

For those of you following Steve Dixon's Target For Tonight Campaign game ... Mission 18 has "F for Freddie" going to Saarbrucken, Germany. No. 101 Squadron is leading the formation on this mission and will be carrying target marking ordnance ... Here is my AAR for "F for Freddie" for the July 14/15 Mission. Enjoy!

No. 101 Squadron (KX) Bomber Command - "F for Freddie"  
14/15 July 42  
Mission 18/ TGT - Saarbrucken, Germany, Zone 7.  
Formation - Leading Mission in the front 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) (1 Bf-110 Kill -18th Mission)

**From Oliver Davies' 13 July 1942 Diary entry:**

We were checking "Freddie" out in his revetment to make sure he was ready for tomorrow's mission when Harry Ponsonby, our Navigator and Bomb Aimer walked up to me carrying a bunch of mail from the Post. He was holding one up and sniffing it as he said with a grin.... "That is some perfume that Miss Sue Ellen uses!"

I snatched the letter from his out stretched hand and said "You know it's against regulations to sniff a senior officer's letters!" ... Harry laughed and said "I have another one too that has the same fantastic scent!" I snatched that one from his grasp, too. Then smiled and said "I must say I'm a lucky Guy alright" as I flipped them to the flap side to open... They were from Miss Sue Ellen Swift... The Earl of Grantham's niece, alright... Both letters had a Ruby Red "lips" impression from her lipstick over "S.W.A.K.!" written on the flap (Sealed With A Kiss!) ... I tore one open and began to read the card...

Harry said over my shoulder ... "Wow! I love that lip stick of hers!" I pulled the card close and turned away from him, giving him a nasty look as I continued to read... He laughed... "Let me guess ..." he said "...She has 'Something Special' planned for you to celebrate your Birthday when you get back from this mission and can get up to Downton Abby again... right?". I gave Harry another "blistering look"! He laughed again...

The crew had gathered around listening... "Well..." Harry said "...Since tomorrow IS your Birthday, I think we need a celebratory toast tonight, don't you think Lads!" A rousing chorus of "Hear Hears!" erupted and Giles Corbyn, our tail gunner produced a bottle of the Glenlivet

Scotch that the Earl of Downton had so graciously given us. Harry took the bottle and raised it into the air "To Pilot Officer Davies... Happy Birthday!" With congratulations from the men the bottle was passed around until it became a "Dead Soldier"...

That evening at the club rumors were running high that "Bomber" Harris was going to support the formation of a new Pathfinder Unit in Bomber Command. The C.O. talked with me and "Harry" Ponsonby about it... he said the "Raid Leader" program was going to be shutdown and that a New Pathfinder group was being formed by Air Vice-Marshal Donald Bennett with Bomber Harris' blessings. The C.O. said AV-M Bennett was visiting bomber groups and taking their best crews for the new pathfinder squadron. He also thought the new PF Group would not happen until early fall but until it was official, each bomb group would continue to use "Raid Leaders" when their group was leading until the Pathfinders were operational. The C. O. then said 101 Squadron would be Raid Leader for this upcoming mission!

"There is a rumor circulating about that the American Army Air Force had finally arrive in England and the Yanks flew their first mission on the anniversary of their Independence Day from Us! ... July 4th no less! ..." Said the C.O. with a "Humpf" at the end! "... Rumor also has it that 6 American crews tagged along with RAFs 226 Squadron using BORROWED British Boston Bombers to bomb 4 Dutch Airfields no less?" (See Note\* below)

Both Harry and I nodded at his expectant look... The C. O. went on... "And, the part about their crew leader and his men getting decorated after losing three of OUR Boston's and damaging a fourth?" Harry and I again nodded... "Well, it's true..." he said "...Their Commanding General pinned their 3rd highest medal on his chest personally." The C.O. paused to gage our reaction... "Now this could cause a bit of a morale issue with our men... the idea of getting a medal just because you got shot at and lost a couple planes could damage morale in our unit..." he said... "Oliver, I want you and Harry here to get ahead of this with our men. I don't want to see any grousing around about how the Yanks are running their war... Any Questions?" he said as he looked both of us in the eye... "None Sir!" we echoed together...

The C.O. started to turn away and then turned back... "Oh Yes..." he said "I hear Birthday wishes are in order for you Oliver." He raised his pint ... "Cheers" he said.

After the C.O. moved on to other groups of officers at the bar Harry turned to me ... He lifted his glass... "Well, Oliver to the Bloody Yanks... " he said..." Over Paid, Over Sexed and Over Here!" We both laughed, then emptied our mugs and called for refills!

(\* - Editor's Note: Among the first USAAF units to arrive in England was the 15th Bomb Squadron from the USAAF's VIII Bomber Command. The VIII Bomber Command was later renamed 8th Air Force. On July 4th, 1942, six bomber crews from the 15th BS "borrowed" RAF Boston Bombers and accompanied RAF's 226 Squadron on a daylight bombing raid on four Dutch airfields. Two American-crewed Boston bombers were lost, another one was so badly damaged it crashed on landing and had to be written off and a fourth Boston bomber was damaged but repairable. The newly promoted American senior officer on the raid, Major Kegelman received the Distinguished Service Cross for his part in the mission. The DSC was presented by Major General Spatz, VIII Bomber Command's commanding officer. The other

members of Kegelman's crew received the Distinguished Flying Cross awarded by General Eaker at the same ceremony at Molesworth on July 11th, 1942. See photo below.)

**From Oliver Davies' 15 July Diary entry:**

We had only one day off between Mission 17 and Mission 18 to Saarbrucken. Our Erk had "Freddie" in tip-top form for the mission.

"Freddie" was lead bomber in 101 Squadron and 101 Squadron was leading the bomber stream formation... We had a New Moon and "Stormy" our WX guy predicted lots of clouds all the way to Saarbrucken from zone 2. He was right! The weather started off clear for take-off and we had no problems. "Freddie" roared down the strip, making an easy lift off with little buffeting as he climbed out and turned toward the assembly beacon. I took my usual approach and flew "Freddie" at "On The Deck" altitude level over the water and into the Continent trying to stay under the towering cumulus clouds and avoid any rain squalls as we went... We had 100% cloud cover in zones 2, 4 and 5 but there was no recalls received. The clouds broke in zones 3 and 6 so I climbed "Freddie" to Low Altitude level and told the gunners to keep a sharp eye out for Jerry night fighters as we were silhouetted against the top layer of the ground fog in those two zones.

We were able to follow the Gee signal and Harry was able to navigate at low altitude by picking out ground reference points as we went ... we were only off course once and we had to circle in the target zone to get re-oriented...

"Freddie" was not spotted by the Jerry Radar or night fighters inbound to the target. I climbed "Freddie" to Low altitude upon entering the Target zone. Harry was a bit disoriented as we could not see the target because of the ground fog... The Germans were beginning to react and we started taking AA fire ... Searchlights beams were illuminating the ground fog and haze diffusing their beams but they did not lock on to us ... Harry finally got us lined up on what he thought would be the IP and bomb run line...

With my hands in my lap and AA shells bursting around us, I sweated out that "Longest Minute" ride until "Freddie" rose like an elevator as the Incendiary Bomb load fell away... After taking back control and maneuvering away from the target, Harry's head popped up next to my shoulder ... his expression told me everything... the bomb run was not good... "Looks like Off Target and we will be lucky if 5% landed in the target area" he said. That was not good as the other bombers will bomb on the fires we started.

We avoided further AA fire and night fighters in Zone 6. As we entered Zone 5 on our return flight, F/SGT Stanley called out a Night Fighter attacking at 3 o'clock level. Golf-ball sized "Balls of Light" zipped overhead with a few making a sharp "Whang" when they hit metal in "Freddie's" fuselage ... I turned into him and dived away toward the ground fog and haze. He turned and made a second pass at us from 6 o'clock high. SGT Corbyn our tail gunner fired a long burst at him and I saw fire break out along the night fighter's fuselage as he passed overhead and broke to the left... I saw his right wing crumple and he began a spin into the fog and haze... and then he was gone! Corbyn was yelling that he got him and that it was a Bf-110 G4... He saw

the flash of the explosion when it nosed into the ground. Sgt Bedford our waist gunner confirmed the Kill...

SUDDENLY there was a chorus of Loud "BANGS" as "Golf balls" streaked by outside. "We had been taken by Surprise and hit!! A black shape flashed by the canopy... "LOOK ALIVE BACK THERE!" I yelled into the mic as I slammed in hard left rudder and brought the nose down... "Freddie" groaned and creaked in protest but he rolled left and picked up speed... I was sweating inside my flight suit and my stomach was churning... "WHERE IS HE?" I yelled into the mic... Each gunner gave a Negative report... I leveled "Freddie" out and got back on course ... The Night Fighter must have lost us as we never saw him again. No one was hurt and there were only a few holes in "Freddie's" skin...

"Freddie" suddenly began to bounce as flak burst around us... The shell bursts were close but "Freddie" seemed to have Lady Luck riding on his wings tonight... we were not hit.

Then came a loud "BANG" and "Freddie" jumped again! More AAA Fire! I scrunched down in my seat as if I could avoid being hit ... fear and adrenalin do funny things to you ... random pieces of shrapnel had hit "Freddie". Then the controls became "Mushy" ... It felt like I had lost a control cable ... one of those shrapnel pieces must have hit a control cable as it was hard to control "Freddie's" actions and I knew that landing would be much tougher...

The German's must have decided to let us go as they would be having their hands full with the raid that was arriving over Saarbrucken... "Freddie" was able to fly out of Germany and over the Channel with no more contacts. We made it home ok and landed safely even with a control cable shot away. I set "Freddie" down and let him roll out. We turned into the taxiway and our revetment position. Our Erk was happy when I told him we only had minor damage. He said he could have the control cable replaced and he would have "Freddie" ready for the next mission...

We were off target in the drop with only 5% of our bombs hitting within the target area. F/Sgt Corbyn got credit for a Bf-110 G4 night fighters shot down. There were no casualties.

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

