

*A Six plane attack unit,*

The Odertal oil refinery was bombed using the synchronous method (bombardier and radar operator working together as a team) utilizing PFF (pathfinder radar bomb sight). The C-1 autopilot was used on the bomb run. Bombing altitude from group lead box was 24,000 ft with bombing airspeed of 160 MPH. The bombsight data was preset. The bomb run was 240 seconds long. The attack was flown in tight formation hitting the refinery at 1215 hours. The wind off of the target was from 260 degrees at 52 knots. The temperature at bombing altitude was -32 degrees. 210 Bombs were dropped. Bombs were dropped into a 8/10/undercast.

Flak was encountered enroute as briefed at: Letenye, Gyor, Bratislavia, Parndorf, Blechhammer, Gleiwitz Moravska-Ostrava, and Oswiecim. See (2) for other flak observed.

At 1155 hours, position 50-16°N, 17-23°E, at 24,000 feet the formation was attacked just as the outbound escort departed. From 25 to 30 enemy fighters attacked from low and level from three to nine o'clock with 20mm cannon. The enemy pressed the attack aggressively, but appeared to lack battle experience. Identification and Markings Yellow noses, silver and black & OD black aircraft, red, white and yellow stripes around the fuselage.

Because the B-24 was built to defend itself from attacks from the rear and at this time the pursuit curve was known by most gunners, defensive fire from the bombers could be very effective. As a result the destroyed claims of one FW 190, six Me 109s, two Me 109s probables, and one ME 109 damaged are easy to understand. A coordinated attack of 3 to 6 aircraft from 5 to 7 o'clock. Several feints were carried through before the attack pressed home.

The lead bombardier for each box was 1/Lt E M Duke. The bombs were dropped into a 8/10 undercast by PFF. Radar type used APS-15 (H2X). Bombing accuracy was unknown, but believed to be excellent. Bombardier and PFF coordination was very good with

visual pre-run rate synchronization. Each aircraft carried eight 500 RDX pound bombs and dropped on target. Bombing airspeed 160 MPH, Rendezvous made with 8 P-38s at 1126 AM, position 49-01 N, 17-35E. See (3) for Mickey report

Penetration escorts were met at 10:36 (P-38s) at 20,000 feet and returning escort of P-51s were met at 12:28 at 22,000 feet.

Bombs were on target at 1215 on a heading of 70 degrees at an indicated airspeed of 158 MPH. The plane suffered damage in the nose.

At Papa at 1110 AM from 22,000 feet an enemy airfield with 36 single engine fighters was seen. At 1154 AM observed a B-24 from the group behind one B-24 blew up, no chutes were seen. At 1203 PM a B-24 on fire going down in a spin from the Bomb Group behind. On returning to base observed a B-24 aborting to the airfield on the Island of Vis, time 1503. As briefed on return course until Lake Balaton where formation went west of TP #1 to avoid unbriefed flak.

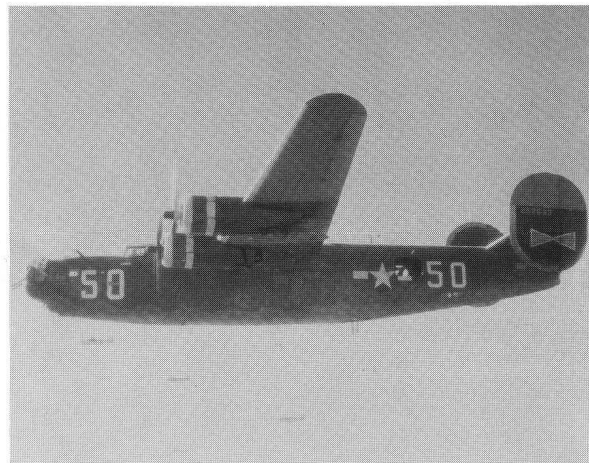
Combat Claim was made at 1210 From 24,000 feet by Anthony L Cartwright 825 squadron the tail gunner on ship #33 shooting down a mottled black and gray Me 109 with red and white stripes around the fuselage about 5 inches wide. The enemy ship came in for an attack of ship #36 from high between six and seven o'clock but appeared to be undecided in pressing the attack, while hesitating to attack he came within 50 yards of the tail of A/C #33 presenting a 3/4 head on view. Cartwright fired 200 rounds into the cockpit and center section. the canopy came off and surrounding fuselage blew off. Smoke billowed out and the A/C went into a straight downward spin and disappeared in the clouds. This was

witnessed by L J Whetstone Upper gunner, R E Self R/H waist gunner, and R F Stewart L/H waist gunner.

At Torretta airfield, of the 30 aircraft that were airborne, one aircraft #86 piloted by Lt Williams returned early due to a gas leak, and two aircraft, # 28 piloted by Lt Himmler, and #38 flown by Lt Martin failed to return. Damage to other aircraft varied from minor to major. Malfunctions were reported by the crew of ship #33: 1) left bomb bay doors would not open, bombs dropped through it, 2) the right top turret gun ran away, manual fire mechanism broken, and 3) the right nose gun solenoid cam was up (gun could not be fired).

The 484th Bomb Group lost one aircraft to fighters, the 451st BG had one B-24 MIA, the 461st had 9 MIA. on the Odertal mission. The 461st BG was attacked by a group of 35/40 very aggressive and very experienced FW-190s in the area just North of Bruno (49-47N-16-56E). The 461st reported that E/A attacked in pairs. The E/A attacking the 461st were slate gray and white.

Escorting P-38s and P-51s made aggressive attacks on the E/A and in all encountered 70/80 E/A. A dog fight from 24,000 feet to the deck ensued and although some of the E/A reacted aggressively to the escort apparently the tactics were to engage the bombers if



*Ship #50 of Able Box*