

OP GAUNTLET - 97Sqn – Flyco's Proposal

Op Gauntlet is set to be flown on 9 Nov 2012. No 97 Sqn have been allocated tasks to knock out two bridges, interdict two armed convoys transporting SA-10s for erection on Senaki airfield, and destroy two fixed units also on Senaki (a Defence Force, and a Command Post).

I believe that this task can be best completed by two separate A-10 flights, each comprising 2-4 aircraft. In addition to Red Air there is at least one mobile SA-13 unit travelling with each convoy. Both bridges, the convoys, and the two fixed targets on Senaki airfield, can be destroyed by the A-10s. The difficulty will come from identifying the convoys and, in particular, the SA-13s within each convoy, and destroying these. There may also be other SAMs in the area. Finally, the area is small and care and discipline will need to be exercised by the 2 separate Flights in locating and attacking the convoys.

I propose that each flight of A-10s should destroy one of the bridges. This can be done simultaneously with a TOT on both of 0434(Z), using GBU-10s. The two Flights will take-off from Kutaisi at 0425 and 0428. Any later time runs the risk that an initial miss or a go-around would not ensure the required destruction time of before 0438(Z). The two bridges are situated to the SE and NW of Senaki, and thus the two flights will depart from Kutaisi in different directions.

To and to avoid any mutual interference, it is proposed that the two Flights maintain separation as follows:

- a. Boar will attack The Chihi bridge to the east of Senaki, and then interdict the Convoy coming in from the East, before turning South and attacking the two fixed target areas on the South side of Senaki. These attacks would be made using APKWs, running in from the South and turning out at about 3 nm. This would minimise any risk from the SA-13s and avoid conflict with Hawg. However, GBU-12s should also be carried for use against battle tanks and any fixed bunkers etc.
- b. Hawg will attack Abasha bridge to the ESE of Senaki. They will then route directly to the railway station in Senaki town, to pick up the convoy routing from there to Senaki airfield – although it is probable that the convoy will already be at Senaki by that time. The probable SA-13 with that convoy should be identified from at least 3 nm range and destroyed first, using APGWs. They will attack the convoy, and the 2 fixed units on the north side of the main Senaki runway, making attacks from the North-East.

Once all targets are destroyed, contact should be made between the 2 flights to determine whether either need assistance with their task. RTB is to be via exit to the South and a turn-on to R/W heading for a run and break to land at Kutaisi.

There will be a Red convoy transiting from Senaki town along the road towards the Abasha bridge, and thence towards Kutaisi. There will be a Blue armoured force travelling to the south of the Abasha bridge to intercept them. Care is to be taken about engaging armour in this area, so as to avoid blue-on-blue. It is also probable that other Blue air units will be allocated to this area. Additionally there will be Blue SEAD and CAP activity.