

No. 101 Squadron (KX) Bomber Command - "F for Freddie"
18/19 June 42
Mission 13/ TGT - "Gardening Mission" - Frisian Islands, Zone 8.
Code Name: Nectarines
Formation - None. Depart -1930 hours.

Crew:

Name	Rank	Position	
Oliver Davies	Pilot Officer	Pilot	
Henry "Harry" Ponsonby	Warrant Officer	Nav/Bomb Aimer (Conspicuous Gallantry Cross 6th Mission)	
Richard Watkins	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' 17 June 1942 Diary entry:

We returned from Group HQ yesterday. After our last mission to Lubeck we were all pulled from Ops status to "teach" Raid Leader techniques to new crews at Group HQ... maybe there is still going to be individual group "Raid Leaders"??? ... Anyway it was a pleasant two weeks with several mornings of classroom instruction and then evening missions flying around the UK to various bombing ranges to hone the instructor's and the student's skills...

I even managed a two day pass to visit Miss Sue Ellen Swift, that Blonde-haired beauty with the bright red 1940 MG convertible! She is the American niece of the Earl of Grantham that I met at the R&R Center dance at Downton Abbey. I must say it was a Glorious 2 days and she wants me to come up to Downton Abby and spend a few days when I get my next Leave! I can hardly wait!

The Squadron CO said he was going to "ease" us back into operations ... The Squadron pulled some gardening missions for 18/19 June and "F for Freddie" is slated to "plant some seeds" in the Nectarines area ... "Harry" Ponsonby and I are meeting in a few minutes to go over our Navigation for the mission...

From Oliver Davies' 19 June Diary entry:

It was the "Dark of the Moon" but our navigation proved to be "Spot On"... We had "stood to" for the afternoon briefings and then our evening meal before we "kitted up" for the mine laying mission. "Freddie's" wheels lifted off at precisely 1930 hours per the ops plan. We climbed to Low Altitude and crossed the English coastline following the steady "dots and dashes" of our GEE.

"Stormy" we right on with the 50% cloud cover prediction that petered out to haze and fog over the channel. Navigation was no problem. Jerry seemed to be busy with an RAF raid that was developing to the south of us... We could see the twinkle of tracers and the occasional bright flash of an explosion as viewed from a long distance...

As we entered Zone 4, a heavy cloud mass that became 100% CC loomed up to our front... "Harry" stuck his head up next to me...

"Turning point 3 is coming up!" called "Harry" from his Navigator's desk below. "Roger that!" I called back. I banked Freddie for a shallow turn to port and watched the compass heading swing around to 060 degrees. I put Freddie's nose down a bit and started a long slow decent to arrive at our Initial Point for the mine laying run at "on the Deck" altitude. Our wireless operator, F/SGT Thomas Stanley called out that the mission was a GO! No recall orders...

"Harry" poked his head up next to my shoulder ... and pointed out to our One O'clock... "Right on Schedule... looks like those students of ours learned something last week's classes" I looked off to our One O'clock... There several miles away to our southeast was an aerial Flare show in progress over Leeuwarden. Our Student Pathfinder's were laid on to provide us with a precise navigation point so we could set up for our minelaying run...

"Harry" had his hand raised and was looking at his stopwatch... He said "NOW! ... Start your turn to heading 085 ... Throttle back to 180 knots and level off at 1500 feet."

I began a right hand turn and as I pulled back on the throttles ... Freddie's engine noise dropped off and he began his decent... we still had ground fog and haze over the water but I was correctly lined up for our run... I picked a point on the land mass horizon that stood out that I could easily steer on...

SUDDENLY! ... the night sky ahead lit up like a Christmas Tree! Strings of golf ball sized glowing orbs appeared out of the haze and crisscrossed the sky above and below us! Angry yellow and red flashes appeared around Freddie followed by the "Krrrruummmppp! ... Krrrruummmppp!" of exploding AA Shells... Freddie bucked and jumped as he was buffed by the shock waves of the explosions!

Shrapnel ripped thru "Freddie's" fabric skin with a tearing sound like a zipper being undone that was quickly followed by a few loud "Bangs!" as shrapnel and small caliber machine gun rounds struck "Freddie's" inner bracings and bulkheads after tearing thru the fabric skin!

Something heavy struck the pilot's windscreen with a loud crash that smashed a small hole thru it and caused a spiders web of cracks ... Followed by several ringing bangs in the nose compartment ... I kicked in left rudder and pushed "Freddie's" nose further down into a dive ... pulling out just above the wave tops... Tracers continued to chase us as I madly jinks-ed left and right!

I could hear "Freddie's" gunners firing as the AAA explosions subsided... It was over as quickly as it started... Our guns fired a few more bursts but they too became silent.

"Any Night Fighter contacts...?" I called... Each station answered in the negative... I leveled "Freddie" out and brought him back to the bombing altitude...

The Kammhuber Line must have spotted us on Radar and alerted that Flak Ship that we were coming... Guess they didn't send any night fighters or if they did they missed us...

Then, "Harry's" head popped back up ... "It was a Flak-Ship, I think..." he said... "Are you still good?" he asked, as he held up the stopwatch. "Yeah... I'm aligned on a point I picked on the horizon landscape"...

"Good!" he said. "We should be ready for the first drop in about 30 seconds." I nodded my head and concentrated on my flying to keep "Freddie" straight and level. "Harry" counted down the seconds for each mine on the stopwatch.

We dropped all six mines by parachute at 5 second intervals... We were ON Target for all six mines and 60% fell within 1000 feet of their intended impact points. There was no night fighter contact to report.

The front turret was damaged and put out of action by the AAA fire but Freddie had no major damage and no one was hurt. We had no other contacts as we turned for home...

The landing went well and our Eerk crew reported that they would have "Freddie's" damage repaired by the next mission.

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Plane Name: "F for Freddie"

