

## **ML.67. The Baltic in the Dark, London at Night**

The story about the recent (March 2023) Rivet Joint flights over Finland reminds me of an ERB-47 mission over the Baltic on a pitch-black night, both aircraft blacked-out, no exterior lights (none), close formation on Jimmie Haynes right wing as we approached Kaliningrad on a head-on attack course with a planned break-up (he left, we right) at the turning point to see what we could generate in signals. We presented a single radar return for the Soviet radars. The only formation reference lights I had were his cockpit lights as we flew 'stacked-up.' Talk about 'VERTIGO!'

Intercepted by the Swedes (using an unknown AI signal not recognized by the Crows) prior to the planned break point, Jimmie suddenly broke left (with no warning from him) and disappeared into the night. The next thing we heard was an abort transmission from him on HF. He descended and overflowed Sweden back to Brize. We briefly continued but were forced to abort since he had, and we withdrew at altitude via our inbound route ... out thorough the 'needle,' RTB Brize.

It was an 'interesting' debriefing.

Jimmie's crew had an appearance next day at 3AD HQ down at RAF High Wycombe. He subsequently received orders to Goose Bay flying Norseman to fish camps ... related or not.

That would have been in the Summer of '62. Those were the 'Daze' indeed. "Tea Sir? White or Black?" Ahhh, London at night, the Columbia Club, the Tube, the theatre, Soho, Marble Arch, Selfridge's, "Speaker's Corner", Wimbledon, Afternoon Tea, Burford, Brize and Bampton, Earlywarm Blankets, Burderop Park Hospital, Swindon, The Swan, The Golden Eagle, The White Horse, Sing-songs-at-the Pub with WW II Brit Combat Veterans, Road Rallies, a 'run' to "Brands Hatch" through London in my '48, four door, right hand drive Austin, stick-shift on the floorn... Red Barrel, Hovis ("don't say bread, say 'OVIS!,") ... stories untold but never forgotten. The Brits opened their arms and took us in ... "Put your feet on the mantle shelf and make yourself at 'ome"... "Welcome-as-the-flowers-in Spring"... and we loved it ... and them!!!!!!

"There will always be an England" in this Yank's heart. "Bless 'em all, Bless 'em all, the long and the short and the tall.....!!!"

*- Brig Gen Reg Urschler*