

55BW Mission Summary No. 101, 12 September 44 (Cont'd)

1. On 12 September 1944, between 0805 - 0817B, 87 B-24 a/c of 87 a/c scheduled and 7 spares took off to bomb the Wasserburg A/C factory, near LEIPHEIM, Germany. 4 scheduled a/c returned early; 6 spares returned (83 sorties). 4 spares returned 10 tons, 1 early return brought back 2.5 tons, 3 early returns jettisoned 7.5 tons of bombs.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered.

Fighters joined formation at 1120B at (4500N - 1245E), furnished excellent cover en route and at target, and remained with formation until 1409B at (4525N - 1245E).

83 a/c were over target at 1303 - 1309B. 78 a/c dropped 192.5 tons of 1000 lb. GP bombs, fused .1N, .01T, from 21,000 - 23,000'. 6 sorties jettisoned 10 tons, 3 sorties returned 2.5 tons of bombs.

Results:

460 Bomb Group photographs show the Wasserburg A/C factory to have received a heavy concentration of bombs covering the entire target area. Several direct hits are visible on the main factory building and numerous hits are visible on small unidentified buildings. One fire is seen to have been started.

465 Bomb Group photographs show the Wasserburg A/C factory to have received probable strikes in the factory area. Several strikes are visible to the right of the target. Smoke prevents complete assessment.

485 Bomb Group photographs show the Wasserburg A/C factory to have received a concentration of bombs in the target area. Three very near misses are visible on the building designated as the target. Numerous additional strikes are visible in the target area.

Damage to the two primary objectives was probably severe. Direct hits appear to have been scored on both buildings. Numerous smaller buildings received direct hits. The size bomb carried was such that all hits scored would normally cause considerable damage.

There was no flak at target. Two groups encountered M-IAH flak at BOLZANO when off course on return. 1 group saw 6, 2 groups saw no e/a. No e/a was encountered.

72 a/c were down at bases between 1610 - 1620. 2 a/c were lost (crash landed near bases), 1 a/c is missing. 8 a/c landed at friendly fields.

Route was flown as briefed until deviation was made on route back.

Weather: enroute 1 - 4/10 stratocumulus, tops 4,000', visibility 15 mi.; target: 2/10 cumulus, visibility 20 miles; return, 2 - 3/10 cumulus, visibility 15 miles.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 12 September 1944, at 0815 hours, 31 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the Wasserberg A/C Factory near Leipheim, Germany.

Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th were accomplished as scheduled. The Wing formed over Spinazzola at 0928 hours, the 460th flying in the #2 position. Fighter escort, P-38s and P-51s, first sighted at 1128 hours at (4532N - 1243E) furnished penetration and target cover. They were last seen at the target at 1309 hours.

2 a/c returned early. Both jettisoned bombs.

At 22,100', 29 a/c were over the primary target, the Wasserberg A/C Factory at 1309 hours. 27 a/c dropped 65 tons of 1000-lb GP bombs. 1 a/c jettisoned bombs at the IP, and 3 a/c had 10 bombs hung up that were later jettisoned; 6 bombs in the Adriatic and 4 bombs in the Alps. Automatic pilot was used by both attack units on the run.

The Group did not encounter flak over the target. MIH flak was reported at Bolzano (4630N - 1120E) both white and black bursts.

8 e/a were seen on the mission. Over the Italian coast, on route, 2 ME-109s were seen at 1150 hours, and 2 SEFs were seen 5 minutes after target time. P-38s chased these e/a away. At an A/D 10 miles N. of the target, 4 e/a were observed taking off. These e/a are believed to have been jet propelled, because of the type of trails left.

The route was flown as briefed except off course on return.

26 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1610 hours. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field near Bari to refuel and has since returned. 2 a/c landed at friendly fields, Pescara and Foggia.

3. 465th Bomb Group. 27 a/c of 28 a/c scheduled with 3 spares took off in two attack units at 0905 hours on 12 September 1944 to attack the Wasserburg A/C Factory near Leipheim A/D, Germany.

The group assembled over Andria at 0910 hours at 9,000 ft. and wing rendezvous was accomplished over Spinazzola at 0927 hours at 9,000 ft. A fighter escort of P-38s joined the formation in the North Adriatic at 1120 hours and gave penetration and target, withdrawal support as far back as the Adriatic coast. Escort was excellent.

There was 1 early return which was caused by a serious oil leak. Bombs were jettisoned at 4550N - 1225E at 1202 hours. 2 spares returned.

There was no flak at the target.

27 a/c went over the target at 1309 hours at 23,000 feet and 25 a/c dropped 62.5 tons of 1000 lb. GP bombs. 2 a/c did not drop: 1 because the racks froze up, the other because the bombs hung up on the racks. Both jettisoned their bombs 25 miles south of the target. Bombing was done visually. The lead ship used A-5 pilot, but 30 seconds prior to dropping bombs the bombardier discovered that the constant speed motor was out. The deputy was informed, but it was too late to correct the error in deflection and bombs were dropped right of the target. The second attack unit using C-1 and sighting visually dropped their bombs in the smoke at the target.

Total tons dropped on target	62.5
Total tons dropped by sortie a/c	5
Total tons jettisoned by E/R	<u>2.5</u>
	70

23 a/c landed at base at 1620 hours. 1 a/c crash landed at Manfredonia and 4 members of the crew are known to have been rescued. 2 a/c landed at Falconaro A/D near Ancona. 1 a/c was last seen falling behind the formation in the Udine area and this plane is still missing.

The route was flown as briefed, except off course on return.

4. 485th Bomb Group. On 12 September '44 at 0817 hours, 28 regularly scheduled and 4 spare B-24 a/c took off to bomb the WESSERBURG JET PROPELLED A/C FACTORY (Primary Target).

The Group assembled over ALTAMURA and were joined by the 460th Group there at 0916 hours at 7,000'.

Wing rendezvous with the 485th leading, followed by 460th and 465th Groups, was over SPINAZZOLA at 0926 hours at 7,000'.

12 P-38 a/c joined the formation at 1123 hours at 4502N - 1305E. These a/c stayed with the formation and furnished very good cover. Later, several additional P-38 a/c were observed above the formation. A/C departed at 1408 hours at 4525N - 1245E.

The 4 spare a/c returned to base after failing to find vacancies in the formation. In addition, 1 a/c returned early. Bombs were returned to base.

27 a/c were over the target at 1308 hours (target time 1245 hours). The delay in reaching the target was due to strong head winds being encountered over the entire route. 26 a/c dropped 65 tons of

1,000 lb GP bombs .1 Nose and .01 Tail Fusing at 21,000'. The bomb racks in a/c #394 froze, making it impossible to release bombs on the target; bombs were salvoed at 1310 hours at approximately 4820N - 1010E. Automatic Pilots were used by both attack units on bomb run, and bombing was by visual means.

No e/a were seen or encountered, and no flak was encountered over the target. On return, the formation encountered IAH flak for approximately three minutes near BULZANO (approximately 4630N - 1130E), at 1345 hours at 21,000'. This flak apparently came from along the double track RR connecting BOLZANO and the BRENNER PASS.

23 a/c landed without incident at 1620 hours.

1 a/c on return, ran out of gasoline and crash landed approximately 20 miles south of the field. 7 crew members escaped without injury, 1 sustained serious injury, 1 was killed.

1 a/c landed at VIS for gasoline, and returned to base at 1805 hours. 1 a/c landed at FOGGIA for gasoline and returned to base at 1722 hours. 1 A/C landed at AMADONNA for gasoline and returned to base at 1700 hours.

Route was flown as briefed except off course on return.