

55BW Mission Summary No. 90, 25 Aug 44 (Cont'd).

1. On 25 Aug 44, between 0642-0648B, 80 B-24 a/c of 82 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb A/D installations at PROSTEJOV, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. There were 4 early returns.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Excellent fighter support was furnished by the 306th Fighter Wing, whose a/c joined formation at 0946B and 1015B at 4534N-1804E and remained with formation until 1351B at 4306N-1538E.

75 a/c were over target between 1128-1131B. 73 a/c dropped 174 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (fused .1N, .01) from 20,000-21,600'. 6 sorties jettisoned 13.5 tons, 1 early return jettisoned 2.5 tons. 1 sortie and 1 early return (each) brought 2.5 tons back to bases (total, 5 tons).

Results:

464 Gp - Photos show PROSTEJOV A/D to have been well covered with strikes. There is a very high concentration of strikes in the target area. Numerous direct hits were observed on all four main hangars and the work shops and administration buildings in the hangar area. Eight SEF and one TEF were destroyed and three SEF were damaged.

465 Gp - Photos show PROSTEJOV A/D to be covered with smoke from previous bombing. Strikes are seen to fall short and over indicating the concentration is in the target.

485 Gp - Photos show PROSTEJOV A/D to be covered with smoke from previous bombing. Strikes are seen to fall short and over indicating the concentration is in the target.

The hangers and installations received numerous hits from the first Group over the target and the strike photographs of the later Groups indicate that they caused additional damage. All the major installations were hit, and several aircraft were destroyed before smoke obscured the target.

Reconnaissance photographs reveal extensive damage that could not be determined from the strike photographs. One hanger is completely gutted by fire, another still burning, a third 3/4 destroyed, and the fourth shows considerable damage. All of the small workshops with but one exception are either destroyed or heavily damaged. The majority of the administration buildings are destroyed. The entire area presents a scene of utter devastation, with the landing area post-holed and nearly all buildings destroyed.

Flak at target was nil. No other flak was encountered.

2-15 e/a were seen by the 3 Groups. No e/a encountered.

72 a/c were down at bases between 1442-1500B. 1 a/c was lost due to mechanical reasons, none is missing, 3 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route flown as briefed.

Weather: Clear over YUGOSLAVIA and to target, CAVU at target, visibility 20-30 miles; scattered cumulus on return, with 4-6/10 cumulus, tops 13,000-15,000', over mountains.

2. 464th Bomb Group. On 25 Aug 44, at 0645B 24 a/c of 26 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the installations on PROSTEJOV A/D, in CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

Group assembly and Wing rendezvous was satisfactory. 24 a/c were over target at 1128B (briefed target time 1118B) and dropped 55 tons of bombs from 20,000'. 1 a/c jettisoned 2.5 tons and 1 a/c returned 2.5 tons to base.

Bombing was visual. The first attack unit leader bombing with C-1 and the second attack leader using P.D.I.

No flak was encountered. 2 ME-109 a/c were observed at 1132B at 4910N-1650E.

Fighter escort was excellent. 28 P-51s first observed at 0953B in vicinity of 4535N-1812E and 18 P-38s observed at 1120B in vicinity of 4920N-1735E. Both types of a/c gave target cover and withdrawal cover to 4410N-15103 at 1315B.

1 a/c lost due to mechanical reason.

23 a/c landed at base between 1436B and 1455B.

Route flown as briefed.

3. 465th Bomb Group. On 25 Aug 44 28 a/c scheduled took off at 0642B in two attack units to bomb PROSTEJOV A/D installations in CZECHOSLOVAKIA. There were 8 early returns.

Group assembly accomplished at 0734B over ANDRIA at 6,000' and Wing rendezvous at 0745B over SPINAZZOLA at 6,000'. P-51s and P-38s joined formation at 0946B at 4534N-1804E. Another group of P-51s and P-38s joined as escort to the formation at 1015B at 4638N-1852E and provided penetration, target, and withdrawal cover. The escort left the formation at 1335B at the YUGOSLAV coast.

No flak and no e/a were encountered, but a number of SEF were observed in the distance engaged with the escort at 4635N-1430E at 1235B. A very wide vapor trail traveling across the sky indicated a jet-propelled a/c at 4750M-1430E at 1210B. 10-15 SEF passed beneath the formation at the target.

26 a/c dropped 61½ tons of 500 lb GP bombs at 1130B from 20,800'. 1 early return jettisoned 2.5 tons, 1 early return brought 2.5 tons back to base, 2 sorties jettisoned 3.5 tons. Bombing was attempted visually using A-5 automatic pilot; the second attack unit bombed by PDI.

24 e/c landed at 1500B. 1 a/c landed at a fighter strip near FOGGIA and returned to base at 1800B. 1 e/c landed at VIS.

Route flown as briefed.

4. 485th Bomb Group. On 25 Aug 44, at 0648B, 28 a/c scheduled took off to bomb PROSTEJOV A/D installation.

Assembly at 0735B at 7,000' was satisfactory. Wing rendezvous on course over SPINAZZOLA effected at 0745B at 7,300'.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, consisting of 30 P-51s and P-38s, effected without incident at 4536N-1805E at 0952B. Escort left formation at 4306N-1526E at 1351B. Fighters gave formation excellent cover.

2 a/c returned early. Both jettisoned bomb loads.

25 a/c over target at 1131B (target time 1118B). 23 a/c dropped 57.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs at 21,600'. 2 a/c dropped their bombs between IP and target due to accidental release. A-5 was used on bomb run.

About 5 e/a were seen in target area, of which three were ME-109s and two were FW-190s. No attacks were made on the bomber formation. No flak was encountered at the target.

Return made without incident. 25 a/c landed, mean landing time 1442B. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

Route flown as briefed.