

SEPTEMBER, 1944

During the month of September, 1944, the 55th Bombardment Wing flew 15 missions, the fewest in any full month since the Wing became fully operational, This relative inactivity was due to unfavorable weather. A tabular view of the Wing's missions during September is as follows:

Serial Number (June)	Mission Number (Current)	Date	Target	Groups Participation			
1.	95	1 Sept 44	SZAJOL, HUNGARY, M/Y SZOLNOK, HUNGARY, RR Br	464 460	485 465		
2.	96	2 Sept 44	NIS, YUGOSLAVIA, M/Y SUPROVAC, YUGOSLAVIA, RR Br	460	465 464		
3.	97	4 Sept 44	ADIGE/ORA, ITALY, RR Br BRONZOLO, ITALY, S M/Y	460		485 465	
4.	98	5 Sept 44	SZOB, HUNGARY RR Br	460	464	465	485
5.	99	6 Sept 44	NYIREGYHAZA, HUNGARY, M/Y	460	464	465	485
6.	100	10 Sept 44	VIENNA, AUSTRIA, SE	460	464	465	485
7.	101	12 Sept 44	WASSERBURG, GERMANY A/C Factory	460	464	465	485
8.	102	13 Sept 44	OSWIECIM, POLAND, O/R	460	464	465	485
9.	103	17 Sept 44	BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, Magyar BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, Shell	460	464	465	485
10	104	18 Sept 44	BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, S RR Br BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, N RR Br SZOB, HUNGARY, RR Br	460			485
11.	105	20 Sept 44	OBERWEISSENFELD, GERMANY Engine Factory	460	464	465	485
12.	106	21 Sept 44	HATVAN, HUNGARY, N&S M/	460	464	465	485
13.	107	22 Sept 44	BROD, YUGOSLAVIA, M/Y	460	464	465	485
14.	108	23 Sept 44	CASARSA, ITALY, RR Bypass PONTE DI PIAVE, ITALY, S RR Br	460	464	465	

			PIAVE SAN DONA,	485
			ITALY, RR Br	
15.	109	24 Sept	SALONIKA, GREECE, M/Y 460	485
		44	SCARAMANGA, GREECE	464 465
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HUNGARY contained the targets for 6 of these missions; YUGOSLAVIA, 2; ITALY, 2; GERMANY, 2; AUSTRIA, 1; POLAND, 1; and GREECE, 1.

Types of targets were as follows: Marshalling Yards, 7 missions (SZAJOL, HUNGARY; NIS, YUGOSLAVIA; BRONZOLO, ITALY; NYIREGYHAZA, HUNGARY; HATVAN, HUNGARY; BROD, YUGOSLAVIA; SALONIKA, GREECE); Railroad Bridges, 6 missions (SZOLNOK, HUNGARY; SUPROVAK, YUGOSLAVIA; ADIGE/ORA, ITALY; SZOB, HUNGARY - 2 missions; BUDAPEST, HUNGARY; PONTE DI PLAVE and PIAVE SAN DONA, ITALY); Industrial Plants, 3 missions (VIENNA, AUSTRIA; WASSERBURG, GERMANY, A/C Factory; OBERWEISSENFELD, GERMANY, Engine Factory); Oil Targets, 2 missions (OSWIECIM, POLAND; BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, Magyar and Shell); Railway Bypass (CASARSA, ITALY) 1 mission; Harbor Installations and Shipping (SCARAMANGA, GREECE) 1 mission.

On these targets a total of 3,578 tons of bombs was dropped as compared to 5,135 tons dropped in August. Of the 3,578 tons, 1,157 were dropped on Marshalling Yards, 1,016 tons on Railroad Bridges and a Railroad Bypass (a grand total of 2,220.75 tons on rail targets), 723 tons on Industrial Factories, 489.75 tons on Oil Refineries, and 130 tons on Harbor Installations and Shipping.

During the month of September the 55th Bombardment Wing improved its Bombing Accuracy (percentage of bombs striking within 1,000' of Briefed Aiming Point), advancing from the mark of 48.4% in August to 50.5%. A feature of this improvement in the Wing as a whole is the particular improvement of the bombing accuracy of the 464th and 485th Bombardment Groups. The 464th Group brought its average from 39.9% in August to 49.6% in September. The 485th Bombardment Group improved its accuracy by 13.3%, advancing from 46.1% in August to 59.4% in September - a percentage which is the highest attained by any Bombardment Group of the Wing and maintained for one month since the beginning of operations.

The decline in opposition by enemy aircraft, noted in previous installments of this History, was all but complete during September. There was only one encounter during the month, and this enemy aircraft was destroyed.

During the month of September the operations of the 55th Bombardment Wing reached and passed a noteworthy milestone: its 100th Wing Mission. This was flown on 12 September. The target was a certain objective in VIENNA, AUSTRIA, but due to very heavy cloud cover the specific target could not be located, and the First Alternate Target, the Industrial Area of VIENNA South East, was bombed. 120 aircraft

were dispatched, 107 aircraft reached their objective and dropped 266.5 tons of bombs. This is in stark contrast to the Wing's first mission, flown on 19 March 1944, when the 33 aircraft dispatched dropped 61 tons of bombs on METKOVIC M/Y and Quay, YUGOSLAVIA. In the period of six months, less one week, elapsing between the first and the 100th Wing missions, the significant fact is that the four Bombardment Groups of the Wing, establishing themselves despite inclement weather and surmounting terrific obstacles to become operational and learning in combat the lessons which training in the zone of the interior could never teach, had developed into veteran organizations which had attained the highest standards of combat effectiveness reached in the Air Force to which they were assigned. The 100th Mission for the Wing was the 96th for the 460th Bombardment Group, the 76th for the 464th, the 80th for the 465th, and the 77th for the 485th Bombardment Groups. The Operations Order for the 100th Wing Mission was numbered 172, 72 orders representing stand-downs. By the time of the 100th Mission the combat crew personnel of the Bombardment Groups had undergone considerable change, to the extent of almost 100% personnel in the case of the 460th Group - but new crews had been trained and indoctrinated with such success that there was no loss of efficiency as reflected in bombing accuracy. Missions had been flown against objectives in every country in the theater with the exceptions of BULGARIA and GREECE, and against targets which were defended with all the power that the enemy could muster. The Wing had made its contribution to the destruction of Axis Oil sources, communications, and counter-air targets; PLOESTI had been destroyed and the 55th Bombardment Wing itself had taken out three high priority targets at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN. Operations in support of ground troops had been accomplished in the decisive drives in ITALY and in the landings in Southern FRANCE. Enemy harbors and shipping had been blasted with gratifying results. It was fitting that a major target, VIENNA, was assigned for this milestone in the operations of the 55th Bombardment Wing. Over the flak defenses of the second most heavily defended city on the continent of Europe, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Acheson led his Wing, as he had led it on its first mission. This, too, was fitting, for it was due to the Wing Commander's high and uncompromising standard of performance, his rigorous and indefatigable inspection system, his knowledge of how combat functions must be accomplished and his ability to impart and instill that knowledge, that the 55th Bombardment Wing was brought to the position of leadership in bombing accuracy which it enjoyed for so long a period of these six months of operations and became so effective a weapon of offensive war.

17 September 1944 marked an occasion of major significance in the history of the 55th Bombardment Wing. On this date it was announced by the War Department Special Order No. 233, dated 16 September 1944, Colonel Acheson was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General (effective date of rank 11 September 1944). It is an interesting coincidence that the date of rank is exactly 15 months from 11 June 1943, when Colonel Acheson assumed command of the Wing. But no one who has worked with General Acheson, as it has been the pleasure of the

writer of this History to have done during the entire period of his command of the Wing, will regard the promotion as in any sense a coincidence, for all such are unanimous in the judgment that no promotion was over more merited as measured by the results achieved by the organization.