

RGI.V WRM WRM 1/18 OP
FROM WARMWELL 180645A
TO 10GRP
SECRET QXX BT

INT/W/1 18 OCT 43

COMPOSITE NIGHT RANGER REPORT 17/18 OCT.

(A) 263 (B) 10 WHIRLIBOMBERS 12 X 500 LBS GP 3 SEC DELAY
8 X 250 GP 3 SEC (C) 1ST SIX A/C 0222 - 0355 LAST FOUR
A/C 0306 - 0440 (D) AS STATED IN 10G/7 OF 7TH OCT (E) 1ST SIX
0300 - 0310 LAST FOUR 0335 - 0405 (F) 1 TRAIN (APPARENTLY AMMUNITION)
CAT A 2 MILES WEST OF ECAUSSEVILLE S/L BAKER 2 TRAINS CAT B
AIREL STATION P/O BLACKLOCK 1 LOCO CAT C NR BRICQUEBEC S/L
BAKER 1 LOCO CAT C SE BAYEUX F/O MERCER 1 LAUNCH (25FT) CAT 4
WEST OF ILE ST MARCOUT P/O BLACKLOCK RAIL BRIDGE OVER R VIRE
SE ISIGNY BELIEVED DAMAGED F/LT ROSS F/S TODD F/S COOPER
TRACK BELIEVED DAMAGED AS FOLLOWS SE OF SOTTEVAST F/S BEAUMONT
NR FLOTTMANVILLE F/S PROCTOR NR LE MOLAY P/O BLACKLOCK
(G) NIL

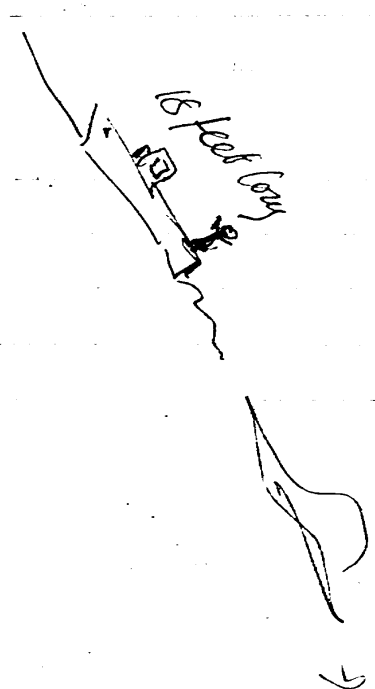
GENERAL PILOTS CROSSED COAST WHERE BRIEFED 3-5000 FT.
ALL PILOTS FOUND THEIR TARGETS EXCEPT ONE WHO WAS
UNABLE TO FIND TARGET E SO JETTISONED IN SEA. EXPLOSIONS
FROM S/L BAKERS ATTACK WERE VERY VIOLENT AND COLOURED YELLOW
GREEN AND MAGNESIUM WHITE. THEY WERE SEEN BY 3 PILOTS UP TO
20 MILES AWAY AND MUST HAVE CAUSED COMPLETE DISINTEGRATION OF
TRAIN AND LOCO. P/O BLACKLOCK SAW ONE OF HIS BOMBS BURST BETWEEN
2 TRAINS IN AIREL STATION HE ALSO MADE 2 CANNON ATTACKS ON
A MOTOR LAUNCH GOING NORTH WEST OF MARCOUF ON MAKING 3RD ORBIT
LAUNCH HAD DISAPPEARED CLAIM CAT IV BELIEVED CAT I

OF THE 3 ATTACKS ON THE BRIDGE OVER VIRE F/LT ROSS SAW
DIRECT HIT ON TRACK ON EAST SIDE OF BRIDGE F/S COOPER NEAR
MISS F/S TODD RESULT NOT SEEN. F/O MERCER ATTACKED TRAIN
WHILE ON TARGET BRIDGE OVER R SEULLES TRAIN STOPPED THEN MADE
CANON ATTACK ON LOCO DEFINITE RESULTS NOT SEEN INTENSE FLAK
FROM FRONT CENTRE AND REAR OF TRAIN. S/L BAKER ATTACKED A
2ND TRAIN NR BRICQUEBEC WITH 2 CANNON ATTACKS TRAIN STOPPED
AND WAS ENVELOPED IN STEAM. HE THEN MADE A SHIPPING RECCO OF
CHANNEL ISLES AREA BECAUSE ALL L/H SEEN ON. NO SHIPPING
SEEN. INTENSE ACCURATE HEAVY AND LIGHT FLAK FROM GUERNSEY/PLEIMONT.
OTHER FLAK FROM MARCOUF, ISIGNY, AIREL, CARPIQUET AND
N. OF CAEN.

WEATHER NO CLOUD OVER TARGET AREA VERY FEW PATCHES OF SURFACE
MIST. VISIBILITY UP TO 20 MILES OVER CHANNEL ISLES
6-10/10 CLOUD AT 12-1500 FT

BT 180645A
THI 0710
PMO B K
RGI WRM R ...0736/18 DONOVAN AR+
K

<i>Name</i>	<i>Time up – down</i>	<i>Ht cross channel</i>	<i>Place and Ht In</i>	<i>Target briefed</i>	<i>Target attacked – TIME</i>	<i>Place Height Out</i>	<i>General, flak, ship, e/a, s/l, lights, etc.</i>
F/Lt Ross 15	0222 – 0330	100ft	5500 Audoville l Hubert	Railway Vire Bdge S.W of Isigny	300 dive 0300 3000 – 700 W/E D.H on line apparently on bdge at East side of bdge 4 th circuit	E of P de la Fleur 100ft	Marcouf Intense light heavy when to west . It came vertical 1 mile away to hi port side. No cloud. Mid Channel cloud 3/10 2000. Saw Explosion S/L Baker
F/O Mercer 34	0229 – 0333	100ft	St Come de Fuesues 4000	Bdge Seullès S.E Bayeux	Saw Target & 1 train W from Audrieux Station waited Ø		Saw C/O's Explosion on way in
F/S Todd 19	0226 – 0334	200-600	5000 St Marie Mout	Railway Vire Bdge	0304 WE 2000-1000 Saw no explosions	St P du Mout 100ft	Guided by F/Lt Ross M.G S.E of Isigny Saw S/L Bakers expl.
S/L Baker 31	0227 – 0345	100	Dunes de Vaneville 3000	Bdge Monderet between Carentan & Valognes	Down road then on xx cdn't see bdges. Train + waggons fired tracer siding [★]		1 Petrol or Ammo Train 1 Loco Cat C
F/S Cooper 40	0228 – 0345	200	5000ft St M du Mout	Vire Bdge	0305 NW – SE 900ft broke left 1 burst on river bank near miss	St P du M	Flak from Isigny
F/S Williams 44	Electrical	Failure		Bayeux - Airl			
Sgt Dunlop 20	0232 – 0359	100ft	2000 N of Les Preux	Blaise les Lignerès ENE Valognes	Searched for Target but could only find roads	Dropped bombs safe	No cloud. Red L/H C de la H. White Alderney. Cherbourg area Red.
F/S Beaumont 16	0306 – 0425	100f	St Marie du Mont 1500	Carentan – Sottevaast Branch line	Carried ranger No trains bombed. Bomber Blaise les Figneres junction. Burst seen in centre of junction	SE of Sottevaast	
F/Sgt Proctor 26	0308	100	Dunes de Vauvill 2500	Carentan – Valognes carried out	No trains. Bombed siding at Flottemanville bursts approximately on ry tracks	2	Poor Blackout in xxxx white building with factory chimney alongside light flak
Purkis 26	0312 – 0452	100	Port en Bessin	Bay – Caen	Carried out <u>twice</u> no trains. Bombed near Brenay. No results seen		Flak near Caen and SW of Ouistreham
Blacklock 21	0310 – 0450	100	Port en Bessin 1500	Bay – Airl carried out saw tramline to BAYEUX	Ranged as ordered. dropped port bomb near le Molay. Burst seen in centre of line. #	3	Bayeux bad blackout S/L + Flak Airl N. of Airl stn on h. gnd.



* ~~Station N. of Chef du Pont.~~ Orbit Port Station & Junction E. of Hemevez 1700 bombed EW 1700 – 700. Orbit port & saw yellow sheet explosion + 2 smaller green explosion + ~~white~~ vivid white flashes like magnesium. Then flew W. and saw goods train going towards Briquebec, 2 cannon attacks EW. ~~Cat~~ Steam over Engine Cat XC. Then x coast S of Carteret 50 feet & saw Jersey L/Hs illuminated. Around 1000 ft Jersey for shipping. None there – South Pleimont intense heavy accurate flak. Evaded. Chan Is 8/10 1100 ft. Target no cloud. St ground haze.

Mercer

Ø Maintaining objective waited for train to reach bidge & bombed W-E 600 feet both 1 burst short, probably in river. Other stopped train Cat XC skidded stbd. Tracer from head centre and rear of train. Orbit port. One cannon opened up and after complete orbit cannon attack N-S on engine saw strikes, Cat C, steam etc more intense flak from several positions.

Black

S/L from Nor Airl picked up broke right & dived ~~saw steam~~ full orbit & approaching Airl from SW. Saw steam both ends of station fired short burst 2 trains stationary opp dived one. Bombed stbd 30° 50 feet & saw explosion between two trains broke right. Back P eu B. (Cannon launch W. of Marcouf). 2 attacks & sunk it Airl Harbour. 25ft ~~Small~~ Motor Launch W. of Marcouf 2 cannon attacks. Orbitted & could not see. ~~The~~ Vis good. ~~Thinks~~ Feels sure sunk, Claim Cat 4
300 – ~~100~~ – 50

FINAL REPORT AND SURFAT REPORT FOR
263 SQUADRON.
SPECIAL NIGHT OPERATION AND RANGER OPERATION 17/18 October
1943

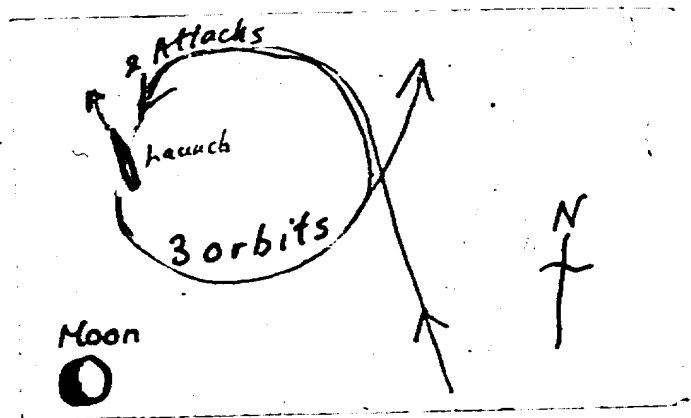
FORM F

- (A) 17/18th October 1943
- (B) 263 Squadron
- (C) 11 Whirlibombers (Six 2 x 500 lb G.P 3 secs
and four 2 x 250 lb G.P
3 secs.)
- (D) 0300 - 0312 and 0335 - 0404 hrs.
- (E) See (K)
- (F) No cloud. Few patches of ground haze
Moonlight in third quarter.
- (G), (H) and (J). Nil.

(K) 1 train, apparently carrying ammunition, Cat A in siding at railway junction S.E of Valognes at 285026 on Sheet 6 of E/3 and 4, France 1:50,000 S/Ldr Baker D.F.C & Bar.

2 trains Cat B in Airel Station, P/O Blacklock
1 locomotive Cat C near Bricquebec. S/Ldr Baker
1 locomotive Cat C on railway bridge over river Seulles. S.E
of Bayeux F/O Mercer
1 motor-launch Cat 4 (or Cat 1) N.W of Ile Marcouf. P/O
Blacklock. See Surfata Report below.
Railway track believed disintegrated (bomb bursts seen on
track) at Sottevaast, F/Sgt Beaumont; and at Flottemanville F/Sgt
Proctor; and at Le Molay, P/O Blacklock.
Railway bridge over River Vire S.E of Isigny damaged, F/Lt
Ross, F/Sgt Todd, F/Sgt Cooper.

Surfat q.



SURFAT REPORT

(a) 263/18 (b) 17/18th October (c) 1 Whirlibomber.
(d) 263

(a) Southerly 10 m.p.h (b) Nil (c) Good
(d) Slight (e) Moonlight

(a) 0405 (b) 49°32' N, 1° 18' W (c) 1 motor-
launch, 25 ft. going N.W of Ile Marcouf.
(d) Two separate cannon attacks 20° starboard bow
(e) Not known.

(a) Not known exactly as cannon previously fired,
 probably about 160 x 20mm
(e) Both attacks 700 - 150 ft

(a) None (b) N/A (c) Launch easily found at
second orbit, not found at all at third orbit.

6 and 7. Nil

(a) 1 motor-launch Cat 4 (pilot believes Cat 1)

See opposite

The intention of this operation was to sever the main railway line in five places between Caen and Cherbourg and to take advantage of the tactical situation by ranging along the line 45 minutes later.

Accordingly, the first wave of six Whirlibombers, carrying 2 x 500 lb. bombs took off from Warmwell between 0222 and 0235 hrs. A seventh A/C had electrical failure and could not take off. These six A/C crossed the Channel at 100 ft, then climbed to make correct landfall at the nearest point to their target, where no flak was to be expected and crossed the French Coast at 5000 - 2500 ft. One pilot could not

over.....

locate target E, the railway junction at Blaise les Lignerres, or find a railway line. He recrossed the coast and jettisoned his bombs in the sea. The other five pilots found their target areas without difficulty and, between 0300 and 0315 hrs, attacked as follows:-

S/Ldr Baker found a train, with a locomotive attached at the Western end, stationary, in the siding West of the junction of the Carentan-Valognes-Montebourg lines. He bombed it in a 1700 - 700 feet dive, jinked to port and saw a huge yellow sheet of explosion followed by two smaller but intense green explosions and vivid white flashes like very large magnesium flares. These explosions were seen by three other pilots, one of whom was more than 20 miles away. S/Ldr Baker considers that the whole train and its locomotive must have been destroyed by the violence and extent of this explosion. Slight light flak came from the train or from the siding during the run-up. S/Ldr Baker then ranged along the branch line to Bricquebec. Near Bricquebec he saw a goods train going north. He made two cannon attacks on the locomotive (114 x 20mm) from E to W and from W to E. The train stopped and the locomotive was enveloped in steam. After recrossing the coast near Cap Carteret he saw the light houses on Jersey flashing and accordingly carried out a complete Shipping Recco of the Channel Island Shipping Lanes. He found no ships but was attacked by intense and accurate heavy and light flak from Guernsey, Pleinmont Point.

F/Lt Ross, F/Sgt Cooper and F/Sgt Todd were briefed to bomb the railway bridge over the river Vire S.W of Isigny. They did so: the first dived in from 3,000 to 700 ft and saw a burst on the track on the bridge at its eastern end; the other two bombed in shallower dives; one saw a near miss on the river bank in the corner made by the bridge. The other did not see his bursts.

F/O Mercer was briefed to bomb the bridge over the river S.E of Bayeux. Approaching his target from the East he

saw a train leaving Audrieux Station. Maintaining his objective, he waited until the train was on the Seulles bridge and then bombed in a dive to 600 ft. He saw one bomb burst short, probably in the river, and thinks the other may have hit the train which stopped. He then orbited and made a cannon attack on the engine, on which he thought he saw two strikes (56 x 20mm). It was enveloped with steam. This train fired double streams of tracer from the front, centre, and rear.

These six pilots then returned to Warmwell where they all landed by 0355 hrs.

The next wave of four Whirlibombers, carrying 2x 250lb bombs, were briefed to range the railway between Caen and Cherbourg, avoiding highly defended areas. They took off between 0306 and 0312 hrs and carried out their instructions perfectly as follows:-

F/Sgt Beaumont searched the branch line between Carentan and Sottevast. He did not find a train on it and accordingly bombed the mainline at a place where there were sidings, at or near Sottevast. He saw bursts in the centre of the tracks.

F/Sgt Proctor found no trains between Carentan and Valognes so bombed the line at or near Flottemanville, seeing bursts apparently on the track. There was a white building with a factory chimney and bad blackout, adjoining the line. Light flak came from very close to this building.

F/Sgt Purkis twice searched the line between Bayeux and Caen and finally bombed the track near Bronay but did not see his bursts.

P/O Blacklock on his way in noticed the train line from Port en Bessin to Bayeux. Then he searched from Bayeux to Airel. He dropped his port bomb near Le Molay and saw it burst on the track. Then, while avoiding the defended area of Airel, according to plan, he saw two trains standing in Airel Station; what looked like a goods train was heading East and what looked like a passenger train was heading West (0356 hrs). He fired a short burst, then dropped his star-

board bomb from 75 ft and saw an explosion between the two trains, which are therefore both claimed damaged. The Airel flak lived up to its reputation for intensity and a searchlight located about 300 yards north of the Station is apparently on a tower or high ground since it picked up our A/C at just above ground level.

P/O Blacklock recrossed the coast near Port en Bessin and searched for ships. When he was N.N.E of Ile St Marcouf he saw a small vessel on his port side and half-orbited it. He saw that it was a motor-launch of about 25 ft with a bridge or superstructure about two thirds forward. He decided that as it had no mast and was alone it was no fishing boat. Accordingly he made an up moon cannon attack from 20° on the starboard bow from 400 to 100 ft at close range. He orbited and repeated the attack, then orbited again and could not find the boat, although the visibility was good and the sky clear. He fired 212 x 20mm altogether. He considered that he sunk this launch but only claims it Cat 4 since results were not definitely seen.

These four Whirlibombers landed at Warmwell by 0450 hrs.

Flak: All pilots had been carefully and extensively briefed to avoid the known locations of flak and no pilot crossed any highly defended area, except for P/O Blacklock who did so for a good reason and with good results. Tracer was seen out of range from Carpiquet, from a point S.W of Ouistreham and from Isigny, as well as from the other places mentioned above. What seems most worth nothing is that for the first time in a year's experience by this Squadron, the Ile Ste Marcouf put up a considerable barrage of heavy and light flak. It appeared to be fired vertically, though no A/C was over head. Lighthouses were flashing at and West of Cherbourg but not East of it. There was apparent bad blackout in Bayeux.

It is quite likely that the success of this operation was not confined to the ten items of damage summarised above. During a rhubarb operation twelve hours later, in the afternoon of the 18th October, two pilots of 257 (Typhoon) Sqdn. found and attacked seven locomotives between Lestre

and Sotteville. This comparatively high concentration of rolling stock may have been partly caused by this Squadron's operations of the previous night.

Andrew Wordsworth
Flying Officer
Intelligence Officer
No. 263 Squadron.