

1. General Summary. On 7 July 1944, 130 B-24 a/c of 137 a/c scheduled took off to bomb BLECHHAMMER North O/R between 0553-0634B .. There were 29 early returns.

Group assemblies and line and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Rendezvous with fighters was reported as seen between 0905-0917B at 4450N-1654E, with penetration, target, and withdrawal cover provided as ordered; fighters were seen to leave formation 1320-1410B.

99 a/c were over target between 1119-1122B. 98 a/c dropped 241.25 tons 182.25 of 500 lb GP bombs, (.1N, .01 and .025T fusing) 59 tons of M-47 incendiaries, from 21,000-24000'. 4 sorties jettisoned full load, 4 sorties jettisoned part load; 12 early returns jettisoned full load, 7 early returns brought bombs back to base.

Results are as follows:

All Groups dropped bombs in 100% smoke obscured area, which had been previously bombed by 49th and 5th Wings. No bomb plots were attempted.

460th Bomb Group. No assessment attempted. No pictures of target. Smoke obscured.

464th Bomb Group. Bomb bursts seen through top of smoke screen. Target 100% obscured.

465th Bomb Group. Incendiaries dropped. No strike assessment.

485th Bomb Group. Target actually bombed, BLECHHAMMER South. Bombs dropped into smoke obscured area. No estimate of damage possible from photos.

Flak at target was M-IAH. Other flak: see Group narratives.

Groups report 5-19 e/a seen. Only one Group reported encounters (6).

91 a/c were down between 1440-1451B. 3 a/c were lost, 4 are missing, 3 landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: At bases, over ITALY and over ADRIATIC clear, visibility 20 miles. 5-6/10 altocumulus over DINARIC ALPS, 5/10 cumulus over CARPATHIANS, tops 16,000'. Target: 3-4/10 altocumulus at 10,000', visibility 20 miles.

Return: 5-6/10 altocumulus over DINARIC ALPS, clearing to bases.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 7 July 1944, at 0625B, 33 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the BLECHHAMMER North Synthetic Oil Plant in GERNANY.

The Group formed its two attack units without incident and rendezvous with the 485th was accomplished between ALTATURA and GRAVINA as scheduled. The Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA on time with the 460th leading the Wing. The fighter escort, P-38s, 51s & 47s, contacted the formation over BANJA LUKA at 0906B furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1322B over BANJA LUKA. Variant report states fighters observed about 1343B

At 24,000', 22 a/c were over the primary target at 1119B. 21 a/c dropped 52.25 tons of 500 lb GP bombs. Due to release malfunction, one a/c was unable to drop its bombs on the aiming point but was able to salvo bombs in the target area.

The Group experienced IAH flak in the target area. One FW-190 flew level with the formation into the flak area and appeared to be directing the batteries. Batteries signaled with green, blue and white bursts. Other flak was encountered as follows: MAH at 4744N1816E, MAH at DUNAALMAS, IAH at GYOR, SIH AT MOR 4723N1812E, SIH at VESZPREM, MAH at KOMARON 4745N1808E and MAG at LAKE BALATON, the N shore.

Other e/a were observed on the mission: two ME-410s near LAKE BALATON at 1050B and two ME-109s near LAKE BALATON at 1237B on the return route. There were no encounters.

Two a/c are missing. A flash report placed the crash of one of them. All crew members bailed out before the crash. Although its wing had been damaged by a falling bomb at the target, another a/c stuck with the formation. It was last reported by our crew members as leaving the YUGOSLAV Coast on course to the KP, CAZZIOL ISLE. A third a/c was damaged by flak.

The route was flown as briefed.

20 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1445B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 7 July 1944, 34 B-24 a/c of 35 a/c scheduled took off at 0612B to bomb BLECHHAMMER North Synthetic Oil Plant (Primary Target) at BLECHHAMMER, GERNANY.

Group assembly was accomplished as planned and line rendezvous with 465th Group was made as ordered on course over ANDRIA at 705B.

Wing rendezvous was made over SPINAZZOLA at assigned altitude at 0722B. 485th Group was late at Wing rendezvous and did not fall into correct Wing position until ten minutes before the target was reached.

25 a/c were over the target at 1120B. (briefed target time was 1050B), dropped sixty two and one half (62½) tons of 500 lb GP bombs, from 21,000-22,000'. Three a/c jettisoned 7½ tons of bombs. 5 a/c returned 12.5 tons of bombs to base.

17 e/a were seen, 8 ME-109s in the target area from: 1115B to 1130B, gray, silver and brown color. These e/a made several passes from 6, 10 and 5 o'clock but did not fire. One JU-52 at LAKE BALATON going south, some distance from the formation was seen. 6 FW-190s were seen at 1037B at 4830N1740E, below formation and made no attempt to attack. 2 more FW-190s were seen at 1218B at 4745N1808E near KANARON but made one pass from 5 and 7 o'clock and turned away without firing.

Rendezvous with fighter escort was made at 0905B at 4440N1700E at which 40 P-38 a/c provided penetration cover. At the target, 15 P-51 a/c provided cover. Withdrawal cover was provided by P-38 a/c who accompanied the formation to the ADRIATIC, last being seen at 1410B.

Flak at the target was IAH, with black and gray bursts. Some white bursts were observed at approximately 27,000'. Formation was in flak for 6 minutes. Flak was also encountered at KAMARON SAH, GYOR SAH, VESYPREN: 4705N1754E SAH, MISBER 4730N1802E SAH, MOR 4723N1812D SAH, MEDVE 4748N1740E MIH.

19 a/c returned to this base between 1440B and 1455B. Two a/c landed at friendly fields to take wounded crew members to the hospital.

One a/c was lost to flak and 3 a/c are missing.

Route was flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 7 July 1944, 31 a/c of 33 scheduled took off at 0558B to bomb the North oil Refinery at BLECHHAMMER, GERMANY.

The Group assembly was accomplished over ANDRIA at 8,000' at 0655B without incident.

Our formation had to make a very wide turn to complete the line rendezvous and as a result were echeloned to the right instead of to the left (as briefed) when taking up course over SPINAZZOLA at 8,000' at 0722B. This made it necessary for our Group to make a dog leg off course over YUGOSLAVIA in order to let the other Groups get ahead so we could get in left echelon as briefed.

P-38 was met at 0917B at 20,000' in the LAKE BALATON area and provided escort to the target where P-51s took over to provide target cover. P-38s then escorted the formations back to the coast of YUGOSLAVIA where they left at 1345B at 14,000'. Crews said that the escort was excellent.

There were 5 early returns.

24 a/c went over the target at 1122B and 24 a/c dropped 59 tons of 500 lb M-17 incendiary bombs from 23,400'.

The following enemy a/c were seen: 6 ME-210 or 410s at 1035B at 4821N 1735E at 18,000', gray color. One Me-109 at 1118B at target area; black with yellow markings on wings. Two FW-190s at 1120B over target at 5,000'. Three FW-190s at 1215B at KOMARON 4745N1808E at 15,000'. Five JU-88s at 1035B at 4823N1735E at 23,000'. One ME-110 at 1050B between IP and LAKE BALATON. One DO-217 at OBER GLOGAU, 5022N1752E at 1118B at 20,000'.

Encounters: 6 ME-109s at 1120D over target at 20,000'. Approached from 5 o'clock toward 7 o'clock level. Attack was made in formation and two broke off from formation and came in toward one of our planes to about 1200 yards. Tail gunner fired several bursts and enemy a/c broke away and rejoined the other fighters and when last seen were being pursued by P-51s. The enemy planes had red noses and red stripes on wings. Some were black and some were silver.

Flak at the target was IH, crews in Baker and Easy boxes reported the flak to be inaccurate but all other crews reported it as accurate. The flak was coming from the left of the formation and this accounts for this difference of opinion. SAH flak was encountered at KOMARON, 4745N1808E; SAH flak was observed at GYOR, 4740N1738E, SAH flak was observed at AUNDAU, 4744N1700E.

24 a/c landed at 1445B (mean time).

One a/c from this Group is missing.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 7 July 1944 at 0634B, 32 B-24 a/c of 36 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb BLECHHAMMER North Synthetic Oil Plant.

Assembly over ALTAMURA at 0708B at 6,000' was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with 460th Bomb Group between ALTAMURA and GRAVINA at 0710B at 6,000'. Rendezvous with 464th and 465th Groups on course over SPINAZZOLA at 0721B at 6,000'.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 20 P-38 a/c was effected without incident at 0905B at 4450N1654E. Departure on return at 1320B at 4420N1700E.

Three a/c returned prior to bombing.

12 e/a were seen, ME-109s, FW-190s and ME-210s in the target area and near LAKE BALATON area, but they did not attack the formation. Flak at the target was MI to AH. MAH flak was encountered at 4540N1745E on return.

28 a/c were over the target at 1119 hours (target time 1000B). 28 a/c dropped 67.5 tons of 500 lb. GP bombs. a/c #361 jettisoned its

bombs at 1054 hours at 49°00'N18°35'E because #1 engine went out and load had to be lightened to stay in the formation.

Return was made without incident. 28 a/c landed, mean landing time, 1451 hours. There were no stragglers, no late arrivals.

None of our a/c were lost.

Route was flown as briefed.

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