

From:- Intelligence Harrowbeer

To:- Intelligence 10 Group

AI/85 IMMEDIATE SECRET

OPFlash No. 2 for 27/4/44

- A. (i) Strikes on shipping in Morlaix estuary (10G Roadstead 91)
(ii) Mission carried out.
- B. (i) 263 (ii) 7 Typhoon 1B bombers 2 x 500 lb MC inst det.
(iii) NIL
- C. (i) 1025 (ii) 1100 (iii) 1140
- D. (i), (ii), and (iii) NIL
- E. 14 x 500 lb MC inst det. released in dive 10,000 - 3000ft. One pair of bursts was seen 5 yards from stern of 3000 T M/V. (Claimed Cat 4 provisionally). A springing mushroom of brown-black smoke seen on believed M class minesweeper, perhaps a direct hit (Cat 4 provisionally). F/O Heaton strikes on flak position.
- F. (i) (a) Intense light flak. 6 light positions again identified on port side of M/V.
M/V flying balloon 1500 ft. Minesweeper 75 yds S fairly confidently identified. 5 believed E boats have moved closer since yesterday.
- G. (I) and (ii) No cloud - vis good.

T.O.O 1225

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From:- Intelligence Harrowbeer
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AI/86 IMMEDIATE SECRET

OPFlash No. 2 for 27/4/44

- A. (i) Strikes on shipping in Morlaix estuary (ii) Mission carried out.
- B. (i) 263 (ii) 8 Typhoon 1B bombers (2 x 500 lb MC inst det.) 2 Typhoons 1B L.R. (iii) NIL
- C. (i) 1630 (ii) 1700 (iii) 1739 - 1751
- D. (i) 1 Typhoon bomber Cat E on landing. No hydraulics thought due to flak. Pilot safe. (ii) and (iii) NIL
- E. Dive-bombed 10,000 - 2000 ft. S/Ldr Gonay's bombs straddled 3000 T M/V amidships. These near misses confirmed by following A/C and the 2 fighters acting as observers throughout the attack. This ship now thought to be Sperrbrecher, was lying in same position, with barge alongside. Other bombs fell 25 - 250 yds from ship. M class minesweeper thought to have been left on fire but this observation may have been of intense flak. Claim Sperrbrecher Cat IV, Minesweeper Cat IV
- F. (i) NIL (ii) Intense light flak from ships and from three multi-light gun positions now observed for 3rd time on islands in mouth of estuary (position 4288 sheet 3F/5 1/50,000). Also 40 mm and light flak from both sides of estuary mouth. Flak started before dive and appeared wild with some attempts at barrage fire. Meagre heavy flak at 12,000 ft.
- G. Balloon still flying over ships. 4 armed trawlers with steam up, stationary, position 4128, heading N. 2 possible E boats ½ mile S of M/V. When formation half way back P/O Beaumont sighted fighter dinghy broke away with his No. 2, orbited and gave fixes. A.S.R. proceeding.
- H. (i) and (ii) No cloud. Vis good.

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Wil X Fighters X

Roadstead 92

Surfat Report 10 Group Roadsteads 91 and 92
27th April 1944

1. (a) 263/30
(b) 27th April
(c) (1) 7 Bomphoons (ii) 8 Bomphoons and 2 Typhoons 1B L.R. close escort.
(d) 263 Squadron
2. (a) Northerly 10-15 mph
(b) No cloud
(c) Good vis.
(d) Slight
(e) Bright sunlight
3. (a) (i) 1100 hours (ii) 1700 hours
(b) Entrance to Morlaix estuary 48° 42' N, 03° 53' W
(c) 1 M/V or small Speerbrecher 3000 tons with a barge alongside it to port.
1 M class minesweeper
(i) Ships were lying at odd angles, the M/V heading E.
(ii) Ships were heading N.
(d) Both attacks out of sun.
(e) Not known
4. (a) (i) 14 x 500 lb (ii) 14 x 500 lb (one pair hung up)
(b) 500 lb MC
(c) Inst.
(d) NIL
(e) 3000-2000 feet.
(f) Eyesight
5. (a) (i) 6 (ii) 5
(b) (i) 1 pair of bursts 5 yds form stern o 3000 ton M/V Others bombs were wide
(ii) 1 pair of bursts 5-10 yards from starboard side of 3000 ton M/V.
(c) (i) A springing mushroom of brown black smoke screen from M class minesweeper
(ii) 2 pilots thought the M class minesweeper was left on fire but our observer fighter leader at 12,000 feet thought that the flames were flak flashes and the smoke was funnel smoke
6. and 7. NIL
8. (a) (i) and (ii) M/V 3000 tons Cat 4 and M class minesweeper Cat 4.
Request Cat 3 for both if any further evidence can be obtained.
9. Sketch not submitted as shipping not at sea.

10. Roadstead 91

Harrowbeer 1025 - 1140. Targets bombed at 1100 hours. 7 Bomphoons of 263 Squadron led by S/Ldr Gonay crossed the channel at 0 ft., climbed to 10,000 feet and turned to port to dive bomb out of the sun from 10,000 to 3000 ft., in dives of 45 - 75 degrees. These pilots fired cannon during the dive but did not see results. S/Ldr Gonay's bombs were seen to burst very close astern of the 3000 ton M/V - so close that the stern was covered by the explosion and the first bomb waves encircled the ship. Another pair of bursts were 25 yds. to port of this ship. Other bursts were 50-300 yds wide. A springing mushroom of brown black smoke was seen on the M class minesweeper and one pilot feels sure that this was caused by a direct hit but it is quite possible that the moke was from flak or funnels. F/O Heaton continued his dive to 1000 feet and to renew his offensive against one of the three 4 x 20 or 40 mm light flak positions which he clearly identified in the Chateau de Taureau on the rocky island in the estuary mouth and on the islands to the N of it (See Surfat Report on Roadstead 90 for April 26th). This pilot again saw the 6 flak positions on the port side of the M/V, but could not see their shape. The M/V (Or Sperrbrecher?) flew a balloon at 1500 feet during all the four attacks which were made on it.

Roadstead 92

Harrowbeer 1630 - 1750. Two A/C down Bolt Head 1830. Targets bombed at 1700 8 Bomphoons led by S/Ldr Gonay and 2 Typhoons L.R. close escort. Dive

bombing attack was out of sun from 10000 to 3000 feet. Both the target ships were now heading to the North with their distance apart at about 85 yards. The barge was still alongside the M/V. There were two probably E boats 10 cables astern of the M class minesweeper and 4 probably armed trawlers to the W. of the flak islands in the estuary mouth. S/Ldr Gonay' bomb bursts were again observed to be very near misses, to port of the M/V, and there was another pair of bursts perhaps 25 yard to starboard of it. Other bursts were 50-250 yds wide. Two pilots saw smoke and flame coming from the M class minesweeper. Light flak was intense from the target ships and the armed trawlers and also from flak positions on the shore and on the islands (See Surfak for Roadstead 90). On the whole, flak was fired ahead of our A/C and there seemed to be an attempt to create a barrage. One A/C was hit as it pulled out at about 3000 ft. The pilot found he had neither flaps or U/C over Harrowbeer and he was forced to belly-land at high speed. He cut his switches and touched down on the grass but his A/C took fire under the wing and inside the cockpit as it scraped on to a runway. The pilot, F/St Shellard, escaped with burnt eyebrows and bruises and the A/C was foam extinguished by the fire tender which arrived within 15 seconds, but it is Cat E.

P/O Beaumont who led the two Typhoon fighters, close escort, thought he saw a dinghy on the way to the target. He continued to protect his formation and orbited the target area at 12,000 ft to observe results, meeting meagre fairly accurate heavy flak. He saw the smoke and flame from the M class minesweeper but considered that they were caused by flak and funnel smoke. P/O Beaumont then led his No 2 back on a course which he calculated would bring them back to the dinghy. He found it with a pilot in it about 50 miles S of Start Point, orbited it and gave fixes and waited until a Beaufighter appeared and dropped another dinghy to which the pilot paddled. P/O Beaumont's section landed at Bolt Head at 1830, rather short of petrol. A.S.R. proceeded satisfactorily although the Walrus had to be towed back by an M/L. It is understood that the rescued pilot was the one who had baled out during Roadstead 90 on the previous day with engine trouble from a Seafire of 24 Naval Wing at Culmhead. 16 Seafires of the Wing provided good target cover during Roadsteads 90, 91, and 92.

It is hoped that these four operations accomplished more than mere provision of dive bombing practise for 263 Squadron, at this level they were certainly satisfactory.

Andrew Wordsworth F/O
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