

55BW Mission Summary No. 48, 22 June 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 22 June 1944, 154 scheduled B-24 a/c took off between 0735 - 0754B to attack BOLOGNA Main and CASTEL MAGGIORE M/Y. There were 5 early returns.

Group assemblies and line and Wing rendezvous were as ordered. Rendezvous with P-38s and P-51s of the 306th Fighter Wing was effected at 1030B, escort gave effective support enroute. over targets, and on return until ANCONA was reached at 1230B.

149 a/c were over target between 1108 - 1114B. 141 a/c dropped 281 7/8 tons (129 7/8 tons of 250 lb, 152 tons of 500 lb) of GP bombs fused .1N 1/2 & 1/2 .01, .025T, from 18,000 - 21,000'. 4 a/c dropped early due to malfunction, 6 (including 2 early returns) a/c jettisoned. None brought bombs back. Results ranged from poor to good.

Flak was SIH at CASTEL MAGGIORE, M-IAH at BOLOGNA. There was SIH at URBINO, FORLI, FAENZA, PRADORO, ESSASO, and VERGATO, and MAH at COLBARDORO.

14 - 18 e/a were seen at BOLOGNA, 5 - 8 being encountered. 15 - 30 e/a were seen at CASTEL MAGGIORE, 4 encountered. Claims are 2 - 0 - 3 by the 465th Bomb Group.

148 a/c were down between 1319 - 1407B. 1 a/c failed to return, being hit by flak at BOLOGNA.

Route was flown as briefed:

Weather: 4 - 5/10 cumulus, 12,000'' base, over ADRIATIC, visibility 20 - 25 miles, at target (BOLOGNA) 2 - 3/10 cumulus, visibility 20 miles (CASTEL MAGGIORE) CAVU. Return, scattered cumulus 3 - 5/10, base 12,000', visibility 15 - 20 miles

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 22 June 1944, at 0745 hours, 39 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the M/Y at CASTEL MAGGIORE.

The Group assembled in the regular area, line rendezvous with the 485th took place as scheduled and Wing rendezvous over SPINAZZOLA was without incident. Fighter escort, P-38s, contacted the formation at 1030 hours in the vicinity of the Key Point, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1118 hours shortly after the target.

At 19,000', 39 a/c were over the M/Y at CASTEL MAGGIORE at 1112 hours. 37 a/c dropped 74 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, .1N, 1/2 1/2 .01 & .025T fuses, Photographs show the M/Y in its entire length obscured by smoke from the concentration of bomb bursts, and from burning tank cars. Some bombs fell beyond the target, in the fields to the northeast. One a/c dropped eight bombs near BOLOGNA after target

time, the bombardier failing to locate the target. Another a/c jettisoned eight bombs in the ADRIATIC due to a power malfunction.

In the vicinity of BOLOGNA, 30 SEF, FW-190s and ME-109s, were observed at 1109 hours. Over the target, one ME-109 attacked from 11 o'clock high; out of the sun, firing rockets. This e/a shot away the nose turret on R/V, killing the nose gunner. At the time the formation was making its wide left turn south of BOLOGNA, three ME-109s attacked the formation from 8 o'clock low. They raised their noses slightly and fired rockets into the formation. Color markings of e/a were observed as follows: black fuselage and wings, some having yellow bands around waist.

The Group experienced SIH flak in the target area. While rallying south of BOLOGNA, IAH flak was encountered from the Rally Point, Marzabotto, to - 4418N1112E, railway flak near the tunnels and a heavy concentration of flak batteries in the fields nearby. An unusual type of projectile was noticed here, a kite-like box of red fire without smoke, approximately four feet square. It did not burst or disintegrate. It was sent up just at the termination of the flak of usual type. SIH flak was also encountered in the URBINO-FOSSOMBRONE area and at COLBORDOLO.

Route was flown as briefed. Weather: 4-5/10ths cumulus over ADRIATIC enroute, visibility 20 - 25 miles, over target, 1-2/10ths cumulus and 2/3/10ths cirrus, visibility 15 - 20 miles.

38 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1330 hours. One a/c failed to return. Crews reported seeing this a/c, damaged by flak, hit the ground at 1139 hours at 4402N1220E. Six chutes had opened.

16 a/c were damaged by flak, one a/c damaged by e/a rocket fire. In addition to the fatality noted, two crew members were wounded by flak.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 22 June 1944, beginning at 0735B hours, 38 B-24 a/c of 38 scheduled took off to bomb BOLOGNA, ITALY, Main M/Y. The 38 a/c formed into two attack units.

Assembly was accomplished without incident. Rendezvous with the 465th Bomb Group, was accomplished as briefed, as was the Wing rendezvous.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, consisting of 30/35 P-38 a/c, was effected at 1030B hours in the immediate vicinity of the key point, 4410N1340E. Fighter cover from rendezvous on was continuous to and over the target, and on return to - 4340N1425E - last being seen at 1215B hours. All crews at interrogation laid special emphasis on the excellence of the fighter cover provided.

16/18 e/a, consisting of 8/10 FW-190s and 6 ME-109s were observed at the target area between 1104B hours and 1110B hours at 19,000 to 21,000 ft. No e/a were encountered by this Group.

Flak encountered at the target area was MAH. On the return route SIH was encountered at URBINO, FORLI, FANO and FAENZA. MAH was encountered in the vicinity of COLBARDO, 4350N1245E.

35 a/c were over the target at 1110B hours (target time 1100B hours. 35 a/c dropped 69 7/8 tons of 250 lb clustered GP bombs - .1N and .01 and .025 mixed tail fuses at 21,000 ft. One bomb (1/3 ton) was returned to base due to rack malfunction in a/c, one a/c salvoed two tons of bombs in the ADRIATIC safe due to #1 inverter out and electrical system in front bomb bay caught fire, two a/c jettisoned four tons, one in the ADRIATIC safe, due to right waist window blowing out and knocking out right horizontal stabilizer, one in the ADRIATIC safe at 4322N1421E due to losing #2 supercharger and hole on pilot's side of windshield caused by empty shell case from another a/c in test firing guns.

Weather over the target was good, with visibility from 15/20 miles, slight haze. Enroute visibility 15/20 miles, slight haze 3/10 low scattered cumulus at 4,000 ft. over ADRIATIC. Near target, 2/10 cumulus at 22,000 ft. On return, 4/10 to 6/10 cumulus over ITALY with top of 9,000 ft.

35 a/c landed beginning at 1302B hours, the last a/c landing at 1336B hours.

Route was as briefed to the target - from MARZABOTTO turn point, the route at times was three miles south of the briefed route to the coast.

Bombing results were good. One large explosion at the aiming point with sheet of flames and smoke 1,500 ft. in diameter. Twelve hits on tracks between aiming point and railroad station. Hits were observed starting at the race track NE of aiming point and running across aiming point and railroad station.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 22 June 1944, 38 ships were scheduled to take off at 0750 hours to bomb the BOLOGNA M/Y. 38 ships took off at 0754 hours.

The group assembled over ANDRIA at 0828 hours at 6,000 ft. and made Wing rendezvous over SPINAZZOLA at 0853 at 6,000 ft. One group came in from the SE instead of SW, but this did not cause our group any difficulty. Escort of P-38s joined the formation at 4412N1342E at 19,000ft. and left the formation at approximately 1230 near the spur on the Italian coast.

There were two early returns: one due to a surging supercharger; and one due to dropping of manifold pressure, Both early returns jettisoned in the ADRIATIC sea.

12 to 14 ME-109s and probably a ME-202 and Reg-2001 were observed in the area between IP and target, 5 to 8 ME-109s attacked from the tail from 5 to 7 o'clock in twos and threes from high and level. Attacks were aggressive and closed to within 150 yards. 1 ME-202 and 5 ME-109s attacked fox box in formation, diving at terrific speeds in what was described as a "combination dive bombing and strafing maneuver". No bombs were actually dropped, but the axis of attack was almost straight down. The aircraft passed within 300 yards in front of the box. 2 ME-109s are claimed as destroyed, and 3 ME-109s are claimed as damaged. Flak was S to MIH at target. Also S to MAH at several points paralleling, and two miles south of the RR from BOLOGNA to ANCONA. SAH flak was encountered a few miles south of BOLOGNA and at a point 5 miles south of FANO.

36 aircraft went over the target at 1108 hours at 20,000 ft. 30 a/c dropped 60 tons of 250 lb GP bombs with .1 nose and .01 and .025 tail fuses. 6 a/c dropped 4 minutes early on box leader. Bomb strike photos indicate that 1st attack unit hit over and left of assigned target in residential section.

Weather enroute: 2/10 cumulus along route with 2/10 to 3/10 cumulus over target. Visibility over target 20 miles. Front building up on Yugoslavian coast.

36 a/c landed at 1325 mean landing time.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 22 Juno 1944, at 0752 hours, 39 B-24s of 39 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb CASTEL MAGGIORE M/Y (Primary Target).

Group assembly was over ALTAMURA at 9,000 ft. and was satisfactory. Rendezvous with the 460th Bombardment Group was accomplished on line between ALTALURA and GRAVINA at 9,000 ft. at 0847 hours. Rendezvous with the 464th and 465th Bomb Groups was over SPINAZZOLA at 0854 hours.

Fighter escort of P-51s was first observed at 4400N1400E at 1037 hours. These P-51s continued with the formation to the target. P-38s were observed over the target and furnished cover upon withdrawal to a point off the coast opposite ANCONA, approximately 4340N1350E.

There were no early returns.

Fifteen e/a, apparently ME-109s were seen between FORMIGNANA and the target, but they did not approach the formation. Moderate heavy flak was observed at BOLOGNA. Scant heavy flak was observed at PRADURO E SASSO, FERRARA and at VERGATO.

Thirty nine a/c were over the target at 1114 hours (target time 1100 hours). Thirty nine a/c dropped 78 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1 Nose & .01 & .025 tail fusing) at 18,000 ft. The first wave got some hits on the briefed mean point of impact with some bombs falling short and to the left of the target. The bombs of the second wave fell to the left of the M/Y and just short of the main railroad.

Enroute, haze was encountered over the ADRIATIC. 3/10 cumulus, based at 12,000 ft. persisted over land. Weather at target was CAVU. On return route scattered cumulus 3/10 to 5/10 at 12,000 ft. was encountered.

There were no encounters with e/a. As stated in paragraph 6, several e/a were seen in the vicinity of the target, but did not appear to be aggressive. Enroute, at landfall, a B-24 of light olive drab color joined the formation, continued to the target, and was last seen at a point opposite TERMINI. Another B-24, with French insignia on the vertical stabilizers, was observed circling above the formation at the target. Flak at target was SIH.

Return was made without incident, Thirty nine a/c landed, mean landing time 1407 hours. There were no stragglers, no late arrivals.

No a/c were lost and there were no casualties.

After rallying from the target the formation zig zagged back and forth dodging flak bursts to RIMINI, where the briefed course was followed back to the base. No trouble was encountered in locating the IP or the target. Large fires were observed in BOLOGNA.

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