

55BW Mission Summary No. 67, 22 July 1944 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 22 July 1944, 134 B-24 a/c of 136 scheduled, of the 55th Bombardment Wing, took off from 0738-0806B to attack the AMERICANO ROMANO OIL REFINERY at PLOESTI. Group assemblies were accomplished without incident. Wing rendezvous was made at 0855B over SPINAZZOLA. There were 44 early returns.

Fighter rendezvous was not too successful. 15/20 P-51s were met at 1100B and 20/25 P-38s at 1115B. Escort returned with one group to the ADRIATIC.

88 a/c dropped 215.5 tons of 1000 lb GP bombs in the vicinity of the target. Visual PFF, offset, and ETA means were used to bomb.

Results are as follows:

460th Bomb Group. Photographs of bombs away indicate probable strikes in target area.

464th Bomb Group. Photographs of bombs away indicate probable strikes in target area.

465th Bomb Group. Photographs of bombs away indicate bombs fell slightly to the right of the assigned target.

485th Bomb Group. Photographs of bombs away indicate bombs fell slightly to the right and over.

Reconnaissance photographs show no fresh damage in the refinery assigned as the target.

The Wing formation bombed from 22,900-24,000' at 1140-1146B. 4 a/c jettisoned a total of 9 bombs.

Flak at target ranged from MIH to IAH. 3 ME-109s and 1 FW-190 making a non-aggressive attack at target. 83 a/c landed from 1545-1625B at home bases. One a/c lost to flak; 2 a/c landed at FF; 2 a/c ditched; 1 a/c crash landed at BRINDISI, and the crew of 1 a/c bailed out over home field.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: 8/10 stratus over Adriatic and heavy haze, visibility 8 miles. Clear from YUGOSLAVIAN coast to DANUBE river. Visibility 20 miles at target. On return clear from DANUBE to West ADRIATIC.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 22 July 1944, at 0742B, 32 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the ROMANO AMERICANA OIL REFINERY in PLOESTI, ROUMANIA.

The Group formed in two attack units in the regular assembly area at 0835B as scheduled.

There were 13 early returns, of which 7 had supercharger trouble

From 23,000' at 1141B, 19 a/c formed in one attack unit, dropped 47.5 tons of 1000 lb GP bombs (1N mixed .01 & .025T fuses) on the primary target. The target was not visible at the IP due to haze and clouds, so the bomb run was begun using PFF, and completed by bombing visually.

The Group encountered MIH flak at the target. Other flak and intensities are as follows; METROWICA, 2052N14252E, IAH; LESKOVAX, 4300N2155E, SIH; BABICI, 4250N2205E, SIH; SAGUBICA, MAH. The smoke screen at PLOESTI was ineffective. It is believed its ineffectiveness was due to high winds. 40 smoke spots were observed in a field SE of the target. They were in a square with ten pots on a side. 15 smoke pots were seen NW of the city. They were in two lines and about 100-150 yards apart.

17 a/c returned to the base with a mean landing time of 1355B. 2 a/c landed at BARI to refuel and have since returned to base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 22 July 1944 at 0738B, 34 B-24 a/c took off to bomb PLOESTI ROMANA AMERICANA OIL REFINERY (Primary Target). 6 a/c returned prior to bombing.

Rendezvous with fighter escort consisting of 15/20 P-51s was effected at 4400N2410E, at 1100B; rendezvous consisting of 20/25 P-38 a/c at 4405N2 OE, at 1115B.

Flak at the target was IAH. The color of the Flak at the target was observed to be black, red and white, the red and white bursts being high. The black barrage was also observed to break into two pieces in shape of dumb bells, each of which again exploded. 40 bursts of SAH flak was encountered at 4413N2147E; 16 bursts of SAH flak from one or two guns was encountered at 4343N2217E; 25 to 30 bursts of SAH flak was encountered at 4422N2210E. Heavy and moderate flak was observed at BUCHAREST, accuracy unknown.

One a/c apparently suffered direct hit in left front bomb bay which was on fire. When rest of formation rallied right off the target, this a/c rallied left, then went into flat spin and hit the ground.

One a/c ditched in the ADRIATIC at 4135N1638E at 1526B.

26 a/c returned to base.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 31 a/c of 32 scheduled took off at 0740 hours on 22 July 1944 in 2 attack units to attack the Romano Americana Oil Refinery at Ploesti, Roumania.

Flak at the target was moderate accurate heavy at altitude of formation and very intense below the formation. No flak was encountered enroute, There were no encounters with enemy aircraft but 1 ME-109 was observed well below the formation at 1105 hours at Rosiorii De Vede.

20 a/c went over the target at 1145 hours at 22,900 feet and dropped 45½ tons of 1,000 lb. bombs with .1 nose and .01 and .025 mixed tail fuses.

18 a/c landed at this base at 1625 hours. 1 a/c, with permission from the tower, continued on to make a landing at Bari. No additional report has been received from this crew. 1 a/c ran out of gas about 3 minutes from the base and the 10 crew members bailed out between 800 and 300 feet.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 22 July 1944 at 0806 hours, 37 B-24 a/c took off to bomb ROMANO AMERICANA OIL REFINERY, PLOESTI RUMANIA (Primary Target).

No rendezvous was made with the fighter escort en route to the target. Some P-51s and P-38s were seen over Yugoslavia on the return route, however, about 25 a/c in all.

A total of 14 a/c returned early.

23 a/c were over the primary target at 1140 hours. 21 a/c dropped 52½ tons of 1000 lb GP bombs (fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail) from 24000 feet, bomb run made on C-1. Disposition of bombs of two other a/c is not known. One of these landed at a friendly field and the other has been reported at the island of Vis ... Results of bombing could not be definitely determined because of an undercast and a combination smoke screen and black oil smoke.

Flak at the target was for the most part intense, accurate, heavy. The formation was exposed to flak for about 4 minutes. 13 a/c were holed by flak, none seriously. The enemy opposition consisted of 1 ME-109 seen over the target which did not attack and 1 FW-190 which came to within 1500 yards of the formation shortly past the target and then peeled off and left. One man was a casualty due to flak.

21 a/c returned safely to home field.

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