

55BW Mission Summary No. 56, 5 Jul 44 (Contd).

1. General Summary. On 5 Jul: 1044, 147 B-24 a/c of 149 scheduled took off between 0730-0755B to bomb TOULON harbor targets. There were 12 early returns.

Group assemblies, and rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered by 3 of the 4 Groups, the 460th did not accomplish line or Wing rendezvous. Fighter rendezvous was reported as effected at 1100B and at 1230B, furnishing target cover, and remaining with formation until off FRENCH coast on return route.

133 a/c were over target between 1234-1239B. 132 a/c dropped 85 tons 1000 lb and 238.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1N,.01,.025T fusing) from 21500'-22800'. 7 early returns jettisoned, 1 sortie jettisoned full load, 1 part load. 5 early returns returned full load, 1 sortie returned 1 bomb.

Results:

460th Group - Approximately 5 to 8 hits in dry docks of Missionary Basin with a direct or near miss on submarine. Several hits were scored in the stores area to the Southeast. Many hits in the repair shed area cutting tracks and damaging several buildings.

464th Group - Heavy smoke obscured much of the target area. 13 hits in submarine station. Fires and heavy black smoke are seen in the drydocks and stores area south of the power station.

465th Group - 15 hits were scored in the warehouse area including at least 5 direct hits. 8 to 10 direct hits are seen on repair shops and 3 direct hits on drydocks. Other hits in coal depot and drydock southeast of target area. 1 direct hit and near miss on ship believed to be battleship leaving it burning.

435th Group - Many strikes and near misses in drydocks of Missionary Basin. 3 submarines received probable direct hits and 2 others near misses. Hits were scored in barracks and building area. Several strikes observed on gate of east drydock with many other hits on previously damaged fitting and assembly shops.

Flak at target was reported M-IAH; no other flak was encountered. 2-6 e/a were seen; there were no encounters.

122 a/c were down at bases between 1515-1530B. 3 a/c were lost, 1 over target, 1 over ITALY (crew srfo), and 1 ditched at sea. None is missing. 10 landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Over ITALY 6-8/10 cumulus, tops 13000'. Over sea 2/10 cirrus 20000', visibility 25 miles; target, clear with light haze,

visibility 20 miles; return, 2/10 cumulus, 12000' over CORSICA, clear over sea, over ITALY up to 8/10 cumulus 12000'.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 5 July 1944, at 0745B, 38 of 39 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the submarine drydocks at TOULON, FRANCE.

The Group formed 2 attack units in the regular assembly area at 0830P. Rendezvous with the 485th was not accomplished, because that Group was 2 minutes late. The 460th was unable to rendezvous with the Wing which had left SPINAZZOLA early. Fighter escort, P-38's, met just before CORSICA at 1100B, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They were last seen over the target at 1238B.

3 a/c returned early. These a/c jettisoned bombs in the TYRRHENIAN Sea.

From 21600', 35 a/c were over the primary target at 1238B. 34 a/c dropped 85 tons of 1000 lb GP bombs, .1N & .01T fuses. Due to malfunction, 1 a/c failed to bomb, jettisoning bombs in the sea.

The Group experienced MAH flak over the target area. The AA guns fired 10 to 12 bursts at a time in a box barrage lasting for about 7 minutes.

Route was flown as briefed.

33 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1515. 2 a/c landed at NAPLES and have not returned to base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 5 July 1944, 39 B-24 a/c scheduled took off at 0730B to bomb TOULON Submarine Docks.

Group assembly was accomplished as planned and line rendezvous with the 465th Group was made as ordered on course over CORSICA at 0834B.

Wing rendezvous was made over SPINAZZOLA as scheduled.

34 a/c were over the target at 1242B and dropped 83½ tons 500 lb GP bombs with .1, .01, .025 fusing from 21800'. 3 a/c jettisoned 1½ tons of bombs, 1 a/c } ton at 4150N-1130E, 1 a/c ¾ ton in water at coast near target, 1 a/c ½ tons at 4220N-0940E, 1 a/c brought back ½ ton. All jettisoned as result of malfunctions. 3 early returns brought their bombs back and 2 jettisoned in the water at 4015N-1700E and 4235N-0745E respectively.

6 e/a were soon, 4 Me 109 a/c at 1254B at 4305N0607 at 20000', these a/c appeared ready to attack when they were driven off by P-38's. 2 misidentified a/c at 1240B at 21700' were also engaged and driven off by our fighter escort.

Flak (predicted) was encountered in the target area only, and formation was within range of M-IAH for periods of from 3 to 5 minutes, depending" upon their formation position. Permanent batteries were augmented by fire from warships in harbor and greatest concentration was west of target, Bursts: black, white, red. Smoke screen was used and covered a large portion of the area making target identification difficult.

27 a/c returned to this base between 1453B and 1530B. 5 a/c landed at friendly fields on return route for refueling and 1 a/c landed and has remained at BORGIO, CORSICA overnight. Last report from this a/c indicated one engine inoperative. 17 of the returning a/c were slightly damaged by flak.

1 a/c was observed to receive direct hit in bomb bay over target area. Fire in bomb bay was followed by an explosion and a/c was seen to disintegrate in air before crashing. Location 4308N-0555E time 1245B. 6 chutes were observed and 1 chute was reported on fire. Bomb photographs include 2 chutes during descent.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 5 July 1944, 37 a/c of 38 scheduled took off at 0746B to bomb the submarine docks at TOULON, FRANCE.

The Group assembly was accomplished over ADRIA at 0830B at 7000' without incident. The line rendezvous with the 464th was accomplished as briefed.

The Wing rendezvous was accomplished over SPINAZZOLA at 0848B at 7000'.

The fighter escort was met at 4300N-0540E (the IP) at 1230B at 20000' and provided cover over the target and escort back to CORSICA where they left at 1330B at 15000'.

There were 2 early returns.

35 a/c went over the target at 1234B and 35 a/c dropped 82½ tons of 500 lb GP bombs.

2 to 3 Me 109's were seen in the target area.

Flak at target was IAH. Crew members said that the flak at TOULON was the most accurate they have ever encountered. A new type of flak was encountered over this target. It consisted of ball bearings about the size of a pen.

2 B-24's from this group did not return to the home base. 1 of these planes landed safely at a friendly field but the other is lost (crew safe).

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 5 July 1944 at 0755B, 33 B-24 -/c scheduled, took off to bomb the TOULON Submarine Docks, FRANCE. There were 2 early returns.

Assembly was over ALTAMURA at 0818B at 4000' and was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with 460th, 464th, and 465th Groups was made over SPINAZZOLA at 0852B.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 1 Group of P-38's was effected at 4300N-0540E at 1230B. Fighter escort remained with the formation over the target and until the formation was well past the coast of FRANCE on the return route.

2 e/a, unidentified, were seen between the IP and the target. They did not attack and were chased away by the fighter cover a/c.

29 a/c were over the target at 1239B (target time 1206). 29 a/c dropped 72.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs .1, .01 fusing at 22800'.

There was cumulus and stratocumulus in patches over the APENNINES of about 5/10 coverage enroute. Few swell cumulus persisted over the TYRRANIAN Sea with a slight build up over SOUTH CONSICA to about 3/10 coverage. The target was clear with a near overcast visible over FRANCE about 10 Miles inland from the coast. On return route, the clouds had built up over the APENNINES with an overage top of 10000' and base of 4500'. Wind over the target was from 320 degrees at 45 knots.

No e/a were encountered.

Return was made without incident. 29 a/c landed, mean landing time 1515B. 1 a/c ditched, 1 landed at friendly field.

Route was flown as briefed.