

After Action Report – L-Lincoln

8/9 AUG 1943

L-Lincoln of 103 Squadron, 15 Group

Ludwigshafen, Germany

Back to Germany, tonight. While Sgt Peyton recovers from his wounds, suffered from the Remscheid raid, Flt Sgt Ballard will be filling in as tail gunner.

According to Met we will have clear skies only for take-off and landing. Skies are expected to be 5/10 to 10/10 all the way to the target and back.

We will be operating GEE, Monica, Mandrel, H2S, and Window.

103 Squadron will be at the end of the stream. No element of surprise from us.

Takeoff was clean, and we climbed to our assembly point and took our turn heading east.

As we crossed the coast into the North Sea, Flt Lt Nye gave me our bearing to cross the Belgian coast just south of Ostend.

“Mid to Pilot”. “Pilot here, what’s up Terry?” “Bogey at 10 o’clock. No heading detected.” “Keep an eye on it.” A minute later, “Mid to Pilot.” “Pilot here.” “Bogey heading away, skip.” “Roger.” No sooner had I released the mike button when the plane shuddered. Flt Sgt Ballard had opened up on an ME-110 that simultaneously fired at us. We took some hits to the tail. “Tail to pilot. I clipped his wing, but he got me in the pins.” “You OK?” “Think so. I tied it up. Doesn’t hurt...yet.” “Roger.”

Passing south of Brussels we were caught by searchlights and flak. We dodged the searchlights, the flak was light and off the mark, scoring no hits.

Passing Namur, to our left, we encountered heavier flak, but still ineffective. In the glare of the searchlights, we spotted an ME-110 making a turn toward us. Just as he was straightening out for his attack he was stitched by tracers. Crossing our front a Mosquito zoomed passed and disappeared into the darkness below.

“Nav to Pilot.” “Pilot here.” “Clervaux coming up Skip.” “Roger.” More flak, still bad shooting on Jerry’s part.

“Pilot to Tail.” Tail... ‘How are you holding up?’ “All things considered, rather be back at the pub.” “Roger.”

“Tail to Pilot” “Pilot here...” “We have a shadow a few thousand yards out. It is not closing, just seems to be meandering.” “Roger. Pilot to crew, we will hold this course. Wally, keep an eye on him. Let me know if he makes any untoward moves.” “Roger, skip.”

We were into German skies now, ticking off landmarks. Light flak opened up on us, hitting the starboard wing. Once again, a dark silhouette blacker than the night was spotted, and still did not close.

ZONE 8

“Nav to Pilot, IP coming up.” “Roger.” “Nav to Pilot, turn to 015, ... now.” “Roger.” “Pilot to Bomb, you have control.” “Roger. I have control.”

As we closed in on the target we encountered heavy flak, which scored one hit taking out the nose turret.

Another solid shadow was observed, still making no move toward us.

Target was mostly obscured, Flt Lt Beverley was On Target 20%

ZONE 8 – Return

I took back control of Lincoln and made the left to head home.

Flak was still probing the skies for us, and still missing us.

Two more shadows darker than the night were spotted, and still no move toward us.

Heading toward Koblenz we were still harassed by flak, but they were still way off the mark.

Passing through the flak there was a sudden drop in temperature. "Pilot to crew, check your guns and gear, don't let them freeze up."

Another course correction, and we passed south of Bonn, heading toward Aachen, when we encountered more flak, which was again ineffective.

"Dornier 3 o'clock!", as Sgt Springfield opened fire on it. "A hit!" We were then wracked with a number of shell hits, causing no serious damage. The Dornier did not reappear.

Passing Liege on our right we encountered more flak, and again ineffective.

Skirting Brussels, again to our left, more flak, more misses.

We must have a guardian angel. We spotted a tenth enemy aircraft, and only two have spotted us.

Over the North Sea, we could see the coast of Suffolk a darker sliver against the dark sea. It was then when Sgt Springfield spotted another deep shadow against the dark skies. As if it was scripted the shadow once again paid us no mind.

We effected a safe landing, with a blood wagon waiting to take Sgt Ballard to hospital.

Flt Sgt Ballard will be out for 6 weeks with his leg wound. We have been assigned a Cpl Gordon Smathers as a temporary replacement replacement tail gunner.

P/O D. Hayden, Pilot

L-Lincoln

103 Squadron, 15 Group