

For those of you following Steve Dixon's 2nd *Target For Tonight!* Campaign game, the date for this mission is the night of 27/28 December 1943 and No. 104 Squadron is heading for Bergerac France. Here is "R for Roger's" mission AAR. Hope you enjoy!

No. 104 Squadron (KX) Bomber Command - "R for Roger"

27/28 Dec 43

Mission 16/ TGT - Bergerac, France, Zone 12. (Industrial Targets)

Formation - Middle 1/3.

Moon Phase: New Moon

Crew:

Name	Rank	Position
Malcolm Fraser	Warrant Officer	Flight Engineer (Wnd)
William Cavendish	Warrant Officer	Bomb Aimer
Jacob Morton	Sergeant	Rear Gunner (1-Ju88c6, 2- ME-110 G4, 1-Do-217N2, 1-Me-110 F4)
Alfie "Binky" Williams	Pilot Officer	Navigator
Theodore "Teddy" Fernsby	Flying Officer	Pilot
Jeremiah "Jerry" MacKenzie	Sergeant	Mid-Upper Gunner (2-Ju88c6, 1-Do-217, 1-Fw-190A5, 1-Me-110F-4)
Oscar Addington	Flight SGT	Wireless Operator/Gunner (Wnd) (Do-217J1)
Sidney Cartwright	Warrant Officer	Senior Erk

"The Mission to Bergerac, France..."

It was the day after Boxing Day and No. 104 Squadron was "stood up" for this mission to Bergerac. The Christmas holiday had seen leaves liberally given out for the squadron and "R for Roger's" crew was no exception. Everyone got a few days rest and R&R to celebrate, but all crews were now back and assigned to tonight's mission. It was going to be a maximum effort raid. Bomber Command was hitting Industrial Targets in Bergerac...

The weather was surprisingly good for December. No rain or fog to deal with and it was a New Moon so the crews would have dark skies for the long flight to Bergerac and back. It was over 600 miles (12 Zones) to the target, which was deep in southern France near Bordeaux.

"This sure reminds me of our early missions to Italy with No.3 Squadron." said Binky Williams, the crew's navigator. He was standing next to Teddy Fernsby who was steering "Roger" carefully down the taxiway following "K for Karen". He was being careful to keep a bit of space between the two Lancaster bombers.

Teddy looked over at him and smiled "Yeah... I remember those early missions in the summer of 1940* ... when we were "those fresh faced kids" flying our first Kite against the Italians!" He chuckled... "Hey, Malcolm ..." he said "...do you remember that first mission we flew in that old Whitley bomber of ours when we tried to find that pass over the Alps on that mission to Turin?"

Malcolm Fraser the crew's flight engineer laughed "I sure do...that was a scary experience alright." he said "... not only for us but for that Italian truck driver when you buzzed over him on that narrow canyon road to the pass." Malcolm chuckled "I swear not only did you scare me, but you must have scared the crap out him too... I remember Jacob back there in the tail turret coming over the intercom saying the truck swerved and ran off the road into a ditch!"

They all laughed! Then Jacob Morton's voice came softly over the intercom... "Telling stories are we?"

"Well..." he continued without pause "...I saw our old Whitley Kite setting over by the maintenance hanger this morning... Seems she is still flying with No. 100 Squadron doing ECM work"

"Really." said Binky. "... I thought she was pretty much worn out after we got done with her!" They all laughed again... Teddy's thoughts turned to their first year flying night missions with No. 3 Squadron in the summer of 1940. It had been tough flying night bombing missions in the Whitley. Antiquated at the start of the war, the Whitley was the only dedicated Night Bomber in RAF service in 1940... The Whitley soldiered on until the 4 engine bombers came into service in 1942. After that the surviving Whitley's went on to provide maritime patrol service for the Royal Navy and were equipped to provide electronic counter measures for Bomber Command's night bombing missions into Germany...

Teddy brought "Roger" to a bumpy stop on the taxiway as "K for Karen" rolled into take off position on the main runway... "K for Karen" revved her engines and then began her take off roll. Teddy released the brakes and rolled out onto the runway and turned "Roger" to face down the runway... "K for Karen" was about halfway down the runway when her number 2 engine burst into flames... A hush settled over "Roger's" cockpit as the three flyers watched the drama unfolding ahead of them... With a great feat of piloting skill, her pilot, PO Boris Rudinski, managed to brake the bomber before the final commit to fly point... With the engine still burning, "K for Karen" managed to pull off the main runway...

A voice sounded in Teddy's ear... "R for Roger, Tower... You are cleared to begin your take off run" ...

"Ahh... Roger that Tower... R for Roger is rolling" ... Malcolm reached over and advanced the throttles to full power... Teddy let off the brakes and Roger began his takeoff roll... As "Roger" flashed past the "commit point" the crew could see "K for Karen" setting on the taxiway with fire crews spraying foam on the engine fire... They waved to Rudinsky and his crew who were standing outside the bomber... "Looks like they're all OK" said Binky as he turned and ducked down into the navigator's cubby below the pilot deck...

Roger climbed into the gathering darkness and turned south to join with the squadron. It was a beautiful night for flying. The sky was clear with patches of ground fog as they crossed the English coastline and went "Feet Wet" over the Channel in zone 4. The great flying weather brought Teddy's thoughts back to that summer of 1940 mission to Turin. The weather that night had been perfect for flying too.

The French had surrendered to the Germans on 22 June, 1940. The terms of the surrender called for Germany to occupy the northern 3/5s of the country with a gradually narrowing wedge of territory along the Atlantic coastline to the Spanish border called the Occupied Zone. The eastern border of the Occupied Zone was quite close to Bergerac. To the east of that line the Germans established the Free Zone, or Vichy France. Vichy France did not officially declare war on the Allies although it did engage in fighting with both Axis and Allied forces throughout its existence. It was referred to as "armed neutrality" and was recognized as a neutral country until November 1942 when the Germans occupied it. On June 10th 1940 the Italians declared war on France and Britain. They invaded France and occupied a portion of southeastern France from Marseille to Lyon and then north to Geneva on the Swiss Border.

Bomber Command's first bombing raid into Italy occurred on 11/12 June 1940. The results were rather poor as only a few of the 36 Whitley bombers dispatched made it to their targets. Bomber Command conducted a few additional raids into Northern Italy into mid July 1940 when Bomber Command curtailed Italian missions to assist in bombing German naval targets gathering for the invasion of Britain along the French coastline. Bomber Command resumed Italian missions beginning in mid-August 1940. That was when the Turin mission occurred that was occupying Teddy's thoughts...

* Editor's Note: For those of you who enjoy *Target For Tonight!*, the *Italian Campaign Expansion* that covers the entire RAF Bomber Command campaign against Italy from the summer of 1940 until August of 1943 when Italy Surrendered is in final play testing and will be submitted to Legion Wargames for publishing very soon. The Expansion will feature a new bomber type, the twin-engine Armstrong Whitworth 38 Mk-V Whitley Bomber for the player to fly. (All of the **Target For Tonight!** bombers can be flown as well) There are three new Italian night fighters provided in this expansion to battle your bomber, the CR-42CN, RE-2001CN, and the D520 (a French import). As there is the possibility of flying in daylight (using the **Target For Today!** rules), eight Italian day fighter types are also included in the expansion kit. The types are: G-50, G-55, MC-200, MC-202, MC-205, Re2000, Re2001 and the Re2005. The **Italian Campaign Expansion** is not a complete game it uses the Target For Tonight game rules for the night mission and the Target For Today game rules for any day missions the player may wish to play.

Roger crossed the French coast flying at low altitude in zone 6... "Just like the Turin Mission" thought Teddy as he steered Roger into a dark area of the coastline. Just then Binky's head popped up next to his shoulder... "OK, time to make your first turn to course 180 in one minute... that should take us down the old border between the Occupied Zone and The Vichy zone... I avoided all the AA sites they briefed us on..."

Teddy gave him a "thumb's up" and a chuckle. "Yeah, we want to avoid the Greenery in the undercarriage this time too!" Binky laughed and then said in a mock-serious voice "Hey! That wasn't my fault! Nobody said there was a tunnel on that road!"

They both laughed ... Binky was referring to the road they had followed to the pass over the Alps on the Turin Mission. After running the truck in the ditch, Teddy had continued following the winding mountain road toward the pass. The Whitley bombers were under powered and with a

heavy bomb load they had to find a low place to cross the Alps. Bomber Command suggested following the road net. Teddy had been doing that when they ran the truck in the ditch. Rounding the next turn in the canyon the road suddenly went into a tunnel...

Malcolm who had been listening to the conversation broke in ... "Yeah and you REALLY scared the "Bejeezers" out of poor old Davy Gibbs!... Remember... he was in the nose giving directions and then you hit that spruce tree... he came flying up out of the tunnel from the nose!" By now they were all laughing...

When confronted with the imminent collision with the face of the mountain cliff, Teddy had made his best Cork-Screw maneuver pulling the nose up and rolling the bomber to the right out over the canyon. He had barely managed to avoid flying into the ground but had clipped the top most branches of a tall spruce tree which had slapped the plexiglass just inches in front of Davy Gibb's face!

They were all laughing now... "And I remember the Senior Erk was not pleased about removing spruce boughs from the turret and the under carriage either." Said Binky, still chuckling...

The cockpit became silent ... "Fun Memories of Davy..." said Teddy with a sigh. "Yeah, Rest in Peace Davy-boy ... we all miss you." said Malcolm.

"Do you remember those Italian Bi-Plane night fighters?" said a disembodied voice over the intercom...

"Yes I do..." said Teddy "... Didn't you get your first confirmed Kill on that Turin mission?" "I did." replied Jacob Morton. "Those Little Buggers could turn on a dime but they weren't well armed... I remember we had fallen behind the rest of the lads while Teddy sorted out the tunnel and getting us over the pass into Zone 13... That little CR42 open cockpit bugger with that big searchlight mounted on the wing sure startled me when he turned it on!"...

"Yeah, but you turned the tables on him when you hit him with those four Vickers guns in the tail turret... I remember the light shattered and then he began to burn ... I saw him crash..." said Binky.

"Those Pilots were not well trained and they tended to make one pass and then head for home." said Malcolm. He went on... "Jacob, didn't you nail a Me-110 just outside of Bergerac on the way home from that mission?" "No..." said Jacob "that was on a later mission.... back to Turin it was though..." he said.

Just then tracers lit up the night as AA guns found Roger... There were some loud bangs, as shrapnel pierced Rogers skin ... Teddy made a hard diving turn away from the fire and continued on toward Bergerac...

The remainder of the flight back to Bergerac and back to England was uneventful. The weather over the base was good and "Roger" lands safely. The mission went well. Bombs were dropped ... 40% on target. Malcolm Fraser picked up a light flesh wound over Bergerac from the AA fire

during the bombing. Just bad enough to have a story to tell to all the ladies at Piccadilly Circus in London on his next leave! Jacob Morton downed a Me-110F4 over the French Coast and Roger made it home with light damage that was repairable for the next mission.

I hope you all enjoyed listening to the crew tell stories about their early missions to Italy from the **Italian Campaign Expansion** that should be available soon... It was a fun play test for me too!

Photos below:

"R for Roger"

The Bergerac Mission Map

The crew's Old Whitley Bomber

Name: Bob Best

