

55BW Mission Summary No. 68, 24 July 1944 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 24 July 1944, 91 B-24 a/c of the 55th Bombardment Wing took off between 0655 - 0705 hours to attack the VALENCE/LA TRESORERIE L/G. There were 2 early returns.

Group assemblies were made between 0740 - 0753 hours in assigned areas with the Wing Rendezvous accomplished at 0803B. Fighter escort consisting of P-51s joined the bombers at 1103B, and provided escort to the target, departing from bombers between French Coast and Corsica.

Between 1147 - 1205B, 89 a/c from 19,450 to 20,500 ft. dropped 179.52 tons of 20# fragmentation bombs.

Results are as follows:

460th Bomb Group photographs show the fragmentation pattern to have covered the southwest dispersal area. Eleven bomber-transport aircraft resembling the JU-88s are present along with three single engine fighters. Of these, one bomber-transport is believed to have been destroyed and seven severely damaged. Two single engine aircraft are believed to have been destroyed and one possibly damaged.

465th Bomb Group photographs show the pattern to have covered the west dispersal area. One bomber-transport is believed to have been destroyed.

485th Bomb Group photographs show the pattern to have covered the center to southwest portion of the landing area, the hangar area, and the northwest dispersal area. Eleven single engine aircraft and nine bomber-transport type aircraft are shown to be present in these areas. Of these six single engine aircraft and two bomber-transport types are believed to be destroyed. Two bomber transports and one single engine aircraft are believed to be damaged.

Photographs show the eastern and northeastern dispersal areas with eight bomber-transports, three single engine aircraft, and two possible gliders, with no damage visible.

No flak encountered at target. Flak observed at FREJUS and MAH flak at 4336 - 0652. No e/a were encountered but 9 SEF and TEF were seen.

Route flown as briefed.

Weather: Enroute 5/10 to 6/10 undercast at 5000 ft. over Corsica which increased to 7/10 to 8/10 at French Coast. 6 to 10/10 at target. On. return 5. to 7/10 clouds at 8000 to 10,000 ft.

87 a/c returned to base. 1 a/c landed at FF. 1 a/c is missing.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 24 July 1944, at 0655 hours, 31 of 35 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the Valence/La Tresorerie L/G in France.

From 20,500', 31 a/c dropped 67:44 tons of 125-lb (6 clustered) fragmentation bombs on the primary target, Valence/La Tresorerie, at 1147½ hours. The assigned area of the target was well covered. 10 SE and TE a/c being caught on the hardstands. Strings fell right and left of the taxi strip, with the bombs of one box falling down the middle. 2 planes were seen burning. 6 or 7 others were probably destroyed. 1 a/c jettisoned 14 clusters immediately after target time due to malfunction, 3 a/c jettisoned 5 clusters in the Liguian Sea, and 3 a/c brought back 17 clusters that had hung up. 1 a/c accidentally released 6 clusters 20 miles from this base on the return. The A-5 was used by both attack units.

No flak was encountered over the target area. On the return route, MAH flak was encountered at (4336 - 0652) from 12 guns.

The Group observed 3 e/a. 1 TEF flew over the formation near the IP at 1141 hours. 2 ME-109e were seen in the target area but there was no encounters.

29 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1525 hours. 2 a/c were seen headed for Corsica, 1 has since returned. No word has been heard of the other.

3. 465th Bomb Group. 25 of 28 a/e scheduled, took off at 0700 hours on 24 July 1944 to attack the Valence/La Tresorerie L/G near Valence, France.

There was one early return.

There was no flak enroute or over the target. Flak was noted over Frejus which was encountered by group behind our formation.

24 a/c went over the target at 1149 hours at 20,500 feet and dropped 51.58 tons of 20 lb. frag clusters. 1 a/c jettisoned 4 clusters 3 miles past target and 1 a/c jettisoned 2 x 20# frags in Tyrrhenian Sea because of rack Malfunctions.

24 a/e landed at this base at 1520 hours.

The route was flown as briefed.

4. 485th Bomb Group. On 24 July 1944, at 0705 hours, 35 B-24 a/c took off to bomb VALENCE/LA TRESORERIE L/G (Primary Target).

1 a/c returned early.

34 a/c were over target at 1151 hours, target time 1205 hours. 34 a/c dropped 60.5 tons of 100 # Frag bombs from 19,450', bombing on A-5.

4 ME-109s were identified in the distance between the target and the French coast on return at 1230 hours. None of these e/a made any attacks, nor did they approach within firing range of the bombers. At 4326 N - 0648 E, scant to moderate; accurate, heavy flak was encountered. This was at 1230 - 1232 hours, at 16,000 - 17,000 feet.

Return was made without incident. 34 a/c landed, mean landing time 1525 hours.

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 cy ea CG, AC of S, A-3, Fifteenth AF
- 2 cys AC of S; A-2, Fifteenth AF
- 1 cy 28th SCU, Fifteenth AF
- 1 cy PRO, Fifteenth AF
- 1 cy ea CO, AC of S, A-2, 5th, 47th, 49th, 304th Bomb Wings
- 1 cy CG, 306th Fighter Wing.
- 1 cy ea CO, AC of S; A-1, A-2, A-3, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy ea Bombr 0, PI, PRO, St t, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy ea CO, ea GP, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 3 cys S-2, ea Gp, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy CG, III Bomber Command.