

No. 101 Squadron (KX) Bomber Command - "F for Freddie"
17/18 Mar 42
Mission 03/ TGT - Kiel, Zone 8.
Formation - Middle 1/3.

Crew:

Name	Rank	Position
Oliver Davies	Pilot Officer	Pilot
Henry "Harry" Ponsonby	Warrant Officer	Nav/Bomb Aimer
Richard Watkins	Flight Sergeant	Observer/Nose Gun
George Blackwood	Flight Sergeant	Wireless Operator
Edward Neville	Sergeant	Waist Gunner
Giles Corbyn	Sergeant	Tail Gunner

Narrative:

The Squadron stood down for six days and "F for Freddie's" crew got leave. Pilot Officer Davies went to visit a "friend" in the village of Downton for a few days...

It was past noon on the 17th... Harry Ponsonby, "F for Freddie's" Navigator/bomb aimer was nervously watching the Station's Main Gate... His Pilot, Oliver Davies had not returned from leave yet. A mission had been laid on for tonight and crews were recalled from leave. While Davies still had almost a hour before briefing started for tonight's mission to Kiel, Ponsonby was starting to worry as the 101 Squadron C.O. was looking for Pilot Officer Davies...

Just then a bright red 1940 MG convertible rolled up to the gate. A gorgeous long blonde-haired beauty was driving... She pulled the car to the roadside and stopped short of the gate... She leaned over to a Pilot Officer sitting beside her, threw her arms around him and gave him a long kiss... The pilot officer got out, walked around the MG to the driver's side, leaned in kissed her again, said something to her and then grabbed his kitbag from behind the seat. She put the MG in gear and made a U-Turn waving to the Pilot Officer as she sped off down the road...

Ponsonby waited as Pilot Officer Davies was passed thru the gate. "Well, Oliver that's quite a lady you found there... " said Ponsonby as they started walking toward the Squadron area. "That, Harry" said Oliver Davies "...is Miss Sue Ellen Swift, the niece of the Earl of Grantham." I met her at the R&R Center dance at Downton Abbey. She is visiting from America".

Davies gave a big yawn, "Excuse Me!" he said with his hand over his mouth... "I didn't get much sleep and she took me on a picnic on the way back here!" "Well, you better get that sleepy look off your face as well as that Red Lipstick... The Squadron C.O. is looking for you!" said Ponsonby...

Just then the Squadron C.O. and a Group Captain came around the corner of Club walking in their direction... "Ah, there you are Davies." said the C.O. "... I think you remember Group

Captain St. John-Smythe from Group Headquarters. The Group Captain will be flying with you on tonight's Mission"

Both Davies and Ponsonby snapped to attention and saluted. "Good Afternoon, Sir" they said in unison. Group Captain St. John-Smythe looked coldly at the two officers. "Hmmm... You look like something the cat dragged in Pilot Officer Davies" He looked Davies up and down with a look of disgust "... you better get yourself and your crew squared away..." he said as he touched his swagger stick to his cap and turned back to the Squadron C.O. ... picking up his conversation with their C.O. as he walked away from the two junior officers... "A real stiff-backed S.O.B." said Ponsonby when the two were out of earshot "... I heard Grimmond's crew talking about him... I guess he gave them a pretty hard time when he flew with them."

Davies yawned again ... "Boy! That's all we need" mumbled Davies... Ponsonby took him by the arm... "Let's get some strong tea into you and wake you up... "

There was no sleep for Davies though. It was right into the briefing and then dinner, kitting out and then right out to "Freddie"...

Group Captain James St. John-Smythe was waiting for them as they got off the lorry. Davies could see he had the Erks standing at attention as he was talking and walking back and forth in front of them, his swagger stick under his arm. The crew made a beeline for "Freddie's" tail wheel for the usual traditional good luck "relief stop" before boarding... As the crew gathered around the tail wheel, the Group Captain came storming to them...

"HEAR HEAR, YOU MEN ... GET AWAY FROM THAT TAIL WHEEL ... THERE WILL BE NONE OF THOSE PAGAN RITUALS HERE... YOU ARE ALL MEMBERS OF THE RAF ... SO ACT LIKE IT! ... PILOT OFFICER, DAVIES GET YOUR CREW UNDER CONTROL". The group Captain glared at Davies, turned and stroked off toward "Freddie's" open hatch.

Davies winced, he could see the horrified looks on the crew's faces ... superstition and luck went a long way to helping the crew moral and getting them thru the horrors of the bombing missions...

"Come on Lads, I'm sure the Gods will protect us if we use "Freddie's" Loo this time... I'll even empty it when we get back." He knew everyone including himself had a full bladder in anticipation of the "Good Luck" ritual... Davies made his way up the slanting deck of "Freddie" to the Pilot Station. He found Group Captain St. John-Smythe strapping in. The Group Captain looked at him and said "I'll be flying this Mission Pilot Officer." and turned back to strapping himself in, dismissing Davies... "Yes Sir!" said Davies making his way back to the Rear Centre Section and taking a seat on "Freddie's" Loo.

Ponsonby looked at him questioningly... Davies shrugged ... "The Group Captain is Piloting." he said. He sat down on the Loo and made himself comfortable.... It was dark and warm and the drone of the engines was comforting... It was going to be a long trip over water the whole way until they hit the German coast and Kiel...

Davies was relaxed and listening to that soft drone of "Freddies" engines ... "Stormy" our weather guy was right ... we had 100% cloud cover out over the Channel, and the Group Captain had decided to fly at an altitude level where contrails formed over the tops of the clouds... Well, it was a Crescent Moon so maybe they would not get picked up by any nightfighters in the neighborhood... Davis set back and listened to the droning engines... it would be awhile before the German coast came up...

"BREAK RIGHT, SKIPPER!" yelled SGT Miles Corbyn, "Freddie's" tail gunner. Corbyn had spotted a night fighter circling in from 6 o'clock high... opened fire and sent a stream of tracers into the path of the oncoming Ju-88 C-6. The night fighter fired a stream of 20mm cannon shells at the Wellington.

Davies rolled "Freddie" to the right and pitched the nose down... The G-Force was so strong it felt like he could not move. He could hear the hammering of Corbyn's .303 machineguns and then I saw tracers streaking past cockpit... His heart jumped up into his throat as a roaring black form in an even darker night sky flashed by not yards away... The altimeter wound down... Sweat streaked his face as he turned his head from side to side still unable to move. He rolled "Freddie" back to the left and pulled the wheel back to start a climbing left turn. When another stream of cannon shells walked them thru "Freddie's" fuselage... F/SGT Watkins doing Engineer duties called out "FIRE IN THE NUMBER ONE ENGINE SKIPPER" ... Then another pass by the Ju-88 with more cannon shells hitting all around him... Then another pass and another pass... Davies was too low and "Freddie" splashed into the surface of the Channel ... Davies felt trapped! He screamed...

THEN A HAND GRABBED HIM AND JERKED HIM UPRIGHT! ... His eyes snapped open as Ponsonby was shaking him and asking if he was ok??? Sweat streamed down his face and he was breathing hard ... He looked around.... he was still sitting on "Freddie's Loo. He sat up and shook off Ponsonby's grip on his arm... "Just a bad dream that's all" he said...

Just then SGT Miles Corbyn, "Freddie's" tail gunner yelled "BREAK RIGHT, BREAK RIGHT!" as he opened fire and sent a stream of tracers into the path of an oncoming nightfighter even as the night fighter fired a stream of 20mm cannon shells at the Wellington.

Group Captain St. John-Smythe was slow in responded and made an easy climbing turn to the right... several cannon shells passed thru the fabric of "Freddie's" fuselage without exploding as Ponsonby and Davies grabbed onto something to steady themselves...

Whether the nightfighter was low on fuel or out of ammo, it didn't come back for a second pass even though "Freddie" had two contrails pointing right to his 6 o'clock...

Just then Group Captain St. John-Smythe's voice came over the intercom "Tail Gunner, I will decide what actions to take if we are attacked... YOU will ONLY call out his location... Is that UNDERSTOOD?"

(Ed. Note: The reason the nightfighter withdrew with only one pass was the new rule we are looking at that limit the number of passes a nightfighter can make. The player rolls a die before

the attack starts that tells him how many passes the NF can make, in this case 1 pass, with no damage to the bomber.

I decided to run out the attack using the old rules for comparison. (Davies "dream") ... If I had run out the combats "F for Freddie" would have been shot down over the channel with no survivors.)

More Narrative:

"Freddie" continues on ... As we entered zone 3 with 100% cloud cover F/SGT Blackwood is seen scribbling a message on a piece of paper... He jumps up and kisses the paper and then moves up to Davies... "Just received Skipper ... we've been recalled!"

Group Captain St. John-Smythe turned "Freddie" back toward home. We jettisoned our bombs over the channel and landed safely.

There were no Bombing Results as we were recalled in Zone 3.
No Enemy Aircraft were claimed this mission.
"Freddie" had light damage and will be ready for the next mission.

Name: Bob Best
Email: b52bob@prodigy.net
Plane Name: "F for Freddie"

