

After Action Report – Charmed
04 July 1942
Charmed, of 103 Squadron, 15 Group
Emden, Germany

It was with some relief to know that most of the mission would be over water – no searchlights or ack-ack. However, we were not looking forward to a mission under the unblinking stare of a full moon.

Take off was a bit touch and go, but we were able to get her off the ground and up to cruising altitude.

Shortly after reaching altitude, and crossing the coast toward the North Sea, we were set upon by a pair of JU-88s. The first made a harmless pass, then flew off into the night. The second also made a harmless pass and got a licking for his efforts. Sgt Carr, tail gunner, got a few hits in, setting the 88's engine on fire. The 88 also took off into the darkness, leaving a trail of smoke, sparks, and debris behind. We doubt he made the coast.

All was quiet for about the next hour. As the Frisian islands came to bear off our starboard wing, we encountered a sole ME-110. He made a single pass, again ineffective. Accurate fire from Wireless Gunner Sgt Ludlum raked his port wing, and Sgt Carr, in the tail, had a successful passing shot, striking the fuel tank and the cockpit of the 110, sending it into the cold waters below.

Shortly afterward, flying parallel to the Frisian Islands, a single Ju-88 tried to sneak up on us. However, Monica had her own plans. Sgt Carr got a clean and full blast into the 88, sending him into the briny, as well. 2 ½ KOs for Sgt Carr. As the night unfolded, it turned out Sgt Carr was far from done.

When we crossed the German coast, and making our run to Emden, it got dicey. We got caught by searchlights, but were able to dodge them, as well as what turned out to be exceptionally light flak. As the flak subsided, a pair of DO-217s made passes at us. The first made a single run, and flew off into the night, probably for other prey. He must have heard about Sgt Carr's unusual prowess tonight. The second 217 tried to sneak up on us from low and behind. Once again, Monica had a better idea. Sgt Carr was able to once again zero in on the attacker, and slice off the end of the port wing of the 217. Sgt Carr reported a parachute, from the 217. Tally 3 ½ for Sgt Carr.

Final approach to target was slightly obscured under about 50% cloud cover. W/O Ludlum was spot on and guided us square on target. Sgt Carr noted about 50% accuracy from F/O Peterson.

We finished our run and made the turn for home. We were able to evade further searchlights, and ack-ack was once again ineffective, barely scratching the paint. However, enemy fighters were still there to harass us. An ME-110 and a JU-88 found us and made their approaches. Sgt Carr took out the 110 before it could get a bead on us. Mid Upper Gunner Sgt Horak was able to take out the 88 on its second pass.

Back over the North Sea Gerry was not about to give us a rest. Another ME-110 and another JU-88 tried to take their best shots against us. We did not see them approaching, and both missed us, and both failed to make further attempts.

It was a quiet flight for the next 30-40 minutes. A lone ME-110 came in from 9 o'clock high. Sgt Horak was able to drive the 110 off, with substantial damage, but not before the 110 seriously wounded Wireless/Gunner Sgt Fairchild. Sgt Fairchild took a round to the left ribcage, opening him up, and breaking a few ribs. Fortunately, no apparent organ damage, or internal bleeding. F/O Peterson did his best to attend to Sgt Ludlum's wounds, and make him as comfortable as possible.

As we approached the coast of Norfolk, and then home, a pair of ME-110s took a last crack at us. The first came in from 6 o'clock high, with a fair warning from Monica. Accurate fire from mid-upper and tail gunners flamed him with devastating hits to the cockpit and fuel tanks before he could get a lock on us. No parachute was observed. The second 110 made a single pass, before he too wandered into the night.

Our landing was routine.

Hospital report on Sgt Ludlum was mixed. He will survive his wounds, but he will not fly again. Group is sending a Sgt R. Larsen as a replacement.

Monica earned her keep tonight. No doubt she was largely responsible for our being able to detect, deter, and destroy so many enemy aircraft. When all was said and done. Sgt Carr fell one enemy aircraft short of becoming an ace on a single mission. Sgt Horak's gunnery was also laudable, as he got credit for 2 kills.

This was our seventh mission as a crew, and our most effective, overall. Only one enemy aircraft shot down in the previous six missions. We were averaging just over 17% accuracy, and only one enemy shot down. Tonight, 50% on target and 6 enemy aircraft sent to Valhalla. Looking forward to continued success.

Respectfully
J. White
P/O