

55BW Mission Summary No. 116, 16 Oct 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 16 Oct 44, 150 B-24 a/c of 150 a/c scheduled took off between 0650-0716A to bomb a target in Southern AUSTRIA. Due to unfavorable cloud conditions, one Group bombed the ST. VALENTIN Tank Works by non-visual method, 2 Groups bombed GRAZ NEUDORF A/C Factory (2nd alternate target) and one Group bombed targets of opportunity. There were 11 early returns. (139 sorties).

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Fighter escort joined the formation at 0955A near 4513N-1416E and remained with bombers over target area until 1140A.

137 a/c were over targets at 1126-1207A. 128 a/c dropped 318.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, .01T, from 22,000-23,800'. 15 sortie a/c jettisoned 37.5 tons over enemy territory; 2 early returns jettisoned 5 tons in the ADRIATIC. 2 sortie a/c returned 5 tons, and 7 early returns brought 17.5 tons of bombs back to base.

Results: GRAZ NEUDORF A/C Factory. The control building has received approximately 20 direct hits. Each of the other 2 buildings received 4 or 5 direct hits. In all probability the plant will not only be out of action but very difficult to repair. Repair if attempted will probably consume several months.

Targets of Opportunity were also attacked with very slight military damage.

Flak at ST. VALENTIN was IAH, at GRAZ ranged from S to M to IAH, and SIH was encountered at VILLACH.

No e/a was seen, nor was there any encounter.

125 a/c landed at bases between 1423-1511A, 4 a/c were lost to flak. 2 a/c are missing. 8 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed to IP, after which routes deviated to 2nd Alternate Target and targets of opportunity.

Weather: 3/10 to 4/10 thin alto cumulus at take off, continuing to coast. In South ADRIATIC, 3/10 alto stratus and 1/10 to 2/10 cumulus, tops 6000' with cloudiness increasing northward. In TRIESTE area, 5/10 cirrostratus at 20,000' and 7/10 cumulus, tops up to 12,000'. Over ALPS, stratocumulus varied from 2/10 to 6/10 with thick stratus in valleys. At target, 7/10 low cumulus, tops 7000' which obscured target. A bank of cirrostratus from 20-26,000' was encountered on rally off target. On return, cumulus over mts had increased and built up to 13,000' with coverage 8/10 to 10/10, layer extending to South of TRIESTE. From mid-ADRIATIC to base 6/10 to 8/10 alto stratus at 12,000' and 1/10 to 3/10 cumulus. Visibility was 15-20 miles entire route.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 16 Oct 44, at 0710A, 43 of 44 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in the STEYR area, AUSTRIA. Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished without incident. The 460th, flying in the lead position, was on course over rendezvous point at 0818A. Fighter escort, P-38s were seen at 1015 at 4540N-1400E. They furnished penetration cover up to 4713N1414E, leaving the formation at 1130A. 2 a/c returned early. These a/c jettisoned bombs in the ADRIATIC.

Because the Primary Target was obscured by undercast and the PFF did not offer definite results, the Group leader elected to bomb the second alternate, the GRAZ-NEUDORF A/C Engine Factory. 40 a/c were over the target at 1159A. From 22,000', 33 a/c dropped 80.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. Because of mechanical trouble, 1 a/c jettisoned bombs at 4701N1454E. 4 a/c had 7 bombs hung up which were later jettisoned, 4 in the ADRIATIC and 3 over AUSTRIA. 7 a/c failed to drop bombs on the target, 6 of these a/c jettisoned bombs above the bomb line. 1 a/c bombed a target of opportunity, a factory south of MITTENDORF 4735N1355E at 1135A. Both attack units used auto pilot on the bomb run.

Results: GRAZ NEUDORF A/C Factory. The control building has received approximately 20 direct hits. Each of the other two buildings received 4 or 5 direct hits. In all probability the plant will not only be out of action but very difficult to repair. Repairs, if attempted, will probably consume several months.

Targets of Opportunity were also attacked with very slight military damage.

M-IAH flak encountered over the target, GRAZ-NEUDORF, for approximately 5 minutes.

Route was flown as briefed to a point between the IP and Primary Target. Thence, to GRAZ and back to base.

35 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1440A. 4 a/c landed at friendly fields. 2 a/c lost over Alternate Target.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 16 October 44, 36 scheduled a/c plus 4 spares took off at 0650A to bomb the ST. VALENTIN Tank Works in AUSTRIA. Group form-up, assembly and Wing rendezvous executed as prescribed. 5 a/c returned early.

34 a/c over target at 1126A (briefed 1129A) and 33 a/c dropped 82.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 23,800'. 2 a/c jettisoned 5 tons over enemy territory. 2 a/c bombed targets of opportunity.

3 early returns brought back 7.5 tons of bombs.

Recapitulation:

33 a/c dropped on target

82.5 tons

1 a/c jettisoned prior to target time	2.5 tons
1 a/c unable to release, jettisoned	2.5 tons
2 a/c bombed targets of opportunity	5.0 tons
3 a/c early returns brought back	<u>7.5 tons</u>
Total	100.0 tons

Bombing was by PFF. First attack unit leader did not use A-5 auto pilot as it was inoperative. Run made manually. Second attack unit leader bombed manually, C-1 auto pilot being out. Third attack unit leader bombed on PDI, C-1 auto pilot being erratic.

Results: Bomb strike photos show bombs to have hit the Southern area of LINZ. No military damage is visible.

IAH flak encountered at target, 5 to 7 minutes. At VILLACH SIH was encountered.

Fighter escort of 40 P-38s made rendezvous with formation at 1010A at 4513N-1416E, providing penetration and target cover. Escort last observed in target area at 1129A. 11 P-51s sighted in target area at 1128A and last reported at 1140A at 4750N-1350E.

1 a/c lost at target due to direct hit from flak in #1 engine.

33 a/c landed at base between 1407-1440A. 1 a/c crashed near field on return; crew bailed out safely.

Route flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 29 a/c of 30 scheduled took off at 0706A on 16 October 1944 to attack a target in the STEYR area. Assembly at 7,000' at 0804A and Wing rendezvous at 7,000' at 0818A. Escort of P-38s joined at 0955A at North end of ADRIATIC, furnished penetration cover, and left in target area at 1130A. There were 2 early returns.

No e/e were seen or encountered. There was no flak at the target attacked, and no flak encountered enroute.

The PT was completely obscured by solid undercast and as the PFF did not work, formation bombed targets of opportunity. 9 a/c dropped 22.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on TRIEBIN M/Y, 4730N-1430E at 1140A from 22,500'. Bombing was done visually using C-1 auto pilot. 17 a/c dropped 42.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on various targets of opportunity including factory building at LIEZEN, 4734N-1415E, RR tunnel at EISIEMKRZ, 4732N-1452E, and various small RR bridges. One prior return dropped 2.5 tons of bombs on ZELTWEIG A/D.

Recapitulation:

Tons dropped on TRIEBIN M/Y	22.5
Tons dropped on other targets	45.5
Tons dropped by prior return	<u>2.5</u>

Total tons dropped 67.5

Results: Targets of opportunity were attacked with very slight military damage.

29 a/c landed at 1427A. No a/c were lost or missing.

Route flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 16 Oct 44 at 0716A, 38 of 40 a/c scheduled took off to bomb a target in AUSTRIA. Second resort target, GRAZ NEUDORF A/C Engine Factory, was bombed after an unsuccessful attempt had been made to bomb the PT.

Assembly was at 6,000' at 0800A with formation following the 460th Group at 0807 $\frac{1}{2}$ A. Wing rendezvous effected at 0818A with 460th leading, followed in order by 485th, 465th, and 464th.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, approximately 35 P-38s, effected at 4527N-1400E at 1015A. Fighter escort departed at 4440N-1418E at 1331A. Several P-51s observed enroute and on return.

2 a/c returned early; bombs were returned to base.

36 a/c turned on ETA at IP and started a bomb run on the PT. Both the IP and the PT were completely obscured by an undercast, making it impossible to bomb visually. When the PFF equipment failed to record sufficient data for bombing by that method, the leader decided to bomb the 2nd Alternate at GRAZ. A heading was set for D. LENDSBORG, the briefed IP for that target.

2 a/c left formation at approximately 4750N-1410E. 1 lost an engine and returned to base alone, landing at 1400A with all bombs. 1 feathered #4 engine, left formation, dropped its bombs on a bridge in AUSTRIA and returned to base at 1410A. 34 a/c were over 2nd alternate at 1207A. 31 a/c dropped 77.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 23,450'. 1 other a/c returned bombs to base due to failure to release over target and inability to find a target of opportunity. 2 additional a/c jettisoned bombs over enemy territory due to rack malfunctions.

Bomb run begun on PFF since target obscured by clouds and smoke from bombs of 460th Group. The wind, from SW, blew smoke from target area, allowing bombardier to pick up target and start synchronization. Then clouds closed in and again the PFF equipment was resorted to. Bombing accomplished by synchronous PFF. The auto pilot was inoperative.

Results: A target of opportunity was attacked with no military damage being visible.

No e/a were observed or encountered. S-MAH flak was encountered over GRAZ for approximately 2 or 3 minutes. No other flak was encountered.

30 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1511A. 4 a/c landed at friendly fields. 2 a/c are missing. Route was flown as briefed.