

55BW Mission Summary No. 122, 4 Nov 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 4 Nov 44, 154 B-24 a/c of 154 a/c scheduled were dispatched between 0725-0740A to bomb the Benzol Plant at LINZ, AUSTRIA. There were 19 early returns.

Group assemblies were effected normally, and line and Wing rendezvous were effected with difficulty due to poor weather conditions, being completed en route.

Fighter escort joined formation at 1055A as (4550N-1240E), with other fighters at target area and appearing as withdrawal cover. Escort departed at (4430N-1230E).

134 a/c were over target between 1150-1151~~1/2~~A, using PFF equipment for bombing run. 131 a/c dropped 322.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 80% of these were fused .1N and .01T; 20% had long delay fusing, 1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons on a target of opportunity. Altitudes ranged from 21,000-24,000'. 9 sortie a/c jettisoned 8.75 tons, 17 early returns jettisoned 40 tons. 2 sortie a/c returned 4 tons, and 7 early: returns brought 16.5 tons of bombs back to bases.

Results: The main weight of the attack fell across the final assembly portion of the Herman Goering Works. Very heavy damage was inflicted upon the plant. The East Machine and Assembly Shop (No. 1) has been heavily damaged by several hits and is one half destroyed with serious damage to the remaining half. Internal damage is probably severe. The roof of the probable Pressing Shop (No. 2) has been holed and it least six points of damage are visible. Heavy internal damage is probable. The Probable Steel Furnaces (No. 3) were heavily damaged at several points and the roof covering the South bay is split by blast indicating severe internal damage. Five or six bays at the North end of the west Machine and Assembly Shop (No. 4) have suffered moderate to heavy damage. The Foundry (No. 5) was damaged at the North end by one hit and near misses. The Ore Preparation Plant (No. 6) has been holed and is one fourth destroyed. Internal damage is probably severe. No fresh damage is visible to the Benzol Plant but additional damage is visible throughout the entire installation. (Annotations refer to the post-raid reconnaissance photographs included in this report).

Flak at target varied from Scent to Moderate and Inaccurate to Accurate Heavy. There was no other flak encountered.

6 e/a were seen; none was encountered.

126 a/c were down at bases between 1505-1525A. No a/c was lost, 2 are missing, 6 landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed except for omitting one dog leg on route out and route back.

Weather: Scattered altostratus at take off, visibility 20 miles. 3/10 to 4/10 stratocumulus and swelling cumulus from base to coast with swelling cumulonimbus over Spur, tops 18,000'. Scattered low clouds over ADRIATIC with cumulus built up. Along coasts 6/10 to 7/10 coverage. Generally clear on northern Italian shore; over Alps 3/10 increasing to 7/10 low cumulus, tops 12,000' and valley stratus. Overcast stratocumulus other side of mountains continuing to target. At target 10/10 stratocumulus, tops 10,000'. Visibility 25 miles. On return, 6/10 to 8/10 small cumulus had built up over ALPS to 13,000'. 3/10 cumulus over ADRIATIC and 3/10 to 4/10 cumulus at base on return, base 4,000', tops: 8,000'.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 4 Nov 44, at 0725A, 39 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the Linz Benzol Plant, LINZ, AUSTRIA.

Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished without incident. However, Wing rendezvous was not affected as scheduled. The 460th was over rendezvous point at 0848~~1/2~~A but the 464th was 2 minutes early and the 465th was not seen at this time. The 460th headed left to cut off the 464th at the first turning point at (4200N-1620E). Weather was bad. The Wing was finally in proper position at 1103A at MONTEREALE, the 465th having come into position in the vicinity of TERMOLI. Fighter escort, P-51s & P-38s were first sighted 5 minutes after target, 1156A. They left the formation at 1300A, at 4540N-1230E.

7 a/c returned early.

From 23,500', 32 a/c were over the PT at 1151~~1/2~~A. Because of solid undercast, the target was bombed by PFF. 32 a/c dropped 79.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 2 a/c had 3 bombs hung up which were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC.

Because the automatic pilot was inoperative, the lead pilot retained control of the a/c on the bomb run.

The Group experienced M-IIH flak over the target area for about four minutes.

The entire route was flown as briefed except that first and last dog log was omitted.

31 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1515A. One a/c landed at friendly field for fuel and returned to base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 4 Nov. 44, 36 scheduled B-24 a/c plus one assigned spare took off at 0738A to bomb the LINZ Benzol Plant Buildings.

The Group form-up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were accomplished in a satisfactory manner.

Two a/c returned early.

35 a/c were over the target at 1150A and 33 a/c dropped 82½ tons of RDX bombs from 21,000'. The 82½ tons included 66 tons of .1N and .01T fusing, and 16½ tons with 6 to 72 hour long delay fuses. 2 of the a/c over the target with the formation failed to release on the target. B-24 a/c #44-41231 because the select lever has not been put in select and on attempt to salvo, lever would not go into stop. This a/c jettisoned ½ ton of delay fused bombs at 4450N-1240E and returned 2 tons to base. B-24 a/c #42-78671, because the bomb bay doors would not open. This a/c jettisoned ½ ton of delay fused bombs in the ADRIATIC off ANCONA, and returned 2 tons to base.

Disposition of Bomb Tonnage		
	.1 nose and .01	
	tail fusing	delayed fuse
.33 dropped on target	66.0 tons	16.5 tons
2 a/c over target jettisoned		1.0 tons
Returned	4.0 tons	
Early returns jettisoned	1.0 tons	1.0 tons
Early returns brought back	3.0 tons	
	74.0 tons	18.5 tons

Bombing was by PFF. The first attack unit leader used C-1 automatic pilot. The leader of the third attack unit made the run manually. The leader of the second attack unit is down at a friendly field at the time of the writing of this report.

SAH to MAH flak was encountered at the target, the formation being in flak for 3 to 4 minutes.

Escort of 25 P-51 a/c intercepted the formation at 1213A at 4730N-1420E providing withdrawal escort, and was last observed at 1340A at 4425N-1220E. 30 P-38 a/c were observed at 1101A at 4610N-1240E and were reported at various times until 1341A at 4425N-1220E.

The route was flown as briefed with the exception that the first TP was cut short to avoid weather.

34 a/c landed at this base between 1455A and 1530A without incident. One a/c is down at a friendly field.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 42 a/c of 42 scheduled took off at 0737A on 4 Nov 44 to bomb the LINZ Benzol Plant Buildings.

The group assembled at 0825A at 8,000' and the line rendezvous with the 464th Group was accomplished at 0832A at 8,500'. The briefed altitude was 8,000' but due to some stratus clouds the Group leader elected to rendezvous at 8,500' but the other two Groups were off to the left and the Wing rendezvous was not actually accomplished until the formation was just beyond ANCONA. An escort of P-38s joined the bombers at 4530N-1240E at 1100A but only remained with our formation

for a few minutes and it is believed that they were the escort for another wing. P-51s joined the formation in the target area at 1200A and left at the ADRIATIC at 1345A.

There was one early return.

3 to 5 unidentified single engine fighters believed to be ME-109s were seen in the UDINE area at 1100A but made no attempt to attack. At 1108A between the UDINE area and the ALPS crew members report seeing a single engine fighter which was probably an ME-163. This a/c was travelling in the opposite direction which was about 10,000' above the bombers and was described as very fast. When first sighted it was in a very steep climb and emitting an exhaust trail which was described as "chopped off" like smoke puffs and definitely not a vapor trail. The a/c was grayish in color. The jet propelled plane made no attempt to attack.

Flak at the target was Moderate, Inaccurate, Heavy.

41 a/c went over the target at 1151A at 22,500' and 40 a/c dropped 97 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. Some a/c did not drop because he did not see leader drop, and jettisoned 10 bombs at 4645N-1330E in an open field at 1230A from 18,500'. One a/c had one bomb hang up in the bomb bays and jettisoned it in the ADRIATIC at 4530N-1300E. One a/c had one bomb hang up in the bomb bays and jettisoned it at 1154A in an open field about nine miles East of the target.

Total tons dropped on target	97
Total tons jettisoned	3½
Total tons returned to Base	2
Total tons	102½

2½ tons of missing a/c unaccounted for. Bombing was done by PFF using C-1 auto-pilot. As the formation approached the IP the radar navigator picked up LINZ on the scope and was able to make the bomb run without any difficulty.

39 a/c landed at 1525A. One a/c left the formation at 1130A in the UDINE area and landed at a friendly field. One a/c left the formation at 4450N-1245E at 1315A after calling on the radio and saying that he lost a super-charger and had to feather an engine and was going back to the field. Witnesses say there were no enemy fighter in the area and no chutes were reported.

The route was flown as briefed with the exception that instead of going out over the Spur of ITALY the formation flew direct over land to avoid clouds in the area of the Spur.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 4 Nov 44, at 0740, 36 scheduled and 2 spare B-24 a/c took off to bomb the Primary Target, LINZ Benzol Plant, AUSTRIA.

Assembly over ALTAMURA was satisfactory.

The rendezvous with the other Groups of the Wing was effected at 0851A at 10,000' on course with the 485th Bomb Group in fourth place in order of flight.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 25-35 P-38 a/c was effected at 1055A at 4550N-1240E and left the formation at 1320A at 4400N-1300E. 10 P-51 a/c were observed on withdrawal from the target.

2 spare a/c returned. There were 9 early returns, 2 spare a/c and 4 early returns brought 12 tons of bombs back to base; 9 early returns jettisoned 15.5 tons of bombs.

26 a/c were over the PT at 1151A. These a/c dropped a total of 63.75 tons 52 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs fused .1N and .01T fusing and 11.72 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs with delayed fusing from 24,000'. One a/c dropped 2.5 tons on a target of opportunity. 3 a/c of those bombing jettisoned 1½ tons: a/c #034 jettisoned 2 bombs at 4515N-1505E because of fuse removal difficulty; a/c #474 jettisoned 2 bombs at 4120N-1641E and a/c #699 jettisoned 1 bomb at 4430N-1300E, both because of rack malfunctions. The bomb run was made on PFF using manual control.

No e/a were seen. MIH flak was encountered over the target area for a period of approximately 5 minutes.

22 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1505A.

3 a/c landed at friendly fields.

1 a/c is missing. No reports are available on its separation from the formation, other than it was last seen at the target.

Route was flown as briefed.