

55BW Mission Summary No. 127, 7 Nov 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 7 November 1944, between 0830-0905A, 119 B-24 a/c of 119 a/c scheduled took off to bomb three railroad bridges on the BRENNER PASS line in Northern ITALY. (Specific targets are identified in Group Narratives.) There were 2 early returns.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. There was no fighter escort for this mission.

117 a/c were over targets between 1304-1308A, and 114 a/c dropped 281.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, .01T, from 12,000-16,000'. 6 a/c jettisoned 7.5 tons. 1 sortie a/c returned 1.25 tons of bombs to base, and 2 early returns brought back 5 tons.

Results: The 460th Bomb Group scored several direct hits on both approaches to the ADIGE/MEZZOCORONA RR Bridge. The bridge itself was not hit. The 485th Bomb Group scored direct hits on the East approach to the ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge, which are believed to have cut the rail line. The bridge is believed to have remained intact. The 465th Bomb Group had an exceptionally high percentage of strikes within one thousand feet of the center of the ISARCO/ALBES RR Bridge. Hits are visible on both approaches and near misses are visible on the bridge. Smoke obscures any possible direct hits on the bridge. The 464th Bomb Group had strikes in the vicinity of the bridge. Smoke obscures any possible hits on the bridge, but additional direct hits are visible on the North approach.

Flak at target was encountered at ADIGE/ORA only, and was IAH. IIH was encountered at ROVERETO, and S-MAH at BESSANO, NERVESCI and CONEGLIANO.

No e/a were encountered or seen.

109 a/c were down at bases between 1529-1600A. No a/c were lost or missing. 8 e/c landed at friendly fields,

Routes were flown as briefed except for deviations required by weather.

Weather: At take-off, 3-4/10 cirrus at 23,000', scattered. Strato-cumulus over hills. General hazy condition; visibility 15-18 miles. Enroute, scattered strato-cumulus over ADRIATIC with increasing cirrus at 23,000', and 10/10 coverage in North ADRIATIC with very thick haze aloft which turned into thin alto-stratus, base 15,000-16,000'. Over lowlands in N ITALY 10/10 cirrus at 23,000''. 4-6/10 strato-cumulus at 5,000-6,000'; visibility 15 miles. South slopes of /LPS, 3/10 strato-cumulus, 10/10 lowering cirrus. At target, clear with solid clouds to North and 3/10 strato-cumulus scattered in the pres. Visibility 18-20 miles. Return, similar to route out, but improved in N ADRIATIC. Winds aloft more northerly and stronger than briefed, making time at target late, with gain on return.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 7 November 1944 at 0850A, 31 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the ADIGE/MEZZOCORONA RR Bridge in N ITALY.

Group assembly and rendezvous with 485th were without incident and on time. The 460th was on course at 1000A. No friendly fighters were seen on the mission.

At 12,000', 31 a/c were over PT at 1306A. Bombing was by boxes. 28 a/c dropped 69.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 3 a/c had 21 bombs hung up. 1 bomb was jettisoned at 4530N-1255E, 10 bombs in ADRIATIC and 11 bombs immediately after target. Due to rack malfunction 1 a/c dropped 10 bombs before target. Automatic pilot was used on bomb run by both attack units.

No flak experienced at target but smoke pots were in operation along the railroad south of target. Flak reported at ROVERETO (4543N-1103E) as ITH.

Route flown as briefed to target and on return as far as turn point off ANCONA. From this point route flown direct to base.

31 a/c returned to base, mean landing time 1600A.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 7 November 1944, 28 scheduled B-24 a/c plus 3 assigned spares took off at 0630A to bomb the ISARCO/ALDES RR Bridge.

Group form-up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were as prescribed.

31 a/c were over target at 1308A (briefed target time 1237A) and 31 a/c dropped 75.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 14,500'. 2 of the a/c over the target were unable to release all bombs, and 1.75 tons were jettisoned.

Recapitulation:

31 a/c of 31 over target dropped	75.75 tons
2 a/c of 31 over target jettisoned	1.75 tons
Total	77.50 tons

Bombing was visual and by boxes. Group leader did not use C-1 automatic pilot for the reason that it was erratic. Baker and Charlie box leaders used C-1. Dog box leader did not use C-1 as it was erratic.

This group encountered no flak. There was no escort.

31 a/c landed at base between 1515-1543A without incident.

Route flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 7 November 1944, 29 scheduled a/c took off et 0853A in two attack units to bomb the ISARCO/ALBES RR Bridge in ITALY.

Group assembled at 0946A at 9,000' and Wing rendezvous was accomplished at 1000A at 9,000'. There was no fighter escort.

1 a/c returned early.

No flak was encountered; no e/a seen or encountered.

28 a/c over target at 1304A at 14,000' dropped 69.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 1 a/c had rack malfunction which caused 2 bombs to hang up, and these bombs were jettisoned in ADRIATIC on return.

Recapitulation:

Tons dropped	69.5
Tons jettisoned	.5
Total tons	70.0

PFF was not used for bombing or navigation; bombing done visually using C-1 autopilot.

28 a/c landed at 1537A.

Route flown as briefed with exception of slight deviations in altitude to avoid weather.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 7 November 1944 at 0905A, 28 regular and 1 spare B-24 a/c took off to bomb the ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge in N ITALY (PT).

Group assembled at 0948A at 7,700', and fell in behind 460 Group. Wing rendezvous at 1001A at 7,700' and formation proceeded on course in following order: 460th, 485th, 465th and 464th.

There was no fighter rendezvous.

There was one early return; bombs were returned to base.

27 a/c were over target at 1306A, and 27 a/c dropped 66.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 16,000'. 1 of these a/c returned 5 bombs to base after bomb bay doors failed to open on one side. The bombing was accomplished by individual boxes in trail, bombing by visual means with C-1 autopilot being used.

Due to overcast, bases at approximately 17,000', formation bombed from 16,000'. Flak defenses at target seemed to have range perfectly and effectively placed their bursts on each box. Another factor which heavily favored flak defenses was a strong head wind which appreciably slowed formation. IAH flak, supplemented by accurate medium flak, experienced over target for approximately 4 minutes.

No e/a were seen or encountered.

19 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1556A. 2 a/c returned after having landed at friendly fields. 6 a/c remain at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.