

55BW Mission Summary NO. 51, 26 June 1944 Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 26 June 1944, 147 B-24 a/c of 151 a/c scheduled took off between 0525 - 0555B to bomb FLORISDORF oil plant at VIENNA. There were 17 early returns.

Group assemblies were without incident, and line and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered with the exception of difficulty experienced by the 465th Bomb Group.

Fighter escort was sighted from 0724 and gave excellent coverage, remaining with the formation until 1145B.

129 a/c were over target at 0944 - 0950B, 122 a/c dropped 184.65 GP bombs (.1N, .025 and non-delay T fusing) and 60.5 100 lb incendiary bombs from 22,500' - 23,800'. 9 a/c jettisoned (including 4 early returns) whole load, 4 jettisoned partial loads. 5 a/c (early returns) brought back whole bomb load, 4 a/c brought back partial load.

Results were as follows:

460th Bomb Group - Bombing was scattered with several strikes within the target in the vicinity of the wax factory. Numerous strikes are located in the rail facilities north of the target. Incidental damage includes approximately twenty strikes in the locomotive repair area of the railway workshops, approximately six strikes in the foundry and storage yard area of the HOFHERR-SCHRANZ-CLAYTON-SHUTTLEWORTH AGRICULTURAL machinery works, and several strikes on the through rail line east of the refinery. 464th Bomb Group - A considerable amount of smoke in the area prevents complete assessment. Visible strikes are concentrated in the east portion of the marshalling yard and the Agricultural machinery works.

465th Bomb Group - The bombing was concentrated in the Gas works and the Agricultural machinery works. One wet type gasometer was hit and set on fire and other strikes scored on important installations in the gas works. Two strikes were scored on the power plant, three on the heavy machine shop, six on the light machine shop and approximately twelve in the storage yard of the Agricultural machinery works. A few scattered hits were scored in the marshalling yards.

485th Bomb Group - Incendiaries are seen to cover the refinery assigned as a target well. Several fires are believed to have resulted. Incendiary strikes extended over into the railway workshop area.

Flak at target was IAH. SAH was encountered at IP, MAH was encountered by one Group at GRAZ. From 9 to 40 e/a were seen by

individual Groups, from 1 to 35 - 40 encounters were experienced by individual Groups. Claims are 18 - 3 - 1.

119 a/c were down at 1255 - 1349B. 6 a/c were lost, 1 is missing, 4 landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: generally good. Enroute and at target visibility was CAVU. On return 1-2/10 cumulus occurred over YUGOSLAV mountains, tops 8,000'; there was some haze, limiting visibility to 10 miles.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 26 June 1944, at 0555 hours, 36 of 38 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the FLORISDORF OIL REFINERY in AUSTRIA.

Assembly and rendezvous were accomplished with the 485<sup>th</sup> over ALTAMURA at 0635 hours without incident. Wing rendezvous was accomplished on time at 0646 hours over SPINAZZOLA. The 460th lead the Wing. Fighter escort, P-51s & P-38s contacted the formation over - 4550N1645E - at 0846 hours, furnished penetration and target cover. They were last seen engaged with the e/a over the target area at 0946 hours.

Seven a/c returned early.

Immediately after the formation passed the IP, about 20 ME-110s, 210s & 410s attacked the formation firing canons and rockets. They attacked aggressively head on in a diamond box formation, passing under the first attack unit and directly over the second attack unit. Another attack was made by an ME-109 from 11 o'clock low. It closed to 500 yards. Ten other TEFs and 5 SEFs were seen shortly after leaving the IP. The Group encountered IAH flak, both barrage and predicted. This continued over the target and shortly after. A sharp right rally avoided heavier concentration of flak.

Shortly after the IP, the lead ship of the high box of the 2nd attack unit was hit by flak and lost its #2 engine. The box fell back as the lead ship could not keep up with the formation. The box leader signaled that he was leaving the formation and peeled off, (This a/c was lost, falling far behind at 4638N1632E at 1030 hours. Four chutes seen). The remaining ships did not completely reform until the rally when they joined the lead box of the 2nd attack unit. Shortly before the target, the lead ship of the low box, 1st attack unit was shot down by e/a. (Nine chutes Seen). This box broke up momentarily over the bomb run and joined the lead box of the 1st attack unit upon tally. One other a/c was lost when it went down out of control 15 miles SW of WIENER NEUSTADT, at 1010 hours. It had been hit by flak at the target. (Two chutes seen). Our claims of seven e/a destroyed are tentative and are undergoing evaluation.

At 23,800', 29 a/c were over the target at 0944 hours. 26 a/c dropped 51.75 tons of 500 lb GP bombs.

The route was flown as briefed.

25 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1300 hours. One a/c landed at FOGGIA and has since returned.

3. 464th Bomb Group: On 26 June 1944, 39 scheduled B-24 a/c took off to bomb FLORISDORF OIL REFINERY and M/Y Oil Sidings, north VIENNA, AUSTRIA (PT).

Group assembly was effected without incident. Wing rendezvous was effected as scheduled. Rendezvous with fighter escort was effected at 0735B hours at 4240N1545E: Fighter escort consisted of from 25 to 35 P-38s, providing continuous cover on penetration, over the target, and upon withdrawal to 4356N1632E at 1135B. hours. Several crews, at interrogation, commented on the excellence of the fighter cover provided for this mission:

A total of 9 to 11 enemy a/c were observed enroute. 1 ME-210 was seen at 0943B hours at the IP (GARNSDORF); 2 FW-190s at 0950B hours over the target; 1 ME-109 at 1015B hours at - 4750N1520E; and 4 to 6 ME-210s at 1009B hours near MURZZUUSCHLEG, AUSTRIA. 1 encounter was. experienced and claimed as destroyed.

SAH flak was encountered at the IP. Over the target, and in the target area, IAH flak was encountered during and following the bomb run. All types of fire were observed, including predicted, or aimed, and barrage flak. Bursts were mainly black, with some white, high above. 2 a/c were lost to flak.

37 a/c were over the target at 0950 hours, target time 0943B hours. 36 a/c dropped 72 tons of clustered 250 lb GP bombs, fused .1 nose and mixed .025 and non-delay tail; from altitudes of. from 22,500 to. 23,500 ft. One a/c; 3 miles before reaching the IP, was forced to jettison its 16 bombs.

35 e/c landed, from 1332B hours to 1300B hours. Of these a/c, 23 were holed by flak, with 7 being rendered inoperational for more than 24 hours. 6 crew members returned with wounds received in action, all caused by flak.

Route was flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 26 June 1944, 34 a/c of 36 scheduled took off at 0526E to bomb the FLORISDORF M/Y at VIENNA.

The Group assembly was accomplished in the assigned area at 0623B hours at 7,000 ft.

The line rendezvous with the 464th was accomplished over ANDRIA at 0637B at 7,000 ft., four minutes after briefed time.

The escort composed of P-38s, P-47s and P-51s joined the bomber formation at 0734B at 4245N1540E at 9,000 ft. and provided escort to the target, in the target area, withdrawal and escorted the bombers back to the Italian coast and left at 11453 at 11,000 ft. One bomber which was seriously damaged by flak was escorted back to FOGGIA by 15 P-38s. This a/c had radioed for escort and upon arrival of the Lightnings the a/c was completely surrounded and the crew treated to a "good show" as the fighter pilots took turns around the ship and performed numerous acrobatics.

There were four early returns.

30 a/c were over the target at 0948B and 29 a/c dropped 60.9 tons of 300 lb GP bombs from 22,500 ft.

SIH flak was encountered at SIBENIK 4343N1554E and SIL and SIH flak was observed at BRATISLAVA 4808N1706E. MAH flak was encountered at GRAZ 4705N1526E. At the target, flak was IAH. Mobile rail flak was reported along tracks paralleling bomb run.

15 - 20 e/a were seen in the target area and were mostly ME-109s but some JU-88s, ME-110s, and ME-210s were among them. 17 encounters were reported from low, level and high at twelve o'clock in line abreast with the planes breaking to the right and left of the formation with the middle plane diving low and climbing up sharply to attack the belly of the bombers. This maneuver was repeated several times. The e/a were seen to attack a group ahead of the 465th group right in the center of the flak area and one enemy a/c was seen to be shot down by flak. Enemy fighters were slate gray colored and some had large white squares on their fuselages. The enemy a/c seemed to be looking for stragglers and crippled bombers. Some crew members reported seeing a new type of projectile between the IP and the target area. It was described as lumps of brass or other metal about the size of a beer can and was sort of raining down through the formation from above but no e/c were seen above them at the time so it was assumed that it was being shot up from the ground. These projectiles did not explode and no damage was reported done by them.

The following claims are made: 1 ME-109, 1 ME-110, destroyed. 1 JU-88, damaged. 1 FW-190, probable.

29 a/c landed at 1310B (mean time).

One aircraft was seriously damaged by flak over the target area and was unable to reach the home base. The right aileron was shot off and the trim tab was severed. This plane landed at VIS.

The route was flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 26 June 1944, at 0535 hours, 38 B-24s scheduled, took off to bomb FLORISDORF OIL REFINERY (PT).

Assembly was over ALTAMURA at 4500 ft. at 0635 hours. Formation at assembly was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with the 460th Group was effected between ALTAMURA and SPINAZZOLA at 0638 hours, and with the 464th and 465th Groups at 0646 hours at 5,000 ft. Rendezvous was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 6 Group of P-38s of the 306th Wing was effected at 0825 hours at 4500N1638E. Fighters provided penetration, target and withdrawal cover as far as the YUGOSLAVIAN coast. As the bomber formation crossed the coast on return, several P-38s were seen covering straggling bombers.

Four a/c returned prior to bombing due to malfunctions.

One a/c, which is missing, was seen to turn back with one engine (#4) smoking slightly at 0910 hours just north of LAKE BALATON at 4720N1730E.

About 35 - 40 e/a, JU-88s, ME-110s, ME-210s, ME-109s and FW-190s were encountered between the IP and the target. Attacks were aggressive and continued over the target. E/A attacked from 11 o'clock low and level with the formation, passing right through the formation and firing rockets, incendiary rockets, as well as canon and machine guns. Several a/c received minor to moderately severe damage from machine gun and cannon fire. Crews claim 8 e/a destroyed (4 ME-109s, 2 ME-110s, 1 ME-210-410, and 1 FW-190), and two probables (ME-210-410). Markings of e/e: ME-110s and 210s, yellow nose, ME-210s with blue and yellow fuselage and dark blue or black cross on side of fuselage. ME-210s, dark brindle camouflage, ME-110 with bluish gray spirals on prop; ME-109s with red spinners, ME-109s silver with orange tails; ME-109s, black fuselage and red tails. Number of different types were approximately: 8 JU-88s, 15 - 20 ME-110s and 210-410s, and approximately 15 e/a fighters (ME-109s and FW-190s). Although the first attack was mainly from the front, succeeding passes were made at the formation from 5:30 to 7:00 o'clock.

33 a/c were over the target at 0945 hours (target time 0937 hours). At least 31 a/c dropped 60 1/20th tons of 100 lb incendiaries from 22,800 ft. (1 a/c lost over target and 1 a/c landed at VIS and bombs from these two a/c were not accounted for). One a/c (lead ship) was forced to jettisoned 22 100 lb bombs in the ADRIATIC, which had hung up and could not be released on the target. Three other a/c jettisoned two bombs each and 1 a/c jettisoned 3 bombs over the ADRIATIC. One a/c brought 8 100 lb bombs back to base due to malfunctions.

IAH flak was encountered in target area. One a/c of our formation, believed to be hit by flak, went down in the target area.

Seven chutes were definitely seen and 3 others possibly. Most of the a/c in the formation received minor moderate incidents of flak damage.

Thirty a/c landed safely, mean landing time 1255 hours. One a/c landed at BARI at 1240 hours with wounded crew member. This a/c returned to home base at 1410 hours.

One e/c is lost, probably to flak over target, and 1 a/c is missing. One a/c is reported to have landed at VIS.

Route was flown as briefed

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