

55BW Mission Summary No. 137, 3 Dec 44 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 3 December, between 0714-0741A, 10 B-24 a/c scheduled took off to bomb a target in AUSTRIA, bombing by individual a/c and by PFF. Early returns numbered 4, 2 of which dropped bombs on targets of opportunity. Reason for early returns was in each case reception of radio messages reporting assigned target clear of cloud.

There was no assembly nor rendezvous, since all a/c left from assigned line of departure at stated intervals. This aspect of the mission was executed as ordered.

No fighter escort was scheduled, but several a/c sighted fighters in sweeps over North ADRIATIC-UDINE areas as ordered.

6 a/c were over alternate targets. 4 a/c dropped 10 tons on VILLACH, 2 a/c dropped 5 tons on FLAGENFURT. Bombs were 500 lb RDX, fused .1N .01T and 3 tons had long delay fuses. 2 early returns jettisoned 3 tons, 1 return brought 2 tons back to base. Be flat bombs were dropped on Alternate Targets.

Results were unobserved (PFF bombing).

Flak was nil; no e/a were seen.

9 a/c were down at bases between 1215-1408A. No a/c was lost, missing, landed at friendly field.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather is reported in Bombardment Group Narrative Mission Reports below.

Tabular View of Operations

Group	A/C No.	Status	Take-off Time	Target Time	Tons Dropped	Target	Heading	Altitude	Time Down
465th	-	Early Return Eff	0714	-	-	-	-	-	-
465th	952	Sortie Eff	0715	1030	2.5	VILLACH	230°	22,000	1237
465th	861	Sortie Eff	0716	1045	2.5	VILLACH	131°	23,000	1304
464th	048	Sortie Eff	0733	1114	2.5	VILLACH KLAGE	135° 185°	24,000	1323
485th	029	Sortie	0736	1103	2.5	NFURT		20,000	1305
460th	021	Early Return	0737	1107	2.5	Tar. Of Opp. Bridge at 4622-	-	24,000	1317
460th	651	Early Return	0738	1020	2.5	1231	-	18,000	1246

		Eff				Tar. Of Opp.			
485th	758	Sortie	0738	1152	2.5	KLAGE NFURT	120°	24,500	1408
464th	613	Sortie	0741	1046	2.5	VILLACH	108°	24,500	1351

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 3 Dec 44, 3 scheduled a/c (Red Force) were dispatched to bomb a target in AUSTRIA by PFF. A/C Nos. 9021, 1651, and 0733 took off at 0737, 0738, and 0740A respectively.

Due to clear weather over the ALPS and the PO Valley, a/c 0733 turned back at (4620-1235). Bombs were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC. A/C 1651 turned back at (4705-1220) because of clear weather and #1 engine failure. Bombs were dropped visually on a target of opportunity, a bridge at (4622-1231). 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, .1N - .01T (1/5 delay) were released from 18,000' at 1020A. The crew reported near misses were scored on the target.

A/c 9021 penetrated to (4705-1219) before clear weather forced it to turn back. This a/c attempted to bomb VILLACH M/Y, the alternate target but due to excessive precision of the flux rate gyro, target was lost from view of the PFF operator. The town of FEIDMIRCHEN, a target of opportunity, was bombed by PFF. The angles of 70, 65, and 50 degrees were furnished the bombardier and synchronization was very accurate. It is believed that this target was bombed with excellent results. There were no malfunctions of equipment. 2.5 tons of bombs were released from 24,000' at 1107A.

PFF equipment operated very satisfactorily in all a/c with some exception. Radar is used for navigation and numerous fixes were taken.

No flak was encountered on the mission. Friendly fighters, P-51s believed to be from the Tactical Air Forces, were observed patrolling near the coast of Northern ITALY.

Route was flown as briefed. Weather: Undercast cumulus at 6,000' over ADRIATIC with 6-8/10ths altostratus. Clear over coast of Northern ITALY with undercast at 12,000' over ALPS. North of ALPS, clear.

A/c 0633, 1651, and 9021 returned to base at 1215, 1246, and 1317A respectively.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 3 Dec 44, 2 scheduled PFF B-24 a/c took off to bomb a target in AUSTRIA.

A/c Nos. 9048 and 5613 took off at 0733 and 0741A respectively.

Both a/c report their time and altitude of departure from point of rendezvous to be as prescribed. Specifics of the a/c at rendezvous was good.

The 2 PFF a/c bombed the 1st alternate Target, M/Y at VIENNA, AUSTRIA. Decision to bomb the 1st alternate Target was based upon over hearing radio conversations of a/c of Groups ahead, stating that the weather over the primary target was clear.

A/c No. 9048 dropped 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N and .01T, at 1110A. From 24,000', on an attack axis of 135°. 2 of the bombs were fused for long delay, and additional leaflet bomb was dropped at the same time. C-1 automatic pilot was used for the bombing run, with I.P. identification, run and bomb release all being performed visually. Visual observation of the target was said to be possible because of a break in cloud cover, described as moving rapidly, and drifting over the target immediately after bombs away.

Reports from the PFF navigator and other crew members indicate that the PFF equipment of this a/c was operating satisfactorily, that crew coordination was good, and that the target material issued was adequate. The PFF navigator, however, states that, coming into the target, and throughout the bombing run, only momentary scope contacts with the target area could be made, due to blotting out by mountain peaks. Positive scope identification was not made until just about 2 minutes before bombs away. In opinion of this navigator, the 1st Alternate Target attacked is not suitable for PFF bombing, due to difficulties in making adequate scope contact.

Malfunction of the "geo" navigation equipment was reported as occurring during the entire flight to the target. Fluctuations were continuous and of such magnitude that no useful navigational purposes were achieved. No defects in the equipment could be found during the flight to the target, and perfect functioning was experienced throughout the entire return trip.

A/c No. 56133 dropped 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDK bombs, fused .1N and .01T, at 1046A, from 24,500', on an attack axis of 108°. 2 of the bombs dropped by this a/c were fused for long delay. Visual pick up of the I.P. was made by this a/c, with, however, the entire bombing run and release being performed on PFF and C-1 automatic pilot. Reports from this crew state that the PFF equipment worked perfectly, and that the scope was used, and picked up the target, immediately after turning from the I.P. No trouble was experienced in target identification. Check points were utilized -- one, a valley with mountains on either side. The town of VILLACH was used to kill rate. There were 2 corrections of 5° right 3° left. 5 sighting angles were Given, 70°, 65°, 60°, 50°, and 40°. Release was made on an angle of 34°. A further 2° correction to the right, it is believed, would have improved accuracy. Synchronization was made on the center of the town.

A/c No. 9048 flew the briefed course to (4644-1225), then to the I.P., to the target, to (4519-1434), to (4430-1420), to base.

A/c No. 5613 flew the briefed course to (4645-1245), then to the I.P., to the target, to (4440-1530), to (4350-1500), to base.

Contact with fighter escort of 9-10 P-51s was made by a/c no. 5613 at 1019A at (4630-1230). These a/c remained in sight until 1029A at (4657-1223). A/c No. 9048 observed 6 P-51s at 1003A at (4600-1240), retaining visual contact for about 5 minutes. The pilot and co-pilot of this a/c further state that considerable radio conversation between friendly fighters and bomber a/c of the 47th Bombardment Wing (H), could be heard about this time.

Weather at base at take off was 3/10ths stratocumulus, base 3,500', tops 5,500', with visibility of 20 miles.

Weather conditions enroute to target were 5/10ths to 6/10ths stratocumulus, tops 6-8,000', over the ADRIATIC Sea. North from ANCONA to 20 miles inland from the ITALIAN coast, 7-10/10ths altocumulus, tops 16,000'. Over the ALPS, weather was clear except for valley stratus.

At the target (VILLACH), there was a low overcast of stratus, tops 4-5,000' with mountain tops protruding thru.

On return, 6-8/10ths cirrostratus over YUGOSLAVIA, with tops at 26,000'. Over the ADRIATIC, 4-6/10ths altostratus, tops at 16-19,000', and 6-8/10ths altocumulus.

At base, altostratus at 16,000', and scattered stratocumulus at 4,000'. Visibility was 20 miles to unlimited.

A/c Nos. 9048 and 5613 landed at base at 1323 and 1351A respectively.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 3 Dec 44, 3 a/c of 3 scheduled took off at 0715, and 0716A respectively to bomb a target in GERMANY.

1 a/c returned early as the weather was too clear to proceed. This a/c jettisoned 2 bombs (long delay) in the North ADRIATIC and returned 8 bombs to base.

2 a/c attacking an alternate target, VILLACH M/Y, encountered no e/a and no flak.

A/c Nos. 952, and 861, unable to reach the primary target because of clear weather attacked the VILLACH M/Y using PFF. A/c No. 952 attacked at 1039A on a heading of 230° at an altitude of 26,000'. PFF equipment was operating satisfactorily and the target was identified. A lake near the target was used as a check point and some visual check points were possible. Last correction was 4° but PFF

operator does not think that drift was entirely killed. Sighting angles, 65-60-50-40° were relayed to bombardier and a last second visual correction was made by bombardier. It is believed that the bombs fell left and short of the target. A/c No. 851 attacked at 1045A on a heading of 131° at an altitude of 23,100'. PFF navigators report is substantially that of the first a/c except that it is believed that drift was killed and the target bombed successfully. These 2 a/c dropped 5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs fused .1 end .01 of which 2 bombs in each a/c had long delay fuses.

Weather enroute was 6/10 AS at 13,000' increasing to 10/10 off ANCONA at 16,000', for scattered light cirrus; clear over the ALPS except for, cirrus and valley stratus and a deck of clouds just North of the ALPS with tops show peaks; VILLACH was obscured by clouds but the surrounding country was clear; weather on return was the same as enroute.

2 a/c landed at 1237 and 1304A.

The route was flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group, On 3 Dec 44, 2 B-24 a/c Nos. 029 and 758 took off at 0736 and 0738A respectively to bomb a target in AUSTRIA, but because observed weather conditions did not present sufficient protective cloud cover, decision was made to bomb the KLAGENFURT M/Y. A/c No. 029 reached NEUNKIRCHEN and a/c No. 758 reached short of REISCHARCH on course before decision was made on bombing; PT was reached

Take off was on schedule and departure on course from Lake Lacina at 9,000' ass at 0820A.

There was no rendezvous with other Groups.

6-12 P-51 a/c were observed enroute and on the return in the vicinity of the key point.

There were no early returns.

No e/a were seen although warning was received by radio from other a/c that e/a were in the area. No flak was encountered but a/c No. 758 observed flashes on the ground near POLA. Bursts could not be seen on account of cloud cover. There were no casualties.

Target Statistics:

A/c	Tons	Altitude	Heading	Time	Remarks
029	2.5	20,000'	185°	1103	Bomb run on PFF and C-1 used
758	2.5	24,500'	120°	1152	Bomb run on PFF. C-1 not used, its operation enroute too erratic

A total of 5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 and .01, and long delay were dropped by the 2 a/c.

Weather: a/c 029 and 758 report that there was thin broken cirrus and altocumulus with few stratocumulus at 3,500' over base on take off. Stratocumulus increased to 6/10 over the ADRIATIC and tops varied from 6-9,000'. Light turbulence near POLA. Thin cirrus deck over entire route, base at 20,000'. The valleys of the ALPS were 10/10 stratus but the peaks were visible. Conditions were the same on return with slight build up of cumulus to 9-10,000' and bases at 4-5000', Wind at KLAGENFURT at 20,000: 280/35K.

Return to base was made without incident. A/c No. 029 and 756 landed at 1305 and 1408A respectively.

Route was flown as briefed.

The PFF operator reports: A/c No. 029 had no difficulty navigating to the target except over ALPS. Equipment functioned well.

The city of KLAGENFURT is identified but no check points were used. It was impossible to identify the M/Y.

The last course correction was 5°. Sighting angles of 70-65-60 and 50° were relayed to the bombardier.

The PFF operator reports: A/c No. 758

The equipment functioned adequately. Ten fixes were given to the navigator enroute.

The IP for the bomb run was xxxxxxxxxxxx and scope picture because of the proximity of Lake xxxxxxxx.

The target is not identified but the city could be seen in the scope, however, the small target caused a "doughnut ring" to the 50° sighting angle.

The last course correction was 0°. Sighting angles of 70-65-60° were relayed to the bombardier.

Reports that the target was not a good PFF target.