

EXE NR EXE2/18 IMMEDIATE SECRET NOTWT

TO 10 GRP INTELLIGENCE
FRM INTELLIGENCE EXETER
INT 14317/18/9/43

COMPOSITE NIGHT INTRUDER REPORT

263

13 WHIRLIBOMBERS 2 X 250 L.B. 3 SECS

(1) 11 A/C UP BOLT HEAD BY 0131 HRS. DOWN EXETER BY 0330 HRS.

2 A/C UP BOLT HEAD BY 0220 HRS DOWN EXETER 0405 HRS

TARGETS IN FORM D 10G/K XXXXXX FORM D 10G/9 OF SEPT 17TH

(1) 0205 - 0215

(2) 0315

1ST A/C BURSTS IN VICINITY OF CUTTING NE OF POMMERET - *Ross* ✓

2ND A/C BURSTS IN VICINITY BRIDGE W OF LAMBALLE - *Beaumont* ✓

3RD A/C BURST ON OR VERY NEAR TRACK E OF GUINGAMP - *Heaton* ✓

LOCO CAT B SGT HEATON

4TH A/C BURSTS ON OR VERY NEAR TRACK NE OF PLOUVARA - *Mercer* ✓

5TH A/C RETURNED EARLY C/S U/S - *McClure* ✓

6TH A/C BOMBED TRACK W OF PLOUARET. RESULT NOT SEEN - *Simpson* ✓

7TH A/C BURSTS IN CUTTING JUST S OF PONTTHOU VIADUCT - *Blacklock* ✓

8TH A/C BURSTS ON OR NEAR LINE SW OF MORLAIX - *Purkis* ✓

9TH A/C BURST NEAR TRACK W OF PONTTHOU VIADUCT - *S/Ldr Baker* ✓

10TH A/C BURSTS IN CUTTING ON OR VERY NEAR TRACK IN CUTTING - *Proctor* ✓
OF PONTTHOU VIADUCT

11TH A/C BURST ON OR NEAR LINE IN CUTTING N OF - *Smith* ✓

PONTTHOU VIADUCT

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

12TH A/C TRAIN CAT C BOMBED E OF PLOUARET F/O HOLMAN - *Holman* ✓

13TH A/C BURSTS ON OR NEAR TRACK NEAR PLOUARET - *Watkins* ✓

xL.

xAL

10 A/C ATTACKED PRIMARY TARGETS. SLIGHT INACCURATE LIGHT FLAK AT MORLAIX.

8-10 SEARCHLIGHTS AT MORLAIX.

xxA. LIGHTHOUSE WHITE OCCULTING AT TRIAGOZ. THREE-STAR GREEN FLARES

2500 FEET AT PTE DE LONGUE ROCHE

WEATHER

8/10 STRATO-CUMULUS 2000 - 4000 FEET AT FRENCTXXXXXX AT FRENCH COAST.

LESS OR NONE IN TARGET AREAS. VISIBILITY GOOD

x600 HRS

xxx 0630 VA

xx RPT WA 2 AC UP

xx 11 A/C UP BOLT HEAD BY 0131 HRS

xxx Z0631 MC DONNELL. VA+

<i>Pilot's Name and Number</i>	<i>Time UP</i>	<i>PLACE and TIME DOWN</i>	<i>PLACE and HEIGHT OVER FRENCH COAST IN</i>	<i>LETTER and NAME of TARGET for which BRIEFED</i>	<i>TARGET BOMBED and HEIGHT of BOMBING</i>	<i>RESULTS SEEN</i>	<i>PLACE and HEIGHT FRENCH COAST OUT</i>	<i>GENERAL – To include WEATHER, FLAK, S/Ls, L/H, BLACKOUT, SHIPS, E/A, REASONS FOR BOMBING SECONDARY TARGET, etc.</i>
Beaumont PLUFF 27 16	0123	0300	6m E of St B	C. Bridge over River TRUTTE West of LANBALLE	Rly bombed in vicinity of bridge 0205			In vic of rail cutting
ROSS x5	0122	0330	6 miles E of St [Illegible]	D. Bdge over River EVRON west of LANBALLE	0210			Rly line on road N.E of Pommeret 2000/500 in vic of cutting S/L at Pte de Longue Roche Where 3 star green flares up to 2000ft
MERCER 34	0125	Last in 0330	St du Bec de Viv	E. Ry Line Plouvara to Plouagat	0215 Target accurately bombed just NE of PLOUVARA 2000/700			On or v close
HEATON 41	0124	0315	Pleubian	F. Ry Line in Bois Maulanay East of GUINGAMP	Port bomb 0208 W and S of Bois de Maulanay other bomb on Rly			Attacked train at PLOUAGAT Sparks from loco and [and had stopped 1 on road Very much steam Cat B 1 on or v close White light SW of Guernsey
McCLURE DFC RCAF x3	0125	Exeter 0225		G. Ry Line WEST of GUINGAMP				Returned to Exeter Stbd C/S into coarse pitch on t/o
SIMPSON 35	0126	0320		H. Ry Line East of PLOUARET	0220			Landfall W of [Illegible] 4-5 miles B'd rly line W of PLOUARET Not seen – b'd down line. Results not seen
BAKER DFC 31	0131	0324	Loquirec 4000	J. PONTYOU VIADUCT	0208 Ponthou Viaduct NE SW 2300 – 1000	Bursts seen in cutting on or near line	E of Loquirec	8/10 Coast 2000-4000 stratocumulus Before and over target no cloud. Vis v good. 2 S/L Morlaix L/H white occulting Triagoz
PURKIS 26	0128	0310	W of MORLAIX	J. PONTYOU VIADUCT	0205 Line S.W of Morlaix 500	Looked v close on or near line	W of Morlaix 2000	8/10 S/Ls from Morlaix
PROCTOR 25	0127	0255	Tregastel 5500	J. PONTYOU VIADUCT	0209 Pouthou Viaduct 2000 700 - 700	In viaduct cutting	Plestin 3000 in cloud	7/10 2/5000 S/L Morlaix Flak from [Illegible] on way out
BLACKLOCK 21	0130	0225	N of Morlaix	J. PONTYOU VIADUCT	J 0215	In cutting N of viaduct in close or on track 700 ft	Loquirec 2000	
SMITH R.Aus.A.F. 36	0129	0301	In cloud 6000 ft W. or Loquirec	K. Ry Line West of Ponthou Viaduct	K in cutting 0204 Burst right of line 500	B sparks just r. of line in cutting	in cloud 5000	S/Ls Morlaix
Holman (29)	0220	0400		W of Guingamp	Train E. of Plouaret	not seen		
Watkins (45)	0221	0405		N. Plouaret		on or v close		

SECRET

Final Report (Form F), Night Ranger Operations.
17th/18th September 1943

No 263 Whirlibombers.

17th - 18th September 1943

263 Squadron

13 Whirlibombers, 2 x 250 lb - 3 secs.

0205-0215 and 0310

LAMBALLE

Railway Line between ~~Lamballe~~ and Morlaix

8/10 Strato cumulus 2000 - 4000 feet over French coast. Less or none in target areas. Visibility good.

Nil.

Nil.

Nil.

1 Locomotive Cat B F/Sgt Heaton

1 Train Cat C. F/O Holman

Other bombing results not decisively observed.

The intention of this operation was to sever the main railway if possible in ten places, between Rennes and Brest, so that railway traffic should be diverted up the the Southern branch line and should thus provide a target for Mosquito's on the following night. Eight railway line targets between Morlaix and Lamballe were assigned to Whirlibombers of 263 Squadron; of these targets the most important was Ponthou Viaduct to which 4 aircraft were dispatched. Two more aircraft took off an hour later to range along the line.

Individual landfalls and targets were selected with the object of avoiding every known location of flak and searchlights and pilots were carefully briefed at Warmwell and they prepared their own Sketch-maps of their targets. The Whirlibombers all took off from Bolt Head, at which night landing and D/F Homing facilities had been established under the supervision of F/Lt. Connolly F.C.O Warmwell. Instructions were to return via Bolt Head and land there if petrol was short, otherwise to return to Exeter. In fact all Whirlibombers got back to Exeter, several of them after a flight of about

two hours duration and one after an exceptionally long flight of two hours ten minutes.

The first wave of eleven Whirlibombers was airborne at Bolt Head between 0122 and 0130 hours. One returned to Exeter with Constant Speed Unit U/S. The other ten made landfall as ordered at 2000-4000 feet at the nearest points to their targets where no flak was expected, and in fact no flak or searchlights were met with throughout this operation. Flak was seen and 8-10 searchlights exposed at Morlaix but none of our aircraft came within range of them.

Nine of these ten aircraft bombed their primary target, or a point very near it:-

(Targets A and B were Mosquito targets).

Targets C and D were small railway-river bridges E of LAMBALLE. These were not found under 7/10 cloud but the track in the vicinity was bombed in two cuttings. Bursts were on or very near the lines.

Target E was the track between Pleuvara and Pleuagat; this was bombed West of Pleuagat, results as above.

Target F was the track in Bois de Maulanay. F/Sgt Heaton dropped his bombs separately, one hit the Guingamp-Pleuaret road which appeared to have tramlines on it, the other was on or very close to the railway line. He then saw a locomotive (apparently attached to a goods train) steaming from Pleuagat. He pulled out of his bombing run, skidded to the [Illegible] and attacked from 500 feet from 10 degrees head-on, firing 58 rounds H.E.I and S.A.P.I. He saw strikes on the locomotive. Then he turned sharply to port and saw the locomotive stopped and letting off steam.

Target G, the railway line West of Guingamp was not attacked, since the pilot briefed for it was the one who had Constant Speed [Illegible]

Target H, the railway line East of Pleuaret was attacked in a satisfactory bombing run but the pilot could not see results.

Target J was the Ponthou Viaduct. Three of the pilots briefed to attack it bombed from N.E to S.W. Two undershot very slightly into the railway cutting N.E of the Viaduct (One pilot thinks he may have hit the end of the Viaduct) and one overshot in to the cutting S.W of the target. The fourth pilot made landfall too far West, recognised his position, and bombed the line S.W of Morlaix. He saw his bursts on or very close to the track.

Target K, the railway line West of Ponthou Viaduct, [Illegible] attacked. The pilot saw a near miss to the South of the line, in the cutting.

All bombing was carried out as ordered in a shallow dive from 2000 feet and bombs were released below 700 feet.

~~THESE WERE THE ONLY BOMBERS WHICH WERE NOT DOWN~~

This first wave of eleven Whirlibombers landed at Exeter by 0330 hours. All aircraft failed to raise Exeter Flying Control until W of Torquay but were materially assisted by F/Lt Connolly i/c [Illegible] Bolt Head ~~and~~ who was contacted 50 miles S of Bolt Head, and by the searchlight homing which was laid on for them.

The twelfth and thirteenth aircraft briefed to [Illegible] the target area, were airborne at Bolt Head at 02.20. One pilot found no trains but secured bursts on or very near the track W of Plouaret; the other, F/O Holman, found a train E of Plouaret going East. (type of train not observed). He bombed it from S.W and orbited to see the train stopped and smoke covering the trucks aft of the engine. He then fired 68 rounds at the engine but could not see results. These two aircraft landed at Exeter at 0405 hours.

This operation proved that Bolt Head can be made [Illegible] suitable for take off at night and in fact all pilots felt quite happy with the possibility of landing there if it should be necessary.

Ten of these thirteen pilots had never before crossed the French coast at night. The fact that not one of them "lost his way" seems to have been due to the briefing extended over several days and to the fact that the pilots had learnt by heart the salient features of the landfall and target areas.

A Wordsworth

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