

55BW Mission Summary No. 136, 2 Dec 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 2 December 1944, between 0750-0810A, 104 B-24 a/c of 109 a/c scheduled took off to bomb BLECHHAMMER South O/R in GERMANY. There were 12 early returns.

Group assemblies were effected as ordered, but line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were late because lead Bombardment Group was tardy at rendezvous point. Rendezvous was completed en route.

Fighter escort was first seen at 1116A at CHELLDOMOLK, HUNGARY, gave excellent target cover, and remained with formation until 1540A at (4540N-1640E).

91 8/c were over Primary Target between 1240-1243A. 84 a/c dropped 163.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs (75% fused .1N and mixed .01 .025T, 25% fused long delay). 7.5 tons of propaganda bombs were dropped. Altitudes were 23,000-24,000'. 5 a/c dropped 10 tons on targets of opportunity. 16 sortie a/c jettisoned 22 tons, 12 early returns jettisoned 11.5 tons. 9 early returns brought 10.5 tons of bombs back to bases.

Results: 460th Bomb Group photographs show strikes in the area of the compressor houses and workshops. 464th Bomb Group photographs show strikes in the smoke covered target area. 465th Bomb Group photographs show several strikes short of the vital area and additional strikes are presumed to be in that area. Thick haze and smoke prevents accurate assessment and plotting in each case. Reconnaissance photographs show slight damage from blast is possible.

Flak at target was IAH. No other flak was encountered.

5 e/a were seen with no encounters.

83 a/c were down at bases between 1626-1645A. 1 a/c was lost, 4 a/c are missing, 4 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed,

Weather: 9/10 stratus at take off, base 2,000', tops 4,500' with Scattered scud at 500'. Generally 6/10 to 9/10 stratus from base to coast. Overcast over W ADRIATIC with tops 5-6000' improving to clear along Dalmatian coast. 25 miles inland from YUGO coast 10/10 stratocumulus, tops 10,000'. This layer persisted to PAPA, HUNGARY where it broke to few scattered. Another overcast was encountered north of VIENNA which continued to 25 miles south of BLECHHAMER. At target, clear but with visibility restricted to 12 miles in haze. On return, overcast North of VIENNA had moved farther South. 7/10 stratocumulus at base on return, base 5,000'. Persistent vapor trails North of VIENNA. Visibility for route was 10-15 miles in haze.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 2 Dec 44, at 0810A, 35 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the BLECHHAMMER S O/R, GERMANY.

The Group assembled without incident and rendezvous with the 464th and 465th was accomplished over the ADRIATIC at 0940A. Fighter escort, P-38s and P-51s, first seen at (4750N-1720E) at 1130A, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at (4950N-1847E) at 1305A. From the Wing: weather plane, as far as the YUGOSLAV coast, and from the Air Force weather plane up to the target, the Wing leader received clear and frequent reports. He was able to transmit his bombing intentions promptly to the Group leaders.

5 a/c returned early. 2 a/c jettisoned 4 bombs in the ADRIATIC and returned 12 bombs to base. 1 a/c jettisoned 8 bombs in the ADRIATIC and 1 a/c jettisoned 8 bombs at 4542N-1637E in order to maintain altitude. 1 a/c bombed a target of opportunity 4647N-1542E, hitting the road or railroad.

At 23,000', 30 a/c were over the primary target at 1243A. 27 a/c dropped 51 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs .1N & .01, .025T fusing ($\frac{1}{4}$ long delay), 12 a/c dropped 1 propaganda bomb each. 3 a/c failed to bomb the target: 1 a/c dropped bombs 1 mile short of the target, 1 a/c dropped 10 miles short and 1 a/c lost bombs immediately before the target when flak damaged the bomb-bay.

2 a/c dropped 9 bombs immediately after the IP due to reck malfunctions and 2 a/c jettisoned 3 bombs in the ADRIATIC. The Group leader used the auto pilot on the run, the 2nd attack leader used PDI. The bomb run started on PFF, the radar operator calling out the 70, 65 and 60 degree angles to the bombardier. At this point the interphone system was shot out by flak and the bombardier picked up enough check points to complete the run visually. Haze combined with a smoke screen made it difficult to distinguish outstanding check points or to see the briefed MPI.

The Group experienced IAH flak for 6-7 minutes at the target. Black and a few large red bursts were observed. Smoke generators were in operation on the North and West sides of the target. MAL flak, believed to be 40mm, was encountered at 4632N-1637E and 4520N-1625E.

2 e/a were seen on the mission, unidentified TEFs at 1114A in the LAKE BALATON area.

27 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1645A. 2 a/c landed at friendly fields, VIS and FOGGIA. 1 a/c is missing: the a/c received a flak burst in the bomb bay causing bombs and pieces of the catwalk to fall sway. A/c remained in position on the bomb run, leading a box over the target. On the rally, a/c radioed "losing all gas, going to Russia." Last seen on 90 degree heading.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 2 Dec 44, 35 of 38 scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0750A to bomb the BLECHHAMMER S O/R, GERMANY.

The Group formation was hindered by weather but the time schedule was adhered to and the Group was over rendezvous point at 0904A. The 460th Group was late for rendezvous but were able to assume their proper position in the Wing area at the YUGO coast.

4 a/c returned early. All the early returns jettisoned 2 bombs with long delay fuses in the ADRIATIC and returned the balance of their bomb loads to the base.

31 a/c were over the primary target, BLECHHAMMER S O/R, at 1245A and 30 a/c dropped 59.25 tons 500 lb RDX bombs. 15.5 tons fused with long delay fuses and 43.76 tons with .1N and .01 .025T fuses. 11 leaflet bombs were also dropped. 1 a/c being unable to release over the primary target, attacked CZELLDOMOLK 4716N-1709E, no specific target, dropping .5 ton RDX bombs with long delay fuses and 1.5 ton RDX bombs with .1N and .01 .025T fuses. 1 leaflet bomb was also dropped. 3 bombs, .75 ton were jettisoned. 1 a/c jettisoned .5 ton, 2 minutes after target time and 1 a/c jettisoned .25 tons at 1300A, 5010N-1830E. Rack malfunctions cause of jettisoning in both a/c.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage:

30 a/c Primary target	(.1 and .01 - .025)	43.75 tons
30 a/c Primary target	(long delay)	15.50
1 a/c Target of opportunity	(.1 and .01-.025)	1.50
1 a/c Target of opportunity	(long delay)	.50
2 a/c jettisoned	(.1 and .01-.025)	.75
4 a/c jettisoned E/R	(long delay)	2:00
4 a/c returned to base E/R	(.1 and .01-.025)	<u>6.00</u>
TOTAL		70.00 tons
Leaflet bombs - Dropped on primary target		11 bombs
Leaflet bombs - Dropped on target of opportunity.		<u>1</u>
TOTAL		12 bombs

Bombing was visual and the altitude 23,500', heading 80 degrees. The approach to the target was by PFF methods until visual contact was possible at which time the formation was 15 miles from the target.

C-1 Auto pilot was used by all attack unit leaders on the bomb run.

Flak at the PT was IAH and of about 7 minutes duration. Red, white and black bursts, the pattern of which, indicated predicted concentration and tracking methods both in use.

Flak position as indicated on maps dated 31 October 1944 at SKOCZOW 4948M-1848E inactive although on course.

1 FW-190 was observed at 1415A 4550N- 1640E, flying at 10,000', no direction or tactics given. 1 a/c reported what appeared to be trails from 6 jet propelled a/c at 1050A 30 miles South of LAKE BALATON.

Escort was described as excellent with particularly fine withdrawal cover by P-38s. 35 P-38s first observed at 1253A 4950N-1830E end last observed at 1540/. 45401-16405. 26 P-51s first observed at 1115A 4620N-1644E end last observed at 1445A 4605N-1840E. Markings indicated the P-38s were from the 14th and 82nd Fighter Groups.

28 a/c landed between 1602A and 1650A. 1 a/c landed and remains at GIOIA. 2 a/c are missing, No. 44-41231 last seen at 4730N-1720E with No. 2 engine feathered. No. 44-49328 last seen at 4520N-1630E, with No. 1 and 2 engines feathered and unable to keep up with formation.

The route was flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 34 of 36 a/c scheduled took off at 0756A on 2 Dec 44 to bomb the BLECHHAMMER S O/R.

The group assembled at 0845 and made rendezvous with the 464th Group at 0853A and departed on course. At 0945A after making 2 doglegs in the ADRIATIC, the 465th and 464th fell in behind the 460th at about 4230N-1610E. Wing rendezvous was not made as scheduled because of the tardiness of the 460th in effecting their assembly and proceeding on course. An escort of P-51s joined at 1116/ et CZELLDOMOLK and provided penetration and target cover. An escort of P-38s joined in the target area and escorted the formation back to the ADRIATIC where they left at 1500A. 3 a/c were E/R. 8 FW-190s were observed flying below the formation in the opposite direction at 4550N-1635E by one crew. Flak at the target was IAH. A large burst of red flame, 10 feet in diameter was reported to have been seen among the flak bursts at the target.

PFF equipment of the lead a/c worked perfectly on navigation to the target. The bomb run was made using PFF with MORAVSKA OSTRAVA and the target itself used as check points on the run. The target was definitely identified on the scope. Drift was believed to have been killed on the target, the last course correction being 4 degrees to the left. 4 sighting angles were relayed to the bombardier: 70,65,60, and 50. With the relay of the angle of 50 degrees, the bombardier was able to pick up the target visually through a break in the clouds and immediately verified the accuracy of the PFF run. Only a slight correction in rate had to be made visually through the bombsight, and the run was concluded on PDI. Due to the malfunction of the intervalometer the lead ship could not drop its bombs over the target. The deputy group leader was an early return, and the plane which took over the position of deputy lead had no bombardier and hence could not drop. Baker leader and the second attack unit leader sighted visually, using PDI.

31 a/c went over the target at 1240A at 24,000', and 25 a/c dropped 37 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs with .1N and .01 and .025T fuses and 11½ tons of 500 lb RDX bombs with long delay fuses and 4 propaganda leaflet bombs. 1 a/c accidentally released its bombs half way between the IP and the target. 1 a/c, having developed turbo trouble in the target area, jettisoned its bombs 4 miles to the South of the target. The lead PFF a/c which was crippled by flak over the target jettisoned its bombs near TRAEICIN; and the other a/c of Able box dropped on targets of opportunity.

2 a/c dropped their bombs over highway near CZELLLLOMOLK, HUNGARY 4715M-1709E and scored a hit or near miss, 1 a/c dropped its bombs on a highway at 4756N-1720E with unobserved results, 2 long delay bombs were jettisoned at 4715151709E because the a/c could not keep up with the formation, 2 long delay bombs were jettisoned at 4920N-1725E because of loss of a supercharger. 1 long delay bomb was jettisoned 24 miles SE of the target because of e rack malfunction. 2 bombs were jettisoned just off the target because of a rack malfunction.

Recapitulation:

Tons ADX regular fuses dropped on target	37
Tons RDX long delay fuses on target	11½
Tons RDX regular fuses dropped on T/O	4½
Tons RDX long delay fuses dropped on T/O	2½
Tons RDX regular fuses jettisoned by sortie a/c	3½
Tons RDX long delay Jettisoned by sortie a/c	2½
Tons RDX regular fuses jettisoned by E/R	1½
Tons RDX long delay jettisoned by E/R	1
Tons RDX regular fuses returned by E/R	1½
Total tons carried	68
Propaganda bombs dropped on Primary	4
Propaganda bombs dropped on T/O	2

28 a/c landed at 1630A. 1 a/c is at a friendly field. 1 a/c fell behind the formation with 1 engine feather, last seen in vicinity of GYOR. 1 a/c was observed to be going down in flames over the target after bombs away. 4 to 7 chutes were soon.

The route was flown as briefed.