

55BW Mission Summary No. 83, 16 Aug 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 16 August 1944, between 0655-0726B, 112 B-24 a/c were scheduled and 115 a/c (including 3 spares which continued on mission) took off to bomb the OBERRADERACH Chemical Works at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY. There were 18 early returns.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as Ordered. Fighter penetration escort was joined at 0950-1000B at approximately 4415N-1336E. Target cover escort was joined at 1105B at 4730N-1030E. Withdrawal cover was furnished until 1300B at 4445N-1315E. Excellent cover was noted by all Groups.

97 a/c were over target at 1127-1129B. 89 a/c dropped 213.5 tons of 500 lb RDX and GP bombs (fused .1N, mixed .01 and .025T) from 21,000'-23,000'. 4 sorties jettisoned full load; 3 sorties jettisoned part load; 5 early returns jettisoned full load; 2 early returns jettisoned part load. 4 sorties returned full load to bases; 11 early returns brought back full load; 2 early returns brought back part loads to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show OBERRADERACH Chemical Works is covered by the bombing pattern but detailed assessment is prevented by the smoke from preceding Groups.

464 Gp - Photos show OBERRADERACH Chemical Works with a good pattern of bombs covering the vital areas. Direct hits are visible on the hydrogen plant and the final processing buildings. Smoke from previous bombing prevents detailed assessment.

465 Gp - Photos show OBERRADERACH Chemical Works with the bombing pattern centering around the area of the final processing buildings. 1 direct hit and 2 near misses on final processing buildings and 2 or 3 direct hits on an unidentified building in the North end of the plant are visible.

485 Gp - Photos show OBERRADERACH Chemical Works has received numerous strikes in the vital area of the plant but detailed assessment is prevented by smoke from previous bombing.

The strikes that were definitely scored on the hydrogen plant and some of the final processing buildings in all probability will put the plant out of action. It is very likely that a great deal more damage was inflicted than strike assessment can reveal. The target was so quickly covered with smoke that the excellent patterns laid down by the last three Groups over the target can only be assessed in general terms. It is believed that reconnaissance photographs will reveal considerable damage.

Flak at target was variously reported by individual Groups, ranging from Moderate to Intense and from Inaccurate to Accurate Heavy. No other flak was encountered. No e/a were observed at target; one Group observed 4 e/a near BOLZANO. No e/a was encountered.

89 a/c were down at bases between 1452-1512B. 2 a/c are missing (believed landed in neutral territory). 6 a/c landed at friendly fields before returning to bases.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations to avoid cloud conditions.

Weather: Generally clear over ITALY and ADRIATIC. 3 - 5/10 cirrus increasing to 8 - 10/10 over ALPS, bases 22,000'. Target: clear except for scattered cirrus, bases 22,000'. On return, scattered cumulus over ALPS, tops 18,000'. Visibility 15 miles over entire route.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 16 August 1944, at 0700B, 28 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the OBERRADERACH Chemical Works.

Rendezvous with the 485th was accomplished as scheduled at 0758B over ALTAMURA and the Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0809B. Escort of P-51s first contacted at 4300N-1300E at 0954B. Later relieved by P-38s, which furnished further penetration, target and withdrawal cover, and were last seen at 4300N-1300E at 1243B.

Six a/c returned early.

From 21,600' at 1129B, 22 a/c dropped 50.5 tons of 500 1b RDX bombs. Bombing was below briefed altitude due to cirrus clouds. Four a/c failed to release all their bombs over the target due to rack malfunctions. Two of these a/c had 12 bombs hung up, 8 of which were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC and 4 over the ALPS. The other two a/c accidentally dropped 2 and 4 bombs respectively between IP and target.

MIH flak encountered at target.

19 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1500B. Three a/c landed at friendly fields, and have since returned to base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 16 Aug 44, 28 scheduled a/c and 3 spares took off at 0655B to bomb the OBERRADERACH Chemical Works at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN.

The Group form-up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous executed as prescribed.

There were 5 early returns.

26 a/c were over the target at 1128B (briefed 1130B) and 25 a/c dropped 60½ tons of 500 lb mixed RDX and GP bombs from 23,000'. 1

a/c jettisoned 1½ tons of bombs at 4620N-1210E and released ½ ton of bombs over target. Due to rack malfunction ½ ton of bombs returned to base. 1 a/c failed to release on target due to rack malfunction and solved 2½ tons of bombs 1 minute after the formation had released. 4 of the a/c returning early brought 10 tons of bombs back to base, while the fifth early return jettisoned 2½ tons at 4541N-1524E.

Flak at target M-IAH and IAH.

4 ME-109s observed at BOLZANO at 1235B, flying 3,000' below formation.

Rendezvous made with 35 P-38s at 0950B at 4415N-1336E, which provided cover until 1245B at 4743N-0925E. P-51s first sighted at 1105B at 4730N-1030E and provided penetration, target and withdrawal escort and top cover. As many as 75 of the P-51s were observed keeping watch over the formation. Escort and cover highly praised by all crew members. The P-51s last sighted at 1300B at 4445N-1315E.

24 a/c landed at 1500B (mean landing time). 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 28 a/c scheduled took off at 0708B on 16 Aug 44 to bomb the OBERRADERACH Chemical Works near FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY.

The Group assembled over ANDRIA at 0752B at 6,000' and Wg rendezvous accomplished at 0806B over SPINAZZOLA at 6,000'. Escort of P-38s joined the formation at 0956B at 4440N-1320E and were later reinforced by P-51s at 1103B near FUSZEN. P-38s and P-51s furnished target cover and withdrawal support and left at 1310B at 4400N-1345E.

There were 2 early returns.

Flak at target M-IAH.

26 a/c over target at 1127B at 21,000'. 24 a/c dropped 59 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 2 a/c did not drop. 1 headed for SWITZERLAND; other jettisoned.

23 a/c landed at 1512B. 2 a/c in trouble observed over SWISS BORDER landed inland. 1 a/c landed at friendly field.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 16 Aug 44 at 0726B 28 a/c took off for OBERRADERACH Chemical Works.

Group assembled over ALTAMURA at 9,000' at 0800B. Formation satisfactory. Wing rendezvous at SPINAZZOLA at 8,900' at 0809B with 465th leading, followed by 464, 460 and 485 Gps. Rendezvous with escort of 25 P-38s effected at 4500N-1310E at 1000B. The P-38s furnished penetration and target cover. P-51s joined at 1300B provided withdrawal cover to approximately 4500N-1308E.

5 a/c returned prior to bombing.

No e/a seen or encountered. Flak over target MIH.

23 a/c over target at 1128B (briefed 1130B). 18 a/c dropped 43½ tons 500 1b RDX bombs at 22,200'. 1 of 18 a/c dropping jettisoned 6 bombs. 1 other a/c jettisoned 10 bombs. 4 a/c returned 10 bombs each to base.

Return made without incident. 23 a/c landed, mean landing time 1452B.