

Target for Tonight – Steve Dixon’s online campaign
Mission 12 Rail installations Aulnoye, France 21/22 November 1943
102 Squadron (Stirlings) Bouncing Betty

Report by Flt Sgt Tom “Nobby” Clarke – Mid Upper Gunner

After our last mission where we got jumped by the Jerries as we crossed our coast, our skipper (Plt Off Keith Snow) gave us a pep talk about making sure that it didn’t happen again. So we tested our guns just as soon as we had passed over Cromer, didn’t we. Then blow me down but two minutes later we found ourselves being chucked about by the wake of an Me 110 passing so close to us that I could’ve shook hands with the bleedin’ pilot, couldn’t I. But what we didn’t see was the crafty blighter in a Dornier 217 sneaking up in a vertical climb who managed to pepper us with walking hits from nose to bleedin’ tail (pardon my French).

A right mess he made, didn’t he. Knocked out the bleedin’ autopilot controls, chipped the paintwork on the ruddy bombs, and then has the bleedin’ nerve to put a round into my ammo feed! Cheeky blighter! Then poor old “Doc” (Flt Sgt Peter “Doc” Watson, tail gunner) cops a fourpenny one right in his Derby Kelly (rhyming slang for belly). Thankfully it’s nothing serious like.

Then this here Jerry scarpers like before we can have a proper go at him.

I then spends the rest of the trip over the Channel trying to sort out the ammo feed, didn’t I.

Just as we cross the Belgian coast we get coned by a bleedin’ searchlight, then all his mates decide to join in a the skipper tries everything to shake off the bleeders, but nothing doing like. Then wouldn’t yer know it but just as I finish fixing the ammo feed but a piece of bleedin’ shrapnel bends it again burning a ruddy great hole in my flying boot on the way in to the bargain. This is taking the ruddy mickey, and no error.

Finally we get to the target zone and I realise that we are in the same bit of sky that poor old Uncle Jim copped his packet in WW1 flying for the Royal Flying Corps. Then I sees him, don’t I, this Jerry in a Me110 coming at us from 3 o’clock high. Well now me danders well and truly up, I can tell you. I’ve just fixed the ammo feed and I am definitely not having it bent again by nobody! So I give him a proper dose and his port wing gives up the ghost and flutters off all by its self and it’s good night children everywhere, innit.

That’s when the bleedin’ flak opens up but apart from some scrap metal in the rudder there’s no real problem. So we all wait for Chalky (Flt Lt Ross “Chalky” White bomb aimer) to drop our load but seeing as how he’s having to doing it manually as the autopilot is out its takes some time, while we’re all feeling proper Charlies sitting around waiting. Finally we feel Betty rear up as the bombs go and we are free to clear off out of it. That is when the flak gets proper hateful but apart from a bit of new ventilation nothing that causes us any problems.

Then this weird looking bleeder appears at 10.30 high with half of Ally Pally sprouting from it’s nose so must be one of those new He219A s we’ve heard about. He lets rip but nothing doing so I give him a squirt a knock a lump off of his Port wing tip and off he goes into the night.

Apart from a bit of light flak as we cross the enemy coast that was the end of the excitement for that trip.

I heard later that we didn’t do too bad either with about 30% of our bombs on target. Good old Chalky, that’s the stuff to give ‘em and no error.