

E -ERNEST 102 Bomber Squadron AAR

Good take off and climbed to altitude. Navigator Cecil Cardew excited to be on his first mission to German. As we cross the North Sea the visibility gets progressively worse and once we cross the Dutch coast we encounter 10/10ths cloud. We encounter a pretty hot reception as we are in the tail end of the bomber stream and our chaps have clearly stirred things up a bit and the flak really opens up on us. We get off pretty lightly with only superficial damage but then Cecil reports that his oxygen is out so we have to lose altitude to keep him from passing out. As a result when we cross into Germany every blessed search light picks us up and after another good dose of flak which cracks the windscreen but despite all of the hate its bark is worse than its bite and we sustain very little actual damage apart from some new ventilation. The lights soon attract some Jerry nightfighters a couple of Ju88s but our gunners spot them in time and manage to drive them off, Mitch Prism thinks he saw a parachute open so we may have done a bit harm to one of them.

Over the target area things began to get really hot as the Lancs and Halifaxes had already dropped their cargo. Being so low down we could see Essen was a bright orange glow but the target was obscured by cloud and smoke. Got a good run in and soon after hearing "Bombs gone" there was a tremendous thump as one of our bombs tried to get back into the bomb bay wafted there by the thermic shock. Gwyn Fairfax our bomb aimer seemed to think that we had done a reasonable job of hitting the target.

Bounced by a Me110 just as we turned to go home but the gunners did a good job fending him off then as we flew back into Dutch airspace our Mid Upper spots another nightfighter closing in but Mitch shouts out to hold fire as it is a friendly Mosquito who keeps the blighters away. Just as well as we are lit up like a Christmas tree by every search light in Holland.

Just as we are coming in to land we are bounced by another Me110 and we take heavy hits to our port wings flaps and then on his second pass on or starboard aileron. Mitch makes short work of him and he brightens the night's sky by exploding off our port quarter. Just as we are about to relax Gwyn gives us the glad tidings that we appear to have brought back an unwelcome passenger in our bomb bay, to wit one unexploded bomb.

We touch down rather gingerly but make it down in one piece and head off for our bacon and eggs somewhat shaken.

40% accuracy 2 Me110.