

After Action Report – Remorseless

12 Jul 1942

Remorseless, of 103 Squadron, 15 Group

Wilhelmshaven, Germany

103 Squadron, 15 Group reports that their aircraft Remorseless, a Handley Page Halifax heavy bomber, is missing. Until further information is gathered, it is presumed the crew is dead.

5 Aug 1942

From the International Red Cross

Sources in Germany have informed us that Pilot Officer Christopher Rodney, RAF was rescued at sea, and has been interned by the Armed Forces of the Third Reich. No information on health condition of Officer Rodney.

28 Mar 1945

Pilot Officer Christopher Rodney was repatriated from Stalag Luft 13 and is in transit back to the United Kingdom. There he will be given any needed medical care and be debriefed.

19 Apr 1945

Account of the final mission of Remorseless, of 103 Squadron, 15 Group, Norwich, as recounted by Pilot Officer C. Rodney, RAF

“Our aircraft and crew were new to 103 Squadron. Replacing a crew lost on their last mission. Our crew had been together for several months, preparing to go in as a replacement, or join a new squadron or group.

We were very anxious but were somewhat relieved to know that our course would be primarily over water. No searchlights, no Ack-Ack.

Our takeoff was uneventful and climb to altitude was swift (for a Halifax) as we joined the stream. The gunners charged and tested their weapons and gave the “All Good” was passed to the Skipper.

The skies were clear, for a while, despite a ground haze that obscured the landscape of Norfolk and then the North Sea. It was not long before the skies became overcast, with the crescent moon peeking through, here and there. It wasn't long, thereafter, that Robbie (Sgt Robert Remington, wireless

operator and nose gunner) noted the glow of engine exhaust from a twin engine fighter, in the distance. The enemy didn't seem to notice us, but we were prepared, just in case.

Just past the halfway point, as we approached the Heligoland, I moved from my position in the nose, to man the ventral turret. Skipper had a bad feeling. Something about his "corns". No sooner had I taken up position we encountered a JU-88. Alfie (Cpl Alfred Darby, Mid Upper Gunner) and Robbie were able to get a few hits on Gerry. Must have been enough because his pass on us wide and wild. Did not see him again.

I kept my position at the ventral guns. Things remained quiet until we reached the German coast and sighted our target. By then I had resumed my position in the nose and began to sight in and lead us to the target.

We got caught in a battery of searchlights and the skipper couldn't shake them. That brought heavy Ack-Ack. The skipper (F/Lt Reginald Atherton, Pilot) took a ricochet, but nothing serious. Jamie (AC 2 James Huxley) took a bad hit. A piece of shrapnel opened him up around the liver and kidney. He remained conscious, but no one could get to him while we were under attack. The flak also got a good hit on the control cables.

Right as the flak ceased a pair of JU-88s came in. We didn't get any hits on them, then neither did they.

Mickey (F/O Michael Stanley, Navigator) reported we had drifted off course. I could see the target and was able to direct the skipper to line up pretty close. Despite having been off course, we were able to get about 40% of our eggs delivered.

Skipper kept us on line a few more minutes while I maneuvered back to Jamie. I applied a pressure bandage and got him as comfortable as possible. I continued back to the ventral guns as quick as I could.

Skipper brought us around. We dodged more searchlights, but Ack-Ack found us again. They were a bit wide of the mark. Which was explained by the appearance of two Dorniers. The Do-217s came in from port and starboard, dividing our firepower. Our fire was spot-on, but we did little more than scratch their paint.

The first Dornier took out Jamie's oxygen, while the second shot away our starboard aileron. Neither made second passes.

Skipper took us below eight thousand. Jamie was bad enough without losing his O2.

Back out over the Heligoland we encountered more heavy enemy fighter cover. A Junkers and a Dornier teamed up, this time.

Alfie shook up the Junkers, sending him on his way. No one saw the Dornier until it was too late. His pass took out the rest of the control cables and shredded the starboard inboard fuel tank.

The fuel tank caught fire, and we were unable to control it. Skipper called for the crew to bail out. Skipper stopped to check on Jamie. Jamie knew the score, being too severely injured to survive the jump. Jamie passed some personal effects to the skipper, who then made his way to the escape hatch.

I freed myself from the rapidly descending aircraft. I saw five other 'chutes in the distance, spread along several miles of sky. Once I was in the drink, I lost sight of them.

I was able to shed the 'chute and inflate my life vest. I floated a few hours, waiting for the dawn. I was drifting the better part of the day before being picked up by the Kriegsmarine. I was treated squarely, given a blanket and a hot meal. Through broken English and German I was unable to find out anything about my crewmates.

Once we reached port, I was handed over to the authorities, who processed me (interrogated) and shipped me to Stalag Luft 13. I spent the better part of the next three years asking every new prisoner if they heard about my mates."

23 Sep 1942

From the International Red Cross

German sources have provided us with the personal effects, and identity if known, of RAF aircrew whose bodies had been recovered from shot down aircraft. Names are listed alphabetically, below

16 Feb 1943

RAF Bomber Command
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

The identities of the following aircrew have been positively identified as deceased, being from aircraft Remorseless, a Handley Page Halifax of 103 Squadron, 15 Group, lost in action on the night of 11-12 Jul 1942.

Cpl Alfred Darby, Gunner
Cpl Roy Kinsley, Gunner

Addendum

12 May 1945

Based on personal testimony of a survivor of Remorseless, 103 Squadron, 15 Group, the following crewman of that aircraft has been positively identified as deceased.

AC 2 James Huxley, Flight Engineer

At this time, it is assumed the rest of the crew are deceased, killed in action.

F/Lt Reginald Atherton, Pilot
F/O Michael Stanley, Navigator
Sgt Robert Remington, Wireless/Gunner