

55B/ Mission Summary No. 72, 30 July 1944 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 30 July 1944, 126 B-24 a/c scheduled took off between 0707-07325 to attack the DUNA A/C factory at BUDAPEST. There were 14 early returns.

Group assemblies and line rendezvous were effected as ordered. Wing rendezvous was in correct form, but one Group was late at the rendezvous point. Some difficulty, involving further difficulty on the bombing run, was caused by the inability of one Group to maintain its position of flight enroute to IP and target.

Fighter rendezvous was made at 1020B at 4510N1710E. Escort provided excellent cover, and remained with formation until 1230B, at the ITALY coast.

111 a/c were over target at 1114-1117B. 100 a/c dropped 265 tons of 500 lb mixed GP and RDX bombs (.1N, .025T fusing) from 23,000-24,000'. 2 sorties jettisoned full load, 6 early returns jettisoned full and 2 early returns jettisoned part loads. 2 sorties returned full load, 3 sorties returned loads, 6 early returns brought back full and 4 early returns brought back part of bomb loads.

Results are as follows:

460th Bomb Group. Photographs show: BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory. were observed both short and over the target indicating probable hits in the target area. Clouds prevent accurate observation.

464th Bomb Group. Photographs show: BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory. Strikes fall short of assigned target on TOKOL 4/D destroying two twin engine aircraft and damaging four others.

465th Bomb Group. Photographs show: BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory. Strikes in the factory area indicate probable hits in the target. Clouds prevent accurate observation.

485th Bomb Group. Photographs show: BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory. Strikes fall in open fields North of the target.

Flak at the target was M-IAH. SIH was encountered by one Group near the IP.

Groups report e/a seen as 4,8,9,30, and 50-75. E/A encountered were reported as 0,0,10, and 13 by individual Groups. Claims (by one Group) are 1-0-0 in air, 2-0-4 on ground.

109 a/c were down at bases between 1355-1405B. 3 a/c were lost, none is missing, none landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations at IP and on return route.

Weather: On route: over ITALY 3/10 stratocumulus, tops 3,000'-4,000', decreased to 1/10 over ADRIATIC and YUGOSLAVIA. In vicinity of LAKE BALATON 8-10/10 cumulus, clearing to 1-3/10, stratocumulus 15-20 miles West of BUDAPEST. Target: 1-3/10 stratocumulus, scattered alto cumulus. Return: variable 3-5/10 stratocumulus, tops 10,000'-14,000'.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 30 July 1944, at 0730B, 27 of 28 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory in HUNGARY.

The Group formed at 0832B in the regular assembly area and rendezvous with the 485th was accomplished over ALTAMURA at 0840B without incident. The Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0851B with the 485th leading and the 460th in the #2 position. The fighter escort, P-51s & P-38s, were first seen at 4600N1720E at 1032B. They furnished penetration, target, and withdrawal cover, returning to the ITALIAN coast with the formation.

3 a/c returned early.

From 23,000', 24 a/c were over the primary target, the BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory at 1116B. 22 a/c dropped 55 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, .1N, .025T fusing. Two a/c jettisoned their bombs just past the target due to bomb rack malfunction. The second attack unit discontinued the automatic pilot because manual control was safer in the congestion of a/c near the target.

MAH flak was encountered over the primary target.

50-75 ME-109s and FW-190s were seen between the IP and the target. At the IP, six e/a came in from 2 o'clock high and made a pass out of range. At 1110B, six ME-109s came in from 11 o'clock high firing rockets. Twelve ME-109s dropped bombs from 3,500' above the bomber formation and then dove into the clouds. The bombs were seen to burst below the formation. One ME-109 attacked from 11 o'clock high closing to 300 yards before peeling off at 3 o'clock. ME-109s were painted black with a red cross on the rudder.

The route was flown as briefed as was the return route to 4500N1820E. Here a turn was made to 4440N1710 and the formation returned directly to the base.

24 a/c returned to the base with a mean landing time of 1400B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 30 July 1944, 38 B-24 a/c of 39 scheduled took off beginning at 0732B to bomb BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory. (Primary Target).

The Group formed up and rendezvous with the 465th Bomb Group were accomplished as ordered and without difficulty.

3 a/c returned early.

35 a/c were over the target at 1115B (briefed target time 1110B) and 34 a/c dropped 85 tons of 500 lb RDX and GP bombs.

Disposition of total bomb damage:

Dropped on target arca	85
Returned to base	5
Jettisoned	5
Tot 1 tons carried	95

A-5 was used by lead a/c of both attack units.

Flak at the target was M to IAH and was not encountered until immediately before bomb release time. Time in flak was reported ne approximately 3 minutes. Flak was observed at points enroute and return which are known locations and on which the crews had been thoroughly briefed. No additional flak was encountered.

30 e/a were observed, 15 ME-109s in the target arca and 7 ME-109s in the LAKE BALATON area. 8 FW-190s at 4720M1730E.

10 ME-109s in target arca started to attack our Group from 3 o'clock high but made a 90° turn right and attacked the group to our rear, 3 abreast, high at 12 o'clock on Able Box diving through the formation. These e/a were immediately engaged by the escort which were observed to destroy 3 in this area. The crows were all impressed by and praised highly the support of todays fighter escort.

All e/a were reported as black or dark and no outstanding markings.

Rockets were used by both ME-109 and FW-190 a/c from out of range of our gunners.

Claims were one ME-109 destroyed as it attacked another group and came within range of our gunner.

Rendezvous with fighter escort was made at 1020r at 4510N1710E when 20 P-38 and 30 P-51 a/c were sighted. From that time until 1250B at the YUGOSLAVIAN coast the fighter cover was continuous and very effective, 30/50 of both types being observed at short intervals in the vicinity of the formation and no opportunity was afforded e/a to engage the bomber formation.

One a/c was lost at the target as a result of a direct flak hit or as a result of receiving direct hits from bombs dropped by our own a/c. Three chutes were observed.

34 a/c landed at this base from 1347B to 1415B.

Route was flown as briefed except for slight deviation in vicinity of IP.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 28 a/c of 28 scheduled took off at 0707B on 30 July 1944, to attack the BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory, HUNGARY.

This group made rendezvous with the 464th Bomb Group in their area at 0835B following them to SPINAZZOLA where Wing rendezvous was made at 0855B (four minutes late) at 12,000'. An escort of P-51s joined the formation at 1024B at 4519N1715E at 21,000' and gave penetration cover, target cover and withdrawal cover to the ITALIAN coast. P-38s were also observed in the target area. All crews reported that the escort was excellent and that it seems to improve on each successive mission.

2 a/c returned early to base.

Flak at the target was M-IAH. No flak was encountered enroute. No e/a were encountered during the mission. 4-8 ME-109s were seen and identified in the target area. 30-40 more e/a were also seen in the target area, but were at too great a distance to be identified.

26 a/c went over the target at 1117B at 23,000'. 26 a/c dropped 62 tons of 500 lb bombs, mixed RDX and GP: 3 bombs were returned to base when they failed to drop because of a rack malfunction. 9 bombs were jettisoned by 3 a/c in order to stay with the formation. Sighting was done by visual means and the lead a/c flew on A-5 pilot.

26 a/c landed at 1405B. No a/c are lost or missing and there are no casualties.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 30 July 1944, at 0731B, 33 B-24 of 34 a/c scheduled took off to bomb BUDAPEST DUNA A/C Factory (Primary Target).

Assembly was as scheduled over ALTAMURA at 0839B at 10,000'. The formation at assembly was satisfactory.

Wing rendezvous with the 460th, 464th and 465th Bomb Groups was over SPINAZZOLA at 0852B at 10,800'. Other than being one minute late the Wing rendezvous was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with fighter escort was effected at 1032B at 4555N1718E and consisted of approximately 75-90 P-51 and P-38 a/c. Escort was last observed at 1230B over the ADRIATIC at approximately 4230N1740E.

6 a/c returned prior to bombing.

26 a/c were over the target at 1114B (target time 1110B). 26 a/c dropped 65 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs (.1N, .025T fusing) at 24,000''. The initial point and last two turning points were obscured by clouds. Formation turned short of IP, on ETA, flying over 10/10 clouds. The target was picked up through a break in the clouds and the attack was made on a bomb run of 92°.

The briefed aiming point was intermittently covered by scattered clouds and smoke on bombing run; However, bombing was accomplished visually. The Group used the automatic pilot on the bomb run.

Approximately 9 ME-109 a/c were in the target area. None of these e/a attacked the formation. Fighter escort engaged e/a. At the IP at 1105B SIH flak was encountered for 2 minutes. Over the target from 1111B to 1116B IAH flak was encountered. 2 a/c were lost to flak.

Return was made without incident. 25 a/c landed, mean landing time 1355B.

Route was flown as briefed, except for deviation noted above.

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 cy ea CG, AC of S, A-3, Fifteenth AF.
- 2 cys AC of S, A-2, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 c; 28th SCU, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy PRO, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cv ea CO, AČ 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 Bombdr 0, PI, PRO, Stat, 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.