

55BW Mission Summary No. 143, 15 Dec 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 15 Dec 44, between 0740-0814A, 87 8-24 a/c of 118 a/c scheduled took off (29 a/c of one Bombardment Group were ordered to stand down on account of base weather conditions after 1 of its a/c had taken off) to bomb SALZBURG and AMSTETTEN, AUSTRIA, M/Ys. There were 9 early returns.

Group assemblies were effected with some difficulty due to cloud conditions; the 1 a/c of the 460th Group joined the 465th, and 1 a/c of the 485th Group attached itself to the 464th. Line rendezvous was effected, and Wing rendezvous was completed enroute.

Fighter escort joined the formation at 1000A at (4430-1400) and, after giving excellent cover, remained with the Bomber a/c until 1305A at (4400-1500).

78 a/c wore over targets (21 over SALZBURG, 56 over AMSTETTEN at 1137A (SALZBURG) and 1144-1146A (AMSTETTEN). 77 a/c dropped 153.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs fused .1N, Non-delay T (25 long delay fusing) on targets (41.75 tons on SALZBURG, 111.75 tons on AMSTETTEN) from 21,900' at SALZBURG and 20,000-21,000' at AMSTETTEN. 2 sortie a/c jettisoned .75 tons, 9 early returns brought back 4.5 tons, 1 sortie a/c returned 1.5 tons, 9 early returns brought 13.5 tons back to bases.

Results could not be assessed, as targets were cloud covered and bombing was by PFF.

Flak at SALZBURG was M-IAH, nil at AMSTETTEN. MIH was encountered at (4733-1506).

1 Bombardment Group saw 2 jet-propelled e/a in the remote distance. There were no encounters.

78 a/c were down at bases at 1435-1445A. No a/c were lost, none missing, none landed at friendly fields.

Routes were flown as briefed except for deviations caused by weather.

Weather: At base on take off was 9/10 stratocumulus, base 1,000', tops 3,500'. 9/10 stratocumulus, tops 5-6,000' over Southern ITALY and Southern ADRIATIC, tops rising to North to 10-12,000' with a few scattered thunderstorms. Along DALMATIAN Coast, 8/10 stratocumulus, tops 10-12,000' with an additional 10/10 altocumulus layer starting over mid ALPS beyond KLAGENFURT. Tops of this deck was at 16-17,000'. Target, 10/10 undercast, tops 5-6,000'. Some high cirrus clouds were observed to the West on the horizon. On return, broken cumulus over ADRIATIC and 8-9/10 cumulus at base on return, base 2,500', tops 8,000'. Visibility 20 miles or more entire route.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 15 Dec 44, 30 a/c were scheduled to bomb a target in GERMANY. At 0740A, the lead a/c took off to check the weather. Due to adverse weather conditions, the remainder of the Group was stood down.

This a/c joined the 465th Bomb Group at 0919A and flew the mission in #9 position of the lead box, 2nd attack unit. At 1146A this a/c released 2 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, .1N-Non-delay T fusing (2 long delay) on the AMSTETTEN M/Ys from 20,400'. Due to solid undercast, bombing was by PFF and results unobserved.

No flak was encountered at the Primary Target. MIH flak was encountered at (4733-1506). At 4435-1427, when the formation is at 14,000', MIH flak was observed 2,000' below the formation. Fighter escort, 50 P-51s, were first sighted at 1010A at (4513-1415) and furnished penetration, target, and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1200A at (4725-1420).

The route was flown as briefed except that from VODIZZE the route was direct to a point 12 miles NNE of WILHELMSBERG resulting in a very long bomb run.

A/c returned to base at 1435A.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 15 Dec 44, 27 of 28 scheduled B-24 type a/c took off at 0800A to bomb AMSTETTEN M/Y.

Group form-up was satisfactory, but Wing rendezvous was 3 minutes late. The Group had some difficulty in making the Wing rendezvous but the formation was correct at 0950A at (4335-1500).

3 a/c returned early; long delay bombs were jettisoned, others returned to base.

24 a/e were over the target at 1144A (briefed target time 1125A) and 23 a/c dropped 34.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs with .1 nose and non-delay tail, and 11.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs with 1 - 72 hour delay fuse. Bombing altitude was 20,000'.

5 a/c each dropped 1 leaflet bomb.

1 a/c over the target jettisoned 1/2 ton of long delay fuse bombs at 1313A at (4340-1500) in the ADRIATIC, and returned 1.5 tons of bombs to base due to rack malfunction caused by the safety pins in select freezing up.

<u>Recapitulation of Bombs</u>		
	.1 nose and non-delay T	1 - 72 hour delay
Dropped on target	34.5 tons	11.5 tons
Jettisoned		2.0 tons

Returned to base	6.0 tons	
	40.5 tons	13.5 tons

Bombing was by FFF method. The PFF equipment in the lead a/c functioned excellently and the coordination between the PFF navigator and bombardier was good.

A/c No. 402 flying Able 11 identified the target on the scope during the bomb run. The last correction for range was made 5 miles, and for course 6 miles from the target. 6 range readings were made and 7 course corrections were made, with the last course correction of 2°. The bombardier determined the preset dropping angle and drift by meteorological data. The set was satisfactory for the entire mission. The target was first picked up on the scope 35 miles from the target.

A/c No. 073 flying Charlie 11 picked up the target 40 miles away, and is identified on the scope during the bomb run. 6 range readings were done and 2 course corrections made, with the last correction being 3°. The bombardier used meteorological data for dropping angle and drift. The set worked satisfactory for the entire mission.

A/c No. 070 flying Dog 11 picked up the target 35 miles away and identified the target on the scope during the bomb run. The tube blow out, which prevented bombing circle operation on this a/c. The bombardier used ABC Computer to determine dropping angle and drift.

A/c No. 049 flying able 12, first deputy lead, picked up the target 45 miles away and identified the target on the scope during the bomb run. The last correction was made for range 5½ miles from the target, with 7 range readings being made: No course corrections were made due to this a/c flying deputy lead. The set operated in a satisfactory manner during the entire mission.

Both the Group Leader and the leader of the second attack unit used the C-1 automatic pilot on the bomb run.

Fighter escort consisting of approximately 50 P-51 a/c were first observed at 1005A at (4428-1418). Escort gave good cover on penetration, over the target and on withdrawal, last being observed 1305A at (4400-1500). Escort was from the 52nd and 325th Fighter Groups. Neither e/a nor flak encountered.

24 a/c landed at this base between 1435 and 1455A.

Route was flown as briefed with slight deviations due to weather.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 31 a/c of 32 scheduled took off from 0746 to 0757A on 15 Dec 44 to attack the M/Ys at AMSTETTEN, AUSTRIA.

The group assembled over ANDRIA at 0845A at 9,000' and made Wing rendezvous at 0852A at 9,200'. Due to 2 Groups of the Wing being 4 minutes late at Wing rendezvous point this Group made several dog legs after departure to allow these Groups to assume their proper position in the formation ahead of this Group. A fighter escort of P-51s joined at 1000A at the turn point of SAN SEGO and left the formation at the same place on return at 1245A.

There were no early returns.

2 jet-propelled a/c were seen through field glasses at 1146A at extremely high altitude on a reciprocal heading to the bombers just as they came off the target. The jets were flying a wing-tip formation and our escort was not seen to attempt an interception.

There was no flak at the target.

31 a/c went over the target at 1145A at 21,000' and 31 a/e dropped 61.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs fused .1 nose and long delay tail. 6 leaflet bombs were also dropped on the target. Bombs were dropped by PFF by both attack units using the C-1 automatic pilot. The whole valley in which the target lay was covered with a complete undercast but the mountains could be seen on either side of the valley. The radar operator was unable to pick up the M/Ys easily as they gave a much stronger return than the village itself. The radar operator gave an 8° correction to kill the drift completely over the target. 5 sighting angles were relayed to the bombardier (one was missed because of the afore-mentioned turn): 70-68-62-58-53. Despite the interference of the preceding group a very good bomb run was effected and both the lead and deputy lead a/c of each attack unit dropped almost simultaneously within their own units on separate synchronizations by the 4 PFF operators on the target, the East end of the M/Y. No difficulties were experienced in PFF navigation to the target and LINZ, ST. POLTEN, the DANUBE River and VIENNA were used as PFF check points in the target area. Cloud cover prevented observation of results.

RECAPITULTION:	Tons on target, ND tail	46.25
	Tons on target, LD tail	<u>15.50</u>
	Total tons carried	61.75
	Plus 6 leaflet bombs on target	

31 a/c landed from 1422 to 1447A.

Route was flown as briefed, except for divinations due to weather.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 15 Dec 44, at 0814A, 28 scheduled and 1 spare B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the SALZBURG M/Y.

Difficulty was experienced in the Group assembly because of the area being overcast, 10/10 stratocumulus clouds, with tops at

7,500'. 21 a/c assembled over the field at 0830A at 8,000'. 6 a/c did not assemble as they were unable to locate the formation. The spare and 1 other a/c returned to base prior to assembly.

A Wing line rendezvous was effected with the 485th leading at 0857A.

15-20 P-51s joined the formation at 1008A. at (4414-1436). They departed at 1236A at (4430-1430).

The spare a/c returned to base at 0900A with on apparent fire under the instrument panel. All bombs were returned to base.

There were 6 early returns, 5 of which were unable to locate the formation. 3 tons of long delay fused bombs were jettisoned; 9 tons of bombs were returned to base.

21 a/c were over the Primary Target at 1137A. 21 a/c dropped 31.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 and non-delay and 10.50 tons 500 lb RDX bombs, fused long delay, from 21,900'. In addition, 5 propaganda bombs were dropped. 1 of the 21 a/c jettisoned 1 bomb of regular fusing at (4710-1340) because of non release over the target. Bombing was by PFF with the lead ship using C-1. Results are undetermined - photos reveal target to be cloud covered.

A/c No. 517, being unable to locate the formation at assembly, joined the 464th Group and bombed the AMSTETTEN M/Y at 1143A. This a/c dropped 1.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 and non-delay, and .5 ton of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused long delay, and 1 propaganda bomb from 20,500'. This a/c reported no flak or enemy fighters.

RECAPITULATION OF BOMBS

		500 lb RDX	
	Propaganda	.1 x nd	delay
7 a/c (spare and early returns) jettisoned			12
returned to base		42	2
21 a/c dropped on PT	5	125	42
1 sortie a/c jettisoned		1	
1 a/c dropped on AMSTETTEN	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>6</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>58</u>

Flak at the target is reported as being from MIH to MAH for approximately 3 minutes. Crew members reported bursts behind and to the side and in the vicinity of the dispersed chaff. There were no encounters with e/a and none was observed.

The lead Mickey Operator reported that his set worked perfectly and that no difficulty was experienced in navigating to the target. The target was definitely identified and the bomb run made entirely on PFF. Drift over the target was killed, the magnitude of the last correction was 3°. The 70-65-60-50° sighting angles were

relayed to the bombardier and numerous fixes were given to the navigator, and there was never any doubt as to the formations location.

Return was made without incident. 22 a/c landed, mean landing time 1436A.

Route was flown as briefed.