

55BW Mission Summary No. 118, 20 Oct 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 20 October 1944, between 0735-0833A, 158 B-24 a/c of 160 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb a counter-air target in Southern GERMANY. There were 13 early returns.

Group assemblies and rendezvous were not effected as ordered, due to cloud conditions: Groups assembled over bases, and effected Wing rendezvous en route to target. Fighter escort was variously seen. Failure of all Groups to see escort was readily explicable by reason of cloud. One Group identified escort at 1155A and saw escort with formation until 1400A.

133 a/c were in target area, and finding Primary target overcast, while First Alternate had been visible en route, returned to ROSENMEIM M/Y at 1246-1256A. 121 a/c dropped 271.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs fused .1N .01T from 20,500-22,500'. 4 a/c dropped 10 tons on targets of opportunity. 8 sortie a/c jettisoned 13.5 tons, 3 early returns jettisoned 7.5 tons. 6 early returns and 7 weather returns brought back 30 tons, and 4 sortie a/c returned 10 tons of bombs to base.

There was no flak at target nor en route. No e/a were seen by 3 Groups. 1 Group saw 2 e/a which appear to have been jet propelled. There were no encounters.

140 a/c were down at bases between 1520-1545A. 1 a/c was lost by collision en route to target. 2 a/c are missing. 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

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

Weather: 6/10 stratocumulus and swelling cumulus at take off and 8/10 from base to coast, tops generally 8,000' with scattered swelling tops to 12,000'. There was also 3/10 altostratus at 10-12,000'. 3/10 to 5/10 altostratus at 12,000' and 1/10 to 3/10 cumulus over ADRIATIC, tops 8-10,000'. 3/10 cumulus over coast increasing to 4/10 over South slopes of ALPS to 8/10 over North slopes. Tops were 10-13,000'. Overcast with cumulus at primary target and 9/10 at alternate, tops of clouds 8-10,000'. Visibility was unlimited. Little change on return except for improvement in conditions in base area. 2/10 cumulus, tops 8,000' at base on return. Visibility 20-30 miles entire route.

Results: Clouds prevent complete assessment but there is considerable evidence of strikes in the M/Y. The 460th Bomb Group secured several hits on the double track rail line to KUFSTEIN which later photographs show probably cut both lines. Additional strikes from this group are visible in the vicinity of the roundhouses. The 464th Bomb Group has even more evidence of bombs on the M/Y. Several of their strikes are visible in the vicinity of the east choke point.

Hits were probably scored on the bridge over the INN RIVER, on the double track line to ENDORF. The 485th Bomb Group photographs indicate probable hits in the M/Y area. The rail line to KUFSTEIN was probably hit.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 20 October 1944 at 0735A, 40 of 42 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in the MUNICH area.

Due to adverse weather, the group assembled between field and rendezvous point. The 460th flew to Wing rendezvous point (4200N-1620E), arriving 3 minutes late. Two groups of the Wing were not at the appointed place so the 460th fell in behind the 464th. On route to the target, the other two groups joined the formation and assumed their proper positions. Friendly fighters, P-38s, were seen passing over formation at 1147A at 4635N-1230E.

5 a/c returned early. 1 a/c bombed a RR Bridge at 4547N-1300E. 2 a/c returned bombs to base, and 2 a/c jettisoned bombs in the ADRIATIC.

The group penetrated to IP of the PT but because of weather, it was decided to bomb the 1st Alternate, the ROSENHEIM M/Y. 34 a/c over this target at 20,500' on an axis of attack of 304°. 32 a/c dropped 79.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs at 1250A. A combination of both PFF and visual bombing was used. The target was obscured at the beginning of the bomb run, closed momentarily, then varied throughout the remainder of the run. Due to malfunctions, 2 a/c failed to bomb the target and jettisoned bombs in the ALPS. 2 a/c had 2 bombs hung up, which were jettisoned in the ALPS. Attack units used auto pilot on bomb run.

Route flown as briefed to IP of PT. Then a 180° turn was made to PRIEN and the bomb run was begun. Return was as briefed.

33 n/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1545A. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field. 1 a/c was lost by collision enroute to target.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 20 October 1944 at 0820A, 34 scheduled a/c took off to bomb a target in Southern GERMANY.

Group form-up was hampered by weather and the fact that the entire Wing was attempting to form up in the same area. Wing formation was not intact until North ADRIATIC was reached.

2 a/c returned early.

31 a/c were over ROSENHEIM M/Y at 1253A and 23 a/c dropped 57.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 22,500'. 4 a/c returned 10 tons of bombs. 2 a/c jettisoned bombs. 1 early return jettisoned 2.5 tons of bombs. Other early return brought back 2.5 tons of bombs to base. 2 a/c bombed targets of opportunity. The 32nd a/c left formation at

1226A and thus did not go over target with formation. Disposition of bomb load of this a/c is not known.

Recapitulation:

23 a/c dropped	57.5 tons
4 a/c returned	10.0 tons
2 a/c jettisoned or accidentally released	5.0 tons
2 a/c dropped on targets of opportunity	5.0 tons
1 a/c early return jettisoned	2.5 tons
1 a/c early return returned to base	2.5 tons
1 a/c down at friendly field	<u>2.5 tons</u>
Total	85.0 tons

First attack unit leader bombed using C-1 auto pilot. Second attack unit leader relinquished lead to C-13 just prior to bomb run. This a/c toggled on the Group Leader. Bombing was visual.

No flak was encountered at target. 1 crew reported that at 4536N-1252E at 1325A from 17,500' 2 small a/c were observed at extreme range of vision to left of formation traveling at an estimated 600 MPH. 2 unidentified a/c flying abreast at same altitude as formation made a long sweeping dive and came up to right of formation and out a great distance from formation.

15 P-38s observed at 4720N-1215E. 5 P-38s observed at 4356N-1409E at 1404A and 2 P-51s at 4245N-1423E. These a/c not considered escort for this group.

31 a/c landed at base between 1515-1545A. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 20 October 1944 at 0800, 42 scheduled a/c took off to bomb a target in Southern GERMANY.

Group assembled over base at 0900A at 4,000', and Wing rendezvous accomplished over water just east of Spur at 0925A at 4,000'. There was no fighter escort. 3 a/c returning early returned bombs to base.

No enemy a/c were seen or encountered. No flak was observed.

Formation proceeded toward PT, but at a point approximately over IP, which was obscured by clouds, it was decided by group leader that it would be impossible to bomb PT due to solid undercast. Formation had passed over 1st Alternate a few minutes previously and it had been observed to be visible. Undercast to West towards 2nd Alternate was observed to be solid, so group leader called Wing formation and advised that 1st Alternate would be bombed either visually or by pathfinder. Formation altered course to right, proceeding to approximate IP of 1st Alternate and started bomb run by PFF. There was about 9/10 undercast when target was approached, but lead bombardier and nose navigator could not pick up target visually.

Lead bombardier observed town of PRIEN through a break in undercast and decided to bomb railroad junction, as he did not believe he would be able to see 1st Alternate. Necessary corrections were made and bombs were dropped after a 30 second bomb run. 37 a/c over target at 1246A at 21,500', and 36 a/c dropped 90 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 1 a/c held its bombs because a plane in attack unit ahead turned off target too quickly and flew under this plane. This a/c dropped on a small town in the ALPS about 30 miles south of target.

Recapitulation:

Dropped on target	90.0 tons
Dropped on T/O	2.5 tons
Returned to base	7.5 tons
Unknown	<u>5.0 tons</u>
Total	105.0 tons

37 a/c landed at base at 1520A. 2 a/e are missing.

Route flown as briefed with exception of slight variations due to weather.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 20 October 1944 at 0833A, 42 scheduled a/c took off to bomb the Primary Target in GERMANY. Due to adverse weather conditions the PT could not be located and the M/Y at ROSENHEIM was bombed instead.

5 boxes assembled over base at 4,000' and took off on course at 0904A for rendezvous point. Dog box after taking off was unable to locate formation and proceeded on course alone. Scheduled Wing rendezvous was not effected due to weather conditions in that area. Groups did not meet until coast line at upper end of ADRIATIC was reached. At that time Dog box had not joined formation. Order of flight was as briefed with 465th leading, followed in order by 464th, 460th, and 485th Groups.

At 1155A 11 P-38s joined formation at 4625N-1250E and remained with formation until 1400A, departing at 4330N-1330E.

3 a/c returned early and brought bombs back to base.

31 a/c over the M/Y at ROSENHEIM at 1256A. 30 a/c dropped 44.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 21,500'. 2 sortie a/c jettisoned 3 tons. Group Commander ordered bomb load reduced from 10 to 6 bombs per a/c due to fact that 300' of the steel matting on the runway had been removed for repairs and that part of the runway was soggy from rain. 7 a/c were over target area, but being unable to find formation, did not bomb.

Recapitulation:

30 a/c dropped on target	177 bombs
1 a/c of the 30 jettisoned	3 bombs
10 a/c early returns returned	60 bombs

2 a/c sorties jettisoned.	<u>12 bombs</u>
Total	252 bombs

Enroute to PT formation sighted 1st Alternate through a break in the clouds. After proceeding to approximately 4801N-1232E, where a complete undercast was encountered, the leader decided to turn back and bomb 1st alternate. This target was identified through intermittent clouds. All units bombed visually by PDI. The auto pilot was inoperative.

One box from another group joined formation and flew over target with it and back as far as the coast of ITALY.

There were no encounters with e/a and none were seen. No flak was encountered.

30 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1531A. 1 a/c landed at IESI for refueling and remained there overnight. No a/c was lost, none is missing.

Route flown as briefed except for deviations caused by weather.