

Twelve Whirlwinds of 263 Squadron took off from Martlesham Heath at 1002 hours on Tuesday the 12th. August to escort 54 Blenheims as far as Doel. Rendezvous was made with the Blenheims over Orford Ness at 1007, and the formation moved off at 1008.

The Blenheims flew at 50 feet in two sets of boxes. The Whirlwinds flew at the same height, six between the two sets of boxes, and six up sun of them. The Commanding Officer of 263 Squadron reports that in his opinion the two formations of Blenheims were too far apart, about 5 miles, for effective protection to have been given to the Port formation.

and weaved above the bombers

where the Whirlwinds climbed to 1000 feet
The Dutch coast was crossed at 1043 hours. ~~xxx~~ The formation was in the vicinity of Doel about 1050 hours. The Whirlwinds turned for home about 4 miles North West of Antwerp. They followed the course' of the Scheldt, six aircraft flying at 50/100 feet, the other six weaving above them at 500 feet. Near Walcheren they saw 6 barges. These were almost certainly Flak barges: fire was observed from them. Three of these were attacked with cannon fire, the Whirlwinds diving from 500 feet to water level. One barge was sunk, and the other two were damaged. F/Lt. Pugh also attacked another barge about 2 miles North West of Walcheren and damaged it.

During the whole flight no enemy fighters at all were seen. Knocke and Vlissingen aerodromes were seen to have no aircraft on them.

Bofors fire was experienced from Vlissingen and Neuzen. F/Lt Pugh "Pinpoints" the Vlissingen position as being just under the T in the TR shown on Sheet 8 of the 1/500,000 series. Machine gun and rifle fire was also experienced at various points. On the outward journey F/O Stein observed some soldiers run out of a house and shoot at him with rifles. He marked the position on his map intending to deal with them later when he had fewer calls on his attention. On the return journey he and Sgt. King searched diligently for the spot, but were unfortunately unable to find it.

The pilots report that the Dutch peasants waved to them enthusiastically.
No balloons were seen.

Over the Channel there was 1/10 cloud. Over the land there was 7/10 cloud. Visibility was 20/30 miles for the most part, but there were short periods of rainstorm when it was reduced to 2000 yards.

The twelve Whirlwinds landed at Martlesham at 1135.

One machine, Sgt. Jowitt, was found to have been hit by an explosive shell near the tail. This machine is Cat 2. Two others had M/G bullet holes in them. These are Cat 1.

The following are the pilots who took part in the expedition:-

S/Ldr. Donaldson A.F.C. ✓

F/LT. Pugh. ✓

F/Lt. Hughes. ✓

F/O Stein. ✓

F/O Coghlan. ✓

P/O Rudland. ✓

P/O Mason. ✓

Sgt. Blackshaw. ✓

Sgt. Albertini. ✓

Sgt. Jowitt. ✓

Sgt. Buckwell. ✓

Sgt. King. ✓

A.H.O.

Intelligence Officer.
263 Squadron.