

55BW Mission Summary No. 112, 10 Oct 44 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 10 October 1944, 118 B-24 a/c were scheduled for operations. 125 a/c (118 scheduled plus 7 spares) took off between 0800-0841A to attack communications targets in Northern ITALY. There were no early returns.

Group assemblies, line and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. No fighter escort was scheduled, but 15-25 P-38 and P-51 a/c were covering target area when bombers arrived.

125 a/e were over targets between 1128-1133A. Only one Bombardment Group was able to see assigned target, because of complete cloud cover. This Group on a second bombing run momentarily saw target through a hole in cloud cover, and 31 a/c dropped 77.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, non-delay T, from 17,200' on PIAVE/SUSEGANA RR Bridge. 1 a/c of another Group dropped 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, non-delay T, on a target of opportunity from 8,500'. 6 a/c jettisoned 8.75 tons of bombs. 90 a/c returned 225 tons of bombs to bases.

Results: The TREVISO/CONEGLIANO and the MONTE BELLUN/CONEGLIANO rail lines were probably cut at the approach to the PIAVE/SUSEGANA RR Bridge. The TREVISO highway was probably cut. Strikes are indicated in the vicinity of the PIAVE/SUSEGANA RR and Highway Bridges, but clouds prevent assessment.

S-MAH flak was encountered at SUSEGANA, S-MAH was encountered at POL on return.

4 e/a were seen by one Group. There were no encounters.

124 a/c were down at bases between 1355-1421A. No a/c was lost, 1 a/c is missing, none landed at friendly fields.

Route flown as briefed except for second bomb run and deviations on return caused by weather conditions.

Weather: On takeoff weather was 4/10 alto-stratus at 13,000' and 2/10 cumulus at 7,000'. Over Spur 3/10 alto-stratus at 9-11,000' and 2/10 cirrus at 20,000', continuing to 40 miles S of VENICE, then 8-10/10 stratocumulus, tops 10,000'. At target, stratocumulus overcast, tops 10,000', visibility 20 miles. Frontal clouds to N and W of target. Conditions same on return. At base 3/10 alto-stratus and 2/10 cumulus. Visibility 20 miles on entire route.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 10 October 1944 at 0805A, 31 scheduled a/c dispatched to bomb the PIAVE/SUSEGANA Highway Bridge in ITALY.

Group assembly and rendezvous with 485th accomplished without incident. The 460th, flying lead position, on course over rendezvous

point at 0926A. Although no fighter escort was scheduled, 24 P-38s were seen in the target area.

At 17,200', 31 a/c were over PT at 1133A. Due to undercast the Group was unable to bomb the target on its initial run. Leader circled target and made another bomb run when a hole in the cloud cover revealed the target. 31 e/e dropped 77.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the PT.

Results: Several strikes are visible on the Southern approaches of the PIAVE/SUSEGANA road and rail bridges. Direct hits were scored on the TREVISO/CONEGLIANO and the MONTE BELLUN/CONEGLIANO rail lines in the vicinity of the bridge. Additional hits were scored on the TREVISO highway south of the bridge. Bombs away photographs indicate strikes in the area of the bridges but clouds prevent assessment.

S-MAH flak over PT for about 3 minutes. On the initial run the flak was inaccurate, but on second run flak became extremely accurate.

At IP, PARDENONE (4557N-1240E), four dark-colored SEFs were seen at 1122A. They were at a distance and being chased by P-38s. E/a were flying four abreast. There was no encounter.

Route flown as briefed except for bomb run, which was made on an axis of 180°. On return thunderstorms and icing conditions forced formation to disperse at 1205A at 4451N-1324E.

30 a/c returned to base, mean landing time 1416A. 1 a/c hit by flak over target is missing.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 10 October 1944, 28 scheduled B-24 a/c and 3 spares took off at 0800A to bomb target in Northern ITALY.

Group formed two attack units. Form-up, rendezvous and Wing rendezvous as briefed without incident. There were no early returns, spares continuing with formation.

31 a/c over target at 1132A, but due to solid overcast of stratocumulus with tops at 10,000' it was impossible to see target, and all bombs were returned to base, 1/2 ton of bombs was Jettisoned at 4558N-1239E when navigator acting as bombardier pushed select position too hard and 2 bombs dropped out.

Group leader used C-1 automatic pilot, but leader of second attack unit did not use automatic pilot as it did not function properly.

No flak encountered at target. Flak was observed at POLA, TRIESTE and TREVISO enroute.

Rendezvous with 15-25 P-38s at 1124A at 4550N-1250E. Escort too far away to be identified by markings; departed at 1205A at 4430N-1350E.

31 a/c landed between 1340-1420A.

Route flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 10 October 1944 at 0815A, 31 scheduled a/c took off to bomb a target in Northern ITALY.

Assembly and Wing rendezvous accomplished without incident. 10-12 P-51s seen at 1140A just South of target, but no contact was established.

No e/a seen nor encountered. S-MAH flak encountered at POLA on return when formation turned off course to avoid weather.

There was a solid undercast in target area. Target was sighted once through an opening from the IP, but overcast was solid over target and formation returned bombs to base. 1 a/c left formation after it had passed over target and returned to target area to drop 2½ tons of bombs on a bridge from 8,500', which was beneath the undercast. 1 plane jettisoned 2 bombs between IP and target because of rack malfunction. 2 a/c jettisoned bombs off spur of ITALY because of loss of engine.

Recapitulation:

Dropped in target area	2.50 tons
Jettisoned	5.50 tons
Returned to base	<u>69.50 tons</u>
Total	77.50 tons

31 a/c landed at 1421A.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 10 October 1944 at 0841A, 32 a/c (28 scheduled plus 4 spares) took off to bomb a target in Northern ITALY.

Assembly, rendezvous with 460th and Wing rendezvous effected without incident. There were no early returns.

There was no rendezvous with fighter escort; however, several P-38s were observed over target area.

32 a/c were over target area at 1128A at 18,000'. Complete undercast obscured the IP and target, making it impossible to do precision bombing. It was decided to return bombs to base rather than bomb indiscriminately. 31 a/c returned bombs (310 - 500 lb RDX fused .1N, non-delay T) to base. 1 other a/c jettisoned 10 bombs at 1340A at 4130M-1610E in order to lighten load after having feathered #4 engine.

No e/a were seen. SAH flak encountered over target for approximately 2 minutes.

Return made without incident. 32 a/c landed, mean landing time 1407A.

Route flown as briefed.