

55BW Mission Summary No. 74, 3 Aug 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 3 Aug 44, between 0640-0700p, 135 B-24 a/c of 139 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb the MANZELL A/C Factory at FRIDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY. There were 15 early returns.

Group assemblies were made without incident, as was line rendezvous. Two Groups were early and one was late, so that Wing rendezvous was effected en route and not as ordered.

Groups report sighting fighter escort between 0905-1050B. Escort furnished excellent cover enroute and over target, and remained with formation as reported by Groups from 1215-1330B.

120 a/c were over target between 1111-1113B. 120 a/c dropped 295.25 tons of 500 1b GP bombs (.1N and non-delay T fusing) from 22,200-24000'. 3 sorties jettisoned 2.75 tons, 7 early returns jettisoned full bomb loads, 2 sorties returned 1 ton, 8 early returns brought back full loads to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Strikes are visible in the southeast portion of the factory with probably two or three direct hits on a large warehouse. Additional hits are probable on the boiler house and several warehouse type buildings. Exact damage assessment is impossible due to clouds and smoke from previous bombing. However, bomb pattern indicates the probability of more bombs in the target area.

464 Gp - Several hits observed on the seaplane assembly and adjacent buildings and on the swaging shop. The west end of the machine and assembly shop for small single engine seaplanes received three near misses. Two strikes are visible along the Northwest side of the multifunction shop with one direct hit on the fitting shop. Rail facilities were covered with a concentration of bombs and the small precision parts building received two near misses. At the North end of the factory area a square unidentified building: received direct hit.

465 Gp - The target area is almost completely cloud and smoke obscured. Several openings show possible hits on sheet metal and fitting shops and one direct hit on the large machine and cutting shop. Many other hits are probable in the target area with the progression of bombs extending thru the smoke into the target.

485 Gp - Smoke caused by preceding attack renders accurate assessment of damage in target area impossible. Numerous strikes are visible southeast of the factory extending toward the target area. Barely noticeable hits are probably scored on the north machine shop. This gives some indication that the bombs rushed right thru the target.

Reconnaissance photographs show: Manzell A/C Factory. Factory devastated by highly concentrated attack. All primary objectives hit and destroyed, including multi-function shops which were still burning at time of photography. 5 out of 6 secondary objectives severely damaged or destroyed and 6th not repaired after last attack. Almost all remaining buildings in target area damaged, many of them severely.

Flak at target was M,I to A,H. No other flak was encountered.

17-50 e/a were seen, 40 e/a were encountered by one Group. Claims (by one Group) are 10-8-1.

109 a/c were down at bases between 1407-1435B. 8 a/c were lost, none is missing, 3 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Over ITALY, scattered alto-cumulus clearing over ADRIATIC. Over ALPS 2-3/10 alto-cumulus, tops 10-12000', increasing to 7-8/10 alto-cumulus over target, tops 13-15000' over target. On return 7-8/10 cumulus over ALPS, 3-4/10 cumulus over PO valley, scattered cumulus over ADRIATIC. Over Southern ITALY 3-5/10 cumulus, bases 5-6000'. Visibility over entire route, 15-20 miles.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 3 Aug 44, at 0640B, 26 of 27 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the FRIEDRICHSHAFEN MANZELL A/C Works in GERMANY.

The Group formed its two attack units in the regular assembly area but the 485th was not over ALTAMURA for the scheduled rendezvous. The 460th proceeded to the Wing rendezvous and formed with the 464th and 465th at 0754B, 2 minutes early. The 485th fell into its proper position after reaching the ADRIATIC. The fighter escort, P-51s, contacted the formation near ANCONA at 0935Z. They furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover, leaving the formation a 4500N1330E at 1230B.

3 a/c returned early. From 22,200', 23 a/c dropped 55.25 tons 500 1b GP bombs on the PT at 1113B. A-5 was used by both attack units.

The Group encountered MIH flak in the target area. The A/A guns put up a wall of fire over the target but most of the bursts were either above or below the formation.

The Group observed approximately 50 e/a, ME-109s and FW-190s near INNSBRUCK at 1138B, but e/a did not attack this Group,

The route was flown as briefed. 20 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1435B. 3 a/c landed at friendly fields to refuel and returned to base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 3 Aug 44, 39 B-24 a/c of 39 scheduled took off at 0700B to bomb the FRIEDRICHSHAFEN MANZELL A/C works.

The group form-up, line rendezvous and wing rendezvous were as prescribed.

39 a/c were over the target at 1111B (briefed 1120B. 39 a/c dropped 95½ tons 500 lb GP bombs on target from 24000'. 1 a/c jettisoned 1 ton of bombs at 4625N1155E; 1 a/c returned 3/4 ton of bombs to base. The 1st attack unit bombed visually; the 2nd bombed by PFF. Poor visibility of target prior to bombing was reported due to 8/10 to 9/10 cloud coverage of target below the formation.

C-1 automatic pilot was used by leader of the first attack unit and A-5 was used by leader of the 2nd attack unit during the bomb run.

MIH flak was encountered at the target beginning at 1111B and lasting for a period of 2 or 3 minutes. The size of the bursts indicated 88mm guns being used, the color being mainly black with some white bursts above the formation. The main concentration being below the altitude of the formation.

15 to 20 ME-109s were observed at 4712N1050g and 2 to 5 FW-190s at 4710N1110E. These e/a attacked the formation immediately behind our group.

Rendezvous with fighter escort was first effected at 0905B at 4330N 1410E. This type of a/c gave cover for penetration to the target and withdrawal until 1215B at 4553N1305E.

39 a/c landed at 1407B. Route was flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 32 a/c of 34 scheduled, took off at 0644B on 3 Aug in 2 attack units to attack the MANZELL A/C Works at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY.

The Group assembled over ANDRIA at 0735B at 5500' and made wing rendezvous at 0753B over SPINAZZOLA at 6000'. An escort of P-51s and P-38s joined the formation at 1050B at 4720N1100E at 20000' and furnished penetration, target cover, and withdrawal cover to the ADRIATIC at 1330P.

There were 4 early returns.

Flak at the target was moderate, accurate to inaccurate, heavy. Flak was intense at 14000'. The Group left the target with A, B, and D boxes in position and C box trailing D box, at its proper altitude.

The leader of C box called in and said that he had lost an engine, and the leader of the formation slowed down. 40 ME-109s and FW-190s came up out of the undercast at 1137B at 4723N1050D while the formation was at 20,000'. They attacked in waves of 4, low from 4 to 7 o'clock with each wave of four slightly V shaped. At times the waves

were almost parallel with each other and gave the impression as many as 16 fighters attacking in line abreast. Break-offs were accomplished various ways. Each group of 4 planes appeared to pick an individual bomber to concentrate its attack on. The entire formation of 40 planes attacked C box and then attacked D box with the exception of a few planes which by-passed D box and attacked B box. It is believed that only one pass was made. At the time the attack was made the escort was ahead, but when they were called, they returned and drove the attacking fighters off. The projectile used by the fighters was self-expending. It burst prior to impact similar to flak, and it is thought that it was either rocket fire or pre-fused 20mm cannon.

28 a/c went over the target at 1112B at 23,000'. 28 a/c dropped 69½ tons 500 lb GP bombs. 1 a/c jettisoned 2 bombs N of BOLZANO at 1037B to keep up. Radar was used to set up course, and it gave a good course and angle of attack. Although bombing run was started with radar, bombing was done visually as it was possible to see the target. A-5 pilot was used.

20 a/c landed at 1422B, mean landing time. 8 a/c are missing.

Claims: 8 ME-109s and 2 FW-190s destroyed, 6 ME-109s and 2 FW-190s probable and 1 ME-109 damaged. Route flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 3 Aug 44, at 0656B, 38 B-24 of 39 a/c scheduled took off to bomb FRIEDRICHSCWAFEN MANZELL A/C Works.

Assembly was over ALTAMURA at 3000' at 0750B. The formation at assembly was satisfactory. Wing rendezvous was effected over SPINAZZOLA at 0757B.

Fighter escort, consisting of approximately 50 P-51s, joined the formation at 0935B at 4405N 1340E. They were last observed at 1218B at 4538N1234E.

3 a/c returned prior to bombing.

30 a/c were over the target at 1113B (briefed 1120B). 30 a/c dropped 75 tons of 500 lb GP bombs at 23800'. Target was partially obscured by smoke from previous bombings. However, the lead bombardier was able to locate the aiming point and dropped his bombs visually. The lead wave used the A-5 pilot on the bomb run and the 2nd wave used the C-1 pilot.

About 40-50 ME-109s were seen in the target area and on return to the ADRIATIC coast. None of these fighters attacked the formation; however, they aggressively attacked the Group immediately behind. Flak was encountered only over the target. Formation was in M to IIH flak from 3-4 minutes; only 2 a/c being damaged slightly. There were no casualties.

Return was made without incident. 30 a/c landed, mean landing time 1414B.

Route was flown as briefed.