

55BW Mission Summary No, 140,8 Dec 44 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 8 December 1944, 8 B-24 a/c from 4 Groups of the 55th Bombardment Wing took off from 0155 - 0209 hours to bomb targets in AUSTRIA. There were 3 early returns. 3 a/c dropped 6.75 tons on VILLAICH from 21,600 - 24,000 feet at 0502-0524 hours. 1 a/c dropped 2 tons on GRAZ from 21,500 feet at 0507 hours. 1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons on GIEISDORF from 23,000 feet at 0505 hours. Results of PFF bombing were unobserved.

No flak was encountered at VILLACH or GIEISDORF; MIH flak was encountered at GRAZ.

Observations: At 4705-1409 a flashing beacon was observed at 0440 hours from 21,800', green, orange and white flares were observed breaking at 24,000 ft. at 0430A at 4710-1405, which could have been the same beacon; a night landing strip was reported at 4731-1409, with 1 a/c taking off and landing; 1 SEF with 1 wing light followed a B-24 for 4 minutes just after crossing the YUGOSLAVIAN coast.

Routes were flown generally as briefed. 5 a/c landed at bases from 0717 - 0750 hours.

A/C No.	Group	T/O Time	Status	TABULAR VIEW OF MISSION			Flak	Axia	Altitude	Time Down
				Target	Target Time	Tonnage				
021	460	0207	- -	- -	-	-	-	-	-	0349
633	460	0209	Eff. Sortie	Villach	0502	2.5	Nil	231	21,600	0717
032	464	0155	Eff. Sortie	Villach	0524	2.25	Nil	210	24,000	0735
070	464	0157	- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	0441
861	465	0206	Eff. Sortie	Villach	0523	2.	Nil	180	22,000	0750
957	465	0205	Eff. Sortie	Graz	0507	2.	MIH	120	21,500	0735
034	485	0155	Eff. Sortie	Glaisdor f	0505	2.5	Nil	186	23,000	0746
779	485	0206	- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	0358

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 8 December 1944, 2 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in Austria by PFF.

1 a/c ret returned early because of equipment failure. Bombs were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC at 4150N-1800E, the a/c then returned to base and landed at 0349.

A/c 0633 penetrated to 4705N-1409E where clear weather forced it to turn back. A/c returned to VILLACH where a bomb run was made on an axis of 231 degrees. At 21,600', 2.5 tons of 500-lb RDX bombs, .1N & .01-025T fusing, were released at 0502 hours (Bomb load included one long delay and 1 leaflet bomb). PDI was used on the bomb run. The PFF operator supplied fixes from the time the set was warned up and ready for use. Enroute for the home base, the operator assumed the navigation duties. The turn to the IP was directed by the PFF operator

and course corrections were made via interphone to the pilot. The scope showed an accurate bomb release over aiming point.

No flak was experienced at the target but just post the target at 4625N-1410E, a large white flash was seen at 20,300', only 500' below the a/c.

Route was flown as briefed on penetration and then to VILLACH.

A/c 0633 returned to base at 0717 hours.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 8 December 1944, the 2 scheduled PFF B-24 type a/c took off to bomb VILLACH.

A/c # 42-52070 proceeded on course to 4345N- 1435E from whence an early return landing was made at 0441A, because of operation failure of PFF equipment. 1 500 lb RDX long delayed bomb was jettisoned in the ADRIATIC at 0330A at 4330N - 1440E, and the remaining bomb load of this a/c was returned to base.

a/c 44-49032 set course for VILLACH M/Y. The full bomb load of this a/c, 8 x 500 lb RDX with .1 and .01 and .025 fuses, 1 x 500 lb RDX long delayed and 1 x leaflet, was dropped from 24,000' on an axis of attack of 210° at 0524A. PFF operator reported equipment in perfect condition. Target was readily picked up on scope. 3 course corrections were made on run, last correction 2°. Complete overcast prevented any observations of bombing results.

Route was flown as briefed.

Return landing of a/c # 44-49032 was made at 0735A.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 2 a/c of 2 scheduled took off at 0205A and 0208A to attack a target in GERMANY. Due to weather unsuitable for night bombing, the alternate target, GRAZ M/Y and the target of opportunity, VILLACH M/Y, were bombed instead of the primary target.

There were no early returns.

Flak at GRAZ was Moderate, Inaccurate, Heavy. Nil at VILLACH.

Both a/c proceeded toward the primary and upon reaching the area near the IP it was decided that alternate targets should be bombed because of the clear weather cover the primary. Aircraft #861 took a reciprocal heading and attacked the VILLACH M/Y using PFF. The PFF equipment was operating satisfactorily and the target was identified. EISZEN LAKE and a section of the city were used as check points. Results were unobserved. Aircraft #957 took up a heading and attacked the GRAZ M/Y visually. The PFF operator was unable to pick up any check points until within 10 miles of the city of GRAZ. This did not allow sufficient time for a PFF bomb run and the bombs were salvoed visually because of the short bomb run. 1 crew member reports

seeing 1 small fire within the city but was not sure if it was due to the bombing.

1 a/c went over VILLACH at 0523 hours at 22,000 feet on a heading of 180° and dropped 1.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 and .025 tail fusing), .25 tons (1 bomb) long-delay and 1 leaflet bomb. 1 a/c went over GRAZ at 0208 hours at 21,500 feet on a heading of 120 degrees and dropped 1.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 and .025 tail fusing), .25 tons (1 bomb) long-delay and 1 leaflet bomb.

2 a/c landed at base at 0735 hours and 0750 hours.

The route was flown as briefed except for deviation in order to reach alternates.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 8 December 1944, 2 scheduled B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the Primary Target but due to inadequate cloud protection in the area, decided to bomb the second alternate target area. Upon arrival, no cloud cover was available but a cloud layer existed to the east, hence the bombs were dropped on a railroad junction at the town of GLEISDORF approximately 15 miles east of GRAZ.

A/c # 52034 took off at 0155 hours. A/c # 48779 took off at 0206 hours.

There was 1 early return.

A/C #48779 turned back at 0222 hours at 4137N - 1538E because flame dampeners on #1 and #4 superchargers were inoperative. 3 bombs were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC, 1 each at 4130N - 1641E; 4104N - 1710E; and 4107N - 1707E; the remaining 7 RDX bombs and 1 propaganda bomb were returned to base. A/C landed at 0358 hours.

1 a/c was observed, showing 1 light, in the vicinity of VODIZES, 4530N - 1400E. The a/c followed a/c #52034 on the right for 3-4 minutes but did not come within firing range.

No flak was encountered. S-H flak was observed at 0510 at a point several miles east of the area in which the bombs were dropped.

2 rockets which appeared like red flares, were observed below a/c #52034 as the plane made landfall on YUGOSLOVIAN coast enroute to the target.

1 searchlight was seen at GRAZ but was not in motion. 2 blinking lights were observed east of GRAZ which appeared to follow the plane. These were not search lights.

One a/c 52034, was over a target of opportunity, GLIESDORF, AUSTRIA at 0505. 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, .1 and mixed .01 and .025 fusing, ¼ tons 500 lb RDX bombs, delayed fusing and one

propaganda bomb were dropped on the target; a total of 2.5 tons from 23,000'. The bomb run was by PFF.

Results are unknown.

A/c #52034 landed at base at 0746A.

Route flown as briefed except deviations due to weather.