

No. 101 Squadron (KX) Bomber Command - "F for Freddie"

3/4 July 42

Mission 15/ TGT - Emden, Germany, Zone 7.

Formation - Last 1/3.

Crew:

Name	Rank	Position	
Oliver Davies	Pilot Officer	Pilot	
Henry "Harry" Ponsonby	Warrant Officer	Nav/Bomb Aimer	(Conspicuous Gallantry Cross 6th Mission)
Quincy Jones	Flight Sergeant	Observer/Nose Gun	
Thomas Stanley	Flight Sergeant	Wireless Operator	
William Bedford	Sergeant	Waist Gunner	(.5 JU-88C6 - 10th Mission)
Giles Corbyn	Sergeant	Tail Gunner	(1Bf-110 Kill-4th Mission) (.5 JU-88C6 - 10th Mission)

From Oliver Davies' 2 July 1942 Diary entry:

Flight Sergeant Quincy Jones joined our crew right after we lost Watkins on the last mission. We flew several training flights to get everyone working on the same page last week and it looks like Quincy is a good fit with the crew. Knows his job and is pretty jovial even though he was the sole survivor from his last crew. They were downed in the channel and he was the only one picked up by the Royal Navy after floating around for a day in a raft.

The C.O. Just talked with me ... he said "Raid Leader" duties for this mission to Emden were going to another Squadron this time. Group wants to make sure other Squadrons are equally well trained to fly "raid Leader" missions ... or so he told me... This time No 101 Squadron was going last... And With A FULL BOMBER's MOON to boot! Boy! That will negate my positive DR modifiers for 10 missions under my belt! Lucky I still have that Magic Rabbit's Foot from Ms Sue Ellen Swift... hopefully "Lady Luck will still Smile on me!

From Oliver Davies' 4 July Diary entry:

The WX was Crappy when I started "Freddie's" engines. We were the lead ship off for 101 Squadron. Jones took the signal from the tower and tapped me on the shoulder as he said "There it is ... start your roll." The full moon was obscured by the clouds and fog as "Freddie" roared down the strip. We were bounced and buffeted as "Freddie" climbed out and we turned for the assembly beacon. As we cleared the coast "Freddie" entered clear air and a bright moon lit night with moon beams reflecting off the waves of the Channel. It looked like I could see for 100 miles. I shuddered and my guts tightened as I knew we stood out to any night fighter in the area.

I could see some ground fog and haze as we entered Zone 3 but that cleared by the time we got to zone 4. All was still quiet as we "rode the beam" on our Gee set. "Harry" popped up from his cubbyhole and announced "Turn 4 coming up"... I made the turn at the appointed time and flew

into 100% CC as we pushed into Zone 5. It stayed "soupy" as we crossed zone 6 to our next turn. There were no recall orders and we pushed on.

Just before we reached our next turn point we had a brush with a night fighter. It roared in from 3 o'clock with guns blazing... I could hear the rattle of MG rounds pinging against "Freddie's" metal bracing and a couple of golf-ball sized "Balls of Light" zipped past the windscreen. I turned into him and dived away into a heavier layer of cloud... he must have lost us as we never saw him again.

I was sweating inside my flight suit and my stomach was churning... "Harry's" head popped up next to my shoulder and said "Turn right to 160 degrees in 30 seconds!".. I steadied down and we made the turn. The WX was clearing off to about 50% as we entered into Zone 7. I could see fires burning on the ground ahead along the dock area. The AAA was really getting heavy as I followed our bombers to the IP for the bomb run...

I could see searchlight beams and streams of tracers coming up from the ground... The bomber ahead of us was trading fire with a nightfighter... Then "Freddie" began to bounce as flak burst around us... Shrapnel wizzed thru "Freddie" striking the instrument panel and smashing the auto-pilot control box.

"Oh, Crap!" I was going to have to fly "Freddie" manually thru the bomb run! Sweat ran down my forehead and into my eyes as I blinked them rapidly to clear my vision... random pieces of shrapnel hit "Freddie's" fabric skin and passed on thru him... I HEARD THE WHINE OF THE BOMB BAY DOORS OPENING...

Ponsonby yelled up from the bomb aimer's position to steer 180 degrees and steady on the altitude... "Freddie" jumped and bucked from the exploding AAA... we were peppered with more shrapnel in the right wing ... I could see the temperature gauge climbing on the Starboard engine ... I hoped it didn't catch fire ...

Ponsonby was yelling "STEADY!... STEADY! ... STEADY! ... DROP!" ... and then the rapid rise sensation like riding a fast elevator in my stomach as the bombs dropped away... I banked hard left and put the nose down in a dive turning back toward the coast... I could hear the whine as the Bomb Bay doors closed ... Checking the starboard engine there was no flames visible... I throttled back as the temperature gauge was approaching red line...

We dropped out of the AAA fire ... but Corbyn, our tail gunner called out a "Break Right" ... I could hear his machineguns pounding away ... then a waist gun opened up... I slammed in right rudder and rolled "Freddie" up on his right wing, letting the nose fall off and into a corkscrew back to the left all the while diving and racing for the coast... The night fighter came back around and attacked from the left... his tracers streaked by the canopy just missing us ... Then Jones began firing from the nose turret as a Twin Engine shadow flashed over head and out of my vision...

I steered 000... due north as I knew the sea was that way... I continued to dive toward a cloud bank and then we were inside ... I leveled off on the deck and turned to course 340 ... I throttled

back and was able to keep the starboard engine just below red line... I could see oil running from the engine back along the nacelle to the rear edge of the wing.

I called for a crew position check ... No casualties but "Freddie" had a number of damaged systems and the left waist machine gun was knocked out as was the wireless... "Ponsonby" stuck his head back up and said to turn to course 240 as we entered Zone 6...

I reached up and rubbed the Rabbit's Foot that I wore around my neck ... just for luck. Lady Luck Smiled upon "Freddie" as the roll for zone 6 was contact... After a reroll for Lady Luck, the dice god was nice and we got a 5, so we were not detected in the zone... We had good luck evading the Jerry Radar in the fog and Haze in zone 5 and flew into 100% cloud cover in Zone 4 and also avoided contact... I began to breathe easier...

We were one of the last to land... I set "Freddie" down and let him roll out. We turned into the taxiway and our revetment position. "Freddie" was a mess... our Erk said he thought he could have "Freddie" ready for the next mission... The starboard engine was shot and would have to be replaced..

We dropped 30% of our bombs on-target. There were NO night fighters shot down.

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