

52BW Mission Summary No, 141, 11 Dec 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary, On 11 Dec 1944, 72 B-24 a/c of 74 a/c scheduled took off between 0501-0835A to bomb the VIENNA, AUSTRIA, South Ordnance Depot. There were 6 early returns, 66 effective sorties.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered.

Fighter escort, consisting of 50-60 P-51 a/c, joined formation at 1115A near VZARDAN. P-38 a/c were in target area when bombers arrived. Escort remained with formation until 1400A at (4330-1615).

65 a/c were over Primary Target between 1236-1237A. 59 a/c dropped 144.75 tons of M-17 Incendiary bombs on Primary Target from 22,400'- 24,000'. 1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons on GRAZ M/Y (Alternate Target). 1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons on a target of opportunity. 3 sorties jettisoned 7.5 tons. 4 early returns jettisoned 10 tons. 1 sortie returned 2.5 tons to base, 2 early returns brought 5 tons of bombs back to base.

Results: Bomb strike photographs show bombs from all Groups to have probably covered the VIENNA South Ordnance Depot. Smoke from previous bombing prevents observation of all but the Northwest half of the Depot but the pattern is seen to cover that area and extend beyond to the Gas Works and the Machinery and Waggonbau Fabriks A.G. Strikes are indicated under the smoke in the Ordnance Depot by the pattern of strikes extending South to cover the Simmering Railway Repair shops. Reconnaissance photographs are expected to reveal incendiary damage to the major part of the Ordnance Depot, the Northern part of the Machinery and Waggonbau works and other unidentified industrial installations. One wet gas holder in the Gas Works suffered possible damage.

Flak at Primary Target was IAH. SIH was encountered by a/c bombing GRAZ M/Y. S-MIH was encountered at BRATISLAVA by one Bombardment Group, and IAH was encountered by one Group at NAGYKANIZSA. An ineffective smoke screen was in operation at the Primary Target.

1 e/a (Jet Propelled) was seen by one Bombardment Group. There were no encounters.

60 a/c were down at bases between 1535-1552A. 1 a/c was lost, 2 a/c are missing, 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Base - 2/10ths altostratus at 10,000'', visibility 20 miles. Route - 5/10ths stratocumulus, tops 7,500' over the ADRIATIC. 3/10ths cirrus at 28,000', valley stratus and 5/10ths stratocumulus to

left of course, over the Dinarics. From Dinarics to the target, 3/10ths to 4/10ths patchy stratus, tops 8-10,000' with scattered middle clouds, tops 15,000' and 4-6/10ths cirrus at 27,000'. On return, cirrus had thickened and increased to 7/10ths to 10/10ths, and lowered to 25,000'. The middle deck had increased to 5/10ths perceptibly thinned. Target - 4/10ths cirrus with 10/10ths dark clouds to the West, base 26,000', visibility was unlimited. Base on return - 10/10ths thin cirrus at 22,000' and 3-4/10ths stratus at 7,000'. Visibility 20 miles to unlimited during entire route.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 11 Dec 44, at 0801A, 14 of 15 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the South Ordnance Depot, VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

Group assembly was accomplished without incident and rendezvous was effected at 0949A. The fighter escort, 50-60 P-51s, first sighted at 1142A at (4554-1631), furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1400A over the YUGOSLAV coast at (4330-1615).

14 a/c were over the primary target at 1237A. 11 a/c dropped 27.5 tons of M-17 incendiaries from 22,400'. 1 a/c jettisoned 2 bombs before the target and released 8 bombs manually 15 minutes after target time. 1 a/c jettisoned 10 bombs 25 miles South of the target after bomb-bay doors had failed to open. 1 a/c dropped bombs on a target of opportunity, VIENNA/ASPERN A/D. Formation leader did not use C-1 because it would not hold course. PDI was also inoperative in the lead a/c.

The Group experienced IAH flak for 10 minutes at the target. Flak defenses extended from the evasive point to the city. Smoke pots were observed South and East of the target. IAH flak was also encountered at MAGYKANIZSA (4630-1700).

The route was flown as briefed.

13 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1552A. 1 a/c is missing: A/c 0508 was last seen at 1245A at (4828-1644) with #4 engine feathered and straggling. This a/c radioed formation leader that two engines on one side were out.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 11 Dec 44, 28 a/c, plus 2 spares, of 31 scheduled, took off to bomb the South Ordnance Depot at VIENNA, AUSTRIA, starting at 0830A.

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

4 a/c returned early. 1 of these a/c returned bombs to base, 3 jettisoned 7.5 tons.

1 a/c, #032, was a prior return. Due to the Radar Operator's oxygen system leaking, decision was made by the pilot to bomb the

second alternate target. The formation was left at (4623-1622) st 1152A. Route was flown to the target selected bombs dropped, and return made to base at 1445A.

25 a/c were at point of bomb release over the primary target at 1237A at an altitude of 24,000'. From an attack axis of 41°, 23 a/c dropped 57.5 tons of M-17 Incendiary bombs.

A/c # 032, a prior return, dropped 2.5 tons on the second alternate target - the M/Y at GRAZ, AUSTRIA. This a/c released its bombs at 1237 from 20,000', on an attack axis of 258°.

A/c # 394 returned 2.5 tons to base due to rack malfunction that made it impossible to release or to salvo.

A/c #613 jettisoned 2.5 tons at 1255A at (4810-1720), because of failure to get the bomb bay doors open over the target.

Bomb Tonnage Recapitulation

Dropped on primary target	57.5 tons
Dropped on second alternate target	2.5 tons
Jettisoned (by 3 ER and 1 other)	10.0 tons
Brought back (by 1 ER and 1 other)	5.0 tons
Total	75.0 tons

A Smoke screen is reported to have been used at the target but was ineffective. Smoke pots were observed, between the IP and the target, and to the South and West of the city, but affording little coverage.

Making the initial approach to the target by PFF, the Group Leader observed that visual bombing could be employed. Turning to right of course just before the turn point of FISCHBACH, a shorter route was flown to the Evacuation point of MIAUSENIEOPOLDSORF. With this exception, the route was flown as briefed.

The bombing run was flown visually by the Group Leader, with the C-1 automatic pilot being used. Due to electrical malfunction, the leader of the second attack unit used PDI during his bombing run.

Flak at the primary target was IAH, with time in range reported as from 6-7 minutes.

Flak was further encountered at NAGYMANIZSA (4627-1659) at 1335A. The concentration was described as SAH, with length of time in flak about 1 minute.

A/c # 032, prior return, encountered SIH flak at the second alternate target, GRAZ, at 1236.5A, consisting of a few bursts and lasting approximately 1/2 minute.

1 e/a, jet-propelled, and leaving a double trail, was seen at 1226A, at (4728-1551). The jet a/c was flying at 27,000', and was accelerating away from 2 pursuing P-51 a/c.

Rendezvous was made with 25-30 P-51s at 1133A at (4540-1650). Excellent cover was provided to and after the target, the escort fighters last seen at 1340A at (4532-1550). 15 P-38s were seen in the target area from 1235A to 1250A, at the rally point.

24 a/c landed at this base from 1520A to 1550A.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 28 a/c of 28 scheduled took off at 0631A on 11 Dec 44 to bomb the VIENNA South Ordnance Depot.

The group assembly was accomplished in the usual assembly area at 0929A at 7,000'. The Wing assembly was accomplished at 0944A with an altitude of 7,000'. A escort of P-38s intercepted the bomber formation at 1015A in the vicinity of VZARDAN and a second escort group of P-51s joined the bombers at 1145A remaining with the formation on penetration, over the target, and on withdrawal as far as the Northern ADRIATIC coast.

2 a/c returned early. 1 of them returned bombs to base; the other jettisoned bombs.

No e/a were seen or encountered.

Anti-aircraft opposition at the target was intense, accurate heavy. Flak was encountered for 5-6 minutes of the bombing run and rally away from the target. Anti-aircraft fire was also directed against the formation at BRATISLAVA and at NAGYKANIZSA (4628-1700), which was scant to moderate.

26 a/c went over the target at 1236A at 23,500' and 25 a/c dropped 59.75 tons of 500 lb M-17 Incendiary bombs. 1 a/c was hit by flak just before bombs were dropped and without releasing its bombs. Bombs were dropped visually by both attack units using the C-1 auto-pilot.

23 a/c landed at the base at 1545A. 3 a/c did not return. One landed at FOGGIA with an injured crew member and another has landed at VIS. A/c #421 was destroyed by flak over the target when it pulled up sharply and then fell off on the left into a large, slow spin. From none to eight chutes have been reported as having been observed to open from this a/c.

The route was flown as briefed in general; the formation cut inside the turn to the IP being crowded into this by another formation coming across the IP just ahead of this Group. The return route was flown as briefed with no variations.