

55BW Mission Summary No. 151, 27 Dec 44 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 27 December 1944, the 4 groups of the 55th Bombardment Wing attacked communication targets in AUSIRIA and YUGOSLAVIA. 99 B-24 aircraft (102 a/c scheduled) took off from 0840-0925 hours for assigned targets. There were 2 early returns.

The 460th Bombardment Group with 13 a/c over KLAGENFURT M/Y, dropped 32.5 tons of M-17 incendiaries from 23,000 ft. at 1249A.

The 464th and 465th Bombardment Groups had 46 a/c dropping 112.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs on MARIBOR Main M/Y at 1156-1158A from 22,000-3,000 ft.

The 485th Bombardment Group, experiencing bombing difficulties, attacked three different marshalling yards. This group had a total of 26 a/c dropping 65 tons on MARIBOR Main M/Y, KLAGENFURT M/Y and VILLACH M/Y.

Results: The 465th Bombardment Group covered the North half of the MARIBOR M/Y. Numerous direct hits are visible on the goods wagons and tracks. Bombs of the 464th Bomb Group are concentrated in the South half of the yard. Several direct hits were scored on rolling stock units. One goods wagon was observed to have exploded and continued burning over an hour afterward. The 485th Bombardment Group had visible strikes located at the North end of the yard and other strikes probably located in the smoke obscured yard at MARIBOR. Post reconnaissance photos show approximately 100 wagons destroyed or damaged. At VILLACH M/Y, the 485th Bombardment Group concentrated its bombs in the station area. Approximately 10 direct hits are seen in the covered platform with others falling on the tracks and rolling stock units. At KLAGENFURT, the incendiary bombs of the 460th Bombardment Group fell to the East of the M/Y. The East choke point of the yard and the adjacent residential area were covered by the incendiary pattern.

Fighter escort, consisting of 15-20 P-51s were observed at 1140A at 4621-1608 and departed at 1314A at 4357-1528.

A total of 6 e/a were observed with no encounters. Flak at MIRIBOR ranged from S - MAH. No flak was encountered at KLAGENFURT or VILLACH.

Weather: 2/10 to 5/10 scattered cumulus over the Western ADRIATIC with tops at 6,000 ft. decreasing; to nil over East ADRIITIC; 10/10 valley stratus over YUGOSLAV mountains, tops 6,000 feet; few scattered clouds north of mountains to target; target clear with visibility 15 to 20 miles; On return solid bank of SC with tops at 6,000 from 4506-1522 extended to the ITALIAN const.

97 B-24s landed at home base from 1418-1630. No aircraft were lost or missing from these operations.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 27 December 1944, at 0925 hours, 14 of 15 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in AUSTRIA.

When the formation was about half-way between the IP and the primary target, which was smoke obscured by previous bombings, the PFF went out on the lead a/c. The deputy lead took over and followed the 485th to the 1st alternate target, KLAGENFURT M/Y, which was bombed. 14 a/c were over the alternate target, KLAGENFURT M/Y, at 23,000' at 1249 hours, 13 a/c dropped 32.5 tons of M-17 incendiary clusters. 1 a/c had 10 bombs hung up which were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC.

There was no flak at KLAGENFURT. Moderate flak was observed at MARIBOR.

4 a/c were seen on the mission: At KLAGENFURT, 1 probable ME-109 was seen at 1252 hours. The e/a was at 24,000', 800 yards away and did not close. At 1320 hours at 4520N-1454E, one U/I a/c believed jet-propelled, was seen at 18,000'. This a/c circled the formation but did not close. Two U/I a/c, black SEFs, were seen at this time. There was no encounter.

The route was flown as briefed to the primary target and thence to KLAGENFURT and return to base.

14 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of time of 1630 hours.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 27 December 1944, 32 of 33 B-24 type a/c scheduled took off, beginning at 0840 hours, to bomb the Main M/Y at MARIBOR, YUGOSLAVIA.

2 a/c returned early.

29 a/c were over the target at 1158 hours at 23,000 feet. From an attack axis of 284 degrees, 20 a/c dropped 50 tons of 500 lb. GP bombs, fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and non-delay tail.

1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons of bombs on the primary target at 1231 hours from 20,500 feet, on an attack axis of 268 degrees. This a/c dropped with the 485th Bombardment Group (H).

The last page of this Textual Mission Summary is almost completely unreadable. It contains the rest of the 464th Mission Summary and the 465th and 485th Mission Summary.