

For those of you following the second edition of Steve Dixon's Target For Tonight Campaign game, the date is the night of 23/24 August 1943 and No. 104 Squadron is heading for Berlin Germany. Here is "R for Roger's" Berlin mission AAR. Hope you enjoy!

No. 104 Squadron (KX) Bomber Command - "R for Roger"
23/24 Aug 43
Mission 06/ TGT - Berlin, Zone 11.
Formation - Last 1/3.

Crew:

Name	Rank	Position
Malcolm Fraser	Warrant Officer	Flight Engineer
William Cavendish	Warrant Officer	Bomb Aimer
Jacob Morton	Sergeant	Rear Gunner
Alfie "Binky" Williams	Pilot Officer	Navigator
Theodore "Teddy" Fernsby	Flying Officer	Pilot
Jeremiah "Jerry" MacKenzie	Sergeant	Mid-Upper Gunner (1 Ju88c6)
Oscar Addington	Flight SGT	Wireless Operator/Gunner
Sidney Cartwright	Warrant Officer	Senior Erk

"The Mission to Berlin"....

8 August 1943:

No 101 Squadron stood down during the group's mission to Ludwigshafen on 8/9 August. The squadron was called together and briefed by the group commander. He said losses had been heavy and the group was losing bombing effectiveness... therefore the group was being reorganized. No. 101 squadron, being the lowest in active trained crews was being broken up and reassigned to the other squadrons in the group to bring 102, 103 and 104 squadrons back up to strength. When the group got more trained replacement crews, No. 101 squadron would be reactivated. It was a short briefing and new assignment orders were passed out after the group commander departed.

Flying officer and pilot of "R for Roger" Teddy Fernsby quickly scanned the paper that he had been given...then said "Alright Lads... Gather round... Looks like we are going to be assigned to No. 104 Squadron... "

There was a chorus of Groans... No. 104's Squadron commander was a stickler for military protocol and discipline and the crew didn't think that Teddy Fernsby's low key method of supervision would go over well in the unit...

"Now Lads..." said Teddy "Let's give our new commander the benefit of the doubt before we condemn him shall we."

From the back of the ranks Pilot Officer "Binky" Williams called out "... And there is going to be a personnel and quarters inspection for all the new crews assigned to No.104 Squadron by the

Squadron Commander tomorrow morning, so you all better get crackin' ... " There was another chorus of groans and the crew dispersed to start moving to No. 104 Squadron's billet area...

23/24 August 1943...

The two weeks preceding the Berlin mission were filled with inspections and training flights for "R for Roger's" crew, but they buckled down and turned out a polished performance like the professionals they were.

For the Berlin mission, No 104 Squadron was in the last 1/3rd of the bomber stream to launch. This meant the Jerries would be primed and ready for them. The weather was good for takeoff. "R for Rodger" was one of the last bombers to take off...

As R for Roger slowly moved down the taxi-way, WO Malcolm Fraser the Flight Engineer stuck his head up next to Teddy Fernsby ... "Hey Skipper, it looks like number 3 is running a bit "hot" and it sound rough" ... Teddy nodded and said "...Keep an eye on it... if it gets overheated, let me know." "Right-O, Skipper" said Fraser and dropped back down below.

Roger made the assembly point and started across the channel on a heading of 98 degrees. The bomber was to cross into the Continent north of Amsterdam and make its first course change turn entering zone 4. Teddy Fernsby kept "Roger" at low altitude as he didn't need the H2S to navigate. He could see the long streams of tracers and the searchlight cones from 25 miles out in the channel. All he would have to do was follow the carnage ahead...

As the coast line closed on "Roger", Fernsby was watching a bomber flying low over the ground that was caught by searchlights near Amsterdam. FO Fernsby could see multiple streams of tracers raising up from the dark landscape and intersecting the bomber as it tried to escape. There was a bright flash of light and then burning wreckage could be seen slowly fluttering downward. It was all very surreal and quiet ... there was no sound other than the muffles "thrumming" of Roger's engines... Fernsby said a quick prayer for the crew of the bomber... he hoped that had gotten out but it didn't look like it...

Note: It was reported on 27 August that No. Squadron 104 Bomber Squadron LANCASTER, SASSY, was flying at low altitude after an attack by an Me110. Flying low over what must have been an anti-aircraft cluster, SASSY was hit - a BIP in starboard wing. No member of the crew was able to exit the stricken aircraft.

Just then Flight Engineer Fraser popped up next to Fernsby... "Number 3's temperature is starting to raise ... I think we may have to shut it down" . Fernsby nodded "We'll keep it running unless it red lines" he said... Fraser gave him a thumbs up and ducked back down below...

Just then F/SGT Oscar Addington, our Wireless Operator's voice came over the intercom... "Skipper, I just copied a message and a reply from L-Lincoln of 103 Squadron, seems they have been recalled, they are turning now."

"Is there any recall for our squadron?" asked Fernsby... "Negative!" Replied Addington...

Following quickly upon the heels of Addington's intercom call, Sgt "Jerry" MacKenzie, "R for Roger's" Mid-Upper gunner called out a German Night Fighter as the Lancaster was about to cross the Netherlands coastline...

In a calm voice Teddy Fernsby heard Jerry say "Hey, Skipper... I have a Do 217 that looks like he's looking us over! ... He is crossing right to left at 9 o'clock level" ... Teddy could hear Jerry's Mid-Upper Turret whining as he tracked the bogey.

Teddy looked off to the left but saw nothing ... This was not the time to try to sucker the Do 217 into a bad attack like they had done last time... With engine problems and the possibility of an engine fire he did not want to be a sitting duck visible to every Jerry AA gunner and night fighter in 20 miles...

"Copy Jerry..." he said "We are going to duck into a cloud and see if we can shake him". Teddy lowered Roger's nose and banked into a left hand turn... Teddy heard Oscar Addington's voice came over the intercom... "W/O moving to the Ventral Turret" ... ("Roger" had a twin gun FN-64 retractable turret installed in the belly) ... Then he heard "Jake" Morton, announce that he had the rear turret manned and ready...

Teddy smiled... he saw a cloud that they could duck into and he thought he could lose the night fighter there. No one talked but Jerry... he continued calling the night fighter's position and direction... "He's coming around at about 15 degrees below the horizontal plane... Looks like a Do 217 J1"...

Jake picked up the call from the tail turret... "Confirmed... Do 217 J1...Looks like he is trying to pick up speed to follow us into the cloud"...

Many things happened quickly...

Just as Fernsby was leveling Roger out he heard a frantic cry from Fraser "FIRE ... SHUTTING DOWN NUMBER 3 ... ACTIVATING FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM!"

(Note: A "04" was rolled on the Mechanical Failure Table, followed by a "22" on the Failed System (Lancaster) Table. The result was engine fire. Then a "6" was rolled for number 3 engine and a "5" was rolled for extinguished.)

SUDDENLY, everything turned white outside the Lancaster as Roger plunged into the dense cloud... Jake immediately rolled right and turned away from the projected flight path of the Do-217...

TENSE MOMENTS passed ... It seemed to have worked as nothing more was seen of the Do-217...

(Note: a Random event was rolled for the NF to sight the bomber)

Fernsby reached for the engine controls to feather number 3 engine, but before he could get to them ...

THERE WAS A HUGE VIBRATION that shook Roger's right wing... followed by a loud BANG! ... metal fragments peppered Roger's fuselage ... A large metal sliver pierced the right side of the fuselage and lodged into the left side of the cockpit narrowly missing Fernsby. Cracks appeared in the right cockpit windows...

And then another loud BANG and Roger slewed to the right...

Fraser yelled "NUMBER 4 DAMAGED ... SHUT IT DOWN AND FEATHER IT!"

Teddy was quick to follow instruction this time and number 4 windmilled down to a stop with the blades turned into the feather position...

Fernsby got Roger under control and leveled out...

"What Happened?" asked Fernsby...

Fraser said " I'm not sure but I think the propeller on engine number 3 came apart and hit number 4 engine and did all this damage to the cockpit from flying pieces of metal from the disintegrating propeller blades"

Note: The random event roll was a "2" and another engine was knocked out...

A few seconds later Teddy said "OK... looks like we lost the night fighter... I'm leveling off...is anyone hurt?" A chorus of "All Good" replies came in as each crew member acknowledged his call in the proper order.

Teddy brought the nose up and after trimming Roger ordered the bomb load jettisoned, then turned the bomber back toward England!

R for Roger aborted the mission with two engines out.
No Night Fighters were shot down and no crew members injured.
No bombs were dropped on the target.

"R for Roger" will be ready for the next mission.

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Plane Name: "R for Roger"

