

Target for Tonight Steve Dixon's online campaign.

Mission 13 V1 installation, Bristillerie, France 25/26 November 1943

As the bus dropped us off at dispersal near Bouncing Betty it was terribly cold. So cold that frost was clinging to every surface despite a fairly stiff breeze blowing. Climbing the ladder I couldn't wait to get inside the aircraft and get under way. With clear skies and very little moon this should be a piece of cake although as tail end Charlie's in the bomber stream the nightfighters will have plenty of time to get ready for us.

Manfred Meurer had already successfully intercepted two of the Tommies on tonight's raid and was delighted to see the second one plunge down into its death dive before exploding with all its deadly cargo still on board. His Lichtenstein radar was alive with targets as more and more of the bomber stream made its way to the target zone. Some of the Tommies were using Düppel or Window as they called to turn his radar screen into a snow storm but he was now adept at picking out a likely target or two. It was getting difficult to know which ground controller's voice he could trust as competing voices would have arguments as to which was the genuine article. If this was a new enemy decoy scheme then it was having the desired effect. Meurer trusted to his hunter's instinct and it wasn't long before he picked out a Stirling bomber as it started to line up for its bomb run. This should be easy pickings for such an expert as it had to fly straight and level for its bomb aimer to do his job. Why are they still using these Stirlings? They can't fly as high as the other aircraft and they make such an easy target.

Meurer stealthily manoeuvred his He219A-0 "Uhu" into the 6 o'clock low position from where he intended to get lined up for a Schräge Musik attack but before he could do so the Stirling's tail gunner opened up and smashing his cockpit canopy and his instrument panel disintegrated before his eyes. He just managed to flip the aircraft over and his crew bailed out. Tumbling through the freezing night air he realized just how deadly these old "kites" could still be. Lesson learned.

Bouncing Betty reported a 40% on target bombing run and claimed 1 He 219A-0 on what proved to be a milk run. Piece of cake old boy, piece of cake.