

OCTOBER, 1944

Tabular view of 55th Bombardment Wing Missions, October 1944:

Serial Number (June)	Mission Number (Current)	Date	Target	Groups	Participation
1.	110	4 Oct 44	AVISIO VIADUCT, ITALY (Red Force)	460	
			ADIGE/ORA RR Br, ITALY (Red Force)		485
			ADIGE/MEZZOCORONA RR Br, ITALY (Red Force)		485
			MUNICH, GERNANY, Main M/Y (Blue Force)	464	465
2.	111	4 Oct 44	VIENNA, AUSTRIA, Winterhafen O/R (Red Force)	460	485
			ERSEKUJVAR, HUNGARY, M/Y (Blue Force)		464 465
3.	112	4 Oct 44	PIAVE/SUSEGANA RR Br, ITALY	460	Abortive
4.	113	4 Oct 44	VIENNA, AUSTRIA SE Industrial Area (At) WIENER NEUSTADT, AUSTRIA (Target of Opportunity)	460	464 465 485
5.	114	4 Oct 44	BOLOGNA, ITALY, Ammunition Dump	460	485
			BOLOGNA, ITALY, Stores Depot		464 465
6.	115	4 Oct 44	BANHIDA, HUNGARY, South M/Y (Blue Force)	460	485
			BLECHHAMMIER, GERANY, South O/R (Red Force)		464 465
7.	116	4 Oct 44	GRAZ NEUDORF, AUSTRIA, A/C Factory (AT) Vicinity of LINZ, AUSTRIA (Alternate Target) TRIEBEN, AUSTRIA, M/Y (Target of Opportunity)	460	 464 465
8.	117	4 Oct 44	MARIBOR, YUGOSLAVIA (Alternate Target) VIENNA, AUSTRIA, Industrial Area (AT) PRIEN, AUSTRIA (Target of Opportunity)	460	 464 465

			NAGYSKANIZSA,				485
			HUNGARY, M/Y (Target				
			of Opportunity)				
9.	118	4 Oct 44	ROSENHEIM, GERMANY	460	464	465	485
			(AT)				
10	119	4 Oct 44	AUGSBURG, GERMANY,	460			485
			Industrial Area (Red				
			Force)				
			North ITALY Targets				
			(Abortive)		464	465	

During the month of October 1944 the Wing experienced the least favorable weather for operations yet encountered since it became operational in March of 1944. It resulted that in October the fewest missions were flown of the number in any month since the Wing became fully operational, that several missions were abortive, and that a marked decrease in the tonnage of bombs dropped occurred. Only 10 missions were flown, and of these 1 was abortive for three of the four Bombardment Groups and 1 (other) was abortive for one Group; three missions (of course not counted in the 10 cited above) were entirely abortive. A total of 2,561 tons of bombs was dropped (a decrease of 1,017 tons from the September total of 3,578 tons); hardly more than half the total dropped in August (5,135 tons), the peak month of the Wing's activity.

Targets attacked in October reflect the rapid change in the overall war situation, especially the reduction in the range of targets in the BALKANS due to the rapid advance of the Russian and Rumanian forces, the withdrawal of the enemy from GREECE, and the pressure applied upon him in the Southern BALKANS, particularly by the Yugoslav Partisans.

Targets attacked were located in ITALY (6), AUSTRIA (4), GERMANY (4), HUNGARY (3), and YUGOSLAVIA (1). Six missions were sent against communications (11 targets attacked), 4 missions attacked 4 industrial targets, 2 missions attacked 2 oil targets, and 1 mission was directed against 2 military concentrations.

The primary objective of the attacks upon communications was twofold: to complete the interdiction of the BRENNER PASS line by destroying railroad bridges and to assist the operations of the Russian-Rumanian forces by destruction of trackage, facilities and rolling stock in Marshalling Yards in HUNGARY and YUGOSLAVIA. The objective of the missions against oil targets represents no change from previous operational plans.

One detail is of great importance. The unfavorable weather commonly encountered during the month required a much greater use of Pathfinder method and equipment than had been employed previously. During this period, in addition to the greater use of Pathfinder in operations, there was much practice flying with the use of this equipment, with the view to preparation for its still more extensive

use in the winter months. More Pathfinder operators were assigned; Wing headquarters added a Pathfinder Officer to the A-3 Section. The effectiveness of increased use and of assiduous practice was observed in the month of November.

Enemy aircraft were even more conspicuous by their absence in October than they had been in September, thus continuing the trend which was already noticeable in August. Gunners were almost wholly inactive on missions in October, for the simple reason that of the few enemy aircraft seen, which was negligible, there were no encounters. It is interesting to note, however, that jet propelled aircraft were seen for the first time in October.

Best results on missions flown in October were secured against the VIENNA Winterhafen Oil Storage, the ERSEKUJVAR and BANHIDA Marshalling Yards, and the GRAZ NEUDORF Aircraft Factory.

A distinctive feature of the operations in October was the division of operational aircraft into two "forces" to secure maximum effort. These two forces were at first designated as "Able" and "Baker" Forces, later as "Red Force" and "Blue Force." The usual effort for Able or Red Force was 36 a/c, and of Baker or Blue Force was 18 a/c. This headquarters on certain occasions secured the desired number by designating two entire groups as the given Force (Red or Blue), thus achieving simplicity. However, there were certain orders in which two forces had to be designated in each of the four bombardment groups.

Of special interest was the mission (Number 114) flown on 12 October 1944. This mission was in direct support of ground operations in the vicinity of BOLOGNA, ITALY. On this date the Wing participated with all units of the Strategic Air Force in attacks upon enemy concentrations of supplies. The mission required meticulous care in planning and execution. Special target materials were furnished by Air Force. Briefing is necessarily thorough. This headquarters took particular pains to inform combat crews of the location of friendly and enemy troops, making every effort to insure that no bombs were dropped on friendly forces. The position of the battle line at the latest report was transmitted to the bombardment groups by teletype, and the latest reported position of the bomb line and a specially prepared marker to indicate the extreme forward position of friendly ground troops were indicated upon a 1:500,000 Sectional map, photographed and distributed in quantity for issue to combat crews. (it was specified that one be on the flight deck and one in the hands of the nose navigator in the lead and deputy lead a/c of each combat wave and box). That this information, particularly the photograph, was useful is substantiated by the facts that routes were flown as briefed and that of all crews in the Strategic Air Force only those of this Wing actually saw the ground marker. It is gratifying to learn that the enemy reported one of the two targets assigned to this Wing as destroyed.