

55BW Mission Summary No. 70, 26 July 1944 (Contd).

1. General Summary. On 26 July 1944, 124 B-24 a/c, of 127 a/c scheduled, took off between 0715-0729B to attack ZWOLFAXING A/D. There were 5 early returns.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Fighter escort was identified from 1029-1034B at approximately 4525N1640E, furnished excellent cover, and remained with the formation until 1305B at a point on the YUGOSLAV coast.

92 a/c were over the Primary Target at 1127-1131B and 25 a/c, because of cloud conditions, bombed BAD VOSLAU A/D at 1129B, 85 a/c dropped on PT, 20 a/c dropped on ZOMBATHELY A/D at 1141B. Total tonnage 59.5 tons of 1000# GP bombs, 67.5 tons of 500# GP bombs (.1, .025 fusing and 131.9 tons of 20 lb clustered fragmentation bombs (instantaneous fusing) from 20,000-20,600' of which 77 tons GP and 82.562 tons frags were dropped on PT, 47.35 tons frags on BAD VOSLAU A/D, and 50 tons GP on AT. 3 sorties jettisoned full bomb load, 5 sorties jettisoned part load, 2 early returns jettisoned full load. 2 sorties returned full load, 2 sorties returned part load, 2 early returns brought back full load, to bases.

Results are as follows:

460 Bomb Group. Photographs show: ZWOLFAXING A/D. Six strikes in the area of the machine gun testing range. One direct hit and three near misses on the east hanger. Six strikes on the hangar line.

464 Bomb Group. Photographs show: BAD VOSLAU A/D. Bomb strikes extend from the center of the landing area to the open country to the east. Additional strikes at the north end and north east of the airdrome. One single engine fighter type aircraft damaged.

465 Bomb Group. Photographs show: BAD VOSLAU A/D. Strikes cover north central, north east, and south east portion of the landing area. Two twin engine and one single engine aircraft are believed to have been destroyed and one twin-engine and one single engine aircraft damaged.

485 Bomb Group. Photographs show: SZOMBATHELY A/D. No military damage indicated.

Flak was as follows: M-IAH at PT, S-MIH at BAD VOSLAU, SIH at ZOMBATHELY. SIH was encountered at FERTO, MAH at NEUSEIDLER SEE.

1-50 e/a were over by individual Groups. 1-30 e/a were encountered. Claims are 13-4-8.

109 a/c were down at bases between 1405-1415B. 3 a/c were lost, 1 a/c is missing, 2 a/c landed except for deviation of one Group

bombing BAD VOSLAU and deviation of one Group, part of whose a/c bombed ZOMBATHELY.

Weather: Clear to YUGOSLAV coast, becoming 2-3/10 cumulus, over YUGOSLAVIA; 3/10 cumulus, 8-10,000' tops and 10/10 cirrus in two layers at 22,000', 24,000' in target area, with haze. On return 4-7/10 alto cumulus over HUNGARY and YUGOSLAVIA, tops 7-8,000', 2-4/10 cumulus over ITALY. Visibility 10-15 miles enroute, 5-10 miles in target area.

2. 460th Bomb Group, On 26 July 1944, at 0725B, 24 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the ZWOLFAXING A/D in AUSTRIA.

The Group formed its two attack units in the assembly area on time and rendezvous with the 485th was accomplished as scheduled. The Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0830B with the 460th leading the Wing. The fighter escort, P-51's met the formation at 4545N1640E at 1029B. They furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover, leaving the formation at 4600N1640E at 1200B.

As the Group approached the target area, 10/10 clouds in two layers reached from 22-24,000'. It was necessary to drop below it for the bombing. Flak was extremely accurate, perhaps the most in the experience of the 460th. As the lead box came out of the clouds to make the bomb run, No. 3 ship had become slightly separated from it. Flak guns lead this single ship, as though shooting skeet, and finally knocked it down. At this time a large projectile went through the left wing of the lead ship, leaving a hole a foot across but not causing a fire. Gas slopped out, gas ran into the Bombay. Two engines cut out. Although it managed to maintain speed and altitude to drop on the target, this ship began to lose position immediately thereafter. Just as it seemed necessary to abandon the lead, the two engines again became operative through prompt transfer and saving of gas. The ship assumed its proper place in the Wing formation.

From 20,600', 24 a/c dropped 59.5 tons of 1000 lb GP bombs, .1N & .025T fusing, on the primary target, the ZWOLFAXING A/D. Automatic pilots used by both first and second attack units. Due to malfunction, 1 a/c returned one bomb to this base.

The Group encountered e/a just before the IP at 1124B. Approximately 30 ME-109s attacked the formation from 2 o'clock level in a tight "V" formation. At 1000 yard, the enemy formation broke up into flights of two, three and four and six a/c. The curtain of protective fire thrown by this Group forced the e/a to break off their attacks, non-aggressively, at 600 yards. In this encounter, one e/a is claimed damaged. E/A markings were observed as follows: e/a were painted black with a small circle on the left wing near the fuselage. Two FW-190s were also seen in the target area.

The Group experienced IAH flak for 10 minutes in the target area. Smoke generators partially obscured the target and were located

as follows: North and East parallel to the railroad, ten generators to the East and West, and 50 generators on the South side of the target, Flak was observed at GRAZ.

The route was flown as briefed.

19 a/c returned to the base with a mean landing time of 1415B. One a/c seriously damaged by flak, landed at VIS, and another a/c landed at GICIA. In all, three a/c were lost to flak over the target, all of them going down in flames.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 26 July 1944 starting at 0715B, 38 B-24 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the ZWOLFAXING A/D Installations and Dispersed A/C.

The Group form-up, line rendezvous, and the Wing rendezvous were executed as prescribed.

One B-24 a/c No. 42-95332 returned. to base early,

37 B-24 a/c were over the target at 1131B (briefed target time was 1112B) and dropped 82.562 tons of frag bombs (instantaneous fuse) from 20,500'. B-24 a/c No. 42-52563 jettisoned .5 tons of bombs at 4808N1635E when these bombs failed to release on the target due to a rack malfunction. B-24 a/c No. 44-41953 lost .062 tons of bombs at 4450N1647E when one cluster fell out of the bomb bay as the bomb bay door were being tested for proper functioning. B-24 a/c No. 42-78431 jettisoned .125 tons of bombs at 4235N1630E which failed to release on the target due to aa reck malfunction. B-24 a/c No. 42-95332 returned 2.25 tons of bombs to the base.

It is apparent from the bomb strike photos that in addition to the bombs dropped on the ZWOLFAXING A/D, that bombs were also dropped on BAD VOSLAU A/D. Photographs indicate that Able Box dropped on the briefed target, however no bomb strikes are visible. Photographs from Baker, Dog, Easy and Fox Boxes indicate that a/c in these boxes released on BAD VOSLAU.

The A-5 Automatic Pilot was used by the lead a/c of the first attack unit on the bomb run. The lead a/c of the second attack unit did not use the A-5 Automatic Pilot because of a lack of sufficient power to operate the A-5.

IAH was encountered at the target, and along the route into the target from a point at 4757N1612E. The flak was reported as very intense and lasted for a period of about 15 minutes. SIH flak was observed at FERTO 4756N1652E.

One to 4 ME-109 a/c were observed in the target area, but no encounters were experienced by this Group.

Rendezvous with fighter escort consisting of 40-50 P-51 a/c and 18-20 P-38 a/c was effected at 1039B at: 4555N1630E and at 1050B at 4650N1500E respectively. The escort was last observed at 1305B at the YUGOSLAV coast.

37 a/c landed from 1402B until 1425B without incident.

The route was flown as briefed to a point 4745N1545E at which point due to the cloud coverage ahead in the area of the IP, the formation cut the IP short and passed over WALDEGG 4754N1603E, VOSLAU 4758N1613E and thence on a heading of 50° into the target. The return was as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 28 a/c of 30 scheduled took off at 0729B on 26 July 1944 in two attack units to attack an airdrome in Southern GERMANY.

The Group assembled over ANDRIA at 0810B at 7,000' and made Wing rendezvous over SPINAZZOLA at 0831B at 7,000'. The formation was joined by an escort of P-51s at 1040 at VARAZDIN 4620N1620E at 18,000', who gave support over the target and left at 1256B near the YUGOSLAV coast.

There were 3 early returns. One a/c returned bombs to base, and two a/c jettisoned their bombs in the ADRIATIC sea.

25 a/c went over BAD VOSLAU A/D at 1128B at 20,000' and dropped 49.35 tons of 20 lb frag clusters. One a/c jettisoned 10 clusters at 4605N1624E, in order to gain altitude and returned 10 clusters to the base because of a rack malfunction. One a/c jettisoned 18 clusters east of ZAGREB in order to keep up with the formation. One a/c jettisoned 3 clusters near LAKE BALATON because they hung up over the target. Clouds obscured the ground for about 25 miles before the IP and navigation was difficult. When the formation dropped beneath the clouds, the leading wings were out of sight, and the town of PERNITZ was mistaken for the IP. The bomb run was made on approximately the briefed axis of attack, and the bombs were dropped on BAD VOSLAU A/D. A-5 pilot was used on the bomb run.

Flak at the target was Scant to Moderate, Inaccurate, Heavy. MAH flak was encountered NW and East of the NEUSEIDLER: sea. 15-20 e/a were observed attacking a formation 30 miles W of LAKE BALATON One e/a passed within 500 yards of the formation and made non-aggressive pass and is claimed as destroyed.

24 a/c. landed at 1405B mean landing time. One crew flying Red I, 853, was last seen to lose altitude after the target and drop. toward the ground under control. When last seen, the a/c was flying at low altitude across the NEUSEIDLER sea.

The route was flown as briefed to the city of PERNITZ which was used as IP. From the city of PERNITZ the formation continued to

BAD VOSLAU A/D thence to the Northern shore of NEUSEIDLER sea, and then on the briefed route back to the base.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 26 July 1944, at 0727B, 34 a/c took off to bomb ZWOLFAXING A/D Installations and Dispersed A/C (Primary Target).

Group assembly over ALTAMURA at 0819B was. excellent.

Rendezvous with the 460th Bomb Group was made over ALTAMURA at 0819B as briefed. Rendezvous over SPINAZZOLA at 0830B was excellent. Formation was excellent.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 35 P-51 a/c was effected without incident at 4600N1640E at 1034B; escort left formation at 4320N1645E at 1230B.

There were 3 early returns.

31 a/c were over the primary target at 1129B (target time 1112B). 7 a/c of low box, lead wave, dropped 17.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs.

The formation proceeded to the Alternate Target, 20 a/c dropping 50 tons of 500 lb GP bombs at 1147B. Bombing was done with A-5. A/C #728 returned bombs to base due to bomb rack malfunction. A/C #426 salvoed bombs at 4802N1605E at 1125B due to error of hitting salvo lever in place of bomb bay door level. A/C #394 jettisoned bombs at 4748N1605E at 1120B. A/C #885 jettisoned at 4800N1600E at 1120B to lighten load after being damaged by e/a.

About 35-40 ME-109s and FW-190s were seen between FELDBACH and MURYUSCLAG and 10 MW-109s in the ZAGREB area on return. Approximately 30 of these a/c made passes at the formation. In the first attack there were about 15 ME-109s flying high and to the right, parallel with the formation. They then peeled off and came in on the second wave between 12 and 2 o'clock high, 2 or 3 abreast and 3 or 4 staggered slightly; they broke away low and attacked the formation from 5 to 6 o'clock low and level in line astern. A similar attack was made by a formation of FW-190s. All pilots were aggressive, some closing in to within 100' of the formation. Attacks by ME-109s in ZAGREB area were made in line astern between 3 and 6 o'clock, level and low. Our bombers claim 12-4-7.

Markings on e/e: FW-190s, light grayish blue color, black crosses outlined in white with white circles on fuselage near cross; ME-109s dark on top with silver bellies. Flak at Primary Target was MAH. Flak at Alternate Target was SIH.

29 a/c landed, mean landing time 1412B. 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed to PT, deviation to AT and thence to briefed return course.

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