

55BW Mission Summary No. 111, 7 October 1944 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 7 October 1944, 188 B-24 a/c were scheduled for operations. Between 0915-0935A, 92 a/c constituting Red Force took off to bomb WINTERHAFEN Oil Storage in VIENNA, AUSTRIA; and between 0954-1007A, 86 a/c constituting Blue Force took off to bomb the ERSEKUJVAR (NOVEZAMKY) M/Y in HUNGARY. Combined strength of Red Force and Blue Force was 178 a/c airborne. There were 18 early returns, 14 from Red Force and 4 from Blue Force.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered for each Force. Fighter escort of Red Force, consisting of about 65 P-38 and P-51 a/c, was first seen at 1215A near 4610N-1656E and, after providing penetration, target and withdrawal cover, remained with Red Force formation until 1545A at the ADRIATIC coast. Fighter escort, consisting of about 50 P-38 and P-51 a/c, joined formation of Blue Force at 1318A at 4610N-1656E and remained with formation until 1632A when the ADRIATIC coast of ITALY was reached.

160 a/c (78 of Red Force, 82 of Blue Force) were over targets (at 1336-1337A, Red Force; 1405-1408A, Blue Force), and 159 a/c dropped 393.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1N, .01T, as follows: 77 a/c of Red Force dropped 191 tons on WINTERHAFEN O/S; 82 a/c of Blue Force dropped 202.5 tons on ERSEKUJVAR M/Y; 1 a/c of Blue Force dropped 2.5 tons on a target of opportunity. Red Force bombed from 22,700-23,000' mean altitude; Blue Force dropped from 17,400-18000' mean altitude. 7 sortie a/c jettisoned 6.75 tons, 3 early returns jettisoned 7.5 tons, 1 sortie a/c returned .75 ton, and 13 early returns brought 32.5 tons of bombs back to bases.

Results:

VIENNA/WINTERHAFEN O/S (Red Force) - Numerous strikes are visible among the oil storage tanks. At least eight storage tanks were set on fire and five additional probably received blast damage. Two medium sized tankers received very near misses and four smaller tankers received direct hits. The marshalling yard adjacent to the oil storage area was probably heavily damaged. number of tracks received direct hits. At least three tank cars were set on fire and others were probably damaged.

ERSEKUJVAR M/Y (Blue Force) - Numerous strikes are visible in the yard and others are presumed to have fallen in the yard but are not visible due to smoke from previous bombing. Twenty to thirty strikes are visible in the heavily loaded Northwest portion of the yard. Additional strikes were concentrated in the center of the yard and in the station area. It is believed that seventy-five to one hundred goods wagons were either damaged or destroyed.

Flak at VIENNA (Red Force target) was IAH. Flak at NOVEZAMXY (Blue Force target, ERSEKUJVAR M/Y) was nil, but 1 Group of Blue Force encountered SIM flak at ZADVARJA.

One Group of Red Force saw 4 e/a, no other Groups saw e/a; no e/a was encountered.

153 a/c were down at bases (72 a/e of Red Force between 1640-1645A; 81 a/c of Blue Force between 1720-1731A) between 1640-1731A, mean landing time. 1 a/c of Red Force, none of Blue Force, was lost; 1 a/c of Blue Force was reported missing (subsequently reported at a friendly field), and 5 a/c of Red Force landed at friendly fields.

Route of Red Force was flown as briefed; route of Blue Force was flown as briefed except for deviation by one Group on route to target, deviation caused by cloud condition.

Weather: Red Force - On take-off, 8-10/10 alto-cumulus, bases 8-9,000', decreasing to 7/10 at spur of ITALY and 3-5/10 over YUGOSLAVIA. Rest of route 2-5/10 stratocumulus and 4-6/10 cirrus, bases 24-25,000'. Target area, 3-4/10 stratocumulus, tops 6-7,000'. Return weather was the same. Visibility 10-15 miles throughout.

Blue Force - Base to coast, 3/10 cumulus and 8/10 alto-stratus. 8/10 stratocumulus over ADRIATIC with 8/10 alto-stratus. Over DINARICS, 4/10 scattered cumulus, tops 8,000', and 3/10 alto-stratus at 16,000'. Generally clear over HUNGARIAN Plains except for patches of stratus and scattered cirrus. On return same, with 8/10 alto-stratus at base. Visibility 5-10 miles over ADRIATIC in haze, improving to 25 miles at target.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 7 October 1944, at 0915A, 45 of 48 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the WINTERFAFEN Oil Stores at VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished without incident. The 460th was on course at 1045A, flying the #2 position. Fighter escort, P-38s and P-51s, first sighted south of Lake BALATON at 1215A, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They were last seen at 1545A on the YUGOSLAV coast.

6 a/c returned early.

39 a/c were over the PT at 1337A. 38 a/c dropped 95 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the target. 1 a/e jettisoned bombs immediately after target due to rack malfunction. The first wave used the automatic pilot on bomb run; the second wave used PDI because of auto pilot failure.

IAH flak encountered for 5 minutes over the target. 4 e/a were soon on the mission. These SEFs, ME-109s or FW-190s, were seen at the IP flying at 17,000'. There was no encounter.

Results: A heavy concentration was scored in the oil storage area. Several direct hits resulted in several fires among the storage tanks. Incidental damage was caused to the marshalling yard and warehouses in target area. Two two hundred and fifty foot oil tankers received very near misses.

Route flown as briefed.

36 a/c returned to base, mean landing time 1645A. 3 a/c landed at friendly fields, Gioia, Amendola and 332nd Fighter Group base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 7 October 1944, beginning at 1007A, 45 of 48 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the ERSEKUJVAR, HUNGARY, M/Y. The 45 a/c formed 2 groups, Able Group comprising 23 a/c and Baker Group 22 a/c. Each group formed 2 attack units.

Group assembly and bomber rendezvous were as prescribed. 2 a/c returned early.

43 a/c were over target at 1405A (briefed target time 1353A) and dropped 105.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 18,000'. 1 a/c dropped 1.25 tons on a target of opportunity after rack malfunction prevented their release over PT. 3.25 tons were returned to base. 2.75 tons were jettisoned.

Recapitulation:

Dropped on Primary Target	105.25 tons
Dropped on Target of Opportunity	1.25 tons
Jettisoned	2.75 tons
Returned to base	<u>3.25 tons</u>
	112.50 tons

Axis of attack was 151° instead of briefed axis of 104°, the change being made necessary by a deviation in course between IP and target. Overcast conditions at IP caused formation to pass beyond turning point.

Bomb was visual and both Able and Baker force leaders used C-1 automatic pilot.

Results: The main concentration of bombs fell in the heavily loaded Northwest area of the marshalling yard. Additional strikes are visible in the area of the workshops and station. Additional strikes are presumed to have fallen in the yard but smoke prevents complete assessment.

No flak defenses were encountered.

Fighter escort first observed at 1318A, 4610N-1656E, and last reported at 1632A over the ADRIATIC.

43 a/c landed at base between 1700-1739A.

Weather necessitated a deviation from briefed route and formation was slightly to right of course and continuing to right of course after first turn point reached the YUGOSLAV coast at 4328N-1604E, MALE DRIVENIK. From that point a direct course was flown to turn point BUC (4528N-1723E), then as briefed to the IP, but the formation passed beyond the IP before turning into target. Return route as briefed except slight deviation to left of course to avoid weather between BUC and the ADRIATIC.

4. 465th Bomb Group. Between 0941 and 1006A on 7 Oct 44, 41 a/c of 45 scheduled took off to attack the M/Y at ERSEKUJVAR, HUNGARY. The formation was composed of 2 groups. 24 a/c were scheduled for Able group and 22 took off. 21 a/c were scheduled for Baker group and 19 took off.

Group assembly and Wing rendezvous were accomplished without incident. An escort of P-51s joined the formation at 1400A at 19,500' in the target area and left the formation at 1630A at the ADRIATIC Sea. 2 a/c returned early.

No e/a were seen or encountered. No flak was encountered at the target but scant inaccurate medium flak was encountered in the vicinity of ZADVARJE 4327N1650E.

21 a/c in Able group went over the target at 1408A at 16,700' and dropped 52.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, 18 a/c of Baker group went over the target at 1409A at 18,000' and dropped 43.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 1 a/c in Able group jettisoned 1 bomb at 1450A about 10 miles NW of PECS after it had hung up over the target. 1 a/c of Baker group jettisoned 3 bombs just outside of the target area after they had hung up. Another a/c of Baker group jettisoned 2 bombs in the ADRIATIC at 1630A after they had hung up over the target.

Able group total tons dropped on target	52.25
Baker group total tons dropped on target	43.75
Able group tons jettisoned	.25
Baker group tons jettisoned	<u>1.25</u>
Total tons carried	97.50

Results: Several strikes are visible in the center and northwest portions of the M/Y. Additional strikes are presumed to have fallen in the yard but are obscured by the smoke from previous bombs.

38 a/c landed at 1731A. 1 a/c has not returned to base.

Route was flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 7 Oct 44 at 0935A, 47 B-24 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb VIENNA WINTERHAFEN O/S, AUSTRIA. These a/c formed in two attack Groups. Group assembly and Wing rendezvous were executed as planned.

Fighter escort, 65 P-38s and P-51s joined the formation at 1244A at 4610N1650E. They provided penetration and withdrawal support, leaving the formation at approximately 1530A, at 4330N1650E.

8 a/c returned prior to bombing.

39 a/c were over the target at 1336A (briefed 1316A). 39 a/c dropped 96 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 23,000'. Of these a/c, 1 jettisoned 5 bombs and 1 jettisoned 1 bomb at approximately 4638N1558E at 1335A because of rack malfunction. The lead ship of the high box of "B" group dropped its bombs approximately 1 minute before "bombs away", when a piece of flak came through the nose and struck the portion of the bomb release electrical control system. Several planes in this box dropped on the leader. The first attack group bombed manually as the C-1 was inoperative. The second group bombed with C-1.

Numerous strikes are visible in the oil storage area and in the adjacent M/Y. 6 oil storage tanks were set on fire and several tank cars were set on fire in the M/Y. 4 tankers were hit and set on fire.

No e/a were seen or encountered. The formation was exposed to IAH flak between the IP and the target area continuously for approximately 4 to 6 minutes. No other flak was encountered.

Return was made without incident, 36 a/e landing at 1640A. 1 a/c received a direct hit in the left wing over the target and was last seen losing altitude rapidly in the target area. No chutes were definitely reported from this a/c although at least 3 were observed in the target area. 2 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed.