

55BW Mission Summary No. 115, 13 October 1944 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 13 October 1944, 154 B-24, a/c of 159 a/c scheduled took off for two operations. 81 a/c of 86 a/c scheduled took off between 0635-0651A to attack BLECHHAMMER South Synthetic Oil Refinery in GERMANY, and 73 a/c of 73 a/c scheduled took off between 0745-0809A to attack the BANHIDA, HUNGARY, South M/Y. There were 11 early returns, 9 from the BLECHHAMMER and 2 from the BANIDA missions.

Group assemblies, line and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Fighter escort joined the BLECHHAMMER force at 0905A at 4338N-1544E with additional fighters at target, and remained with formation until 1330A at a point near the YUGOSLAV coast. The BANHIDA force was joined by escort at 1007A at 4143N-1534E, and escort accompanied formation to and from target until 1315A near the YUGOSLAV coast.

142 a/c were over Primary Target, and 1 sortie a/c was over Alternate Target. 71 a/c over BLECHHAMMER at 1120A, of which 66 a/c dropped 163.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, .01T, from 22,200-22,950'. 71 a/c over BANHIDA, and 69 a/c dropped 165.75 tons of bombs as follows: 41 a/c dropped 101 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, .01T, and 28 a/c dropped 64.75 tons of 500 lb M-17 Incendiary bombs with .1N and instantaneous tail fusing from 16,000-17,200'. 11 sortie a/c jettisoned 20.75 tons, 2 early returns jettisoned 5 tons of bombs. 9 early returns brought 22 tons of bombs back to bases.

Results: BLECHHAMMER South: The entire area completely covered by smoke from previous bombing and damage within plant area not visible. Strikes on the edge of the smoke area indicate a possibility of strikes in the northern portion of the plant.

BANHIDA M/Y: The south choke point was well covered with strikes and all through tracks are cut. The incendiary pattern is seen to cover the north three-quarters of the marshalling yard and the adjacent industrial installations. The entire aluminum production plant, the south half of the cement and carbide plant, and the coal briquetting plant were covered by incendiaries. These were still burning at time of reconnaissance photography.

Flak at BLECHHAMMER was IAH, and at BINHIDA was reported SI/AH.

1 enemy aircraft (Me-163 - the first occasion of a jet-propelled type a/c seen by crews of this Wing) was seen by one Group. There were no encounters.

130 a/c were down at bases, 59 a/c of the BLECHHAMMER mission between 1530-1535A, 71 a/c of the BANHIDA mission between 1444-1445A (mean landing time in every case).

3 a/c were lost, 7 are missing, and 3 landed at friendly fields (these are a/c of the BLECHHAMMER mission).

Routes were flown as briefed.

Weather: BLECHHAMMER Mission: Scattered alto-stratus and stratocumulus at take-off; visibility 20 miles. Over ADRIATIC 2-3/10 cirrus, base 25,000' and 2-3/10 stratocumulus, tops 5,000'. Over DINARICS 4-5/10 cerro-stratus and 2-3/10 stratocumulus. Beyond DINARICS to target cerro-stratus varied from 4-7/10 at 23-25,000'. Solow plane was 4-6/10 alto-cumulus, tops 10-12,000'. At target scattered cirrus and clear below planes; 4-5/10 alto-cumulus to South; visibility 15-20 miles in haze. Returning conditions similar, 2-3/10 alto-stratus and 2/10 cumulus at base. Frontal clouds observed West of course both going and returning. Visibility 20 miles to unlimited.

BANHIDA Mission: Clear and visibility over 15 miles at base and assembly. 1-2/10 scattered patches of stratocumulus at 5,000' and 2/10 alto-cumulus alto-stratus at 12,000' over ADRIATIC. 5/10 cumulus, tops to 9,000', over DINARICS, thinning to 3/10 enroute to target, with scattered patches of thin alto-stratus at 12,000' east of mountains and enroute over YUGOSLAVIA and HUNGARY. Clear in immediate target area, but solid deck of cumulus from 4,000' to 12,000' extended in a North-South direction in distance to East of target. Scattered cumulus over HUNGARY and Northern YUGOSLAVIA, but only thin deck of alto-stratus at 12,000' over DINARICS on return. Scattered patches of cirrus on entire route. Visibility over 15 miles over entire route. Winds aloft at 17,000' over YUGOSLAVIA and HUNGARY were from 220 at 20K. Temperature at 17,000' at target was -14C.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 13 October 1944 at 0745A, 36 scheduled a/c dispatched to bomb the BANHIDA M/Y in HUNGARY.

Because Group Leaders a/c was unable to take off, the formation assembled on Deputy Leader's a/c. Group Leader took off in substitute a/c and assumed proper position. Rendezvous with 485th accomplished without incident and Wing rendezvous was at 0900A. Fighter escort, P-38s and P-51s, seen only in target area.

1 a/c returned early because of a defective prop cowling. Bombs were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC.

At 16,000', 35 a/c were over the primary target at 1137 hours. 17 a/c dropped 42 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, .1N & .01T fusing, and 16 a/c dropped 34.75 tons of 500 lb K-17 incendiaries, instantaneous fusing, 1 a/c bombed a target of opportunity, a large factory at KAPSOVAR (4622N - 1748E). 1 a/c had 10 bombs hung up which were jettisoned one mile past the target. 2 a/c jettisoned 3 bombs immediately after target time. The Group leader used the automatic pilot on the bomb run, and the second attack unit used PDI.

RESULTS: The bombs fell slightly north of the target and no military damage is visible.

The Group encountered SIH flak for 2 minutes over the target.

1 possible ME-163 was seen at the IP at 1130 hours. This a/c, butterfly in shape, was flying in a circle. There was no encounter.

The route was flown as briefed,

35 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1445 hours.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 13 Oct. 44, 45 of 49 B-24 scheduled a/c took off at 0635A to bomb BLECHHAMMER South Oil Refinery, GERMANY.

Group form up, two Group and Wing rendezvous were made as planned without incident.

6 a/c returned early.

38 a/c were over the target at 1120A (briefed 1123A) and 35 a/c dropped 87.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 22,950'.

1 a/c dropped two and one half (2.5) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the second alternate target, the ERSEKIJVAR M/Y at 1101A from 20,000'.

4 a/c jettisoned 8 tons of bombs.

6 a/c returned 14.5 tons of bombs to base.

Recapitulation of Bombs

Primary Target	87.5 tons
2nd Alternate Target	2.5 tons
Jettisoned	8.0 tons
Returned to Base	<u>14.5 tons</u>
Total	112.5 tons

Bombing was visual by Able Group. Baker Group was by offset, with PFF being used solely to 50° dropping angle, after which PFF was used for course and offset for rate.

Target visibility was obscured by an effective smoke screen, with smoke generators observed on the North West, North and South East of the target area. Smoke generators had apparently been in operation for some time, as the target area was well covered with smoke from the generators. Ground wind was from the South East.

The leader of Able Group used the C-1 automatic pilot on the bomb run, but the leader of Baker Group did not as the C-1 was inoperative.

RESULTS: Bombs are visible on the north edge of the plant but smoke prevents assessment.

Flak at the target was IAH for a period of 5/6 minutes.

Rendezvous was made with 45/50 P-38s at 0905A at 4338N - 1544E and with 25/30 P-51s at 1118A at the target area. Last escort was observed at 1330A at the YUGOSLAVIAN Coast.

2 a/c were lost at the target to flak and 2 a/c are missing. 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

32 a/c landed at this base between 1452 and 1535A. 1 a/c that bombed the second alternate target landed at this base at 1340A.

Route was flown as briefed to the target.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 36 a/c of 37 scheduled took off at 0651A on 13 Oct 44 to attack the BLECHHAMMER SOUTH SYNTHETIC OIL REFINERY.

Assembly and rendezvous were effected as ordered. An escort of P-38s joined at 0918A at the YUGOSLAVIAN border and furnished penetration cover. An escort of P-51s joined at 1104A at OLONOUK. Left at 1330A at coast of YUGOSLAVIA.

There were 3 early returns.

No enemy a/c were encountered or seen. Flak at the target was IAH. MAH flak was encountered along the RR line leading from KOMAROM south to KISBAR (4735 - 1805), believed to be rail flak. SIH flak was encountered at SIBINER.

33 a/c went over the target at 1120A at 22,200' and 31 a/c dropped 75.75 tons of 500 lb. RDX bombs. 1 a/c failed to drop because of a rack malfunction and jettisoned its bombs a few miles beyond the target. 1 a/c jettisoned 6 bombs at UMBROD, GERMANY and 4 bombs 1 min before the target because he could not keep up. 1 a/c jettisoned 7 bombs at 4632 - 1730 because he could not keep up with the formation. The first attack wave dropped by PFF, and the second attack wave dropped on the first attack wave due to rack malfunction of the lead aircraft. The third attack wave dropped by the offset method aided by visual check.

Recapitulation:

Total tons dropped on target	75.75
Total tons jettisoned by sortie a/c	6.75
Total tons jettisoned by E/R	2.50
Total tons returned to base	<u>5.00</u>
Total tons carried	90.00

RESULTS: Bombs are visible on the north edge of the plant but smoke prevents assessment.

26 a/c landed at 1530A. 1 a/c was lost, 5 a/c are missing, 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

The route was flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 13 Oct 44, at 0809A 37 regularly scheduled, B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the BANHIDA SOUTH M/Y (Primary Target).

Group assembly was at 0849A at 6,000'.

The 485th Group led the 460th Group and proceeded to rendezvous point, arriving there at 0900A.

10 P-38s joined the formation at 1007A at 4148 - 1534. 2 P-51s were observed on return near the YUGOSLAVIAN COAST. 5 a/c identified as Spitfires were observed at the target. These a/c remained in the vicinity of the formation until over the ADRIATIC on return. The fighter cover departed at 1315A at 4348 - 1542.

There was 1 early return. Bombs were returned to base.

36 a/c wore over the target at 1136A at 17,200'. 24 a/c dropped 59 tons (236 bombs) of 500 lb RDX bombs. 2 of these a/c jettisoned 4 bombs: a/c # 495 jettisoned 2 bombs at 4734 - 1834 due to a rack malfunction; a/c # 997 accidentally released 2 bombs at the IP when the bomb bay doors were opened. 12 a/c dropped 30 tons (120 bombs) of 500 lb M-17 incendiaries. Bombing was by visual means with the first attack unit using the C-1 auto-pilot. The other two attack units bombed by PDI; their auto-pilots being inoperative.

RESULTS: BANHIDA M/Y. The south choke point was well covered with strikes and all through tracks are cut. The incendiary pattern is seen to cover the north three quarters of the marshalling yard and the adjacent industrial installation. The entire aluminum reduction plant, the south one half of the cement and carbide plant, and the coal briquetting plant were covered by incendiaries.

No e/a were encountered. SAH flak was encountered at the target for approximately 1 minute. SAH flak was encountered for not more than 1 minute at 4350 - 1640.

36 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1444A.

The course was flown as briefed.