

55BW Mission Summary No. 62, 14 July 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 14 July 1944, 134 B-24 a/c of 141 scheduled took off between 0600-0617B to bomb an oil target in North ITALY. There were 5 early returns, resulting in 130 sorties of which 24 were not effective. The PT and 1st AT were completely overcast. 84 a/c dropped 191.15 tons (30.65 tons 100 lb GP and 130.5 tons M-17 incendiaries) on MANTUA, 2nd AT from 21000'. 24 a/c of one Group, finding 2nd AT also completely obscured, jettisoned or returned bombs. In all, 26 a/c jettisoned full and 3 jettisoned part load, 22 a/c returned full and 4 returned part load to bases.

Results were as follows:

460th Group - Bomb strike photos indicate strikes in the target area in the North portion of the M/Y and REGGIO Arsenal extending into the residential area of the city. Heavy cloud cover and smoke from fires prevents accurate assessment.

464th Group - Bombs dropped on a target of opportunity approximately one mile east of assigned W/Y. Strikes were scored on a probable brick works and the single line rr to LEGNAGO.

485th Group - Very high concentration of incendiaries seen to cover the central portion of the M/Y and the REGGIO Arsenal. Large fires are seen to have been started and are clearly visible as the Group leaves the area.

There was no flak encountered at PT or ATs. SAH flak was encountered at OSTIGLIA. 1 e/a was seen; there was no encounter.

130 a/c were down between 1157-1259B, none lost, missing, at friendly fields.

Route was approximately 15 miles East of briefed course, to PT, thence proceeding to 1st and 2nd ATs and reciprocal course to base.

Weather: Clear at bases, 4/10 cumulus over mountains of ITALY, and to IP, at PT 9-10/10 altocumulus and cumulus. At 2nd AT 1/10 cirrus above formations, 2/10 cirrus at 19000', 5/10 altocumulus at 12000'.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 14 July 1944, at 0600B, 38 scheduled a/c took off to bomb an Oil Target in North ITALY.

The Group formed its 3 attack units in the regular assembly area and made rendezvous with the 485th over ALTMURA at 0702B without incident. The Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0712B with the 460th flying in the #4 position. The fighter escort, P-51s, met the formation at 09148 southwest of POLA. They furnished penetration,

target and withdrawal cover, leaving the formation near the TROMITI Isles.

38 a/c reached the primary target, but the solid undercast prevented the Group from locating the primary or alternate targets. The formation continued to the last resort target, the M/Y at MANTUA. The First and Second attack units were unable to locate this target, also because of the 7-8/10 strato- and alto- cumulus undercast. The Third attack unit was able to find the target through a hole in the cloud cover: In all, 19 a/c dropped 46.5 tons of 500 lb M-17 incendiary clusters with instantaneous fusing. 17 a/c salvoed bombs in the ADRIATIC. One a/c returned bombs to base, and 2 a/c salvoed 14 bombs in the ADRIATIC that had hung up.

The Group encountered no flak at the target.

One ME-109 was observed in the target area flying in and out of the cloud banks but there was no encounters.

Route was flown 15 miles N of the briefed course on the route out and as briefed on the return.

38 2/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1220B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 14 July 1944 starting at 0600B, 37 B-24 a/c of 38 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb the M/Y at MANTUA, ITALY (second alternate target). 34 a/c were over the target dropping 60.55 tons of clustered 100 lb GP bombs (mixed instantaneous and .1N and non-delay T fuse) at 0948B to 0957B from 21000'.

The Group form up was executed according to plan. Line rendezvous with the 465th Bomb Group was as prescribed, as was the Wing rendezvous.

Rendezvous with fighter escort consisting of 7-11 P-33 a/c and 15-20 P-51 a/c was effected at 0910B at 4420N1340E and at 0930B at 4510N1205E respectively. The escort provided what the returning crews describe as superior cover to the target and withdrawal to the coast of ITALY. The escort was last observed at 1017B at 4451N1230E.

31 a/c dropped 60.65 tons of 100 lb GP bombs on MANTUA M/Y, 2nd alternate target.

No enemy fighters were observed enroute to or on return from the target. No flak was experienced at the target however at OSTIGLIA SAH flak was encountered both going into and on the route out from the target. Three or four bursts were observed on each pass. SIH flak was observed at ROVIGE, 4505N11474E. Some 30 smoke pots were observed just east of OSTIGLIA through a break in the clouds as the formation passed this point.

34 a/c landed at 1157B.

The route to the Second Alternate and return was flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 24 2/c of 27 scheduled took off at 0616B in two attack units on 14 July 1944 to attack an oil target in Northern ITALY, The first attack unit was led by Lt. Col. Harold A. Bullock and the second attack unit was led by Captain Norman A. Perry.

Group assembly took place as scheduled over ANDRIA at 0657B with our formation falling in behind the 464th Group between ANDRIA and CANOSA at 6,000' at this time. Wing rendezvous was accomplished over SPINAZZOLA on course as briefed at 0712B.

There were no early returns. No flak was encountered in the area of the primary target but SIH flak was observed at CHIOGGIA and also SIH flak came through the undercast at either OSTIGLIA or MANTUA. No enemy fighters were seen.

24 a/c flew over the undercast in the vicinity of the primary target as well as the alternate target. However, neither target could be seen and the formation returned to base without having attacked any target. 16 a/c brought their bombs back to base while the remaining a/c jettisoned all of their bombs in the ADRIATIC sea, between 1115B and 1130B in the general area, 4220N1540E. Bombs were jettisoned because they could not be safely tied.

The weather enroute to the target was as follows: Clear to north ITALY, then solid undercast to 15,000'; over the target, 10/10s undercast at primary and alternate; route back, scattered cumulus clouds and very hazy.

No observations of military importance were reported and 24 a/c landed at base at 1220B. No a/c are lost or missing and there were no casualties. No photographs were attempted.

The route flown was slightly east of course to IP, then inland south of the primary target to a point a few miles east of MANTUA, then returning to the coast and back to base as briefed. See chart of route attached.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 14 July 1944, at 0617B, 36 B-24 a/c of 39 n/c scheduled, took off to bomb an oil target in North ITALY.

Assembly over ALTAMURA at 7,000' was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with 460th Bomb Group between ALTAMURA and GRAVINA was effected at 0703B at 7,000' on course over SPINAZZOLA.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 20-25 P-51 a/c, was effected at 0925B at 4518N1230E, and left the formation at 1012B at 4440N1210E.

2 a/c returned prior to bombing.

34 were over target at 0945B. 34 a/c dropped 84 tons of 500 lb cluster M-17 incendiary bombs at 21,000'. One a/c jettisoned 2 bombs at IP of PT due to bomb rack malfunction.

No flak and no e/a were encountered.

Return was made without incident. 34 a/c landed, mean landing time 1259B. There were no stragglers, no late arrivals.

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