

55BW Mission Summary No. 97, 4 Sept 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 4 Sept 44, between 0935-0958B, 115 B-24 a/c of 115 a/c scheduled plus 3 spares, took off to bomb ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge and ORA M/Y, ITALY. 3 scheduled a/c returned early; 3 spares returned.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous, although hindered by cloud conditions, were effected as ordered.

Fighter a/c joined formation at 1223B near ANCONA, furnished close escort cover, and remained with formation until 1441B near PIANOSA ISLAND.

105 a/c were over targets between 1325-1330B. 99 a/c dropped 244.75 tons of bombs on Primary Targets, and 6 a/c dropped 6 tons on a target of opportunity. In detail, 126.5 tons of 1000 lb RDX bombs (.1N, non-delay T fusing) were dropped on ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge; and 1 tons of 1000 lb RDX bombs (.1N, non-delay T fusing) were dropped on target of opportunity (a highway bridge, which was destroyed). 118 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1N, .025T fusing) were dropped on ORA M/Y. 5 sorties jettisoned 11 tons; 3 early returns jettisoned 7.5 tons; 3 spares jettisoned 7.5 tons. 5 sorties returned 9.25 tons to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show the ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge covered with smoke from previous bombing. Bombs visible on the edge of the smoke-covered target, and strikes are presumed to have fallen in the target area.

464 Gp - Photos show the ORA M/Y to have received two concentrations of strikes. One heavy concentration lies directly across the center of the yard. A smaller concentration covers the north choke point of the yard.

465 Gp - Photos show the ORA M/Y to have received a concentration of strikes in the central portion of the yard. Smoke from previous bombing prevents a complete assessment but strikes are visible in the marshalling yards.

485 Gp - Photos show the ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge to have received a heavy concentration of strikes. Direct hits were scored on both approaches and several near misses were scored on the bridge. One box attacked a target of opportunity, a highway bridge, and scored three direct hits or near misses on the bridge.

Reconnaissance photographs show the east approach to the ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge to be blocked. Both ends of the bridge have received probable blast damage due to near misses. The bridge is intact, but will probably not be usable for two or three days.

All through tracks have been cut in several places in the marshalling yards. Approximately 34 units of rolling stock are destroyed and 12 probably damaged. All through tracks will probably remain cut for several days because of the large number of craters in the central portion of the yard.

There was no flak at targets; no other flak was encountered.

No e/a was seen nor encountered.

111 a/c were down at bases between 1420-1608B. No a/c was lost nor missing. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

Route flown as briefed.

Weather: On take-off 3-5/10 cumulus decreasing to 2-4/10 cumulus over the ADRIATIC. At targets, 2-3/10 cirrus, visibility 15-20 miles. Return 2-4/10 cumulus over ADRIATIC, 3-4/10 cumulus at bases.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 4 Sept 44, at 0935B, 31 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the ADIGE/ORA RR Bridge in ITALY.

Group assembly and Wing rendezvous were effected as scheduled. The fighter escort of P-51s first sighted at 1224B at 4420N-1340E, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at 1441B at 4350N-1350E.

One a/c returned early due to an engine failure. Bombs were jettisoned in ADRIATIC.

From 21,800' 30 a/c dropped 74 tons of 1000 lb RDX bombs on the PT. Due to malfunction 1 a/c dropped 2 bombs 3 minutes before target time. Both attack units used automatic pilot on bomb run.

No flak was encountered.

29 a/c returned to base with mean landing time of 1550B. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

3. 464th Bomb Group, On 4 Sept 44, 28 scheduled a/c and 3 spare a/c took off at 0946B to bomb ORA M/Y, ITALY.

The 3 spares returned, jettisoning bombs. 1 scheduled a/c returned early, bombs jettisoned.

Group form-up and line rendezvous made as planned. On Wing rendezvous 464th was 2 minutes late due to low overcast and being 2000' higher than briefed altitude.

27 a/c over target at 1328B, and 23 a/c dropped 55.75 tons of 500 lb GP bombs from 22,600'. 6 a/c jettisoned 15 tons; 1 a/c

jettisoned 2.5 tons at 4601N-1127E; 1 a/c jettisoned 2.5 tons at 4552N-1150E. 4 a/c returned 6.75 tons to base.

Recapitulation of bombs:

Dropped on target	55 3/4 tons
Jettisoned	15 tons
Returned to base	6 3/4 tons
Total tonnage	77 1/2 tons

The group leader used C-1 automatic pilot. Second attack unit used PDI.

There was no flak et target.

Rendezvous with fighter escort at 1130B at 4430N-1330E when 35-40 P-51s of the 325th Fighter Group were observed. Excellent cover given on penetration, target and withdrawal, escort being last seen at 1530B at ITALY coast.

27 a/c landed at base between 1550B-1616B.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 4 Sept 44, 28 scheduled a/c took off in two attack units et 0940B to bomb ORA M/Y, ITALY.

Group assembled over ANDRIA at 1039B at 8,500'. Wing rendezvous accomplished over SPINAZZOLA at 1046B et 8,500'. 1 early return. P-51 escort joined bombers at 1223B near ANCONA and provided penetration, target and withdrawal cover, leaving bombers at 1530B near PIANOSA ISLAND.

No flak encountered at target. No e/a seen or encountered.

27 a/c over target at 1330B at 21,500' and 25 a/c dropped 62.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs. 1 a/c jettisoned its bombs; 2 bombs at 4530N-1300E and 8 at 4630N-1250E. 1 a/c jettisoned after target run at 4629N-1110E. Bombing was visual, using A-5.

Recapitulation of bombs:

Dropped on target	62.5 tons
Jettisoned by early returns	2.5 tons
Jettisoned by sortie a/c	5 tons
Total tonnage	70 tons

27 a/c landed at 1420B (mean landing time).

Route flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 4 Sept 44, at 058B, 28 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the ADIGE/ORR RR Bridge (PT).

Three boxes assembled above overcast over ALTAMURA at 7,600' at 1020B, and the fourth box joined the group over SPINAZZOLA just before Wing rendezvous. Wing rendezvous over SPINAZZOLA at 1043B at 7,700' with 485th leading, followed in order by the 460th, 464th, and 465th Groups.

30-40 P-51s joined the formation at 4400N-1340E at 1225B and departed at 1403B at 4506N-1253E.

There were no early returns.

21 e/c over target at 1325B. 21 a/c dropped 52.5 tons of 1000 lb RDX bombs at 21,000'.

Between IP and target, lead box of second attack unit overshot its position and drew up under lead box of the Group. Being unable to pull back, they turned left and attacked another highway bridge approximately 3 miles south of the PT at 1326B. 6 a/c dropped 15 tons of 1000 lb RDX bombs from 20,400'. 1 a/c returned bombs to base.

No e/a were seen or encountered and there was no flak either at target or at any point enroute or on return.

Return made without incident. 28 a/c landed, mean landing time 1608B.

Route flown as briefed.