

55BW Mission Summary No. 134, 22 Nov 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 22 November 1944, between 0706-0730A, 104 B-24 a/c of 105 a/c scheduled took off to bomb a target in GERMANY. There were 18 early returns.

Group assemblies could not be effected as ordered, due to local cloud conditions, so that line rendezvous was delayed and Wing rendezvous was effected en route.

Fighter escort joined formation at 1115A, near UDINE. Other fighters joined the formation in the target area. Escort departed formation at 1343A, at a point near RIMIMI.

As the assigned Primary Target was approached, it became apparent that it was inadvisable to bomb it, and the formation turned to the First Alternate Target: SALZBURG M/Y. 81 a/c were over this target between 1224-1236A, and 67 a/c dropped 131.25 tons on the target from 18,000-27,500'. 9 sortie a/c jettisoned 19 tons of bombs, 7 early returns jettisoned 12.5 tons. 1 sortie a/c returned 2 tons, 9 early returns brought 17.5 tons of bombs to bases. 9 a/c dropped or jettisoned 18 tons of bombs on targets of opportunity.

Results: Bomb Strike photographs show the visible damage to be confined to the area of the South choke point of the East marshalling yard. Direct hits were scored on the roundhouse, turntable, end through tracks South of the choke point by the 485th Bomb Group. Additional damage to residences and minor industries is probable. 464 and 465 Bomb Groups flew above the cloud layer present at the time of the attack and the bomb strike photographs show total undercast with no indication of results achieved.

Flak at target ranged from Scant to Moderato to Intense, and from Inaccurate to Accurate Heavy. There was no other flak encountered.

2-12 e/a were seen by 3 Bombardment Groups; none by 1 Group. There were no encounters.

80 a/c were down at bases between 1440-1520A. 1 a/c was lost (crashed soon after takeoff), 2 a/c are missing, 3 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route flown involved deviations, due to Weather, from briefed route.

Weather: 4/10 stratocumulus at takeoff, tops 9,000', continuing to coast. 2/10 cumulus, tops 10,000' in South ADRIATIC decreasing to 1/10 northward and to clear extreme North and in N ITALY. Clear over S ALPS, except for valley stratus. Over N ALPS, 8/10 thick cirrostratus base 20-22,000', tops 25,000', Persistent vapor trails from 22,000' to 26,000' from this point Northward. At MUNICH

10/10 cirrostratus, tops 25,000'. At SALZBURG, 8/10 cirrostratus, tops 25,000'. Patchy stratocumulus below, tops 8,000'. Similar conditions on return except cirrostratus extended to N ADRIATIC shore.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 22 Nov 44, at 0730A, 22 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in GERMANY. Due to adverse weather, the Group turned back before reaching the briefed IP and bombed the first alternate target, SALZBURG M/Y, GERMANY.

The Group assembly and Wing rendezvous were not effected as planned due to cloud formations in the normal areas. Fighter escort, P-38s and P-51s were first seen near UDINE at 1115A and last seen abeam RIMINI at 1343A.

4 a/c returned early. 1 a/c jettisoned 8 bombs on a target of opportunity, ST. JOHANN (4733N-1227E) and 1 a/c jettisoned 8 bombs on OBER DRABERG (4645N-1259E), missing the M/Y due to a rack malfunction. 2 a/c jettisoned bombs in the ADRIATIC.

PFF equipment was used for navigation only. Bombing was visual, PFF operator assisted on the rendezvous and gave 20 to 25 fixes enroute to and from the target to the DR navigator. On the bomb run, the PFF operator called the angles as an aid in case the bombardier had any trouble in identifying the target. The set worked very well.

18 a/c were over SALZBURG M/Y at 1225A at 18,400'. 17 a/c dropped 32.25 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, .1N and .01T fusing. 1 a/c jettisoned 8 bombs at 1240A in the ALPS due to a rack malfunction over the target.

The route was flown as briefed to West of SALZBURG, where it was decided, because of weather, to bomb the first alternate target.

The Group experienced M-IAH flak at the target.

16 a/c returned to the base with a mean landing time of 1520A. 1 e/c landed at IESI, ITALY, a friendly field. 1 a/c is missing. This a/c with #1 engine feathered and #3 engine smoking. was last seen at 4540N-1300E at 1259A at 14,000' altitude on a heading of 120 degrees, indicating that a landing or bailing out may have taken place in YUGOSLAVIA.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 22 Nov 44, 26 scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0720A to bomb a target in GERMANY.

The Group form up was satisfactory. The 465th Gp did not rendezvous as prescribed. The 464th Gp which circled 3 miles South of Andria to Canosa at 12,000' and crossed over Canosa at 0822A, falling in behind 3 boxes of the 460th Gp at Spinazzola at 0836A. The 485th and 465th Gps Joined the formation in the North ADRIATIC.

4 e/c returned early. 1 a/c jettisoned, 3 a/c returned bombs to base.

18 a/c were over SALZBURG M/Y (First Alternate Target) and 7 aa/c dropped 14 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1N and .01T fusing) at 1224A from 18,000', while 10 aa/c dropped 20 tons of bombs at 1229A. from 27,400'.

1 a/c of those over the target failed to bomb at SALZBURG. This aa/c dropped on LEAD M/Y rt 4718N-1302E at 1240A from 18,000'.

4 a/c, prior returns, dropped 8 tons on 4 targets of opportunity.

Recapitulation of bomb tonnage:

17 a/c dropped on target	34 tons
1 Early Return jettisoned	2 tons
3 Early Returns brought back	6 tons
4 Prior Returns bombed targets of opportunity	8 tons
1 a/c over target bombed target of opportunity	<u>2 tons</u>
	52 tons

The Group leader bombing from 27,400' used the C-1 auto pilot and bombed by PFF. The leader of the 2nd attack unit bombed visually from 18,000' using the PDI as the C-1 auto pilot was erratic.

The 1st attack unit at 27,400' encountered SIH flak at SALZBURG while the 2nd attack unit at 18,000' report the flak as M to IAH.

2 crews report 12 unidentified SEF observed between LIENZ 4650N-1245E and ZELL AM SOE 4719N-1248E et 1156A. The SEF were at 15,000' and flying in a southerly direction. The formation was at 23,000'. The a/c were described as dark in color. A dogfight involving unidentified a/c was observed at 1219A at 4815N-1245E at 26,000', the formation being then at 26,700'. 25 fighters reported to be engaged.

Escort of 14 P-38 a/c observed first at 1125A at 4610N-1248E and 25 P-51 a/c 1140A at 4640N-1245E. The escort was last observed at 1342A at 4400N-1346E.

18 a/c landed between 1425A and 1510A. The 4 prior returns landed between 1336A and 1430A.

The route was flown as briefed to 4817N-1839E, the point where the Wing leader ordered SALZBURG to be bombed. The return route was the reciprocal of the route out.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 22 Nov 44 at 0706A, 31 a/c of 31 scheduled took off to bomb a target in GERMANY.

Group assembled at 0820A at 11,000' and joined Wing formation at 0844A at 11,000'. Escort of P-51s joined bombers at 1120A in UDINE area and escorted bombers to target and back to the ADRIATIC, where they left at 1258A.

There were 7 early returns.

3 ME-109s were seen at 1240A at 28,000' about 10 miles southeast of SALZBURG. They came up out of an overcast and were apparently going to make a pass, but several P-51s appeared at the same time and the e/a ducked into the undercast. A top turret gunner fired about 15 rounds at the ME-109s before they passed out of view but no claim is made. E/a were gray with white bellies. No markings were noted.

Flak at target (SALZBURG) was SIH.

As the formation proceeded to the PT it encountered weather just North of the ALPS which caused solid vapor trails to come from each a/c, so dense that it was impossible to see other a/c in the same box. Group continued to climb to 27,500' in effort to get out of this weather, but conditions did not improve. As formation passed opposite PT on course as briefed, several groups of a/c in single pairs, boxes and group formation passed under and in front of the formation, headed in the direction of the PT. These a/c were components of at least two wings. Hazardous weather conditions plus the fact that it was impossible to tell if another group was flying beneath the formation prompted the group leader to turn back and bomb SALZBURG, the 1st Alternate Target. The three PFF navigators used PFF up to this point and were able to get the PT city in their scopes but were not close enough to get the exact target. Formation did a 180° turn and headed for SALZBURG. PFF operator in lead and deputy lead a/c unable to pick up SALZBURG, although it is believed formation flew directly over city. Deputy lead PFF operator unable to pick up SALZBURG enroute to PT, although he later was able to pick up PT itself. He could not tell whether PFF or electrical system was defective. He was able to use PFF for navigation enroute home after target. Group leader decided to return bombs to base since his PFF operator was unable to locate the target. Communications in lead a/c were defective and he was unable to contact other a/c in formation to state his plans. Second attack unit PFF operator was able to pick up SALZBURG on his scope and this attack unit dropped on target. When second attack unit dropped, the tail gunner in Able 7 called "bombs away" to his bombardier and he dropped with second attack unit. Baker 3 and Baker 4 dropped on Able 7. All other a/c in 1st attack unit did not drop on SALZBURG. PFF operator in lead a/c of second attack unit had no difficulty in navigating to target, and he definitely identified the target and used CHIEM Lake and the valley in the target area as check points. He had some interference, possibly pressure trouble, on bomb run. Drift was killed

and last course correction was 2° to the right. Four sighting angles to bombardier were 65, 60, 50, and '40, and there was no confusion between operator and bombardier, pilot, or navigator. He thinks he hit the city of SALZBURG. PFF operator stated that if not on the target the bombs would fall short.

24 a/c over target at 1236A at 27,500' and 16 a/c dropped 31 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1N and .01T fusing). 1 a/c had rack malfunction and was unable to drop on target, jettisoning bombs at 1241A in SALZBURG area with unobserved results. Deputy group leader (PFF a/c) jettisoned at 4539N-1320E in ADRIATIC and 3 other a/c, thinking he had selected a target of opportunity, dropped on him. All bombs fell in ADRIATIC according to PFF operator. 3 a/c returned bombs to base, 1 a/c jettisoned 4 bombs at IP to maintain altitude.

Recapitulation:

Dropped on target	31.0 tons
Jettisoned by sortie a/c	11.0 tons
Jettisoned by E/R	4.5 tons
Returned by sortie a/c	6.0 tons
Returned by E/R	5.5 tons
Dropped on T/O	<u>4.0 tons</u>
Total	62.0 tons

22 a/c landed at 1450A. 1 a/c landed at friendly field. 1 a/c, 48-78259, piloted by Lt. Priddy, left formation in vicinity of SALZBURG at 1240A with one engine feathered. Two crews of 464th Group reported an a/c calling fighter escort for help at 1245A using our call sign (Fruittart 4) and shortly after heard the pilot give the order to bail out. Crews making this report were at 4046N-1250E, at 1245A at 26,000' when they heard the distress call.

Route was flown as briefed except that large deviations were made over ADRIATIC enroute to target by Wing leader, presumably to maintain Wing position.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 22 Nov 44 at 0728A, 25 of 26 scheduled a/c took off to bomb e target in GERMANY. Prevented from attacking the PT by unfavorable weather, the 1st Alternate Target, SALZBURG M/Y, was bombed.

Group assembled at 0829A. A/c #76299 crashed about 10 miles SE of Neture A/D at about 0800A. 3 crew members parachuted safely. The remaining 7 were killed in the crash.

Group arrived at rendezvous point at 0841A, about 6 minutes late due to weather conditions, and found that other groups had rendezvoused and proceeded on course. Interception made over ADRIATIC and Wing rendezvous completed before second turnpoint was reached. Order of flight was 485th, 460th, 464th, and 465th Groups.

Rendezvous with 15-20 P-38s accomplished at 4704N-1247E at 1154A. They left formation at about 1255A at 4607N-1303E. Several P-51s observed in target area.

There were 3 early returns; bombs were returned to base. Approximately 50 miles south of SALZBURG an altostratus overcast based at 18,500', and becoming thicker to north and west, was encountered. Formation came down to 18,000' in order to get under this front. Continuing on course, weather continued to become worse. Rather than attempt to bomb PT by PFF at this altitude, it was decided to bomb 1st Alternate. Formation circled to left at 4805N-1240E and began bomb run from CHIEMING.

21 a/c over target at 1224A. 17 a/c dropped 34 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, fused .1N, .01T, from 18,000'. 1 a/c returned 8 bombs to base. Bombing accomplished by visual means, with 1st attack unit using C-1. Smoke pots were ineffectively used around target. PFF used only for navigational aids. 3 a/c jettisoned 6 tons of bombs.

No e/a encountered. 2 unidentified SEF seen at 4535N-1252E. Flak at target IAH for 5 minutes. The 1st attack unit encountered more flak than second unit and likewise suffered more damage. 7 a/c received minor and 3 a/c received major flak damage.

20 a/c landed with incident, mean landing time 1505A. 1 a/c landed at friendly field.

Route flown deviated from route as briefed.