

55BW Mission Summary No. 55, 3 July 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 3 July 1944, 131 B-24 a/c of 136 scheduled took off between 0744-0835B to bomb TIMISOARA M/Y and BELGRADE Shell Oil Depot. There were 8 early returns.

Group assemblies and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Fighter escort was reported seen between 0940-1045B, and provided penetration, target, and withdrawal cover.

122 a/c were over primary targets between 1100-1127B. 120 a/c dropped 297.75 tons of bombs on assigned targets. Of the tonnage dropped, 223.2 tons were 500 lb GP (.1, .01, nondelay) and 74.5 tons of M-17 incendiaries. 1 a/c dropped 2.5 tons on the target assigned to 304th Wing. 1 a/c jettisoned full load, 2 a/c jettisoned 3 bombs each, and 1 a/c returned 2 of its bombs to base,

Results were as follows:

460th Group - At least 40-50 hits in target, approximately 4 hits in main passenger station. Very heavy concentration of strikes in the central portion of the M/Y. There is some evidence of explosion in east portion of yards.

464th Group - Numerous hits scored in the target area with the largest concentration in the eastern half of the target area. Undetermined quantity of hits causing explosions in the large circular storage tanks in the southeast portion of target area. A large rectangular building and two very large storage tanks were hit by several bombs. Barges and harbor installations northwest of target area were hit by several bombs. Reconnaissance photos show fires burning in east portion of target area.

465th Group - Several direct hits were scored on the car shops. Good concentration in center of yards with the heaviest concentration falling on the west choke point. Hits were scored on all lines at the choke point and on the overpass.

485th Group - Large concentration of hits in built up area just southwest of target, including numerous strikes in factory area. Good concentration across the M/Y which covers the car shops and continues over the roundhouses. Numerous small fires appear in area south of M/Y.

Flak at target ranged from S-MIH. A total of 4 e/a were seen with no encounters.

123 a/c were down between 1255-1415B.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Enroute, 2-5/10 cumulus; over target, 3-5/10 scattered; and on return, 6-7/10 cumulus with tops ranging from 12-15000'.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 3 July 1944, at 0855 hours, 29 of 30 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the 1/Y at TIMISOARA, ROUMANIA.

Group assembly was effected without incident. Rendezvous with the 485th was accomplished over ALTAMURA at 0856. The Wing formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0906B on schedule. Fighter escort, P-3Ss, contacted the formation at 1045B at 4415N 1920E, furnished penetration, target, and withdrawal cover. The escort left the formation forty miles from the YUGOSLAV coast.

At 21,000', 20 a/e were over the primary target at 1120B. 27 a/c dropped 66.25 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, .1N, mixed .01N, non-delay T fuses. One a/c dropped ten bombs to the right of the town, because bomb-bay doors failed to open at target time. One a/c had two bombs drop when the bomb-bay doors were opened. 2 a/c with three bombs hung up jettisoned in the ADRIATIC.

One of our a/c took off late and failed to catch up with the formation. This a/c joined the 304th Wing, went on to Bucharest, where it bombed the TITAN Malaxa Steel Works. 2.5 tons were dropped.

The Group experienced SIH flak over the targ.t.

29 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 14158.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 3 July 1944 at 0744B, 37 B-24 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the BELGRADE Shell Oil Depot (primary target).

Group assembly was affected without incident.

From 20-25 P-51 s/c were observed at 0945B at Turn Point STOLC. There were also observed 20 P-38 a/c at 0932B at 4332N 2505E; another group of 25 P-38 a/c were seen at 1110B at 4215N 1856E which remained with the formation until it reached the ITALIAN mainland.

6 a/c returned early.

2 c/a were observed; one Me-109 at target just after bombs away; one Ju-52 at 4430N 2022E which was flying in opposite direction to the formation. Neither e/a made any effort to attack.

28 a/c were over target at 1100D. 28 a/c dropped 70 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1N & mixed .01 & .025T) at 22,000'.

MIH flak was encountered at target.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 3 July 1944 at 0802B 36 a/c of 37 scheduled, took off to bomb the M/Y at TINISOARA, ROUMANIA.

Group rendezvous was accomplished at 0852B over ANDRIA. at 7,000'.

There was one early return.

No e/a were seen or encountered. Flak at the target was SIH and also some SIL flak was reported.

35 a/c went over the target at 1127B at 22,000'. 87 tons of 500 lb GP (.1N & mixed .01 & non-delay T fuses) were dropped. One a/c returned 2 of its bombs to base.

35 a/c landed at 1415B.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 3 July 1944, at 0815B, 32 a/c took off to bomb TIMISOARA M/Y (Primary Target).

Assembly over ALTAMURA at 0859B at 5,000' was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 20 P-38s was effected at 1035B at 4430N 1950E. Escort left formation on return at approximately 30 miles off YUGOSLAVIAN coast.

Two unidentified e/a were seen enroute.

31 a/c were over target at 1121B (target time 1121B). 30 a/c dropped 74.5 tons of 500 lb cluster aimable M-17 incendiary bombs from 21,000'

31 a/c landed, mean landing time 1430B.

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 cy ca CG, AC of S, A-3, Fifteenth AF.
- 2 cys AC of S, A-3, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy 23th SCU, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy PRO, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy ca CO, AC of S, A-2, 5th, 47th, 49th, 304th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy CG, 306th Fighter Wing.
- 1 cy ca CO, AC of S, A-1, A-2, A-3, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy ca Bombdr 0, PI, PRO, Stat, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy ca CO, S-3, ca Gp, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 3 cys S-2, ca Gp, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy CG, III Bomber Command.