

# NIGHT LIGHTS

**A**lthough Ripe is, like all WWII installations on both sides of the conflict, submitted to a strict black-out, it is equipped with some lights, all too necessary for night operations. Some are activated by day-night passage, others by radio frequencies.

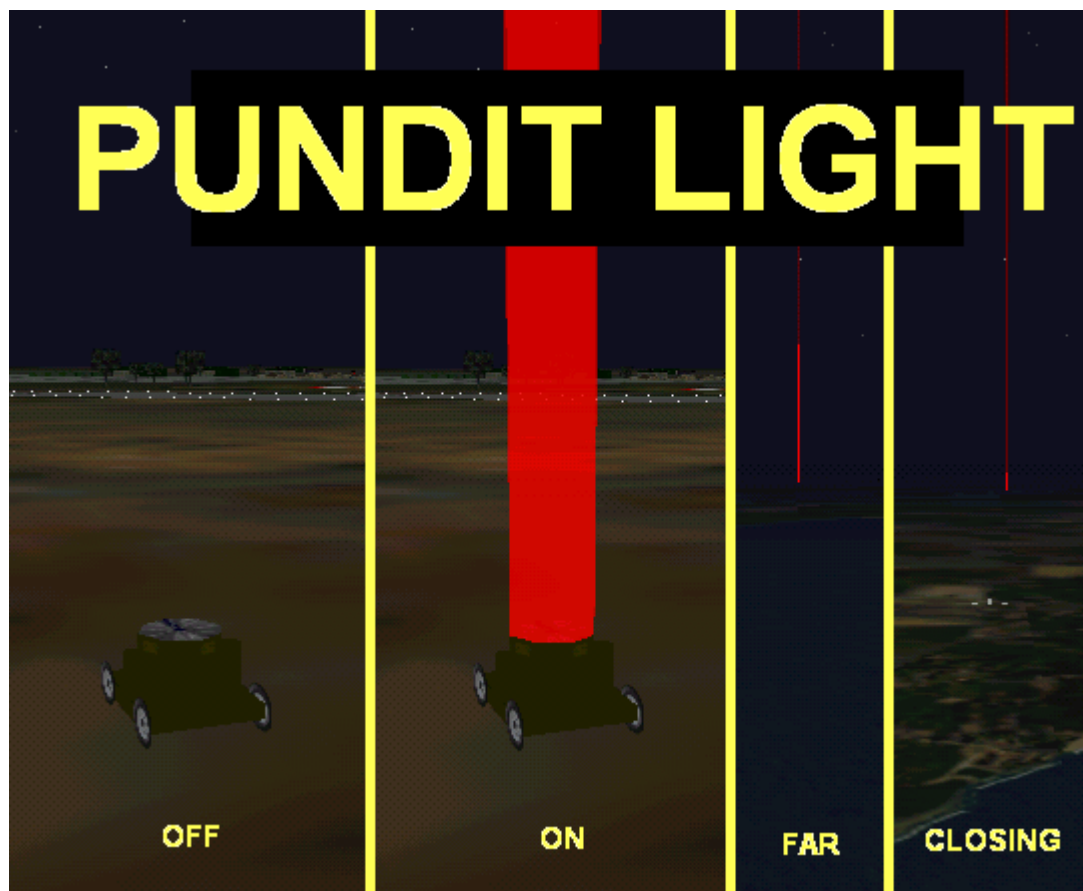
For the latter, you will need at least a functioning COM1 radio gauge on your panel. Normally, lights were turned on-off by the officer on duty in the Watch Office or, at some unmanned satellite bases, by the pilot himself through radio signals. Here, you will assume both roles.

## THE PUNDIT LIGHT

Calling “DARKY...DARKY...DARKY” on 6440kHz frequency, a pilot could ask, day or night, for any information he needed. By triangulation, his position, altitude, direction and speed was calculated at **DARKY** HQ from listening stations all over England (and beyond after D-Day). To help the pilot locating a specific air base, a “pundit” red light, flashing a two letters call sign in Morse code, would, on demand, be turned-on.

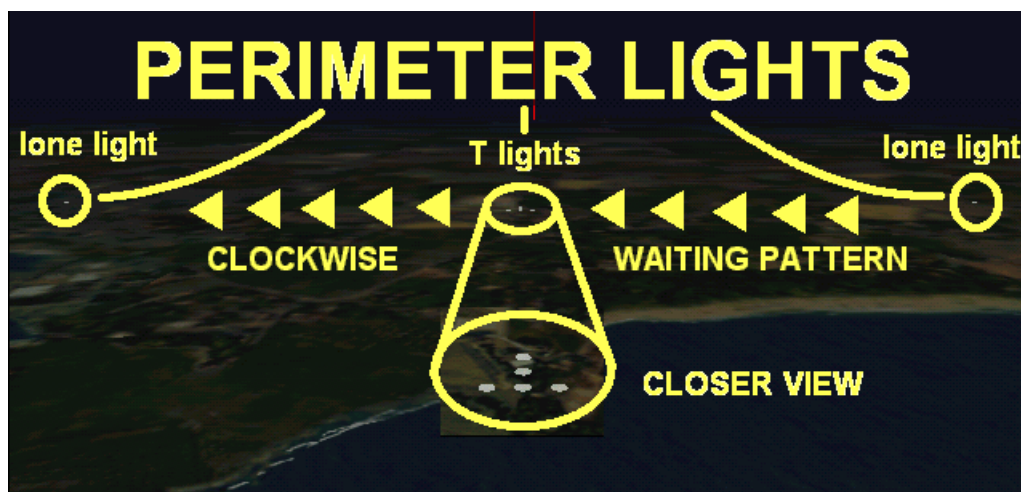
Ripe has its own pundit light, activated by tuning 122MHz (from 122.00 to 122.95 inclusively) on COM1 and is visible at night from 17 nautical miles out. Flashing

Morse code is **RI** (·\_\_· ..).

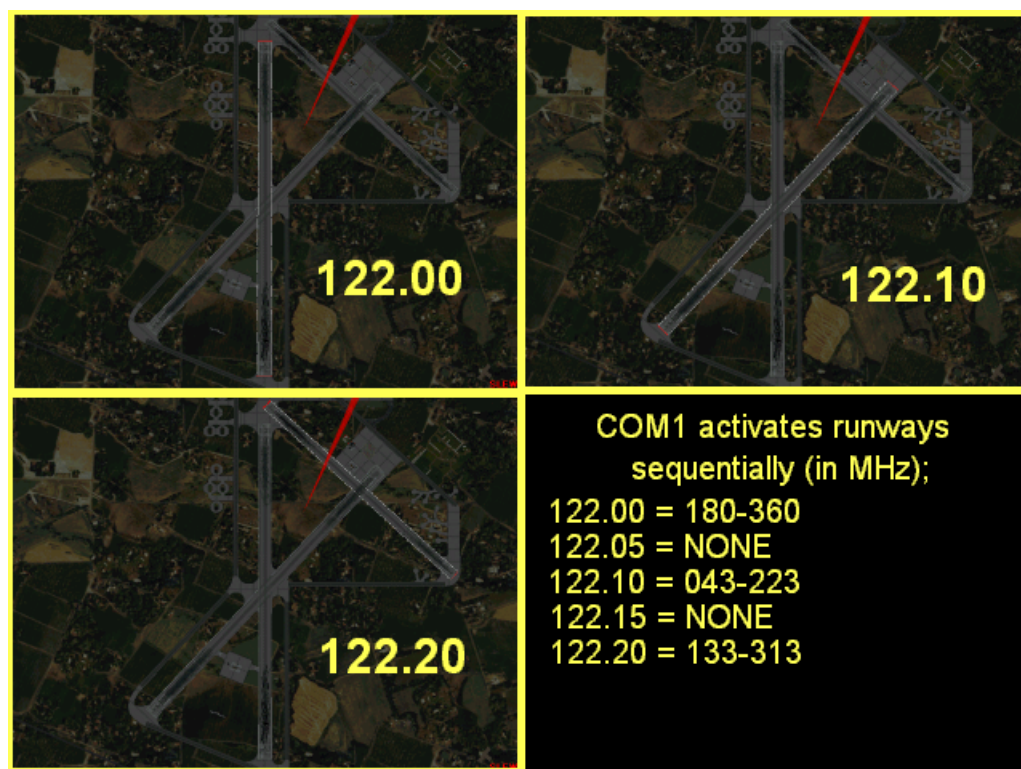


## THE PERIMETER LIGHTS

Under poor visibility conditions, the pundit light was not enough, that is why a system of low intensity ground flood lamps was installed on the perimeter of air bases. Going over these lights, a pilot could get his aircraft up to a marker (here T lights) that would indicate that he was in line for a runway. These lights were also used for waiting pattern at night. For Ripe, this system is activated along with the pundit light.



Remember that, for Ripe, the pattern is going clockwise, contrary to the English norm. This is to take into account the counter-clockwise patterns of Brooklands and Tangmere, hence reducing the risk of collision in mid-air.



## RUNWAYS' LIGHTS

By 1943, all but a few English airfields used for night operations had an electrical

lights system installed. Ramp lights were white and threshold lights were red. The system was operated by the Watch Office FCO (Flight Controller Officer) or, in some unmanned satellite airfields, by the pilot (or his radio operator) through radio.

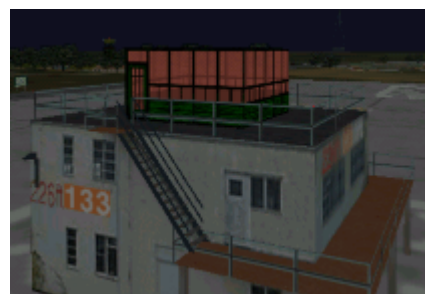
On Ripe, you can activate the light system of all three runways sequentially by tuning COM1 frequencies after the decimal point on 122MHz according to the picture above. Runways are only illuminated at night and only one runway is illuminated per frequency. Tri-colors VASI system follows the same frequencies (see *Flying the Meatball*), and works day or night for the two main runways.

**TIP–** *Activate the frequencies by highlighting the numbers after the decimal point, then use your “+” and “-” keyboard’s keys to switch from one to the other. Try it, it’s neat!*

### OTHER “LIGHTS’ EFFECTS”



Some other minors lights effects are also present at Ripe. The watch office has a lamp post that sheds its beam along the same frequencies as the pundit light or the perimeter lights (see above). Flashing red lights are installed in the **GO-NO GO** decision-making panels. A pilot has to decided at this point if he is going to stay on the ground or not, at take-off and landing, day or night. Incidentally, these panels are among the rare examples of objects not “crash-enabled” as I decided that they would be “bendable” as to not discourage unfortunate pilots.



Other panels, crash-enabled BTW, are illuminated at night by a low-intensity light bulb. The Watch office lookout is also illuminated at night with subdued red lights.

Although some bases had illumination for taxiways, Ripe is not one of them. Maybe in

the future...

In the meantime, have fun with what's in place!

Maj. Hubbabubba, Fitter & Rigger for the AAC.  
Corrections by AAC Lt-Col. smilo

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