

55BW Mission Summary No, 124, 5 Nov 44 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 5 Nov 1944, 117 B-24 a/c were scheduled, and between 0735-0807A 118 a/c took off to bomb the VIENNA/FLORISDORF Oil Refinery. There were 13 early returns (1 a/c bombing a target of opportunity, returned prior to the bombing of the primary target).

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered.

Fighter escort joined the formation at 1120A at (4640-1610), with other fighters appearing at target and on withdrawal, escort departing the formation at 1402A at the coast of YUGOSLAVIA. Cover furnished by fighters was excellent.

102 a/c were over primary target between 1217-1219A, and 98 a/c dropped 241.75 tons by Pathfinder methods, on target as follows: 112.5 tons of RDX bombs (80% fused .1N, .0IT, 20% fused long delay) and 129.25 tons of M-17 incendiaries Altitudes were 21,000' - 24,500'. 1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons on a target of opportunity. 9 sortie a/c jettisoned 14 tons, 8 early returns jettisoned 17 tons of bombs. 1 sortie a/c returned .25 tons to base, and 5 early returns brought 11 tons back to bases.

Flak at target was reported as Moderate Inaccurate to Intense Accurate Heavy. SIH was encountered at KNIN.

2-7 e/a were seen, none encountered.

99 a/c were down at bases between 1455-1515A. 1 a/c was lost (mid-air collision) 1 a/c is missing, 3 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: 6/10 to 8/10 stratocumulus and swelling cumulus at takeoff and continuing to coast, tops 8,000'. Over ADRIATIC, 2/10 to 3/10 small cumulus, tops 4,000'. 2/10 to 3/10 stratus and stratocumulus over Dinarics, tops 5,000'. From Dinarics to Balaton, 6/10 to 8/10 stratus and stratocumulus, tops 10,000' which increased from Balaton to target to 8/10 to 10/10. 10/10 undercast at target, tops 10,000'. Visibility was 20 miles. Clouds had broken up on return to 4/10 to 7/10 over the plains. 3/10 to 4/10 flat cumulus over base on return, base 5-6,000'. Visibility was 20 miles or better entire route.

Results: No assessment of results possible. Photographs show total undercast.

2. 460th Bomb Group. At 0750A, 31 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the FLORISDORF O/R, VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished on time. The 460th was on time but the 465th was about two minutes late and flying at the 460th altitude. Wing assembly was not completed as briefed, until SPLIT had been reached. Fighter escort, P-38s and P-51s, first sighted at 1119A at (4640-1609) furnished penetration, target, and withdrawal cover. They loft the formation at 1311A at 4330-1612.

5 a/c returned early. 4 a/c jettisoned bombs in the ADRIATIC and 1 a/c jettisoned 4 bombs in the ADRIATIC and returned 6 bombs to base.

At 24,500', 26 a/c were over the primary target, the FLORISDORF O/R, at 1217½A. Because of complete undercast, bombing was accomplished by PFF. 11 a/c dropped 27.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, and 13 a/c dropped 32.25 tons of M-17 incendiaries. Due to malfunctions, 3 a/c had 21 bombs hung up which were jettisoned as follows: ten bombs jettisoned manually immediately after target, ten bombs jettisoned at (4730-1710) and one bomb North of the target.

The Group experienced M-IIH flak for 5 minutes in the target area. SIH flak was reported at KIIN (4403-1611)

The route was flown approximately as briefed with variations of 5-10 miles to avoid weather.

24 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1515A. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field and has returned to base. 1 of our a/c is missing on the return route.

3. 464th Bomb Group, On 5 Nov 44, 28 scheduled a/c and 2 spares took off at 0735A to bomb VIENNA/FLORISDORF O/R, AUSTRIA.

Group form up was made without incident. Two Group rendezvous was hampered by inaccurate information received from the weather a/c. The Wing rendezvous was made as briefed. The Group leader states that the Wing lead was too fast and the air speed erratic.

One a/c returned early, 1 a/c returned prior to bombing the primary target.

27 a/c were over target at 1219A, and 26 a/c dropped bombs as follows: 15 a/c dropped 37½ tons of M-17 incendiaries, and 11 a/c dropped 22 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs and 5½ tons of 500 lb RDX long delay fuse from 22,200'.

3 a/c jettisoned 5½ tons.

1 a/c No. 42-51760, a prior return, bombed a target of opportunity at 1153A, at (4647-1610) from 19,000'. The target was a single track railway, with unobserved results.

1 a/c returned 2 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs to base.

	Recapitulation of Bombs		
	<u>M-17</u>	<u>RDX (.1,.01)</u>	<u>RDX Long Delay Fuse</u>
Dropped on target	37½ tons	22 tons	5½ tons
Jettisoned	2½ tons	2 tons	1 ton
Target of Opportunity		2 tons	½ ton
Returned to Base		2 tons	
	40 tons	28 tons	7 tons

Both of the attack unit leaders used the C-1 automatic pilot on the bomb run.

Flak at the target was M to IIH. Time in flak was estimated to be from 3-4 minutes. It is the opinion of crew members that the chaff dispensing a/c preceding the 5th Wing was at least partially responsible for the inaccuracy of enemy fire.

3 ME-109 a/c were observed at 4741-1750 after the rally at 1222A. Observed from 2 o'clock low and swerved and come towards the formation from 10 O'clock level breaking off at 700 yards. E/A were dark colored and no other markings were observed. E/A did not attack the formation outside of this one half hearted pass.

Rendezvous was made with 30 P-38 a/c at 1021A at (44410-1626), and with 30 P-51 a/c at 1030A at (4434-1633). Both P-51 and P-38 a/c were over the target. P-38 escort was last observed at 1402A, and P-51 a/c at 1409A at the YUGOSLAVIAN coast. The crews report that the escort on this mission was very satisfactory.

28 a/c landed at this base between 1440-1520A.

Route was flown as briefed.

4. 465th Domb Group. 30 a/c of 31 scheduled took off at 0751A on 5 Nov 44, in two attack units to attack the FLORISDORF O/R at VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

The Group assembled at 0840A at 7,000', and the 464th fell in behind our formation at 0843A. Wing assembly was accomplished at 0858A at 7,000'. Assembly was 1,000' higher than the briefed altitude due to the weather. An escort of P-38s joined the formation at 1102A near BJELOVAR and furnished penetration, target, and withdrawal cover as far back as the YUGOSLAVIA coast. An escort of P-51s joined the formation at 1120A near ANGEF and also furnished penetration, target end withdrawal cover as far back as the YUGOSLAVIA coast.

4 a/c returned early,

Flak at the target was MIH and no flak was encountered enroute. No e/a were encountered by any of the returning crews.

However 1 crew reported seeing a straggler from our formation being attacked by two SEF at 1253A in the Lake Balaton area. This straggler landed at VIS and has not been interrogated. No other ee/a were seen. P-51s drove away the attacking E/A.

26 a/c went over the target at 1217A at 21,000'. 12 a/c dropped 29.5 tons of 500 lb M-17 incendiary bombs. 14 a/c dropped 35 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs.

Total tons FDX dropped	35
Total tons 1-17	29.5
Total tons jettisoned	.25
Total tons brought back	.25
Total tons carried	65.

1 a/c jettisoned 1 bomb in the ADRIATIC at (4150-1620) at 1425A at 3,500' and brought back 1 bomb to base due to shackle malfunction.

25 a/c landed at 1510A. There were no casualties. 1 a/c received slight damage from flak.

The route was flown as briefed. The Wing formation, while on course to the target, 5 miles north of Barletta was intercepted by two boxes of a/c bearing tail markings of the 459th Group. These a/c flew between Able and Baker box of our formation and forced the Group leader to put Able box into a dive in order to prevent a collision. Tho Wing formation was very poor as far as GRAZ where the 464th, which had been lagging behind, caught up to our Group. This Group had been called both by the 465th and 485th to get into position, but failed to respond until it reached GRAZ. The formation was good from GRAZ, over the target and to BRATISLAVA. From there until it reached the ITALIAN coast it was very poor.

While the formation was returning to base, a lone B-17 made a head on approach at the a/c flying in Charlie 5 position. Warning machine gun bursts were fired at the a/c and when it began to close in on the formation in what appeared a hostile attitude, several bursts were fired directly at it. It then veered away and is believed to have joined a B-17 formation in the vicinity.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 5 Nov 44 at 0807A, 27 B-24 type a/c scheduled took off to bomb the VIENNA/FLORISDOPF O/R in AUSTRIA.

The boxes assembled over the base and proceeded to assembly at 0848½A. A/C #1299 collided in mid-air with a/c #394 at 0845A. A/C #1299 crashed killing 8 of 10 crew members. A/C #394 returned to base at 0900½A.

The 460th Group fell in behind the 485th and the two Groups arrived over rendezvous point as scheduled, circled 270° to the left

waiting for the 464th and 465th Groups to arrive. The Wing formation was completed at 0902 $\frac{1}{2}$ A.

45-50 P-51 aa/c joined the formation at 1023A at 4410-1628. They departed at 1308A at 4330-1613. Several P-38 a/c were observed at the target area.

3 a/c returned early. 1 jettisoned 2.5 tons, 2 returned 3 tons to base.

23 a/c were over the target at 1219A (target time 1210A) at 23,000'. 9 a/c dropped 18 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs .1, .01 fusing and 4.5 tons of 500 lb FDX bombs with long delay fusing. 12 a/c dropped 30 tons of M-17 incendiaries. 2 a/cc jettisoned 10 bombs each (500 lb RDX) at the IP due to an accidental release by the lead ship of the box. C-1 was used by both attack units.

2 ME-109s were observed near the IP but they made no effort to attack the formation. ITH to IAH flak was encountered over the target for a period of approximately 6 minutes with 4 a/c receiving minor damage.

22 a/c landed without incident at 1455A. A/C #043 landed at a friendly field with wounded crew member. This a/c returned to base at 1615A.

Route was flown as briefed.