

55BW Mission Summary No. 119, 23 October 44 (Cont'd)

1. General Summary. On 23 October 1944, 172 B-24 a/c were scheduled for operations, 94 designated as Red Force, 78 consisting of Blue Force. Between 0715-0735A 91 a/c of Red Force took off to attack a target at AUGSBURG, GERMANY, and between 0905-0920A 77 a/c of Blue Force took off to attack a target in Northern ITALY. 8 a/c of Red Force and 6 a/c of Blue Force returned early.

Blue Force Groups effected assembly and rendezvous, but upon encountering extremely unfavorable weather conditions and penetrating to 4255N-1430E were recalled at 1208A, all a/c returning bombs to bases. 72 s/c were down at bases at 1330-1335A.

Red Force Groups effected assembly as ordered, and effected Wing rendezvous substantially as ordered. Fighter escort joined formation at 1100A at 4636N-1232E and remained with formation over target and until 1318A at 4547N-1239E.

83 a/c were over target between 1214-1215A. Finding target completely cloud covered the target area was bombed through cloud by non-visual means. 81 a/c dropping 181.7 tons of bombs (102 tons of 500 lb RDX fused .1N, .01T and 79.7 tons of M-47 100 lb clustered incendiaries) from 21,000 - 22,700'. 5 sortie a/c jettisoned 5.3 tons (3 tons RDX, 2.3 M-47), 6 early returns jettisoned 13 tons (5 tons RDX, 8 tons M-47). 1 early return brought back 2.5 tons of RDX and 1 early return brought 2 tons of M-47 bombs back to bases.

Results could not be observed; bomb strike photographs show bombs falling into cloud over target (target area indicated by flak bursts).

Flak at AUGSBURG was Moderate Inaccurate to Accurate Heavy. Moderate to Intense Accurate Heavy was encountered by one Group at INNSBRUCK.

5 e/a were seen by one Group. There were no encounters.

71 a/c were down at bases between 1552-1600A. No a/c was lost, 12 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations required by weather conditions.

Weather: Base and assembly 3 to 5/10 altocumulus and cumulus with light showers, bases at 3,000', tops to 6,000'. Scattered altostratus at 8,000' to 10,000'. Towering cumulus and cumulonimbus in the Spur area with multilayer clouds from 2,000' to 16,000' and rain. This extended to Ancona. From Ancona to target there was scattered cirrus at 20,000' with heavy vapor trails and a solid undercast at 14,000' tops with breaks visible only at Caerole and Bolzano. Solid undercast at target at 14 to 16,000'. Return conditions were same with

heavy cumulonimbus and rain in the area of the Spur, bases of clouds 1,500'. Wind at 20,000' at north end of ADRIATIC 090 at 35K. Temperatures at 21,000' over target -26c.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 23 October 1944, at 0715 hours, 46 of 47 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target at AUGSBURG, GERMANY.

Assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished without incident. The formation had to swing to the right of rendezvous point to avoid clouds. It circled over the ADRIATIC to climb above clouds, thus arriving late at the target. Fighter escort, P-38s, first sighted over the ALPS at 1120 hours, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation over the ALPS at 1300 hours.

5 a/c returned early. 4 a/c jettisoned bombs in the ADRIATIC, and 1 a/c returned bombs to base.

At 22,700', 41 a/c were over the primary target at 1215½ hours. Due to solid overcast, the Group bombed the primary target by PFF. 40 a/c dropped 79.7 tons of M-47 incendiaries clustered. 1 a/c failed to bomb the target because the bomb-bay doors would not open. This a/c jettisoned 40 bombs immediately after the target. 2 a/c had 6 bombs hung up. 2 bombs were jettisoned in the ADRIATIC and 4 bombs fifteen minutes after target.

The Group experienced MIH flak over the primary target for about 4 minutes. Over the target, 5 ME-109s were seen. These e/a were painted black. There was no encounter.

The route was flown as briefed with exceptions for going around weather.

35 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1600 hours. 6 a/c landed at friendly fields.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 23 October 1944, beginning at 0920A, 35 scheduled B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the primary target designated in Operations Order No. 224.

The Group form-up was executed north of the base area due to local weather conditions, and Group end Wing rendezvous were executed as prescribed. Adverse weather conditions were encountered immediately after take-off and the formation received a recall signal and turned back at 1208A hours (4255N-1430E).

All the bombs, a total of 87.5 tons were returned to the base.

3 a/c returned early.

32 a/c returned to this base between 1305A hours and 1400A hours.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 23 October 1944 42 a/c of 42 scheduled plus 1 spare took off at 0905 to attack a target in N. ITALY. The a/c formed in 3 attack units.

Weather prevented assembly over prescribed rendezvous point and after assembling the groups at 0945 at 5,000 feet, the Wing rendezvoused at 1020. There was no fighter escort.

1 spare and 2 other a/c returned early.

Formation proceeded only a short way past the Spur and encountered no e/a nor flak.

After assembly the Wing made 2 circles, attempting to gain altitude, eventually attaining 20,500 feet altitude just N. of the Spur. In attempting to go on course, multi-layer clouds prevented proceeding further than north east of PENNA PT., 4220N-1510E, end at this point the mission was recalled by radio. All a/c returned bombs to base. 40 a/c landed at 1335A.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 23 October 1944, at 0735 hours, 45 B-24 type a/c of 47 a/c scheduled took off to bomb a target in AUGSBURG, GERMANY. 8 boxes assembled in "A" and "B" Groups.

The "A" Group arrived over rendezvous point at 0845 hours, 1 minute late at 10,000', upon advice of the weather ship, where the rendezvous was effected with 1 Group of the 460th Group. The "B" Group, because of radio failure in the lead a/c, did not complete their assembly until on course. The Group assembly and rendezvous with the 460th Group was eventually effected in the vicinity of the first turning point over the ADRIATIC. The order of flight was the 485th Group leading, followed by the 460th Group.

At 1100 hours, approximately 40 P-38s a/c joined the formation at 4536N-1232E and remained with the formation until 1318 hours. The escort departed at 4557N - 1239E.

3 a/c returned prior to bombing. 2 a/c jettisoned and 1 a/c returned bombs to base.

42 a/c were over AUGSBURG at 1214 hours (Target time 1151A). 41 a/c dropped 102 tons of 1000 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and .01 tail, from 21,000'. 1 of the a/c dropping bombs on the target jettisoned 1 bomb at an unknown location. 1 a/c jettisoned 5 bombs at 1222 hours shortly after the rally because of rack malfunction.

Both attack Groups used PFF because of solid undercast. The "A" Group used the A-5 and the "B" Group used the C-1 on the bomb run.

There were no encounters with e/a and none were seen. 6 to 8 vapor trails were observed to the north of the target. MAH flak was

encountered for approximately 4 minutes in the target area. Weather conditions necessitated a deviation in course after the rally which carried the formation over the westerly edge of INNSBRUCK where M to IAH flak was encountered. Evasive action limited exposure to approximately 1 minute.

36 a/c landed without incident, mean landing time 1552 hours.
6 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed except for divinations caused by weather.