

55BW Mission Summary No. 92, 27 August 1944 (Cont'd).

1. On 27 August 1944, between 0725-0737B, 114 B-24 a/c scheduled plus 2 spares took off to bomb BLECHHAMMER (GERMANY) South synthetic oil plant. There were 19 early returns.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous effected as ordered. Fighter escort joined the formation at 1110B at 4745N-1748E and at 1240B at 4910N-1720E. Fighters remained with formation until 1332B at 4640N-1720E.

94 a/c were over target between 1214-1216B, and 93 a/c dropped 227.75 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (fused .1N, .025T) from 22,600-23,400'. 7 sorties jettisoned 9.75 tons, 10 early returns jettisoned 21.75 tons, and 11 early returns brought 23.75 tons of bombs back to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show BLECHHAMMER South oil plant to have received a concentrated, pattern in the vital area. Direct hits were scored on the distillation plant, hydrogenation stalls, injector house, and probable additional hits on other installations in the area. Smoke from previous bombing prevents complete assessment.

464 Gp - Photos show BLECHHAMMER South oil plant to have received numerous hits on vital installations. The injector house, the hydrogenation stalls and the compressor house received direct hits. Additional strikes are in the target area but assessment is prevented by smoke from previous bombing.

465 Gp - Photos show BLECHHAMMER South oil plant with the main concentration of bombs falling in the vital area of the plant. Direct hits are visible on the gas generating plant, the compressor house, the injector house, and probably the hydrogenation stalls. Numerous additional bombs fell in the vital area of the plant but smoke from previous bombing prevents assessment.

485 Gp - Photos show BLECHHAMMER South oil plant with a well concentrated pattern of bombs in the target. Direct hits were scored on the hydrogenation stalls, the distillation plant and injector house. Numerous hits were observed on workshops and pipe lines within the target. Several buildings, one cooling tower and oil lines and storage are seen to be burning.

Reconnaissance photographs show that an excellent concentration of bombs was obtained in the assigned primary area of the plant, causing very considerable damage. This area is at least 50% destroyed and still burning and definitely rendered inactive. The turbine house is 50% destroyed and two of the three water towers damaged. The switch house, main gas units and workshops are all severely damaged. In addition several hits damaged oil transfer lines and many minor installations. There is no doubt that enough serious

damage has been caused to all major installations to render the entire plant inactive for some time to come.

Flak at target was reported from MI to IAH. SAH flak was encountered by one group at 4915N-1845E and SIH by one group at TREVCIN.

Two groups reported no e/a seen, one group reported 3 and one group 7 e/a seen. There were no encounters.

89 a/e were down between 1550-1620B. 2 a/c were lost (one crash landed near base due to mechanical difficulties and exhaustion of fuel), 2 a/c are missing, 4 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed except that one group made a wide turn from rally and GYOR.

Weather: CAVU on entire route except for 3-5/10 cumulus over Southern ITALY on return. Visibility 20 miles.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 27 Aug 44, at 0725B, 31 scheduled a/c dispatched to bomb the BLECHHAMMER South synthetic oil plant, in Germany.

The Group formed in the regular assembly area and rendezvous with the 485th accomplished without incident. The Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0832B, the 460th flying #2 position. Fighter escort, P-51s and P-38s, first sighted forty miles north of LAKE BALATON, at 1117B, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation in VIENNA area at 1250 B.

5 a/c returned early.

From 23,400', 25 a/c were over the target at 1215B. 24 a/c dropped 57.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs. 4 a/c failed to release 20 bombs on target due to malfunctions. One bomb was dropped three minutes before target, 4 bombs were dropped two minutes after target and 15 bombs were jettisoned 30 miles south of the target. Both attack units used the automatic pilot on bomb run.

The group encountered M-IIH flak over target area.

Route flown as briefed with exception of a wide turn between rally point and GYOR.

23 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1550B. On route to target, 1 a/c landed at VIS and 1 a/c is missing. On return 1 a/c crash landed.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 27 Aug 44, 27 of 28 a/c scheduled and 2 spares took off to bomb BLECHHAMMER South synthetic oil plant.

Group form-up was hindered to some extent by low cumulus in the form-up area. The line rendezvous was as prescribed; however, Wing rendezvous was about 1 minute late because this group was forced to execute a steep left turn in order to maintain Wing formation.

5 of the scheduled a/c wore early returns.

23 a/c were over the target at 1216B (briefed target time 1213P) dropping 57.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, from 23,000'.

Recapitulation of bomb disposition:

Dropped on target	57.50 tons
Jettisoned	7.50 tons
Returned	7.50 tons
Total	72.50 tons

The C-1 automatic pilot was used by the leader of the first attack unit. Flak at target was IAH. SAH flak, consisting of about 3 bursts, described as white, was encountered at 4915N-1845E. Scant and heavy flak was observed from GYOR. No e/a were observed or encountered.

Escort consisting of 20 P-51s, were first observed at 1110B at 4745N-1748E, of which 4 P-51s were identified as belonging to the 332nd Fighter Group. Fighters of the 52nd and 31st Fighter Groups furnished target cover. 12 P-38s were observed at 4910N-1800E at 1240B and furnished withdrawal cover. The escort departed at 1332B at 4640N-1720E.

One a/c is missing. P-24 No. 42-50796 is reported by members of two crews to have left the formation at 1052B at 4655N-1740E, having reported a gas leak in No. 4 engine. B-24 No. 41-29450 is reported to have landed at VIS.

22 a/c landed between 1524-1623B. B-24 No. 42-78336 landed at CHISTI (Gallon Tower) for gas at 1552B and returned to base, landing at 1823n.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 27 Aug 44, 27 a/c scheduled took off in 2 attack units at 0737B to bomb the BLECHHAMMER South synthetic oil plant.

Group assembled at 0820B over ANDRIA with 464th falling in behind at 0821B at 7,000'. Wing rendezvous was accomplished over SPINAZZOLA at 0831B at 7,000'. An escort of P-51s joined the formation at 1115B at ERSEKUJVAR and left at 1220B in target arca. A few P-38s were also observed in target area.

5 a/c returned early.

Flak at target was IAH and SIH was encountered at TRENCIN (4852N-1903E). There were no encounters with e/a, but 7 ME-109s were observed in target area at 1225B.

22 a/c over target at 1215B at 24,000'. 22 a/c dropped 53 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, 3 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs.

22 a/c landed at 1620B and no a/c are lost or missing.

Route flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 27 Aug 44, at 0730P, 28 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the BLECHHAMMER South synthetic oil plant.

Group assembly at 0819B at 5,000' was satisfactory. Rendezvous with 460th, 465th, and 464th Groups made over SPINAZZOLA at 0830B at 5,000' was satisfactory. Fighter escort of 7 P-51s at 1120B at 4820N-1800E; departed at 1310B at 4745N-1555E.

4 a/c returned early.

3 unidentified e/a seen in target area; none attacked formation.

24 s/c over target at 1214B (target time 1213B). 24 a/c dropped 59.75 tons of bombs at 22,600'. 1 of 24 a/c salvocd 1 bomb which failed to release on target at 4930M-18255 at 1229B. Automatic pilot used on bomb ran; bombing visual.

Flak over target IAH. Smoke generators in operation, principally to NE and east of target. Wind from 200° blew smoke away from target.

Route flown as briefed. 22 a/c landed at 1555B. A/c #127 lost to flak. A/c #162 landed at VIS after failing to keep up with formation.