

55BW Mission Summary No. 46, 14 June 1944 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 14 June 1944, between 0725 - 0750B, 152 B-24 a/c took off to bomb the PETFURDO oil plant. There were 4 early returns.

Group assemblies were without incident. Line rendezvous was effected as ordered by two groups, but one group of the second attack unit was late. Wing rendezvous was on time, however, being effected with some difficulty due to the late arrival of one group. Fighter escort rendezvous was as ordered, and all groups agree that the fighter escort and support were most effective.

148 a/c were over the target at 1058 - 1103B. 140 a/c dropped 278 tons of bombs from 18,000 - 19,900'. 6 a/c jettisoned or salvoed bombs; 2 a/c returned bombs to base. Results were good to excellent.

Flak at target was SIH. Flak was observed or encountered at VESPREM (SIH), PECS (SIH), and POLGARDI (SIH).

So well did fighter escort protect formation that only 5 or 6 e/a were seen; there were no encounters.

148 e/c were down between 1335 - 1350B.

Route was flown as briefed, except that the 460th Bomb Group cut in short of the IP and bombed in advance of the group ordered to precede it in the formation.

Weather: enroute 2/10 cumulus, tops 10,000 - 14,000, target: clear, visibility 20 - 25 miles, return: 2-3/10 cumulus, tops at 10 - 14,000' over YUGOSLAVIA, 5-6/10 cumulus, tops 11,000' over ITALY.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 14 June 1944, at 0730 hours, 39 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the Oil Plant at PETFURDO, Hungary.

The Group formed in two attack units in the regular assembly area at 0820 hours. Rendezvous with the 485th, between ALTAMURA and GRAVINA was accomplished at 0831 hours as scheduled. Wing rendezvous was over SPINAZZOLA at 0840 hours, the 460th in the #4 Wing position. Fighter escort, P-38s, contacted the formation over BANJALUKA at 1035 hours, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover, left the formation at 1200 hours over BANJALUKA.

From 19,500', 38 a/c released 75.25 tons of 250 lb clustered GP bombs, .1N - .01 & .025T fuses, on the primary target at 1101½ hours. Three a/c with nineteen bombs hung up due to release malfunction, jettisoned these one minute after target. One a/c was unable to drop three bombs due to rack malfunction, jettisoning in ADRIATIC. The target was well hit in the area designated. Smoke from previous bomb bursts prevented accurate visual observation of results. There were

explosions and fires in the target, the smoke rising to 15,000' as the Group left.

The Group experienced SIH flak over the IP and the target. Flak was also encountered as follows: SIH at PECS 4605N - 1812E, where red bursts were observed, and MIH at VESPREM.

Route was flown as briefed. Weather: CAVU, visibility ten miles at target

39 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1345 hours.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 14 June 1944, beginning at 0725B hours, 39 B-24 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the PETFURDO (Hungary) Oil Cracking Plant

Assembly was accomplished without incident at ANDRIA at the prescribed time. Wing rendezvous was on time.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, consisting of 35/40 P-38 a/c, was effected at 0927B hours in the immediate vicinity of Cazziol, the Key Point. Fighter cover from rendezvous on was continuous to and over the target, and on return to the Yugoslavia coast, last being sighted at 1240B hours. All crews, at interrogation, laid special emphasis on the excellence of the fighter cover provided.

Six e/a, believed to be ME-109s were observed at considerable distance from the formation.

MIH flak was encountered in the target area.

37 a/c were over the target at 1101B hours (target time 1103B hours). 36 a/c dropped 69 3/8 tons of 250 lb clustered GP bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fuses). The target was well covered by smoke from bombing by previous groups; many crew members report observing their bombs falling into the smoke obscured area at about the briefed aiming point, with new fires and explosions visible, and smoke over the target area building up from 12,000/15,000 ft. A few bombs are reported as falling to the West and to the Northwest of the target at a distance of about 2,000 to 3,000 feet.

Weather over the target was good, with visibility from 20/25 miles and slight haze. Enroute, 2/10 cumulus, tops from 10,000 to 14,000 ft was observed over the mountains; scattered cumulus generally from the Yugoslavian coast to the target area; clear over the Adriatic Sea. Upon return, 2/10 to 3/10 cumulus, tops at 10,000 to 14,000 ft was seen over Yugoslavian mainland; and 5/10 to 6/10 cumulus, tops at 11,000 feet. from the Italian coast to Base.

Return was made without incident. Route was flown as briefed. 37 a/c landed at 1335B hours, with no stragglers nor late arrivals.

4, 465th Bomb Group. On 14 June 1944 at 0744B hours 35 a/c of 37 a/c scheduled took off to bomb Petfurdo Oil Plant.

The Group assembly was accomplished without incident over Canosa at 0820B hours at 5,000 ft.

The Wing rendezvous was accomplished without incident at 0840B hours over Spinazzola at 5,000 ft.

P-51 and P-38 escort was met at the Key Point at 0930B hours at 6,000 ft. and left at 1225 hours at 13,000 ft. at Berletta. Escort was described as excellent.

There was 1 early return.

34 a/c went over the target at 1058 hours and 32 a/c dropped 64 tons of 500 lb. G.P. bombs (.1 nose and .01 and .025 mixed tail fuses) from 19,900 ft. 2 a/c did not drop due to a rack malfunction and returned its bombs to the home base. 1 a/c lost an engine enroute to the target and jettisoned its bombs at 46°14' N - 17° 23' E at 1040B hours in order to keep up with the formation. Bomb strike photos show an excellent pattern well concentrated in the target area. Hits can be seen on the cracking plant, boiler house and stabilization plant with numerous direct hits on large storage tanks. Huge flames were seen coming from the target and smoke rose to 15,000 ft.

No enemy planes were seen or encountered.

Flak was encountered between the I.P. and the target at 46° 55' N - 17° 50' E and was said to be SIH. Flak was also observed at Pecs Airdrome at 46° 05' N - 18° 13' E which was reported as scant inaccurate medium and heavy.

The weather was clear enroute to and from the target with some stratocumulus at about 16,000 ft. Visibility over the target was CAVU.

34 a/c landed at 1350B hours (mean time).

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 14 June 1944, at 0750 hours, 39 B-24 a/c of 39 scheduled took off to bomb Petfundo Oil Plant (Primary Target).

Assembly was over ALTAMURA at 7,000' at 0832 hours. The formation at assembly was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with the 460th Group was effected on line between ALTAMURA and GRAVINA, and with the 464th and 465th Groups over SPINAZZOLA at 0840 hours.

Rendezvous with the fighter escort, which consisted of P-38s was effected without incident at 45° 40' N - 17° 20' E at 1038 hours. Fighters provided cover over the target and on return to a point approximately 44° 00' N - 17° 00' E at 1217 hours.

One (1) a/c, # 727, returned prior to bombing.

5 e/a, apparently 3 ME-109s and 2 FW-190s were seen in the target area, but they did not approach the formation. Scant, heavy flak was observed off course at PECS, 46° 05' N - 18° 10' E, and at VESPREM, 47° 05' N - 17° 53' E, and at POLGARDI, 47 03' N - 18° 15' E.

38 a/c were over the target at 1103 hours (target time 1103 hours). Target was reached on schedule, but our formation went over target last instead of as briefed, because the 460th turned inside of I.P. going in ahead of our formation. 35 a/c dropped 69 3/8 tons of 250 lb G.P. bombs (.1 nose, .01 & .025 mixed tail fusing) at 18,000'. Of the 35 a/c dropping bombs on target, two returned 4 bombs to base due to malfunctioning of bomb release mechanism. Another of these a/c jettisoned one bomb in the Adriatic on return. Three (3) a/c turned 32 bombs to base after failure to release bombs over the target and a/c jettisoned 16 bombs at 1058 hours at 46 degrees 57 minutes N - 17 degrees 33 minutes E. Target was well covered by smoke from the bombing by the other Groups ahead of the formation,

Bombing results were undetermined, although some hits were observed on oil storage tanks slightly Northwest of the target.

The weather was CAVU enroute and over the target. On return, scattered cumulus of about 3/10 coverage at 8,000' was encountered over land; over the ADRIATIC the weather was CAVU.

Return was made without incident. 38 a/c landed, mean landing time 1347 hours.

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