

Target for Tonight Steve Dixon's Online Campaign
Mission 18 Target Heilbronn, Germany 1st/2nd September 1944
H Hotspur 102 Squadron

"Seems funny not to be using Monica after all this time, dunnit?" That is Chris my Flt Engineer.
"Yeah, well with the nightfighters using their new box of tricks it would be arsking for trouble, wouldn't it. What with you newly married an all. How is Dolly?"

"She sounded proper fed up in her last letter. I don't reckon that she likes living with me old mum down in Saxmundham, but it will be a lot safer for her than London with all this doodlebugs and whatnot coming over. Stands to reason."

"Well at least we don't have to worry too much about the Luftwaffe until we actually get into Germany, and that's no error."

"Just crossing the Belgian coast now skipper."

"Thanks Neil. You almost said enemy coast ahead didn't cher?"

"Yeah – had to stop meself."

"Lesley check that we haven't received recall signal."

"Yes skipper."

Just as we crossed into Germany the cloud cover starts to break up and we start streaming a ruddy great stream of contrails brightly lit by the full moon. Despite this or maybe because we are in the leading stream of bombers the search lights fail to pick us up.

"Skipper we have a Dornier sniffing around below our tail but I don't think that he has spotted us yet."

"Keep an eye on him and let me me know if I need to corkscrew."

"No, it's OK he's after some other poor beggar."

"Target zone ahead skipper."

"Over to you Lofty." Flt Sgt Ian Lofthouse is already in position and gets ready to assume control. Again the searchlights are having trouble locating us, hampered no doubt by the ground fog and there is very little nightfighter activity.

Lofty starts to hone us in on to the target Böckingen train transfer station. "Steady, steady, left, left, steady."

"Master Bomber, Master Bomber bomb on the green Tis. I say again bomb on the green Tis. Ignore the reds, ignore the reds."

"Bombs gone!"

After waiting for the photo flash I then begin the turn to port to set us on the home run.

Just then a bright flash lights up the sky about 20 feet away. "Some poor beggar just copped it!"

It is then that we are bathe in a searing blue light as the master searchlight hits us.

"Hold on to your ha'penny everybody!" and I throw the aircraft into a corkscrew manoeuvre but I fail to shake off the light.

Medium flak is bursting all round, above and below us. We are hit!

"Chris what is the damage? I can't see a ruddy thing with this light."

"Superficial. There's some bit flapping around on the port wing but nothing vital."

Then over Mainz we get picked up again but this time my manoeuvring is enough to escape the lights but attracts some unwanted attention from a Ju88G7. Bernie is the first to spot him as he lines up an attack from 9 o'clock high and his deadly fire rips the starboard wing right off the Junkers which plunges in its death spiral below us.

"Well done Bernie! Ruddy good shooting!"

"Time to break out the cocoa I think. Let's go home."

The photos show a disappointing 20% on target.