

55BW Mission Summary No. 39, 5 June 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 5 June 44, the 464th and 465th Bombardment Groups of the 55th Bombardment Wing attacked the FERRARA M/Y. 72 B-24s took off at 0950 to 1005 hours. 4 a/c returned early. Group assembly was accomplished at 1051 hours with Wing rendezvous at 1053 to 1102 hours. Fighter escort was joined at 1226B at ANCONA. From 19500 to 20500' at 1310B, 67 a/c dropped 131.8 tons of 100 lb GP bombs, with results termed very good. One a/c jettisoned and 1 a/c brought bombs back to base. Flak encountered was MAH with some rail flak employed. Flak at BOLOGNA was observed to be Intense Heavy. A total of 36 a/c were seen with 22 ME-109s and FW-190s making attacks particularly with pressing and aggressive attacks. One B-24 was lost to e/a. The 464th Bomb Group states claims of 4-1-1. Weather was clear with 15 to 20 miles visibility. Route was flown approximately as briefed.

On 5 June at 0955B, 39 a/c of the 460th Bombardment Group took off to attack FAENZA M/Y. There was one early return. Group assembly was made at 1035B. Fighter rendezvous was accomplished at 1224 at ANCONA. A total of 38 a/c were over the target at 1305B. From 17700 to 19000', 37 a/c dropped 74 tons of 500 lb GP bombs. Results are termed good. There were no encounters and no flak. Weather was clear; route flown as briefed.

On 5 June at 1010B, 35 e/c of the 485th Bombardment Group took off to attack FORLI M/Y. There were two early returns. Group assembly was accomplished at 1052B and Wing rendezvous at 1115B. P-38s provided target cover but no penetration or withdrawal support. At 1300B, 32 a/c dropped 64 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, from 17500'. Results termed good. No flak or e/c encountered although SIH was observed at ANCONA. The route was flown approximately as briefed with weather clear.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 5 June 1944, at 0955B, 39 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the M/Y at FAENZA, Italy. The Group formed at 1035B in the assembly area, rendezvous with the 485th being accomplished at 1053B. Rendezvous with Wing over Spinazzola was one minute late. Fighter escort, P-38s & P-51s, contacted the formation off Ancona at 1224B, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1315B at the coastline.

One a/c returned early with two generators and two superchargers out. Bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic.

From 17700' - 19000', 38 a/c were over the primary target at 1305B. 37 a/c dropped 74 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, .1N & .025T fuses. One a/c, unable to open the bomb bay doors, jettisoned 8 bombs in the Adriatic. Results: M/Y well covered from end to end by the 2 attack units. A good bomb pattern. Hits in both choke points. Large explosion in middle of yard. Three trains in yard at time of attack.

The target was without flak. SIH flak from 6 guns was observed at Ancona.

Route was flown as briefed with this exception: A group flying on the left prevented the 460th from turning on time off Ancona, and necessitated a subsequent shift to the proper course. Weather: CAVU, slight haze on return.

38 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1530B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 5 June 1944, beginning at 0950B 36 B-24 a/c took off to bomb FERRARA M/Y (Primary Target).

Rendezvous with the 465th Bomb Group was accomplished at Andria at 1053B.

It was obvious that the 464th Group had reached the primary target before the 465th Group because there were no bomb strikes apparent on or in the vicinity of the target when the 464th Group dropped its bombs.

Friendly fighter cover was observed before arriving at the target, but none was observed immediately after passing the target when 22 enemy fighters aggressively attacked the rear elements of the 464th Group's formation. The escort was in sight of this Group for a very short time and no cover was given in target area or on withdrawal.

33 a/c were over the target at 1309½B and 32 e/c dropped 63.8 tons of 100 lb GP bombs (.1 and .025 fusing). One a/c returned bombs to base due to inability to release, caused by rack malfunction. One of the a/c over target returned 2 tons due to rack malfunction. Bombing results were good, the pattern bracketed the north M/Y and extended south of this Group's assigned area to take in the choke point and the northern tip of the south M/Y. First impacts were slightly short and trailing into good yard and over to factory and RR repair buildings to the northwest of M/Y, Impacts from second attack unit were to the south of assigned area also starting short and trailing across choke point and tracks and installations in south M/Y and just beyond.

22 encounters with e/a were reported; 20 ME-109a and 2 FW-190s. First encounters were at 1312B, altitude 19000' at SE edge of Lake Comacchio 4435N.1210E, 10 ME-109 e/c attacked from out of the sun, coming in low at 5 o'clock in line astern and opening fire between 600/800 yards, attacks were pressed to 200 yards. Apparently the same group of fighters resumed the attack at 1320B at 4430N-1216E altitude 18000', when 8 ME-109 a/c came into the rear of the formation from 9 o'clock, turned and attacked from high at 6 o'clock singly in line astern breaking off at 200 yards and peeling off. 2 additional attacks by ME-109 a/c were reported, one at 1320B hours, 4437N-1203E, altitude 19000', high at 5 o'clock and 1 at 1320B, 4435N-1215E altitude 17000', 4:30 o'clock and closed to 200 yds. Principal attacks were concentrated on, Easy box and our a/c lost was from this box and reported not in good formation position.

Flek at target was MAH. Railway flak was present and disposed in the M/Y proper with 6 to 8 guns observed.

Weather at take off. was clear. Over target hazy with visibility of 15 miles. Enroute to and return hazy, visibility 15 miles with 1 to 2/10 cumulus at 5000' and 3/10 cirrus at 25000'.

32 a/c landed beginning at 1510B. One a/c was lost to e/a at 1321B, 4437N-1209E, altitude 17000', 4/7 chutes reported.

Route flown approximately as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 5 June 1944 at 1005B, 36 a/c were scheduled to take off to bomb the FERRARA M/Y. 36 a/c took off at 1005B.

The group assembled over Andria at 1051B at 5000' and made Wing rendezvous over Spinazzola at 1102 at 5000'. Escort of P-47s, P-38s, and P-51s of the 306th Wing joined the formation at Ancona at 1226B at 18000' and left the formation at 1325B at 4420N-1220E at 19000'.

There was one early return.

11 ME-109s, 1 ME-110, and 4 T/E fighters with single fins were observed in the target areas. There was one encounter. Moderate inaccurate heavy flak was encountered over the target. Intense heavy flak was observed at Bologna. Scant heavy flak was observed at Ancona.

35 a/c went over the target at 1310B at 20500'. 35 a/c dropped 68 tons of 100 lb GP cluster bombs with .1 nose and .025 tail fuses. One a/c jettisoned 20 bombs in the Adriatic Sea at 4220N-1620E because of malfunction of bomb racks. The 464th Bomb Group went over the target first, and the target area was completely obscured by smoke. The lead bombardier aimed at the traffic circle which was the only visible point. Bomb strike photos showed that it was extremely difficult to pick out the full pattern of the group because of trailing the 464th so closely over the target. It appeared that the first bombs fell slightly short and covered the target area.

Weather enroute: scattered cumulus, hazy and clear over the water with 4/10 cirrus 23000'; CAVU at target; cumulus building up on return.

35 e/c landed at 1528B.

Route was flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 5 June 1944, at 1010B, 35 e/c took off to bomb FORLI M/Y, Primary Target. 2 a/c returned early.

There was no penetration or withdrawal fighter escort but approximately 16 P-38s were seen for nearly 10 minutes over the target area.

No enemy a/c were encountered en route to, over, or in return from the target. Scant, heavy flak was seen to left of course at ANCONA and also further inland at SENIGILLIA 4343N-1313E en route to the target and again at ANCONA, SH, on return. No flak was encountered over the target itself.

33 a/c were over the target at 1300B (target time, 1259B) and 32 planes dropped 64 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, fused .1 Nose and .025 Tail, from 17500'. 1 a/c returned 8 bombs to base. The first wave approached the target from the IP slightly to the right of course and dropped its bombs approximately one to two miles over the target in an agricultural section. The second wave successfully attacked the Primary Target, some hits being observed short of the M/Y, and approximately 25 hits on the tracks were observed, and some on the buildings beyond the M/Y.

The weather was CAVU, with practically no clouds, although there was a slight haze with the visibility from 15 to 20 miles over entire route.

Return was accomplished normally and all 33 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time, 1500B.

Route was flown very nearly as briefed.

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 cy ea CG, AC of S, A-3, Fifteenth AF.
- 2 cys AC of S, 1-2, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy 28th SCU, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy PRO, Fifteenth AF.
- 1 cy ea CG, AC of S, A-2, 5th, 47th, 49th, 304th Bomb Wings.
- 1 cy ee CG, AC of S, A- 2, 306th Fighter Wing.
- 1 cy ee CG, C of S, /-1, A-2, /-3, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy ea Bmbdr 0, PI, PRO, Stat, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy ee CO, S-3, ea Gp, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 3 cys S-2, ea Gp, 55th Bomb Wing.
- 1 cy CG, III Bomber Command.