

HISTORY

of the

484TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

1 December 1944 to 31 December 1944

The coming of winter with its rain and snow brought about a sharp reduction in operational flying. With non-military motor and foot travel on the bumpy, muddy, Italian roads practically at a standstill, it became necessary to keep the men occupied during leisure time.

The study classes which began slowly in the early fall came into their own and all squadrons had increased attendance. The studies covered a wide range of subjects from practical work to classes in Psychology. Evening news talks became a popular indoor sport and S-2 briefing rooms had standing room only during their sessions.

The spacious Group Theatre made in Nissen hut style with bomb stands as seats was the scene of an unusual show by the men of the Group. The show performed on two nights and received much praise.

December saw the completion of most of the tufa stone houses and winterizing of tents. Men situated in more advantageous spots for supplies of various kinds built (with Italian labor and their own help) houses that were almost "a bit of home" in Italy. Each tent or house had its own improvised fuel stove or fireplace and when the smoke is pouring out of the stove pipes in the different squadrons, the areas look like little Pittsburgs.

Christmas in Italy. A few months earlier no one would have bet on its happening. But here we were, and with Christmas trees brought down by

Special Service from the Manfredonia mountain area, the yuletide spirit was in evidence everywhere. Packages from home (mostly with food) arrived in huge numbers and with a delicious Christmas dinner served by the Squadron messes, the inner man was satisfied. Master Sergeants, full of the right spirit, took over KP duties, and also had to take a lot of kidding.

The year 1944 ended in a high spirited celebration perhaps in the belief that 1945 would see the end of European hostilities. Every man in the Group felt that it had been a year of achievement both in training and in combat.

During the month of December the 484th Bombardment Group was able to accomplish 16 missions, an amazing number when the weather for the month is taken into consideration. A total of 290 sorties were flown bringing the Group total to date up 4,427. Early returns for the month totaled twenty-seven. Two hundred and fifty-nine aircraft dropped 449.65 tons of bombs on enemy installations. During the month we destroyed seven enemy fighters while losing four of our planes.

A brief description of each mission follows:

Mission No. 110, 2 December 1944, Blechhammer South Oil Refinery

Blechhammer South Oil Refinery was the first target for the Group for the month of December. It was one of the high priority oil targets for the Fifteenth Air Force. When we attacked it, the refinery was only putting out 40% of capacity, but was under repair. The weather was clear over the target, but our bombardiers were hampered by smoke. Forty tons of bombs were dropped, and the target area was believed to be well hit. Flak was I-A-H in the target area, but no planes were lost, although two were damaged.

Mission No. 111, 3 December 1944, Innsbruck M/Y.

Latest intelligence information accounted for 685 cars in the yards, and two planes were sent to this target to bomb by instruments under cover of the weather. Three tons of bombs were dropped, and the mickey operators believed results were good.

Mission No. 112, 6 December 1944, Maribor South M/Y, Yugo.

Thirty-five aircraft were sent to this target, but because of poor weather conditions, the formation became separated before reaching the objective. Ten planes bombed at Maribor, but results were unobserved. Weather was 10/10 at both targets. One aircraft failed to return to the base.

Mission No. 113, 7 December 1944, Innsbruck M/Y.

Under cover of night two planes were again dispatched to this target. One plane returned early, but the other went on to drop 1.5 tons of bombs on the target. Results were unobserved.

Mission No. 114, 11 December 1944, Graz M/Y

Twenty-eight planes took off to bomb the Blechhammer Refinery on this date, but weather conditions forced them to turn to the fourth alternate, the Graz M/Y's. It was hazy over the target, and results are thought to be poor.

Mission No. 115, 12 December 1944, Blechhammer South Oil Refinery.

Under cover of a 10/10 undercast two planes were sent to this target to bomb by instruments. Three tons of bombs were dropped on the target with unobserved results.

Mission No. 116, 15 December 1944, Linz Main M/Y.

Twenty-six aircraft were sent to destroy this target. The target is the main bottle neck for the German traffic moving from the west to the east. The weather was again poor, necessitating use of instruments. Forty-one tons of bombs were dropped, but results were unobserved.

Mission No. 117, 16 December 1944, Brux Synthetic Oil Plant.

Our target for the 16th of December was the Brux Synthetic Oil plant which was rated as the number two priority target in all Europe. Twenty-seven aircraft were sent to this target, but again it was the same story on the weather. It was 10/10 over the area to be bombed, but the formation continued on instruments. Results were unobserved, but were generally thought to be good. Thirty-six tons of bombs were dropped.

Mission No. 118, December 17 1944, Odertal Oil Ref., Germany.

Odertal Oil Refinery had been under attack before this date, but was still able to produce 4000 tons of gasoline per month. On this day 30 B-24s attacked it, dropping 52.5 tons. Results were unobserved. On this mission our group was attacked by fighters. Thirty or Forty of them attacked the formation just as our escort left. We didn't lose any planes to them, while knocking down seven of their planes,

Mission No. 119, 18 December 1944, Blechhammer South Oil Ref.

This was another Pathfinder mission. A 10/10 undercast over the target made it necessary for the bomb run to be made on instruments. Results were again unobserved, but it was thought they were good. Nineteen aircraft dropped 33 tons of bombs on the target.

Mission No. 120, 19 December 1944, Blechhammer South Oil Ref.

After bombing the North Refinery on the 19th, the South Refinery was the target on the 20th. This mission was a duplication of the one going before. The target was bombed by Pathfinder, and again results were believed to be good although they were unobserved. Eighteen tons of bombs were dropped.

Mission No. 121, 20 December 1944, Linz M/Y, Aus.

On this mission Linz was the third alternate target. It was bombed by pathfinder when a 10/10 undercast obscured the target area. Again results were thought to be good, although they were not observed. Thirty-four tons were dropped.

Mission No. 122, 25 December 1944, Villach, Aus.

Twenty-six aircraft took off to bomb Brux, but because of a heavy overcast, the formation became divided. Four planes bombed at Villach, one at Wels, and the rest returned their bombs to the base. The mission was very unsuccessful, but all planes returned safely.

Mission No. 123, 27 December 1944, Venzone Viaduct, Italy

This mission was one of the first in which the weather was clear over the target. Results were good, although the Bombardier in the first box had a malfunction. The bombs seemed to straddle the viaduct. Seventy five tons of bombs were dropped on this target which was a very important part of the communications system from Vienna through Villach into Italy.

Mission No. 124, 26 December 1944, Venzone RR Bridge, Italy.

This target was very close to the one which the Group attacked on the preceding day. The weather was clear again, and the objective was badly damaged.

Mission No. 125, 29 December 1944, Passau M/Y

The last target for the month was the Passau M/Y, a rail center on the most direct line from central Germany to Vienna. It was particularly important at this time because the enemy was trying to avoid using the facilities at Munich. Although the target was cloud covered, fifty-four tons

of explosives were dropped in a good concentration. This was the last mission flown by the Group in the year 1944.