

55BW Mission Summary No. 52 28 June 1944 (Contd).

1. General Summary. On 28 June 1944, 144 B-24 a/c of 147 scheduled took off between 0615-0645B to bomb the PRAHOVA and TITAN Oil Refineries et BUCHAREST. There were 15 early returns.

Group assemblies, line, and Wing rendezvous were made as ordered. Rendezvous with fighter escort of 306th Fighter Wing was effected as ordered.

126 a/c were over the targets from 0946-0947B. 125 a/c dropped 269.20 tons of 100 lb and 500 lb GP bombs (.1N, mixed .025 and non-delay T fusing) from 22,300-23,900'. 3 a/c (2 early returns) jettisoned full bomb load; 6 a/c (5 early returns) brought full load back to base.

Results:

460th Bomb Group - Bombs dropped approximately five miles from target. One direct hit was scored on a probable munitions storage building of GIULESTI A/D causing an explosion.

464th Bomb Group - The refinery was well covered by a concentration of bombs and several hits were scored on the adjacent railway workshops and marshalling yards. Three direct hits were scored on two columns of goods wagons.

465th Bomb Group - Highest concentration centers about the oil refinery with strikes extending to the railway workshops and the adjacent marshaling yards.

485th Bomb Group - The first wave attacked a small unidentified factory on the edge of BUCHAREST scoring several strikes in the factory area. The second wave attacked the oil refinery assigned as the target scoring several strikes in the oil storage area starting several fires.

Reconnaissance photographs show the PRAHOVA Oil Refinery with the distillation unit damaged by a direct hit. Several hits on tank storage for intermediate and finished products have destroyed a number of tanks and have Severely damaged a smell boiler house. The TITAN Oil Refinery had several fires started among the storage tanks and several unidentified buildings damaged.

IIH flak was encountered at target, none elsewhere. 8-50 e/a were seen by individual Groups, 3-45 e/a were encountered. Claim are 10-15-1.

120 e/c were down between 1316-1340. 3 a/c were lost, 6 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations by 460<sup>th</sup> and 485th Bomb Groups.

Weather: enroute out 4-5/10 cumulus, at target 3-4/10 cumulus, visibility 10-15 miles, route back 4 - 5/10 alto-stratus, clearing over ADRIATIC and ITALY.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 28 June 1944, at 0615 hours, 33 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the TITAN Oil refinery at BUCHAREST, ROUMANIA.

Assembly and Wing rendezvous were as ordered. Fighter escort consisted of P-38s & P-51s. P-38s furnished penetration and withdrawal cover and P-51s provided cover over the target. Escort was first seen at 0900 hours, five miles N of ALEMSINAO - 4333N 2143 - and left the formation at 1135 hours, ten miles S of NOVI PAZAR - 4300N 2030E.

Five a/c returned early.

From 22,700' at 0956 hours, 28 a/c dropped 68.25 tons of 500 lb GP bombs.

Due to malfunctions, two a/c jettisoned two and five bombs respectively, immediately after the target.

The Group experienced continuous pointed IIR flak in the target area.

Immediately after the information passed over the target, two boxes were attacked by ME-109s. One box was attacked by six ME-109s which made passes from 3 to o'clock. The other box was attacked by four ME-109s which came in singly from 5 o'clock closing to 600 yards. Our a/c successfully fought off these attacks and claim two ME-109s destroyed. Approximately 15 other ME-109s were seen over the target area, but they did not attack.

27 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1340 hours. Due to gas shortage, 1 a/c landed at BARI and has since returned.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 28 June 1944, 38 B-24 aa/c of 39 scheduled took off to bomb the PRAHOVA Oil Refinery, BUCHAREST, ROUMANIA.

4 a/c returned early.

Group assembly was made as briefed. The line rendezvous was made without incident.

Rendezvous with the fighter escort was at:

0813B hours at 4200N 1842E with 16 P-47 a/c

0822B hours at 4315N 1940E with 16 P-51 a/c

0848B hours at 4348N 2128E with 25 - 30 P-38 a/c

Fighter escort was seen almost continuously from rendezvous into the target and on return to the YUGOSLAVIAN coast - last seen at 1205B hours at the YUGOSLAVIA coast. Returning crews commented favorably on the closeness and excellence of cover provided by the fighter escort.

4 ME-109s and 4 FW-190s were seen at the target area at 0949B hours.

34 a/c were over the target at 0948B hours (target time 1000B hours). 33 a/c dropped 59 tons of 100 lb GP bombs (.1N & mixed .025 and non-delay T fuse) from 22,300-24,000'.

33 a/c landed, from 1258B to 1330B hours. 1 a/c No. 41-29351 landed at BARI at 1255B hours, for fuel and landed at this base at 1630B hours.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 28 June 1944, 36 a/c were scheduled to take off at 0605 hours to bomb the PRAHOVA Oil Refinery at BUCHAREST. 35 a/c took off at 0605 hours.

There were 4 early returns.

The group assembled over ANDRIA at 0656 at 4,000' and made Wing rendezvous at 0711 hours over SPINAZZOLA at 4,000'. Escort of P-47s and P-38s joined at 0815 at the coast of YUGOSLAVIA at 12,000' and provided penetration cover and withdrawal and left the formation at 1200 hours at the coast of YUGOSLAVIA at 12,000'.

8 JU-87s, 1 JU-88, 3 - 5 ME-109s and FW-190s were observed in the target area. 2 SE fighters were observed near the YUGOSLAVIAN coast. 1 ME-109 was observed in the vicinity of NIS. There were three encounters. A FW-190 made a head-on attack at 0947 made three passes from below at 7 o'clock. A JU-88 made a head-on attack at 0951 in the target area. No claims are made on these attacks. A FW-190 in the target area made a pass at 10 o'clock level and is claimed as destroyed. 1 ME-109 at 1005 at ROSIORU De VEDE, 4456N 2459E, came in at 6 o'clock in a steep climb and is claimed as destroyed. M-IIH barrage type flak was encountered over the target. SIL flak was encountered at BRGOT, 4239N 1810E.

31 a/c went over the target at 0947 hours at 23,900' 31 a/c dropped 59.975 tons of 100 lb GP bombs.

31 a/c landed at 1320 hours mean landing time.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 28 June 1944 at 0548 hours, 38 B-24 a/c 39 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb TITAN Oil Refinery and Storage at BUCHAREST.

There were 2 early returns.

Assembly was over ALTAMURA at 0645 hours 6,000'. Assembly was satisfactory.

Rendezvous with 460th Bomb Group at 0700 hours at 6,000' between ALTAMURA and GRAVINA; rendezvous with 465th and 464th Bomb Groups took place at 0711 hours at 6,000' on course at SPINAZZOLA.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, which consisted of 20 P-38 and some P-51 a/c 0807 hours was effected at 4250N 1810E. These fighters left formation at 0945 hours and were not seen again until 1023 hours at 4355N 2410E on the return route; this consisted of 20 P-38s; they left the formation at the YUGOSLAVIAN coast on ADRIATIC.

45 - 50 e/a, 10 FW-190s, 30 ME-109s, 1 JU-88 and a few ME-110s and JU-87s were seen from IP to target and on the return. The formation was under continuous attacks for 35 minutes. Flak at the target was ITH.

33 a/c were over the target at 0952 hours. 33 a/c dropped 82 tons of 500 lb GP bombs.

About 45 - 50 e/a were seen between IP and target, of which 10 were FW-190s, 30 ME-109s, 1 JU-88 and 6 ME-110s and JU-87s. About 32 ME-109s and 3 FW-190s attacked the bomber formation. Attacks were continuous from IP to target and for 30 minutes on return route. Fighter attacks lasted approximately 35 minutes. attacks were aggressive, coming in from all round the clock, high, level, and low. E/A came in from 2 to 6 abreast, and 2 to 4 in line. The pilots appeared to be quite experienced. Bombers claim 12 ME-109s destroyed; 15 ME-109s probables, and 1 FW-190 damaged. Markings: ME-109s dark grey in color, several black and silver with swastika on fuselage and tail some with yellow spinners. Flak at the target was IAH. A/C of formation, which were holed by flak - seven, slight, and five, severe, a/c of formation were holed by fighters - five, severe, and one minor. 3 of our bombers were lost due to e/a. 1 a/c #147, was seen to go down shortly after passing over target 4 chutes were seen to open. 1 a/c #701, was seen to go down and 6 chutes were seen to open. Another a/c #122, was seen to go down shortly after passing over target two men jumped out; one chute was definitely seen to open.

29 a/c landed at home base without incident at 1330 hours 4 a/c landed at friendly fields. A/Cs #534, 703 and. 718 at BARI, and #116 at TORTORELLA, a/c #718 returned to home base.

Route was flown 16 miles to left of briefed course to IP, then followed as briefed.

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