

For those of you following Steve Dixon's Target For Tonight Campaign game ... Mission 17 is going to Wilhelmshaven. No. 101 Squadron is in the middle of the formation ... Here is my AAR for "F for Freddie" Enjoy!

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

11/12 July 42

Mission 17/ TGT - Wilhelmshaven, Germany, Zone 7.

Formation - Middle 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' 10 July 1942 Diary entry:**

We got "the word" ... leave's were cancelled and no passes off base were issued. A mission had been laid on. Rumor had it we were going to Wilhelmshaven. There was a bustle of activity on the flight line as Erks got their charges ready for the mission.

Harry and I visited "Freddie" in his revetment and went over his details... His engine had been replaced and "Harry" and I had decided an early morning test flight was in order. During the flight I found an elevated temperature condition in the new engine that forced me to declare an emergency. We happened to be near a small satellite RAF air strip that acted as an emergency landing field just outside of Downton Abby. We set down there to see about correcting the problem. I taxied "Freddie" to the edge of grass where a small unoccupied maintenance building stood... There, sitting alongside of the building was a bright red 1940 MG convertible with a gorgeous long blond-haired beauty leaning against the fender...

"Hi There!" she called as I leaned out of the pilot's window after shutting "Freddie" down... "Hi Yourself!" I called back as "Harry" poked his head up along side of me. "Isn't that Miss Sue Ellen Swift... The Earl of Grantham's neice?" he asked... I just looked at him and smiled as I started unbuckling and getting out of my seat... "Uhhh... So I guess there is no engine emergency???" Harry continued...

I smiled again "Of course there is an engine emergency!... but after we have a picnic lunch with Ms. Sue Ellen and pick up the case of Glenlevit Scotch the Earl so graciously gave us we can see if "Freddy" has cooled off enough to be back in the green!"

It was a Grand Picnic! And after landing back at base, I explained about the "overheat emergency" to our Erk as I passed a couple bottles of Glenlivet to him "...for him and the ground crew" I said. ... With a smile, our Erk assured me that he would had the engine man go back over the engine and make sure "Freddie" was working perfectly.

That evening at the club the C.O. talked with me and "Harry" Ponsonby... he said the "Raid Leader" program was going to be shutdown and that a New Pathfinder group was being formed. He did not have any details but he did say we did a splendid job while the program was running... He told us 101 Squadron would be flying in the middle of the pack on this next mission and he even bought our Pints that we were drinking... That was something!

### **From Oliver Davies' 12 July Diary entry:**

This time No 101 Squadron went to Wilhelmshaven in the middle of the bomber stream. We had a Crescent Moon and "Stormy" our WX guy predicted lots of clouds all the way to Wilhelmshaven. He was right! The weather started off with ground fog on takeoff. Quincy Jones, our observer again took the signal from the tower. He tapped me on the shoulder and said "There's the green flare ... start your roll."

"Freddie" roared down the strip, making an easy lift off with little buffeting as he climbed out and turned toward the assembly beacon. Once we left the coast the entire flight was over water until we turned into Germany in zone 7. I took my usual approach and flew "Freddie" at low altitude over the water... Quincy Jones seemed a little nervous about the long flight over water at low altitude, but who wouldn't be after losing his last crew and drifting around in the channel for 24 hours before being picked up.

We had 50% cloud cover thru zone 4 and that turned to 100% in zone 5. F/SGT Stanley our wireless operator said there was "No Recall" as we crossed zone 5. . All was quiet as we "rode the beam" on our Gee set. As we approached zone 6 "Harry" popped up from his cubbyhole and announced "Turn 4 coming up"...

I made the turn at the appointed time and flew into 50% CC as we pushed into Zone 6. It stayed "soupy" as we crossed zone 6 toward our next turn. Just before we reached our next turn point we had a brush with a night fighter. It roared in from 9 o'clock with guns blazing... a couple of golf-ball sized "Balls of Light" zipped past the windscreen. I turned into him and dived away toward a heavy layer of cloud... He turned and made a second pass at us from 6 o'clock. SGT Corbyn our tail gunner yelled "BREAK RIGHT, NOW!"...

I rolled "Freddie" up on his right wing and punched in hard right rudder as I pulled up his nose... "Freddie" shed airspeed ... and slide off into the start of a spin... More "Golf balls" streaked by as a black shape flashed by the canopy... I slammed in hard left rudder, pushed the control column full forward in the opposite direction of the spin... "Freddie" groaned and creaked in protest but he rolled left, picked up speed and left the spin... 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...

"Harry's" head popped up next to my shoulder and said "Turn 5 coming up ... Turn right to 160 degrees in 30 seconds!"... I steadied down and we made the turn.

The WX closed up to 100% cloud cover as we entered into Zone 7. I could see hazy searchlight beams and streams of tracers coming up from the ground. Fires were burning in the target area casting an eerie glow ... The AAA was really getting heavy as I followed our bombers to the IP for the bomb run turn...

Then "Freddie" began to bounce as flak burst around us... The shell bursts were close but "Freddie" seemed to have a charmed air about him... we were not hit. Then Ponsonby yelled up from the bomb aimer's position that he had control... "Freddie" was flying straight and level...

Here we go again I thought... that longest minute! ... My hands were shaking but I put them in my lap ... I HEARD THE WHINE OF THE BOMB BAY DOORS OPENING... A particularly close explosion bounced "Freddie" up and down but he leveled out again and flew on... Sweat ran down my forehead and into my eyes as I blinked them rapidly to clear my vision. I had my "lucky Rabbits foot" Sue Ellen had given me in my hand and I was rubbing it furiously. I closed my eyes and tried to think about the "after picnic" time Sue Ellen and I had together in the deserted maintenance shed after "Harry" so graciously said he would go back and get "Freddie" ready to go after we had eaten and left us alone together...

A loud BANG and "Freddie" jumped again! "Oh, Crap!"... my eyes flew open... random pieces of shrapnel hit "Freddie's" fabric skin and passed on thru him... and then the rapid rising sensation like riding a fast elevator in my stomach as the bombs dropped away...

We passed over the target and I made a hard left and put the nose down into a dive turning back toward the coast... the bomb bay doors whined again they closed...

The AAA fire fell away behind us and I thought we might be home free, but then Corbyn yelled "Break Left" and he began firing ... I rolled "Freddie" left and let the nose fall off and into a corkscrew all the while diving and racing for the coast... The night fighter came back around and attacked from the right... 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 due north toward the coastline while continuing to dive toward a cloud bank... then we were inside ... I leveled off on the deck and turned to course 320. When we entered zone 5, we turned again to course 235 and headed toward England. 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 made it home ok and landed safely. 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 Thank You again for "the gift" and that he and the boys enjoyed it!

He also said he would have "Freddie" ready for the next mission...

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

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