

55BW Mission Summary No. 131, 18 Nov 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 18 November 1944, between 0705-0730A, 115 B-24 a/c of 118 a/c scheduled took off to bomb UDINE CAMPOFORMIDO A/D, ITALY. There were 4 early returns.

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

Fighter a/c (P-51) furnished target cover.

111 a/c were over target between 1112 $\frac{1}{2}$ A-1115A, and 109 a/c dropped 219.5 tons of bombs (54.85 tons of 100 lb GP, fused .1N, non-delay T, and 164.65 tons of clustered frags) on target from 20,100' - 22,000'. 14 sortie a/c jettisoned 7.2 tons, 4 early returns jettisoned 5.8 tons of bombs. 1 sortie returned .1 ton of bombs to base.

Results: The 460th Bomb Group covered the hangar area with bombs, destroying 5 aircraft and damaging 3 others. The runway and landing area were post-holed. The 464th and 485th Bomb Groups covered the East and Southeast dispersal areas and the 465th Bomb Group destroyed 1 aircraft and damaged 4 others in the West and Southwest dispersal areas.

Flak at target varied from Moderate to Intense, and from Inaccurate to Accurate, Heavy. No other flak was encountered.

5-23 e/a were seen, but there were no encounters.

105 a/c were down at bases between 1309-1350A. 1 a/c was lost as result of flak damage when attempting to land at a friendly field to hospitalize a wounded crew member. 3 a/c are missing, 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown substantially as briefed.

Weather: At take-off, clear except for 1/10 cirrus at 20,000'. Off Spur, 3/10 stratocumulus, tops 6,000', otherwise clear over ADRIATIC except for 3-4/10 cirrostratus at 25,000'. At target, 7/10 cirrostratus at 25,000' and 2/10 small cumulus, tops 8,000'. Visibility was 15 miles. On return, similar conditions with 7/10 thin cirrostratus at base at 25,000'.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 18 Nov 44 at 0730A, 30 scheduled a/c dispatched to bomb the UDINE A/D in ITALY.

Group assembly and rendezvous with 485th without incident. Formation over rendezvous point at 0839A. Fighter escort, P-51s, first seen at 1103A at FARRA (4607N-1221E); last seen at 1230A at 4210N-1520E.

2 a/c returned early for following reasons: (1) #4 engine out, (2) #3 engine throwing oil. These a/c jettisoned 80 bombs in the ADRIATIC.

At 20,100', 28 a/c over target at 1112½A, dropping 54.85 tons of 100 lb GP bombs, .1N, non-delay T fusing. 7 a/c had 53 bombs hung up. 51 bombs were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC, and 2 bombs were returned to base. Group leader used auto pilot on bomb run; the second attack unit did not due to malfunction of A-5. PFF was used for navigation only. Bombing was visual. Weather was good and PFF was not needed for navigation. Over ADRIATIC, radar was used as the only means of getting accurate fixes. PFF was used on approach to ITALIAN Coast, but after crossing coast pilotage was used. The equipment worked well.

MAH flak experienced for 3-4 minutes over target.

23 e/a were seen on the mission. At 1100A, 6 ME-109s were seen at 4555N-1235E, P-51s in pursuit. At 1102A, 15 unidentified SEF were seen firing on another group at 4607N-1222E. P-51s were present. At 1103A, 1 FW-190, brown in color, was seen at FARRA (4607N-1221E). There was no encounter.

Route was flown as briefed to target. On return, route was flown direct to base instead of around Spur.

24 a/c returned to base with mean landing time of 1325A. 2 a/c with wounded aboard landed at friendly fields, 1 of which has since returned. The other blow up on landing. 1 crew member was killed, 7 are in hospital, and 3 are unharmed. 2 a/c are missing; one last seen at 4518N-1310E at 1122A and the other at 4350N-1400E at 1152A.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 18 Nov 44, 29 of 31 a/c scheduled took off at 0726A to bomb the UDINE COMPOFORMIDO A/D.

Group form-up was satisfactory, although take-off was late due to an accident involving a crew member of the lead a/c. For this reason the 465th Group took off first, arriving 7-10 minutes early for line rendezvous; however Wing rendezvous was as prescribed.

29 a/c over target at 1115A and 27 a/c dropped 58.2 tons of clustered frags. 2 a/c failed to release; one, because of rack malfunction, jettisoned 2.16 tons of bombs. and the other jettisoned 2.16 tons because the servo pin stuck and racks would not go in

Select. 1 a/c dropping on target failed to release 1 cluster due to rack malfunction and this was jettisoned.

Recapitulation:

27 a/c dropped	58.20 tons
2 aa/c jettisoned full loads	4.32 tons
1 a/c jettisoned	<u>.06 ton</u>
Total	62.58 tons

Bombing was visual. Group leader used C-1 auto pilot. Second attack unit leader made the run manually because of numerous changes in heading.

M-IAH flak of 2-4 minutes duration encountered at target.

5 ME-109s reported by one crew observed at 4605N-1235E at 1100A.

Bomber formation at the time was at 22,800' and the e/a passed below at 17,000' from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock position. The e/a were described as being black and gray.

Escort of 10-12 P-51s observed in target area at 1110A; last reported at 1145A at 4442N-1330E.

29 a/c landed at base between 1300-1350A.

Route was flown generally as briefed except that IP was cut short in order to avoid weather.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 18 Nov 44 at 0705A, 32 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the UDINE CAMPOFORMIDO A/D in ITALY.

Group assembled at 0824A at 11,000' and Wing rendezvous accomplished at 0841A at 11,000'. Escort of P-51s joined formation at 1110A in target area and provided general target cover.

1 a/c returned early, jettisoning its bombs in the ADRIATIC.

Flak at target was Moderate Heavy. Able and Dog boxes report flak Inaccurate and Baker and Charlie boxes report Accurate. No flak encountered enroute. No e/a seen or encountered.

31 a/c over target at 1115A at 21,200', dropping 54.75 tons of 100 lb clustered frags. Bombing was visual using C-1 auto pilot. 1 a/c lost 12 bombs when bomb bay doors were opened at IP. 1 a/c had 8 bombs hung up in racks and jettisoned in ADRIATIC on return. 1 a/c had 1 bomb hung up and jettisoned in ADRIATIC on return.

Recapitulation:

Dropped on target	54.75 tons
Jettisoned due to malfunction	1.05 tons

Jettisoned by early returns	<u>1.80 tons</u>
Total.	57.60 tons

30 a/c landed at 1330A. 1 a/c left formation at 4410N-1308E with one engine feathered.

Route flown as briefed except for deviations made during bomb run to avoid cloud conditions.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 18 Nov 44 at 0725A, 24 of 25 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the UDINE A/D, ITALY. There was one early return (bombs jettisoned).

Assembly as scheduled at 0800A, and rendezvous with 460th at 10,000', the 460th arriving 4 minutes before schedule. Wing rendezvous accomplished at 0830A, order of flight being 460th, 485th 465th, 464th Groups. There was no rendezvous with fighter escort. Several P-51s and Spitfires were observed over target proa.

23 a/c over target at 1115A (target time 1128A). 23 a/c dropped 51.7 tons of 100 lb clustered frag bombs from 22,000'. 1 of the 23 a/c had 1 bomb to hang in recks and jettisoned it at 4520N-1315E in the ADRIATIC. Bombing was visual with both units employing C-1 auto pilots. Target area was generally clear, however light cirrus clouds reduced visibility of aiming point. Bombardier identified southwest end of the runway and succeeded in releasing his bombs using runway as a checkpoint.

No e/a were seen or encountered. MIH-MAH flak experienced over target for approximately 3 minutes. 3 a/c received minor flak damage. Flak appeared to be more accurate on leading group and on following groups. Flak was encountered at no other points by the formation.

22 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1309A. 1 a/c which landed at friendly field with wounded crew member landed at base at 1517A.

Route was flown as briefed.