

Steve Dixon's online campaign Target For Tonight
Mission 9
Sassnitz, Germany
1st/2nd January 1945

C Cobblers 102 Squadron

"C Cobblers circling the field has fired a red Very light wounded on board Sir."

"Recognition signal verified?"

"Yes Sir."

"Very well illuminate the flarepath."

No sooner had the Lancaster taxied to a halt then the blood wagon drew up and its crew helped to extricate the wounded Mid Upper Gunner. The 6 inch hole made by the shell clearly visible just below the gun turret and the blood splashed all over the perspex dome bore a grim witness to what had taken place.

The debriefing room was thick with cigarette smoke and the exhausted crew sat around the table.

"It was all going so well until we passed over Eckensforde. Bags of flak and searchlights. We copped some shrapnel in the port wing and a bit in the belly. Then we were jumped by an Me110 but other than putting the wind up Paul, our bomber aimer as he narrowly missed colliding with our nose he didn't do any real damage. He came back for another go from 9 o'clock level and that is when Ken copped it in the chest. After that I don't know where he went. Dave our wireless operator went to see what he could do and managed to get Ken down and propped up against the main spar. After which he took Ken's place in the Mid Upper position." PO Dodds took a long drag on his cigarette before continuing.

"We made it to the target zone pretty much unharmed but being tail ended Charlie they were waiting for us. A Dornier 217 N2 decided to have a go at us but apart from taking a few potshots at us didn't seem to know what he was doing. Anyway by that time the flak decided to have a go and lost a bit of our starboard rudder. The Master Bomber had done a grand job of keeping the skymarkers and TIs going for us latecomers and although the target had ben plastered Paul managed to get the bang on the mark." (Photos later showed 40% on target)

"The journey home was ruddy awful flak all over the shop. Bags of superficial hits, you could use the old crate as a colander I reckon. The bomb sight was jiggered, H2S and radio took hits, control cables shot to blazes and the wing root took some substantial hits."

"Right you chaps go and get something to eat."

NOTE FltSgt Ken Taylor died from wounds received later that morning.