

550 Squadron - Berlin - Lancaster O - 30/1/44

The account of the above flight contains many inaccuracies and inconsistencies. It appears to be loosely based upon the initial debriefing, but its style reflects that of a rather inexperienced media reporter. Herewith my comments which to the best of my recollections and notes, are accurate.

1. The initial attack was from dead astern and the aircraft involved was identified by both gunners as a 4 engined bomber.
2. Firing commenced within seconds of this identification and as tracers were whistling down the length of the fuselage (I had a weird notion to put out my hand to touch), appeared to originate from the previously identified aircraft.
3. It was known at that time that the enemy was operating captured bombers by placing them in the main bomber stream. Such aircraft were reputed to be equipped with cannon.
4. The aircraft made a virtually uncontrolled descent of 10,000 feet. The loss of inter-com was immediate. No verbal or other instructions were given (or could have been given) at this critical time. My own parachute, normally located on my table, was firmly anchored (or so it seemed) to the ceiling. The airspeed indicator on my table had revolved twice and was against the stops. For a short period, every one concerned was fully pre-occupied in survival.
5. It was noted that the B/A had jumped, taking the hatch flap with him. At debriefing, by mutual consent, the best possible interpretation was volunteered for this action.
6. Relative stability was achieved at 12000ft approx. and a course was set for home. This was approximate. The use of the moon, two main stars (Polaris being a godsend) and ground features where they could be reasonably determined. Defended areas were of assistance in this context.
7. From Berlin to Woodbridge, height was continually and continuously lost. The Dutch coast was crossed at 2000 ft. plus and the English coast at 4-500 ft. indicated.

*W/F 000, 6/1/44*