

55BW Mission Summary No. 120, 1 November 1944 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 1 November 1944 (The first anniversary of the activation of the Air Force to which this Bombardment Wing is assigned), between 0850-0919A, 118 B-24 a/c were scheduled, and the 118 scheduled a/c plus 6 spares took off to bomb a target in Austria. Due to cloud conditions the assigned primary target was not attacked. GRAZ, AUSTRIA, M/Y and targets of opportunity were attacked. There were 12 early returns. 6 spare a/c returned.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as scheduled.

30-35 P-51 a/c were seen by Bombardment Groups between 1105-1235A, gave penetration, target and withdrawal cover, and remained with the Bombardment Groups until 1538A at (4153N-1525E).

94 a/c were over GRAZ (Alternate target) between 1302-1352A. 13 a/c (including 1 a/c which was over AT but did not drop) were over target of opportunity. 28 a/c dropped 216 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N and .01T on GRAZ M/Y from 20,000-22,000'. 13 a/c dropped 32.5 tons on target of opportunity. 4 sorties jettisoned 6 tons and 3 early returns jettisoned 7.5 tons of bombs. 6 sorties returned 9.5 tons of bombs to bases, and 8 early returns and 3 spares a/c returned 27.5 tons of bombs to bases.

Results: The 460 Bombardment Group scored several strikes in the area of the main passenger station, at the South end of the Southern yard. The 464 Bomb Group scored approximately six hits across the center of the Northern yard with additional bombs falling in residential or minor industrial areas. The 465 and 485 Bomb Groups photographs do not reveal any damage to the M/Y. Visible strikes are located in areas occupied by residential, commercial and minor industrial establishments.

Flak at Alternate Target was variously reported as M to I & I to AH. IAH was encountered at 4633N-1520E). SIH was encountered at MEUNKIRCHEN.

No e/a were seen or encountered.

105 a/c were down at bases between 1550-1612A (mean landing time). No a/c was lost, none is missing, 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviation caused by weather.

Weather: Base 7/10 thin altostratus and 2/10 stratocumulus at take off. Route 2/10 to 4/10 stratocumulus over Adriatic, tops 8,000' and 7/10 to 9/10 altostratus, base 16,000' lowering to 11,000' in North Adriatic. Over Dinarics 4/10 stratocumulus and stratus, tops 10,000' and 6/10 cirrostratus, base 18,000'. From Dinarics to IP to Primary Target, 7/10 cirrostratus at 20-22,000' and 1/10 to 3/10 stratocumulus, cirrostratus increasing to 10/10 about 70 miles South of target. Below was 6/10 to 7/10 middle clouds, tops 13,000'. At target, 8/10 to 10/10 cirrostratus at 20,000' and 6/10 altostratus, tops 14,000'. Visibility was 10 miles in haze. On return, continuation of high and middle cloudiness and 5/10 cumulus over Dinarics, tops 12,000'. At base, 8/10 altostratus, base 15,000' and 1/10 to 2/10

cumulus. Visibility entire route, 10-20 miles in haze. No icing was encountered.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 1 Nov. 44, at 0919A, 31 a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in Austria.

Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished without incident. The Wing formed at 1015A as scheduled, the 460th flying in the lead position. Fighter escort, P-51s, first sighted at 1105A, at 4947-1533), furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1402 hours at (4528-1453).

2 a/c returned early. Bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic.

Due to adverse weather conditions the Group leader elected to bomb the second alternate target, the GRAZ M/Y. Due to poor visibility the briefed IP was not located and a very short bomb run was made on an axis of 257 degrees. From 20,000', 29 a/c were over the target at 1302A. 27 a/c dropped 67 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. Due to malfunctions, 2 a/c failed to bomb the target. 1 a/c returned bombs to base, the other a/c jettisoned bombs 20 mi. SW of GRAZ. 1 a/c had 2 bombs hung up which were jettisoned in the Adriatic. The Group leader used the auto pilot on the bomb run, the second attack unit leader used PDI.

The Group experienced MAH flak over the target area for approximately 5 minutes.

The route was flown as briefed with constant variations to avoid weather and flak areas. Return route was the same in reverse.

29 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1550 hours.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 1 November 44, 28 scheduled a/c plus 3 designated spares took off at 0850A to bomb a target in Austria.

There were 5 early returns. 1 a/c jettisoned, 4 a/c returned bombs to base.

24 a/c were over the GRAZ M/Y at 1308A. 22 a/c dropped 54 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 21,500'. 1 sortie a/c jettisoned, 1 returned bombs to base, and 2 a/c dropped bombs on two targets of opportunity.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

22 a/c over target dropped	54.0 tons
1 a/c over target bombed target of O.	2.5 tons
1 a/c over target jettisoned	2.5 tons
1 a/c over target returned	2.5 tons
1 a/c bombed target of opportunity	2.5 tons
4 a/c early returns brought back	10.0 tons
1 a/c early return jettisoned	<u>2.5 tons</u>
	76.50 tons

Bombing was by PFF on start of bomb run; however a break in the clouds permitted the latter part of the run to be made visually. The Group leader used the C-1 auto pilot and the second attack unit made the run manually, the C-1 being inoperative.

M to IAH flak was encountered at GRAZ. Crews report time in flak from 3 to 5 minutes. The crew of the a/c which bombed the target at 4633-1528 reports MAH flak at this target.

3 FW-190 a/c were observed. No attack was made by e/a.

Escort consisting of 25 P-51 a/c intercepted the formation at 4631-1611 at 1235A and provided penetration, target, and withdrawal escort and was last observed at 4440-1512 at 1500A.

The route was flown as briefed to the Key Point, after which deviations were made due to weather.

26 a/c landed at this base between 1534A and 1615A.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 28 a/c of 28 scheduled took off at 0919 hours on 1 Nov 44 to bomb a target in AUSTRIA. Due to weather the second alternative target, GRAZ M/Y, was attacked.

The Group assembled at 1002A at 8,000'. An escort of 4 P-51s joined the bombers at 1130A at 4600-1700 and were last seen in the target area.

Three a/c returned early. No e/a were seen or encountered.

Flak at GRAZ was M to IAH. Flak at NEUNKIRCHEN (4745-1615) was SIH.

Just past the IP for the Primary target the Group leader received a call from the Wing leader that the second alternate target was to be attacked so the formation made a 180° turn and proceeded to GRAZ. 18 a/c went over the second alternate target at 1352A at 21,500' and 17 a/c dropped 40½ tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 1 a/c did not drop and returned its bombs to the base. 1 a/c dropped 8 bombs on the target and jettisoned 2 bombs due to rack malfunction. 1 a/c dropped 2 bombs on the target and returned eight bombs to base due to a rack malfunction. The following targets of opportunity were attacked: Ravigars (4651-1735) 2½ tons at 1339A, hits on some small buildings and a highway. KOTORIRA RR Bridge at 1400A, 12½ tons, hits observed slightly to right of bridge. ANGER (4716-1540) 2½ tons, results unobserved.

Total tons dropped on GRAZ M/Y	40
Total tons dropped on T/Os	17½
Total tons returned to base	19½
Total tons jettisoned by sortie a/c	½
Total tons	77½

25 a/c landed at the home base at 1650A. Deviated from briefed route to avoid weather.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 1 Nov 44, at 0900A, 28 scheduled B-24 a/c and 3 spares took off to bomb a target in Austria. The second alternate target, M/Y at GRAZ, Austria, was bombed because the PT was covered by cirrus clouds with base at 18,000' and tops well over 24,000'. The formation reached a point 15 miles South of the IP for the PT before decision was made to bomb the second alternate target. The 3 spare a/c returned to base.

Assembly was satisfactory and on time; however departure was two minutes late.

The rendezvous with the other Groups of the Wing was effected at 1016A at 6,000' on course with the 485th Bomb Group in second place in order of flight.

Rendezvous with fighter escort which consisted of 30-35 P-51 a/c was effected at 1238A at 4631-1411 and left the formation at 1538A at 4155-1525.

There were 2 early returns, which returned bombs to base.

22 a/c were over the GRAZ M/Y at 1338A. These a/c dropped 55 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 22,000'. Prior to bombing, the PFF equipment in the lead ship failed. The deputy leader in a/c No. 779 took the formation over the target using C-1 and PFF, one correction being made on bomb run with bomb sight. The second attack unit did not use C-1 because the "R" box slid over and above the "2C" box which prevented the leader of the unit from flying a straight course. This was brought about by the dense cirrus cloud formation which made visual observation of adjacent boxes difficult.

3 a/c became separated from the formation in the cirrus clouds near the IP for the PT, so bombed a target of opportunity, a M/Y at KOMEND. These a/c dropped 7.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 21,000' at 1327A.

1 a/c, No. 067, became separated from the formation in the vicinity of 4707-1543, bombed town of STUDENZEN, dropping 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 19,000' at 1301A.

No e/a were seen or encountered. S to M/I to A/H flak was encountered in the second alternate target area for a period of approximately four minutes.

25 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1612A.

1 a/c landed at friendly field.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations caused by weather.