

Target For Tonight Steve Dixon's online campaign
Brunswick, Germany 3-4th January 1944

102 Squadron G George

"'Ere Flight what about this 'ere new crew then?" asked the Erk as he worked on repairing the damage to number 3 engine.

"Well, they might look still wet behind the ears but anyone who can get a crate back in this condition is alright by me." Replied the Flight Sergeant.

"Err Flight what should I do with this then?" said the Erk, holding an unexploded 20mm canon shell nervous in his pliers.

"Stick it in a fire bucket you clot! What did you think they did? Brung you back a souvenir from Brunswick?"

Pilot Officer Geoffrey Flowers watched the ground crew at work on his damaged kite. It had been quite a night. Their first mission together as a crew and they had done a bang up job albeit with a few dicey moments.

At least there hadn't been much moonlight and they were in the middle of the bomber stream but the Met boys had got the winds all wrong and they had ended up drifting much further south and had run slap bang into to flak batteries based on the Texel Islands. That's where they had copped a packet in the rudder and lost number 1 engine. If they hadn't been so quick to put out the fire they would probably have had to bail out.

Lighting a cigarette the smell of the aviation fuel used in the lighter brought back the memory of that moment and the terror that had gripped him as G George lurched under the impact of the flak burst.

But we pressed on rather than risk a collision with the rest of the stream. We could see aircraft getting a pasting all around us. In the end it got too much. "For goodness sake, lads, don't keep reporting kites shot down. Just keep your eyes open for fighters."

It was when we got into the target zone that we had our first real brush with nightfighters. "Corkscrew port!" shouted Ray our Tail Gunner as he opened up with his four guns. An Fw 190 A5 single seater stitched a line along our fuselage and into our number 3 engine which started to run really rough but didn't catch fire immediately so I feathered the engine. It was going to be a long trip back.

"Look out he's coming back to have another go." This time Chris, our Mid Upper put him off his aim by hitting his engine which immediately started streaming a cloud of Glycol and soon after his prop stopped turning.

We flew on slowly with two engines out to drop our load. "Make sure you get them on target first time Hugh - I don't think that we can go around for a second run."

Flak bursts all around. Fresh load of TI s going down. "Master Bomber. Master Bomber. Bomb on the green I say again Bomb on the green!"

"Bombs gone!"

"Let's go home chaps."

"Break left! break left!" as once again G George shudders under the impact of shells ripping into the fuselage.

“Oxygen fire! In the nose!”

“Tom, take him another extinguisher quick as you can.”

Smoke starts to fill the cockpit. Acrid stuff must have spread into the wiring.

“Fire under control Skipper but we need to lose height.”

“Not here. Evacuate the nose and get up here until we are clear of the target area.”

Heavy flak over Hannover and then again north of Amsterdam.

“OK chaps North Sea ahead. Soon be home.”

And that was it. Taxied in. Debrief. Bacon and eggs. 1 down 29 to go.

Geoffrey stubbed out his cigarette and gave the Ground Crew one last look turned around and walked off.