

55BW Mission Summary No. 96, 2 Sept 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 2 September, 1944, 87 B-24 a/c scheduled 3 spares not returning, 90 a/c took off between 0710-0729B to bomb NIS M/Y (two groups) and SUPOVAC RR BRIDGE (one group), Yugoslavia. There was 1 early return which crashed near base.

Group assemblies were without incident, but Wing rendezvous was not properly coordinated.

Fighter escort joined the formation at 0923B at 4250N-1803E and remained with the formation over the target and on return until 1120B at 4148N-1908E.

89 a/c were over the designated targets at 1020-1021B, 84 a/c dropping 136.75 tons 500 lb GP, fused .1N, .025T, on NIS M/Y; and 72 tons 1000 lb RDX. fused .1N, non-delay tail, on SUPOVAC RR BRIDGE. Both C-1 and A-5 automatic pilots were used on bomb run. Bombing was from 18-21,000'. 2 a/c jettisoned their entire loads due to malfunction and 1 a/c jettisoned 1 bomb. The early return jettisoned its bombs near base. 4 a/c returned entire loads to base and 3 a/c returned 3 bombs to base due to malfunction.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show NIS M/Y to have received two concentrations of strikes. One concentration covers the southeast portion of the yard, scoring numerous hits on the tracks and goods wagons in the area of the southeast choke point. The other concentration covered the northwest portion of the yard, scoring two or three hits on the northwest choke point. Strikes extend to the area of the round house and work shops. Hits were scored on the round house and a work shop.

465 Gp - Photos show the visible strikes to have fallen in an unidentified industrial area immediately east of the marshalling yard. Additional strikes are possible in the marshaling yard but smoke prevents assessment in that area.

Reconnaissance photographs show the east choke point to be blocked. The round house is badly damaged and a small repair shop practically destroyed. Round house repairs will take a week or more, but all through tracks can be repaired in two or three days.

464 Gp - Photos show the SUPOVAC RR BRIDGE has received a concentration of strikes in the area of the bridge and the southeast approach. Several near misses were scored on the southeast end of the bridge. Numerous strikes are visible on the southeast approach.

Reconnaissance photographs show no structural damage to the bridge. The southeast approach is cut. The bridge is expected to be denied the enemy for a few days.

Flak at NIS M/Y was SI-SAH and at SUPOVAC RR BRIDGE none was reported. 1 FW-190 was seen at NIS and 1 FW-190 was encountered by the 465th Group at SUPOVAC.

89 e/c were down at bases at 1215-1235B. 1 a/c was lost, and early return crashing near base.

Route flown as briefed.

Weather was generally clear. Over YUGOSLAVIA, 2-3/10 altocumulus with bases at 18,500'. Visibility 10-15 miles.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 2 Sept 44, at 0710B, 31 scheduled a/c dispatched to bomb the NIS M/Y in YUGOSLAVIA.

Group assembly and Wing rendezvous accomplished as scheduled with 460th in lead position. Escort of P-51s first contacted at 4310N-1840E at 0935B, and provided excellent penetration, target and withdrawal cover. The escort last seen at 4205N-1950E at 1055B.

At 18,000' 31 a/c over target at 1020B. 29 a/c dropped 71.75 tons of 500 lb GP bombs. Due to malfunction, 1 a/c salvoed its bombs at IP and another a/c was unable to release at target and returned bombs to base. Two other a/c failed to drop all their bombs on the target. One of these a/c jettisoned 1 bomb at IP and the other had 2 bombs hung up and returned them to base. Lead ships of both attack units used automatic pilot on bomb run.

SAH flak encountered over primary target.

31 a/c returned to base with mean landing time of 1235B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 2 Sept 44, 28 scheduled a/c and 3 spares took off at 0710B to bomb SUPOVAC RR BRIDGE, Yugoslavia. The 3 spare a/c flew the entire mission.

Form-up was executed without incident. In effecting the line rendezvous with the 465th Group, the 465th Group at 0813B was heading south from ANDRIA to CORATO. A right turn was made instead of a left to effect the rendezvous. The 460th Group did not pass over SPINAZZOLA on course at the prescribed time due to being late for rendezvous. The 465th and 464th Groups passed over SPINAZZOLA at 0826B and joined the 460th 10 miles east of SPINAZZOLA.

31 a/c bombed the target by boxes in column. (Briefed target time 1015B). Target times for the four boxes as follows: A, 1019B; B, 1020B; C, 1020B; D, 1020B. 29 e/c dropped. 72 tons of 1000 lb RDX from following altitudes: A, 18,500; B, 19,100; C, 18,000; D, 19,180.

2 of the 31 a/c over target returned 3 tons of bombs to base.

Recapitulation of bombs:

29 a/c dropped on target	72.00 tons
2 a/c returned to base	3.00 tons
1 a/c jettisoned	2.50 tons
Total tonnage of 31 a/c	77.50 tons

Scant Heavy flak of undetermined accuracy observed on rally at NIS.

Rendezvous with fighter escort consisting of 30 P-51s identified as 325th and 52nd Fighter Groups effected et 0923B at 4250N-1803E. These a/c covered formation at target and were last seen at 1120B et 4148N-1908E.

31 a/c landed at base from 1215B to 1235B.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 2 Sept 44, 28 a/c scheduled took off at 0729B to attack NIS M/Y, Yugoslavia.

Group assembled over ANDRIA at 0814B et 8,000' and Wing rendezvous accomplished over SPINAZZOLA at 0826B. 465th Group one minute late and was forced to swing inside SPINAZZOLA because of very poor visibility. A fighter escort of P-51s joined formation at 0946B at 4326N-1934E and gave excellent penetration, target and withdrawal cover as far as the YUGOSLAV coast, leaving formation at approximately 1100B. 1 a/c returned early.

Flak encountered at target SIH; none encountered enroute. One FW-190 encountered in target area at 1021B. This a/c dove down from 9 o'clock high, in, under formation and came up at Able box, closing to 700 yards. A/c utilized cloud cover and vapor trails of lead group for cover. Ball gunner fired and a/c broke away and down. Another FW-190 seen over NIS airdrome.

26 a/c over target at 1021B at 21,000' dropped 65 tons of 500 lb GP bombs. 1 a/c did not drop due to rack malfunction.

Recapitulation of bombs:

Tons dropped on target	65
Tons jettisoned	0
Tons brought back	2.5
Total tons carried	67.5

27 a/c landed at base at 1228B.