

On 18 November the oil refinery at Florisdorf, Vienna, was the target. Four groups from the 5th Wing dispatched 164 Forts, which dropped 327 tons of bombs using nonvisual techniques. Twelve fighters were seen but did not attack the B-17s; nevertheless, the 301st lost two aircraft. Lieutenant Albert Luster's B-17 (353d) first experienced difficulty forty-five minutes prior to the target when the number two engine started throwing oil. He kept it running, bombed the target, and remained in the formation. After the target Luster feathered the prop and maintained his position in the formation. At fifteen thousand feet over Yugoslavia, Luster's bomber came up under Lieutenant Greenfield's B-17 and was chewed up by the propellers and immediately went into a spin and crashed. Four to five chutes were seen. The other B-17 survived the accident, despite the loss of two engines. German flak hit Captain William Ludwig's, former 352d Commander, bomber over the target. Ludwig made it back to Italy, but one engine burst into flames while he was in the landing pattern. It is not clear whether a damaged fuel line or the fuel-booster pump started a serious fire when the fuel-booster pump was activated for landing. After failing to extinguish the fire which continued to spread, Ludwig ordered the crew to bail out. All exited the bomber; but Ludwig, the last to jump, was too low for his chute to open. Ironically, just after Ludwig bailed out the burning engine fell off the aircraft and took the fire with it.¹¹²