

CHRONOLOGY

Thirty-seven B-24's took off at 0600 hours to bomb Ploesti Romano/American Oil Refinery. Four returned early. Thirty-two dropped 72.75 tons 500 lb G.P. bombs in target area at 0953 hours from 19,600 - 21,000 feet. One jettisoned .25 tons of bombs 15 minutes past target about sixty miles west of Bucharest as the bomb hung up. Thirty-four returned to base 1246 hours. Two lost. One missing. None at friendly airfields.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT Rendezvoused with the 376th Bomb Group over San Pancrazio at 0644 hours at 6000 feet and with other Wing groups along rendezvous line San Pancrazio to San Vito D' Normanni at 0652 hours. Continued on course to I.P> then made right turn onto target attacking on an axis of 162 degrees. Rallied left and continued on course as briefed to base. Contact was made with out fighter escort at 0745 hours and consisted of 30 P-38's which stayed with formation until 0840 hours at 0930 hours 20-35 P-51's joined the top cover and continued after the P-38's had departed, on to the target where they were last seen at 0950 hours in target area. We conclude that it was this lack of cover which permitted enemy aircraft to attack our formation and to maintain the assault for a period of twenty minutes thereafter.

III. RESULTS

As the formation approached the target, and at an distance of 35 miles, it could be seen that smoke pots were in use and that the city of Ploesti and the aiming point were rapidly being covered with a heavy concealing cloud. It was evident that visual bombing would be impossible so P.F.F. was utilized. All bombs were dropped thru the smoke as the entire area by that time was entirely concealed, the screen being absolutely effective and the heaviest yet encountered by this Group. Photos showed a concentration of bursts. A large column of smoke was seen above the smoke screen in the vicinity of the Dacla Romana Oil Refinery indicating some bombs fell at that point as it was in line with previous bomb fall.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: Five minutes past target time and ten minutes after our fighter cover was last seen this Group was assaulted by 15-20 ME-109's and FW-190's, 5-7 JU-88's and 5 ME-110's. The first attack came at 1000 hours from 9-10 o'clock out of the sun in a dive and was made by 1-15 ME-109's and FW-190's who made a wide swinging pass about 200-250 yards out. This coordinated attack was the only such one resorted to and promptly split into elements of two and three who attacked from 5 and 8 o'clock, both low and level. Other single attacks were made from 5, 6, and 7 o'clock both low and level and in some instances were reported several times by the same aircraft.

While these attacks appear to be made in force they were not aggressive and seldom approached closer than 200 yards. Twin engine aircraft, JU-88's, stayed out at distance and fired 20mm cannon but did not make any passes. Five ME-110's made some attacks but were not at all aggressive. The enemy appeared to be waiting for stragglers and pounce on last from our formation when they fell behind. In all the assault lasted twenty minutes and we lost two aircraft. Markings: ME109's silver wings and fuselages

with black crosses on wings and tail and they were all the late G model; JU-88's black wings and fuselages.

First Attack Unit:

A. Plane #234: FW-190 attacked.

B. Plane # 378: Several ME-109's attacked with cannon staying out of range.

C. Plane #331: ME-109's attacked from rear, made pursuit curve, also broadside and underneath.

D. Plane #154: Several ME-109's came in low at 6 o'clock, made 3 passes.

E. Plane #304: ME-109's and FW-190's made low attack from 5, 6, and 7 o'clock.

F. Plane #152: ME-109 attacked from tail.

G. Plane #285: Several ME-109's attacked from tail, low Made 3 passes.

Second Attack Unit:

H. Plane #622: An ME-109 attacked from 6 to 4 o'clock from tail

I. Plane #579: About 10 FW-190's made one coordinated attack from 9 and 10 o'clock, then broke up into 2's and 3's attacking mostly from 8 o'clock level. They left shortly thereafter to go after stragglers.

J. Plane #348: FW-190 attacked from 10 and 2 o'clock high.

K. Plane #164: FW-190 made low tail attacks, pulled out at 200-250 yards. Made 5 passes.

L. Plane #455: ME-109's came in at 9 o'clock on first pass, then worked around toward tail and made passes from 4 and 7 o'clock.

M. Plane #752: ME-109's attacked high, low and level from 3 to 2 o'clock. Lasted about 20 minutes.

N. Plane #774: ME-109's and ME-110's made 5 to 6 passes from 6 to 9 o'clock.

O. Plane #390: ME-109's attacked around the clock.

P. Plane #708: ME-109's attacked from 5 to 7 o'clock.

Q. Plane #205: ME-109's attacked from 3 o'clock low.

B. Flak: The first attack unit using "carpet" experienced moderate, fairly accurate heavy flak while the second attack unit without benefit of "carpet" reported it as intense, accurate, and heavy. This would tend to prove that the radio jamming device was to a certain extent effective. At the I.P. the flak was slight, inaccurate, light while at Craiea it was reported accurate, accurate heavy. All aiming was of the predicted variety as barrage type was seen. Twenty of our aircraft were holed of which five were seriously damaged.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 0858 hours aircraft #144 left formation near Yugoslavia border and turned back - reported missing. At 1013 hours, 18,000 feet, one B-24 went down and exploded - 1 chute. At 1040 hours, 17,000 feet, one B-24 crashed and exploded - 10 chutes.

VI. CASUALTIES

Pilot in aircraft #152 was killed by flak and the bombardier seriously wounded. Two bombers were lost to flak. Eleven chutes seen. Twenty aircraft were damaged by flak, 5 serious, 15 minor.

VII. VICTORIES

Destroyed	Probable	Damaged
2 FW-190's	1 ME-109	1 ME-109
4 ME-109's		1 FW-190

VIII. FLIGHT LEADERS

Gideon Carr	Robinson	Heiser	Courtright	Coates
Henderson	DiGiovanni			