

The longest op to date – over the Alps to Italy, which seems to be on the brink of quitting the war. Over the North Sea a very persistent Ju88 latched on and didn't let go before he had seriously wounded the W/T Operator, knocked out the H2S, and peppered the tail and rudder.

Attempting to return fire, all four tail guns jammed (one for the whole op). Hotspur II still responded well so the crew pressed on, trying to keep the wounded Flt. Sgt. Childs as comfortable as possible.

After this initial brush, the inbound leg was fairly uneventful, save for some flak in vicinity of Lyon. The ship was coned but vigorous corkscrewing evaded the beams, and while the ack-ack came close, none hit.

After scaling the Alps Genoa soon appeared, the target completely obscured by cloud and smoke. Nevertheless, and despite having no H2S, the bomb drop was good. No flak or night fighters observed over target.

The return leg over the Alps was rather dodgy, with high clouds and extreme cold moving in – luckily the passage was made OK. Over France a Bf110 suddenly attacked and knocked out the port wing flap and the O2 supply to the tail section. But Sgt. Weeks' three-gun return fire damaged jerry and he disappeared.

Just as the Belgian coast passed astern a “friendly” bomber appeared out of nowhere and passed within inches of the port wing – only extreme good fortune saved the ship (one Lady Luck token was expended).

It was quiet over the airfield and the landing was OK. Luckily, Flt. Sgt. Childs made a rapid and full recovery, and is cleared to continue on ops.

Result: A/c moderate damage, W/T Operator SW (recovered and may continue ops), bombs on target (50% accuracy).