

# THE HISTORY OF



OCT 1944

SEPT 1945

## BOMBER COMMAND





## Foreword

It is sometimes argued that the air offensive against Nazi Germany was so increasingly dominated by ever more sophisticated scientific electronic devices on both sides, that aircrews might well have become superfluous. But no amount of technical wizardry could ever displace the courage and determination shown by the men of Bomber Command - among whom were members of No.153 (Bomber) Squadron - featured in this history.

Following disbandment of the Squadron, a small element (called 'Y' Flight) was retained to complete service trials of new equipment. The seventy men so involved built up such a high degree of comradeship that they arranged to meet annually for dinner, calling themselves "The Doomie Club; among their appointed officials was the 'Doomie Scribe' - or John O'Devon.

Initially, the reunion was held in different locations (to share travel burdens) but by popular request it was agreed to assemble annually in the 'Grand Hotel' in Lincoln. Due to lengthy spells of duties overseas, 'Doomie Scribe' was seldom present and did nothing to justify his honorary title.

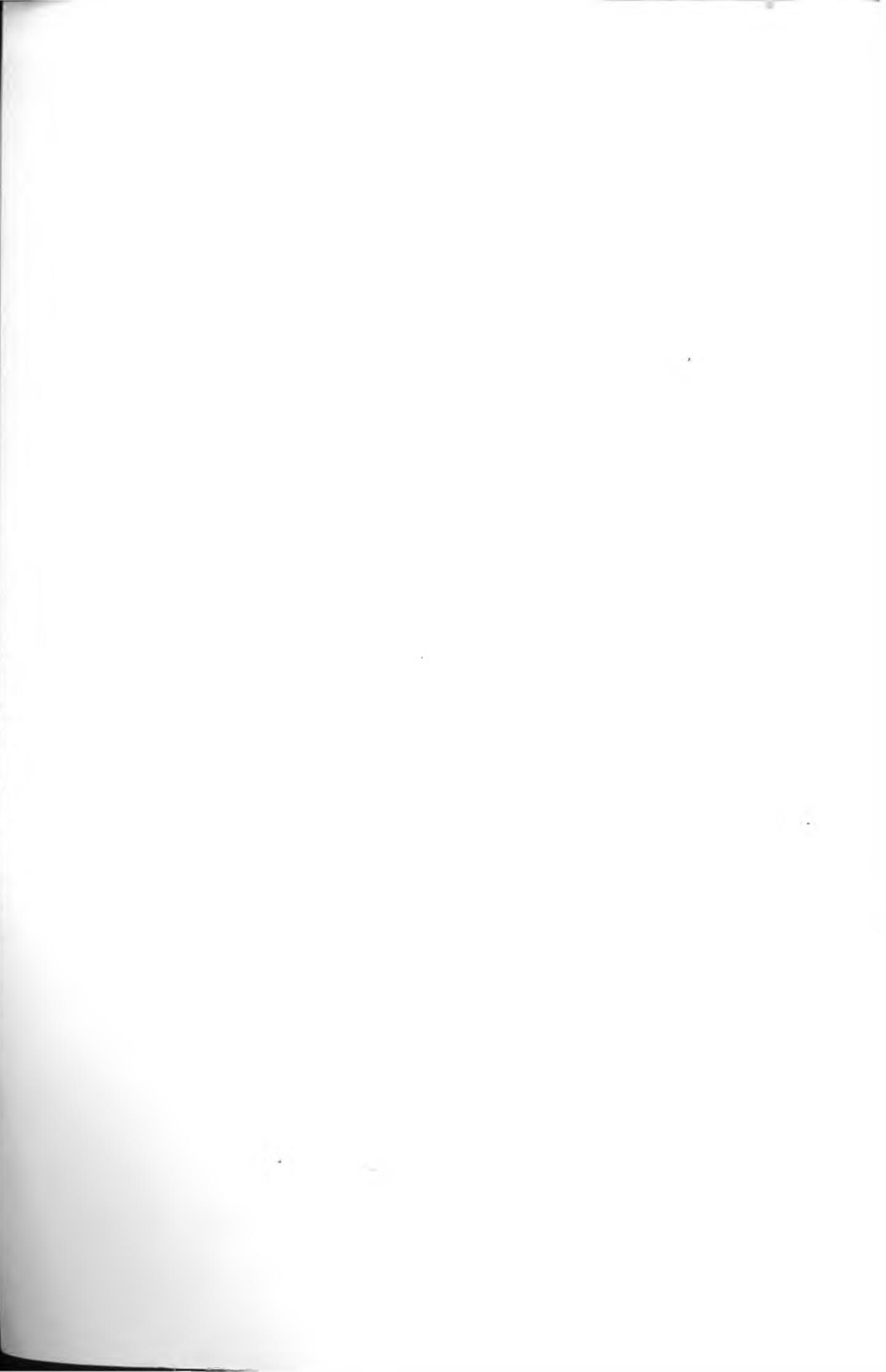
Because 153 Squadron operated as a bomber squadron for less than 12 months few people knew of its existence, and its contribution to victory in Europe; let alone some of the remarkable achievements of its aircrew. To rectify this situation 'Doomie Scribe' decided to earn his title by writing a full account of the activities of the Squadron. This is it.

Certain problems had first to be overcome. To be able to include personal anecdotes he sought to establish contact with as many ex-153 members as possible. He began with the surviving 'Doomies' but this approach was sadly limited because their numbers had declined through natural causes; he therefore obtained the 'Doomies' agreement to expand their 'closed shop' to include all ex-153 members and also to permit him to assume the mantle of Secretary, 153 Squadron Association; this enabled him to secure recognition by the Bomber Command Association, the Aircrew Association, and the RAF Association - and through them, to gain publicity. Contact was thereafter established with many ex-153 types, both in the UK and overseas.

Thankfully Freddy Fish volunteered to take over as Secretary, thus leaving me free to write this History - and to merit my honorary title.



John A. Johns  
(Doomie Scribe - John O'Devon)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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for all their practical assistance

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### **Those contributing reminiscences (mostly written - some verbal)**

*(No particular significance should be read into the order in which names of contributors appear)*

Pilots - Don Freeborn DFC\*, CD; Tom Tobin DFC; Hal Mettam; Noel Crane DFC; Morley 'Froggy' French DFC; George Bishop DFC; Peter Speed AFC; Bill Langford DFC; Jack Heaton.

F/Engs - Jack Syme; Dave Broughton; Frank Etherington; George Sutton; Jack Ross; Dennis Baker; Peter Baxter; Sid Robinson.

B/A's - Bill Thomas; John Hows DFM; Jim 'Granny' Vollans; Norman Fenerty

Navs - Ron Fullelove DFM; Ian Henderson DFM; Freddy Fish DFM; Jack Boyle; Ian McCregor DFM; Ralph Smith; Ron Colman; Dennis McDonald; Noel Read; Arthur Allan DFM

W/Ops - Tom Jones; Dave Dawson; Walter Lott; Colin Hill; Taff Owen

A/G's - Jack Western; Colin Bream; Vincent Cox; 'Yorkie' Dolling

Ground Crew - Bill Voss; Doris Davies; Marie Toulson; Jim Calvert.

Associates - John Barton, Bomber Command Association, Auckland, New Zealand.  
(Concerning Reg Adlam, Nav RNZAF)

Also - Jaromir and Martin Kohout (SLET), Plzen, Czech Republic  
- Ron Hayne, Cheltenham  
(Concerning F/O Bill Bailey and crew)

- Phillip Jenkinson (ex A/G with 10 Squadron)  
(Concerning his brother, Peter Jenkinson DFM, F/Eng)

**For permission to extract information which appeared in the following:-**

"Wingspan" by John Gee DFC\*, AE

"I flew with seven Wing Commanders" by Peter Baxter

"Diary" produced by Tom Tobin DFC

**Other source documents:-**

"History of the Second World War - The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany 1939/1945. Volume III - Victory, and Volume IV Annexures and Appendices by Sir Chas Webster and Noble Frankland

No. 153 Squadron Operations Record Book located at Public Record Office

"Bomber Offensive" by Sir Arthur Harris

"The Bomber Command War Diaries" by Martin Middlebrook

"The Avro Lancaster" by Francis K. Mason

RAAF Record Office, Canberra

RCAF Record Office, Ottawa

The "Rhein-Necker Zeitung" - extract from Tuesday 15th October 1974

Pilot's Log Book of the late F/O O.M.C. Jones DFC

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## **Roll of Honour**

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- Series B - Details of Aircraft flown by the Squadron
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- Series D - "Who flew which aircraft, where and when" - monthly details
- Series E - Operations flown - Aircraft used - monthly details
- Appendix G - Minelaying Operations
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## No.153 SQUADRON, BOMBER COMMAND.

(This account is based on official Squadron records, supplemented by reminiscences contributed by various individuals. The Author apologises for any errors which may occur, and welcomes any necessary corrections.)

### BACKGROUND

1. During the second World War, Royal Air Force Bomber Command eventually comprised seven groups in the United Kingdom, strategically stationed near the east coast of England, broadly based as follows:

No 1 Group	North Lincolnshire	14 Squadrons
No 3 Group	East Anglia	11 Squadrons
No 4 Group	South Yorkshire	10 Squadrons
No 5 Group	South Lincolnshire	13 Squadrons
No 6 Group	North Yorkshire	13 Squadrons (all RCAF)
No 8 Group	Cambridgeshire	12 Squadrons
No 100 Group	Norfolk	6 Squadrons

No 8 Group, formed in 1942, comprised the 'Pathfinder Force' to provide specialist marking of targets. Also the 'Master Bombers' who positioned themselves over the target area to control attacks as they developed.

No 100 Group was formed in November 1943 to provide electronic and radio counter-measures designed to foil and mislead enemy radar and other defensive facilities.

The remaining Groups were known as the 'Main Force' - albeit No 5 Group achieved a degree of 'separateness' denied to the rest.

2. On its creation as a bomber squadron, No 153 became the 13th Squadron in No 1 Group. It was the 'new boy' for a very short time because a week later saw the re-formation of No 170 Squadron (eventually based at Hemswell) which brought No 1 Group fully up to strength.

## SQUADRON PEDIGREE

- 3 It might well be said that from its inception, No 153 Squadron was an afterthought - certainly as a bomber squadron. Initially planned to be a fighter squadron, it was formed at Hainault Farm, Essex, in December 1918, i.e. after the First World War had ended. It survived for only six months, being disbanded in June 1919. 8
- 4 It was re-formed as a night fighter squadron on the 14th October 1941 from a flight of 256 (N/F) Squadron stationed at Squires Gate. It moved to Ballyhalbert in Northern Ireland, being equipped with the ill-starred Boulton Paul 'Defiant'. During 1942 it was re-equipped with Beaufighters and in December 1942 moved to Algeria where it operated in a night-fighter role. As the war in the Mediterranean moved northwards, the Squadron re-located in July 1944 to Sardinia to provide intruder missions over Northern Italy and to assist allied forces landings in Southern France. No sooner was this fully accomplished, than the Squadron was disbanded on 5th September 1944, but not before some extremely acrimonious comments by an upset Squadron Commander found their way into the official Squadron records. 9
- 5 The Squadron re-formed as a heavy bomber squadron at Kirmington on 7th October 1944, being equipped with Lancasters, but after less than a year, was again disbanded on 28th September 1945. 10
6. It was re-formed yet again at West Malling as a UK based night-fighter squadron on 28th February 1955, equipped with 'Meteor' jet N/F aircraft and existed until 2nd July 1958 when, at Waterbeach, it was renumbered as 25 Squadron. 11

## SQUADRON BADGE

- 7 The Squadron badge was authorised by King George VI in October 1944. The official description is:

"In front of a six pointed star, a bat"      Motto : "Noctividus"  
("seeing by night")

The composition of the badge was submitted for Royal approval while the Squadron was operating in a night-fighter role. Having operated from both Northern Ireland and North Africa, the Squadron wished to commemorate the fact by including in its badge a white star - which appears in the arms of Northern Ireland - and a bat. The bat is

indigenous to North Africa and is also a nocturnal predatory animal; which is intended to symbolise the unit's night-fighting activities.

## FORMATION OF No 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON

The Squadron re-formed on 7th October 1944 from a nucleus of 27 crews supplied by No 166 Squadron at Kirmington, Lincolnshire. (It is perhaps of interest to note that No 166 had itself been formed at Kirmington from crews previously comprising 'C' flight of No 103 Squadron).

The Squadron's official code-letter appearing on all aircraft was P4. This was followed by an individual aircraft letter - the entire alphabet being used except letter 'Z' (although following its early loss, the letter 'M' was never reactivated). 'A' flight operated letters A to L and 'B' flight letters N to Y.

On formation, the Squadron inherited 18 aircraft (Lancasters Mark I and III) from No 166 Squadron and over the following weeks acquired the remainder of its authorised establishment of 24 aircraft

## COMMAND STRUCTURE

The following were selected to organise the new Squadron:

Officer Commanding	Wing Commander	F.S. Powley DFC AFC
'A' Flight Commander	Sqdn/Ldr	T.W. Rippingale DSO
'B' Flight Commander	Sqdn/Ldr	J.W. Gee DFC
Engineer Leader	F/Lt	P.O. Baxter
Bombing Leader	F/Lt	R.F. Thompson
Navigation Leader	F/Lt	E.O. Wheelwright DFC
Signals Leader	F/Lt	R.W. Stewart DFC (RNZAF)
Gunnery Leader	F/Lt	J.T.G. Weaver DFC
Adjutant	F/Off	R.P. Hargrave

This was a very experienced and multi-national team. Francis Powley was a Canadian who had enlisted in the RAF. Peter Baxter and Tommy Thompson were old buddies. In conversations, it emerged that Ron Stewart came from Wanganui on New Zealand's North Island - an odd coincidence, given that this was one of the codewords used by Pathfinders for their flare-marking techniques.

- 12 The 27 "Founder Members" crews comprised 49 officers and 140 senior non-commissioned officers; they hailed from different forces ie:

Regular RAF (one British, one Canadian, one South African)	3
RAFVR	121
RCAF	47
RAAF	14
RNZAF	4

Most crews were commanded by a commissioned pilot, the only honourable exception being W/Off Noel Crane (who later was commissioned F/Officer).

#### OPERATIONAL RECORD - KIRMINGTON

- 13 The Squadron entered operational flying in a spectacular and probably a unique manner. On the morning of its birth, it despatched 11 crews on an attack against a supply base at Emmerich. This must have presented a severe organisational task for the infant Squadron's management and ground crews, but seems to have been successfully achieved. The raid was protected by an escort of Spitfires, the weather proved clear and a well concentrated attack encountered only moderate flak. Lancaster JB297 (P4-B) piloted by F/O Searle suffered minor damage, although the crew emerged unscathed.
- 14 The Squadron was then stood down for three days. Already plans were being drawn up for a move to Scampton but these were interrupted by operational needs. On October 11th, the Squadron was ordered to despatch 7 aircraft to attack Fort Frederich Henrik - an important enemy stronghold in the Scheldte Estuary - but due to short notice, only 5 could be bombed up in time. Conditions over the target caused the Master Bomber to order abandonment by the first wave, but in the second wave two aircraft succeeded in dropping their bombs. The following morning 3 more aircraft were despatched against the same target and, in excellent conditions for visual bombing, were able to record a concentrated attack. Before the day was over, 8 more aircraft were made ready for another raid, but this was cancelled before briefing.
- 15 On the 12th October, Sqn/Ldr Gee joined the Squadron. At the time it was being planned he had accepted an offer to become 'B' flight commander, but first he needed a crew. On reporting to a Heavy

Conversion Unit at Blyton, he found a 'headless' crew (i.e. one that had lost its pilot through sickness) who had already completed 8 operations. By a happy coincidence, they had flown these with 166 Squadron, so they became the 28th crew to be supplied by that Squadron.

5 In the meantime, detailed plans had been published (Movement Order 1/44) to transfer to Scampton on 14th October - but once more the war intervened. On the 13th October, when the movement order required aircrew to have their kitbags packed and put in the gymnasium together with their private bicycles (all properly labelled and secured), the Squadron was required to prepare 13 aircraft for a raid against Duisburg - which was then postponed following briefing. The postponement was only temporary and 13 aircraft took off at 0630 hrs to rendezvous with a fighter escort which protected them to and from the target area. Visibility was restricted, so area bombing was adopted. Some moderate flak was reported and it was rather upsetting when 2 aircraft of 'B' flight failed to return; the veteran JB 297 (P4-B) (see also para 13 above) which had entered operational service in September 1943 with 405 Squadron, flown by P/O Draper and his all RAFVR crew, and NG190 (P4-T) flown by F/O Brouillette and his four fellow Canadian and two RAFVR crew members. Post-war research showed that there were no survivors. The Squadron had been in existence for only eight days.

7 On 15th October 1944, 153 Squadron moved to Scampton.

## RAF SCAMPTON

- 18 Thanks to the epic raids against the German dams flown from Scampton by 617 Squadron, the name of the airfield became very widely known to the British nation generally. What is less appreciated is that the "Dambusters" took off on grass runways; in fact, shortly after their historic attacks, the airfield was closed for eighteen months whilst concrete runways were laid. When 153 Squadron flew in to occupy the base they became the first to enjoy the improved facilities.
- 19 Three runways were created, bearing (in degrees) 10/190, 50/230 and 110/290. The former ran almost parallel to the Roman Ermine Street, (the A.15) which passes the base. The latter was the shortest and most disliked by pilots who had to keep a watchful eye on high-sided vehicles using the A.15 because just beyond the boundary hedge their paths crossed almost at right-angles. However, most used was the main runway (50/230) which afforded crews a superb view of Lincoln Cathedral when flying south.
- 20 Being a permanent, peacetime station, Scampton provided accommodation and amenities that no war-time aerodrome could rival. There were few, if any, regrets at a move which removed the necessity of sloshing across open, wind-swept spaces to wash or use the unheated, bare concrete-floored latrines; and dispensed with the need to use bicycles to circulate between widely dispersed Nissen huts variously got up to act as eating, sleeping, working or entertainment centres. The wisdom of dispersal can not be faulted, but the practical problems which resulted therefrom should not be overlooked. 153 Squadron was indeed fortunate in being able to move before Winter arrived.
- 21 The move itself was carried out in four phases. Shortly after 0900 hrs the 18 aircraft were flown in by their crews - led appropriately by NG 185(P4-A) whose Bomb Aimer (F/O Bill Thomas) always maintained that as first to arrive they should have the choice of accommodation! The main party, comprising 142 Ground crew (including 3 F/Sgts, 10 Sgts and 2 WAAF) under charge of the Squadron Adjutant, followed in a fleet of buses; these preceded a smaller group of 3-ton lorries, carrying the personal baggage and their nominated handling parties. Bringing up the rear came a gaggle of individual private cars and motorcycles, led by the Squadron Commander in his recently acquired official staff car.

## OPERATIONAL RECORD - SCAMPTON - OCTOBER 1944

- 22a Less than three days after the move, the Squadron was required to 'stand up' 15 aircraft (i.e. ready them for operations) but they were not used until the following day when they flew in two waves against Stuttgart. The first wave of 5 aircraft each carried a "cookie" and 1,800 incendiaries; the second wave of 10 aircraft took 9 x 1,000 lb and 4 x 500 lb bombs. The weather conditions were not helpful, with clouded skies over most of the route including the target area, necessitating the bombing of sky markers.
- 22b Skymarkers were used when it was impossible to see the glow of target indicators because of density and/or depth of the cloud. They comprised parachute flares, of various colours, that would mark a spot in the cloud for a limited period - usually three to five minutes. But they drifted with the wind as they burned away, so the skill lay in dropping them in such a manner that when the flare was half consumed it was positioned at the required aiming point. Provided that the main bomber force was approaching the target on the correct heading, with bomb sights set to the normal height, each bomb aimer could direct his pilot through the line-of-sight of his aircraft on to the aiming point. This whole technique relied upon precise mathematical calculations, based however on imprecise factors, so even given very accurate flying, could only be claimed to be an improvement on the slap-dash methods previously employed. One drawback was the fact that the bombers were silhouetted against the 'sky glow' for overflying enemy fighters.
- 22c Stuttgart did however provide the Squadron with a memorable and honourable milestone. Just as he commenced his bombing run in PB 636 (P4-D), F/O Don Freeborn received a shrapnel hit in his left thigh. The impact caused him to jerk violently to such an extent that he disconnected his intercom cord. For a brief period he was disoriented, but on re-engaging contact he did not hear any comments from his crew that could lead him to believe that they were aware that both he and the aircraft had been hit; so he quietly carried on with the bomb run, dropped the load, and only announced his injury some time after leaving the target area. Because the wound was on his left-hand side and could not be reached by another member of the crew, he applied a shell dressing and tourniquet himself (it was during this activity that he found his seat-type parachute, which he had acquired only that same day, was shredded, having clearly absorbed much of the explosion). The aircraft handled reasonably well, so they set course for the emergency landing field at Manston, which was just as well as

F/O Freeborn passed out completely after making a successful landing, and awoke in a hospital bed.

For this exploit, F/O Freeborn was awarded an "immediate" DFC - this was the only occasion that such an honour was bestowed on the Squadron.

- 23 Despite worsening weather conditions, 5 more raids were carried out during the month (fully itemised details of which are given in Appendix C1) all aimed at hindering enemy armament production and troop reinforcement of the "Westwall" and Siegfried line. Of the total number of 21 aircraft held on strength, 17 were usually made ready for operations - a figure which reflects credit on a hard-working and competent ground-crew, for significant damage was suffered by enemy flak requiring repairs to be effected. An idea of this effort is provided by PB636( P4-D) landed by F/O Freeborn on 20th October at Manston, it flew to Cologne on 28th (when once again it received several A/A hits) but nevertheless it was back on operations on 30th October!.
- 24 The hazards of operational flying were always present as evidenced by the following examples:-
- (a) On take-off for Essen on 23rd October piloting NG184 (P4-U), S/Ldr Gee found that his airspeed indicator was seriously mal-functioning, but as he was too far committed to abort take-off, he decided to fly using his navigator's instruments, their readings being duly relayed to him by a crew member. With generous use of "George" (the automatic pilot) he was able to reach and bomb the target; the problem would be to make a night-time landing without an airspeed indicator. His first attempt was almost catastrophic, but his second was notably successful. Subsequent examination showed a pipe leading from the pitot head to the pilot's instrument panel had been bent, causing a restricted airflow, which in turn distorted the readings given. The fault became apparent only when the aircraft gained flying speed - which allowed no leeway at all!.
- (b) Whilst attempting a night landing in PD 343 (P4-Q) after attacking Cologne on 30th October, F/O Williams hit a tree. The damage could not be assessed so the aircraft was diverted to Carnaby, where it was successfully landed.  
(This aircraft was eventually repaired and returned to service with No 550 Squadron. It went missing on an Italy/UK flight on 29th September 1945).



On 31st October, whilst taxiing out of its dispersal, one (unidentified) aircraft bogged down; in doing so, it blocked another. To add further mishaps, two aircraft aborted the mission due to oxygen failure. The day was rounded off by a remarkable incident, recorded by the navigator of "A" - F/Sgt Freddy Fish

F/O Wheeler (flying Lancaster NG185 (P4-A) was approaching Cologne when the aircraft suddenly heeled right over to starboard. It was assumed that this was the result of a flak burst under the port wing - but Whizz Wheeler regained control, and the bombs were dropped on time. It was shortly after leaving the target that the Flight Engineer noticed a large hole in the starboard wing! After a brief exchange of four letter words, the W/Op (who usually over the target stood in the astrodome, looking upwards, to act as look out against over-flying aircraft) was asked why the \*\*\*\* he had not shouted a warning. His reply was memorable and accurate "I was too paralysed to speak". Clearly the sight of a stick of bombs hurtling toward one would be enough to petrify anyone. He went on to say that he had hoped the bombs would miss them - but one did not.

Although the starboard aileron was ineffective, and other problems had to be mastered Whizz nursed the crippled aircraft back to make a good landing at Scampton. Later examination revealed a jagged hole, about three foot square, virtually through the roundel. About two inches away was the pink outline of the outboard petrol tank and the main spar. Fortunately the bomb had not reached its 'explode on impact' point so the damage was limited to that caused by a solid inert, 1,000 lb. mass weight going through the one part of the wing it could do, without fatal consequences. A close shave indeed. 18 days later, 'A' was back on operations.

25 The following appendices are attached:

- A1 - List of all 27 Founder Member (FM) crews
- A2 - Crew postings during the month
- B1 - Aircraft taken over from No 166 Squadron
- B2 - Monthly record of aircraft acquired/relinquished
- C1 - The month's Operational Diary
- D1 - Pilot/Crew monthly summary of "who flew which plane where and when"
- E1 - Monthly summary listing aircraft usage

## SCAMPTON - NOVEMBER 1944

- 26 As has been shown, by the end of October the squadron could muster 36 crews. During November, a further 7 crews arrived, but with postings and losses, the total active strength at 30th November (allowing for F/O Freeborn's continued stay in hospital) was 37. (For details of postings and losses - see Appendix A3)
- 27 Although the squadron's authorised aircraft strength was 24, only in theory could this number ever be simultaneously airborne, since machines had to be taken out of service at regular intervals for periodic maintenance overhauls whilst some required repairs to make good operational damage: also loss replacements had to be effected. In fact, the maximum effort ever achieved was on 27th November, when from an available total of 22 aircraft, 20 were despatched to Freiburg - a figure never again reached throughout the squadron's existence. (For details of aircraft received and lost - see Appendices B3 and E2).
- 28 Under the aircrew leave rotation scheme (six weeks on duty - the seventh week on leave), 5 or 6 crews would be away on leave at any given time. After making provision for a touch of sickness, there was therefore not all that much spare capacity within the authorised establishment. It is interesting to note that of the 160 sorties mounted in November, well over half (108) were flown by only 18 of the crews.
- 29 Each day (the timing depended on whether operations had been flown the previous night), crews would attend a flight muster parade; captains to the fore. The Flight Commander would ask each captain whether his crew was operational or not. If the pilot, navigator or the bomb aimer was sick (which generally meant suffering colds or ear trouble, either of which could spell real danger in the non-pressurised conditions at higher altitudes) the crew would be grounded. Other crew members unfit to fly, could - and would - be replaced or interchanged. If the crew was reported as being O.K. (and an operation was planned) the captain was warned that they were regarded as being on 'stand by'.

### STAND BY

- 30 November saw 10 days of 'stand down' (when personnel not on duty could pursue their own interests): 10 days when operational attacks were flown, and 10 days in the state of suspended

animation known as 'stand by'. The first two categories are self-evident: for the uninitiated 'stand by' requires a more detailed explanation.

- 31a The daily activity of any operational heavy bomber station like Scampton was dictated by the choice of targets selected by HQ Bomber Command, which itself had to observe one of the basic principles of flight, i.e. that every aircraft has a maximum lifting capacity, beyond which it simply cannot get airborne. Titled the 'all up weight', it comprises fixed and variable elements. Foremost of the fixed elements is the aircraft itself - plus its equipment, guns, ammunition and the crew. The variable elements are fuel and bomb load. The further the target, the more fuel (weighing 10 lbs a gallon) is required - which proportionately restricts the weight of bombs that can be carried.
- 31b To bring a squadron to readiness, HQ Bomber Command would initially issue a 'stand by' order. Such an order (invariably classified 'Secret') would detail the number of aircraft to be made ready, together with the fuel gallonage and the various types (and numbers) of bombs to be loaded. Ground crew fitters and riggers, together with instrument mechanics and other specialist tradesmen, would ensure that all was readied for test flights to be made by the aircrews on 'stand by': once they pronounced themselves happy with the state of their aircraft, then the armourers and petrol bowser operators could get on with loading duties. However, having carried out this strenuous preparatory work it was not unusual for the orders to be changed, requiring topping-up or draining of fuel tanks and de/bombing and re/bombing of the aircraft. On many occasions this work had to be done at night, in all kinds of wind and weather: it did not help if the operation was then cancelled (which was not at all uncommon). An understanding of the demanding additional work involved can be obtained by studying the summaries at the foot of each month's Appendix "C"
- 31c Similar repercussions would arise when the original timing of an attack was changed. In addition to the ground crews out on the exposed dispersal sites, the mess staffs, the motor transport drivers and the RAF Service Police had to accept alterations to their detailed plans, so as to meet the revised timetables. Here mention must be made of the mess orderlies in their role of 'wakers-up' of aircrew due to fly on operations, for on them fell the unfortunate task of having to do the rounds even when the operations were cancelled. In theory, this was to avoid the panic which might ensue if someone woke up

late thinking he had missed his date with destiny - but it took a special sense of humour to appreciate being woken up in the middle of the night, just to be told there was in fact no need to wake up!

- 31d To be fair to Command HQ, the disruption created from changing 'stand by' instructions could often not be avoided. Deteriorating weather conditions, affecting take-off or landing prospects, had to be allowed for. Close support bombing attacks, designed to aid army advances, could be negated by ground forces occupying the target area faster than expected.
- 31e It was often the case that crews reached the Briefing Room - and sometimes their aircraft - before cancellation was ordered. On one such occasion, when F/O Tom Tobin was late leaving a briefing, word came through that the operation was cancelled. Showing great initiative, he dashed to the Parachute Room and ensured he drew his flying rations (chocolate bar, chewing gum, and barley sugar) - actively helping with the issue to other crews, before news of the cancellation reached that area. Tom knew that once issued, such rations were never taken back! This action got him into trouble with the Squadron Commander, who nailed him. Tom talked his way out of the situation by asking, "What would you have done in the same circumstances?" Exit one Wing Co, laughing.

## OPERATIONS

- 32 On 2nd November, 18 aircraft were despatched to Dusseldorf, four of them manned by crews on their first 'op'. It proved to be a rough evening. F/Lt French in NE 113 (P4-H) had to abandon the flight due to complete loss of power in the starboard outer engine; F/O Jones in PB 515 (P4-N) came under sustained attack from a Ju88; sadly, F/O Bob McCormack flying PB 639 (P4-I) on his first solo operation, was shot down together with his four fellow Canadian and two RAFVR crew. There were no survivors. The raid itself was deemed successful, despite heavy A/A fire and intense fighter activity, which harassed the stream right back to the French coast.
- 33 On 4th November, 17 aircraft were sent to attack a synthetic oil plant at Bochum. F/O Rhodes in NG 189 (P4-P) found his supercharger unserviceable and had no option but to jettison his bombs and abort; P/O Gibbins in PD 380 (P4-X) lost the use of his blind-flying panel and also aborted; F/O Jones again flying PB 515 (P4-N) suffered severe damage when attacked by an ME 262 (the first reported attack

by the newly introduced German jet-propelled aircraft); although his crew emerged unscathed, the damage to 'N' took over three weeks to repair. The actual raid was concentrated and all crews considered it successful. Enemy fighters were again active.

34 Over the rest of the month, both by day and night, a further five raids were made against synthetic oil plants at Wanne Eickel, Dortmund, and Gelsenkirchen - all within or close to the "Happy Valley" of the Ruhr. On the last of these, F/Lt Bill Pow flying PD 380 (P4-X) on his first solo operation was killed, together with his RAFVR W/Op and Flight Engineer and their four Canadian comrades. (Both Pow and his W/Op, Warrant Officer Ray Jones, had relinquished their training instructor posts in order to fly operationally). Five other aircraft suffered varying degrees of flak damage. Due to poor weather and considerable cloud cover over target areas, much of the bombing had to be made on skymarkers and the resultant damage did not reflect the effort involved.

35 On 16th November, 13 aircraft took part in a daylight attack in support of the American army's advance against the small town of Duren - which lies mid-way between Aachen and the Rhine. It was only a short way over the 'bomb line' which denoted where the leading army elements were, and definite identification of the target was essential to avoid a repetition of the misunderstanding at Caen. In the event, an almost copybook concentrated attack developed, which obliterated the target.

In response to a substantial escort of Spitfires and Mustangs, enemy resistance was limited to moderate flak - but that was sufficient to create problems for PA 168 (P4-G) which, owing to malfunction of its D/R compass, arrived late over the target. No sooner had F/Sgt John Hows dropped his 'cookie' than there was an almighty bang; in addition to a strong smell of cordite, the aircraft began to 'wander'. Although all four engines were still running, many of the controls were not responding normally, and all hydraulic power appeared to be ineffective. The bomb doors could not be closed, and on checking the open bomb bay, Hows was horrified to see smoke coming from the incendiaries, which were still aboard - so he released the lot, canisters included. All of the crew responded on the intercom, so F/O Les Taylor decided to fly home by using engine power to compensate for the lack of trim and normal rudder control. A 'Mayday' call got them directed to the emergency landing strip at Woodbridge, which, following a very difficult flight, they found shrouded in poor visibility. This entailed landing using 'FIDO' - the system whereby the runway

was outlined by parallel perforated pipes of burning petrol, which caused the ground mist to lift sufficiently to allow aircraft to land. This was a hazardous undertaking at the best of times, and not one to be lightly undertaken in a sadly weakened aircraft. But the landing was safe - if somewhat bumpy - and met the old airforce criteria - "if you can walk away from it, it's a good landing". The following morning, under guidance of the navigator - F/Sgt Arthur Allan - the crew returned to Lincoln by train. 'G' remained at Woodbridge, undergoing repairs, until mid-January 1945.

- 36 The weather conditions on the 18th November grew steadily worse as the raid was being flown, to the extent that all 18 aircraft were ordered to divert to South Norfolk; 15 did so and were entranced to find they were on USAAF bases at Horham and Mendlesham Heath. Although their overnight accommodation proved both sparse and cold, the warmth of their reception by the American Army Air Force more than compensated for the inconvenience suffered. Regaled with generous portions of bacon and eggs, followed by tinned fruit and other half-forgotten luxuries, the crews were able to visit the P/X store (the American equivalent of the NAAFI) where they could purchase unlimited quantities of many rationed goodies, such as sweets, cigarettes, soap, chocolate and even cigars. Before the Lancasters returned to base, the Yankee airmen wanted to see inside the bomb-bays, which could contain more than double their own pay-load. They were duly obliged. But pride goes before a fall! F/Lt Peter Baxter (Eng Ldr who was flying in PB 642 (P4-W) because their regular F/E was sick) found that the bomb doors could not be closed without the crew's manual assistance, which provoked ironic jeers from the USAAF.

Three crews failed to receive the diversion signal and overcame atrocious weather conditions to land at Scampton. They each received a reprimand for their failure to carry out orders, but they were hurt much more when they learned of the 'rewards' the others had enjoyed!

- 37 Operations were also flown against the marshalling yards at Freiburg and Aschaffenburg; neither particularly successful. In the case of the latter, neither the Master Bomber nor his Deputy was able to visibly identify the Aiming Point, so crews were ordered to bomb on estimated time of arrival (ETA) or navigational aids. At Freiburg, little damage was inflicted on the railway, but the medieval township nestling in the Black Forest was practically wiped out. When leaving Aschaffenburg, NG 189 (P4-P) came under frequent attacks by

fighters, necessitating violent evasive action. With his fuel tanks almost empty, the pilot, F/O Sinnema (the Squadron's own 'Flying Dutchman') landed at Carnaby emergency landing strip to re-fuel.

38 One most unusual event occurred prior to take-off at noon on 29th November. Whilst taxiing round the perimeter track the Verey pistol was inadvertently discharged inside NG 185 (P4-A), filling the cockpit and the front end of the aircraft with dense smoke. Suspecting a fire, pilot F/Lt Holland cut the engines and, after giving the order to abandon the aircraft, used his overhead escape hatch to abandon the plane. Sadly he slipped off the wing and so badly injured his back that he had to be invalided out of the service. Following behind him in ME 812 (P4-F), F/Eng Frank Etherington saw the smoke and flame, and assisted his pilot F/O Art LaFlamme to beat a hasty retreat in case P4-A should explode. Meantime, the 'fire' was successfully extinguished by the navigator and bomb aimer, both of whom were too busily occupied to register their captain's order to abandon the aircraft. The nominated reserve crew led by P/O Schopp, then took over the aeroplane, and flew it on the raid without further problems.

39 On 24th November, all ground crew personnel (apart from the Squadron Adjutant) were posted to come under administrative control of 15 Base, Scampton. The change, which marked a significant shift of emphasis in the Command's organisational structure, passed unnoticed by the aircrew, mainly because nothing changed on the dispersals.

## SCAMPTON - DECEMBER 1944

- 40 The number of crews on squadron strength (including F/O Freeborn's) reduced during the month from 37 to 33. The welcome news was that no fewer than 5 crews completed their tour of 30 operations. (Full details of postings and losses are in Appendix A4.)
- 41 Due to two aircraft (C and G) undergoing major overhauls and two lost on operations (J and P) the total effective strength available on any day was 20. (Details of aircraft received and lost appear in Appendices B4 and E3.)

### CHANGING WAYS

- 42 Significant changes to the pattern of the air war in Europe began to emerge. The thrust of the allied armies had lost momentum on reaching the German border, but the liberation of France, and large areas of Belgium and southern Holland, enabled allied fighter aircraft to move into airfields close to the front lines, resulting in more fighter escorts being given to allied bomber forces. Opportunity was taken to set up advance Gee stations, which greatly improved the range and clarity of their signals; the counter-measures of 100 Group (particularly the Mandrel screen) were greatly enhanced. The German air defences (fighter bases, early warning radar stations, ground controllers, flak batteries, searchlight detachments etc.) all had to withdraw into the Fatherland. Taken together, these various factors enabled Bomber Command to change its tactics. In effect, it became possible to attack targets in the Ruhr on a 'quick in and out' basis, by routing the main force through southern England and swinging east over France, to get very close to the front line before emerging from behind the protective Mandrel screen for a short dash to the target. It also provided a number of airfields in Europe on which crippled aircraft could make emergency landings, rather than taking the risk of a hazardous sea crossing.
- 43a Unappreciated by the general public, immense tactical changes had been introduced regarding the conduct of bombing raids. In order to saturate enemy defences overwhelmingly, it had become customary to concentrate the maximum number of aircraft bombing the target in the shortest possible time. To achieve this, every crew was allotted an individual 'drop time' (with a tolerance of 15 seconds early or late) - outside this time limit they were occupying someone else's 'drop space' and incurring a real risk of collision. In the same



manner, each crew was allotted a bombing height. If not in the top (highest) band they stood a very real chance of being hit by a load dropped by a higher colleague (as happened to Whizz Wheeler on 31st October). The map in Appendix M1 reveals that 453 aircraft took only 21 minutes to bomb Osnabruck whilst 497 spent 26 minutes over Merseburg. Saturation in practice!

b To reach the target within the very narrow time-span allotted demanded a high standard of precision on the part of the Navigator and his pilot. It was customary to calculate 'backwards' from the 'drop time' to determine the times to proceed through the intermediate check points - some provided by flares put down by the Pathfinder Force, others from ground features or external fixes. Following the conquests in Europe, the first turning point on this evolving journey became the town of Reading, which also became the first hazard! Aircraft arriving there before their assessed time would overfly the town, circle round, and return on a different bearing; those likely to arrive late would take a short cut to join the stream south of the town; meantime most arrived on schedule and set course correctly. For a time, a sharp lookout was required to avoid collisions, but eventually everyone would slot into his proper place. Those who criticised the apparent lack of discipline shown by aircrew could profitably study the assembly of a saturation bomber attack in 1944/45.

4 It was indeed fortunate for 153 (Bomber) Squadron that it formed up when all these advantageous changes were emerging. It will not have escaped notice that 10 of the 21 raids in October/November 1944 occurred in daylight, whilst only 1 required a night take-off and landing; the remainder involved evening take-offs and night landings. A similar pattern emerged in December, with 2 daylight raids and 9 evening take-offs.

## OPERATIONS FLOWN

5 On 3rd December No 1 Group was ordered to attack the Urft Dam. This was a large reservoir in the Eifel region, which the Germans were using to systematically flood an area through which the Americans were trying to advance. Its destruction would initially create one massive flood, after which any denial of free movement would no longer be possible. The squadron contributed 11 crews, all keen to emulate the exploits of 617 Squadron (The Dambusters) - also from Scampton - albeit they were carrying 14 x 1,000 lbs rather than special 'bouncing bombs'. They flew out in a 'gaggle' which has

been described as a number of aircraft proceeding in roughly the same direction at vaguely the same time and approximately the same height at around the same speed - in no way to be confused with formation flying! On arrival, the Master Bomber decided that as the very small target was completely obscured by cloud, accurate bombing was impossible; he therefore issued instructions to abandon the mission - much to the disappointment of S/Ldr John Gee, who had hoped to ascertain how well the squadron would cope with such a precision task. 10 aircraft flew back to Scampton, only to find the cloud base down to 300 feet, necessitating a low level approach and landing with all bombs aboard. The eleventh aircraft NG 189 (P4-P) flown by F/Lt Don Legg was hit by flak, which set the starboard inner ablaze; he managed to reach the sea to dump his bombs, and turned back to Brussels to make an emergency landing (ironically the aircraft was subsequently completely destroyed by a surprise German air attack on Brussels some two weeks later).

- 46a Post-war publications reveal that high level disagreements began with regard to the relative importance of strategic targets to be attacked, in particular as between the oil production, communications (railway yards and canals) and centres of government/administration. This resulted in 153 Squadron flying to a mixture of targets, affected also to a large degree by severe wintry weather in the UK and over Germany. Thus, industrial targets such as the Durlacher machine tool factory (Karlsruhe), Krupps Steel (Essen), the Magirus Deutz and the Kassbohrer lorry factories (Ulm) were bombed on December 4th, 12th, and 17th. The Merseburg synthetic oil plant at Leuna (close to Leipzig - see Appendix M1) which entailed a round trip of over 1,000 miles, the IG Farben chemical factories at Ludwigshafen (which included synthetic oil production), and the Scholven oil refinery (together with its storage tanks) at Gelsenkirchen, were attacked on the 8th, 15th and 29th. The common factor noted in crew reports was the weather. Bad weather may have been the cause of the loss of PB 633 (P4-J), which collided with a Lancaster over Laon, resulting in the loss of the pilot F/O Harry Schopp (an American serving in the RCAF), his Canadian navigator and bombaimer and RAF flight engineer. The wireless operator and both gunners survived and were returned to the Squadron.
- 46b Should a crew fail to return from operations, and no information was forthcoming that they had landed elsewhere, it became the immediate duty of the station "Effects Officer" first to list and then to impound their personal possessions, and remove them into safe custody. Any individual who subsequently re-appeared could reclaim his

possessions - otherwise, after a reasonable time, they were transferred to the official RAF Effects Branch and eventually released to the man's legal next-of-kin. The need for an Effects Officer, although prudent and necessary to avoid "affinching" or "liberation" of a missing colleague's belongings, was inevitably likened to the approach of the grim reaper! Woe betide anyone who had loaned a missing man a book (or anything else) that did not bear evidence of his ownership. Frequent confrontations occurred, particularly in cases of shared accommodation; but once the Effects Officer impounded an item, it virtually became irrecoverable.

7 The German army, practising rigorous wireless silence and protected by providential mists and low lying cloud, successfully assembled an army group of 1,000 tanks and supporting arms, ready for an attack on Antwerp and Brussels. On December 16th, the attack was launched, through the Ardennes, aimed at the junction of the British and American armies. They were lucky, in that England became shrouded in fog for almost a week following the onslaught, followed by very low cloud on the continent. Allied air power was rendered impotent. Conditions at Scampton were atrocious. On one or two days the fog lifted sufficiently to allow air tests, but closed down after a brief period. Crews felt frustrated at not being able to partake in army-support operations; every day, briefings were held, but to no avail. Indeed, on one occasion, crews were actually on board their aircraft when the fog came down and the operation had to be cancelled. Eventually, on 22nd December 15 aircraft took off for an attack on the rail yards at Coblenz - one of the major supply routes for the enemy. Despite persistent fog, crews took off relying on their instruments, knowing that they could not land back at Scampton. Misery was compounded, when on their return to the U.K., all aircraft had to be diverted to Manston as all other airfields were once more 'fogged out'. Overnight accommodation was however at a premium, for not only had much of Bomber Command to be housed, but also the crews of U.S. Fortresses and Liberators who were suffering the same fate.

18 The intention to attack rail supply points was bedevilled by continuing inclement weather. On the afternoon of the 23rd December, 9 of the 15 diverted squadron aircraft had managed to get back to Scampton, whilst the other six were able to land at Binbrook. By 27th December conditions at Binbrook improved sufficiently enough to allow these 6 crews (apart from that of S/Ldr Gee who was replaced by F/Lt Arthur Winder and crew) to join the attack on the rail yards at Rheydt -

although Scampton was unable to operate. Ironically on their return, all six were able to land back at Scampton.

- 49 It was standard practice for newly joined pilots to fly an operational raid as supernumerary (or '2nd Dickey') with an experienced crew, so as to observe and absorb the conditions which lay in store. F/Sgt Robertson flew his 'Second Dickey' with F/O Art LaFlamme to Essen on 12th December in PB 636 (P4-D), when it was hit by flak, and thereafter seemed determined to climb. Sent back to investigate the reason, the F/Sgt reported "a hole" in the port side, whereupon Frank Etherington (flight engineer), armed with tools and portable oxygen bottle, went back to find the elevator trimming tabs completely severed, which caused the aircraft's pronounced 'nose-up' attitude. He managed to manually pull the rear ends of the cables to a neutral position, which eased the strain on his pilot, but he was very much aware of the huge gaping void at his elbow! Because of the damage, the pilot ordered the crew to crash positions prior to landing thus affording the 'Second Dickey' the rare experience (for a pilot) of facing backwards as the aircraft touched down.

## SCAMPTON - JANUARY 1945

50 The number of crews on squadron strength, notwithstanding the welcome return to operational duties of F/O Freeborn, fell to just 30 - the lowest total in its existence. This was partly caused by inclement weather in December, which restricted the number of replacement crews passing out of OTU's and Heavy Conversion Units. (Full details of postings and losses are in Appendix A5.)

51 On 29th January, while awaiting replacements for 6 operational losses (plus return of LM 754 (P4-E), undergoing lengthy repair of combat damage) the Squadron could muster only 16 serviceable aircraft. (Details of aircraft received and lost appear in Appendices B5 and E4.)

52 Taken together, these figures illustrate why January ushered in an unhappy period for the squadron. In the preceding three months, it had launched a total of 448 sorties for a loss of 5 crews; during January, another 5 crews were lost in flying a further 121 sorties. No obvious reason emerged to explain this steep upsurge in the rate of casualties.

53 Only 7 targets were attacked during the month - 3 in the first week, the other 4 spread over the succeeding 24 days. Mist, fog, drizzle and bitter wintry weather featuring sleet, snow and ice made Scampton a cold, inhospitable and dreary place, especially for ground crews. The Canadians, despite being used to very cold conditions, suffered particularly from the combination of dampness allied to the low temperatures and keen easterly winds which prevailed over Lincolnshire.

### OPERATIONS FLOWN

54 On 2nd January, 18 aircraft departed in mid-afternoon to attack Nuremburg. Once again, the 'Met' report correctly forecast clear skies over the target, enabling a very concentrated and highly effective raid. The severe damage caused to the important MAN and Siemens factories, together with many other industries and rail facilities, provided a near-perfect example of major area bombing. This area of previously disappointing results for Bomber Command was finally destroyed. Sadly, soon after take off, a fatal collision between P515 (P4-N) and NG 421 (IQ-M of 150 Squadron) over Sudbrooke, Lincs resulted in the loss of both aircraft. F/O Dan Reid died with three

fellow Canadians, his American Air Bomber and two RAFVR crew - all aged 22 or less.

- 55 Two days later, 18 aircraft were despatched to Royan - a small town on the north bank of the Gironde estuary, roughly halfway down the Atlantic coast of France - where the German garrison was still holding out. With clear skies and only light flak to contend with, the Master Bomber ordered crews to bomb from 9,000 feet, resulting in a most concentrated and devastating attack, delivered an hour or so before daybreak. This was the only time that the squadron bombed a French target. (Regrettably, after the war ended, it was learned that the many French civilians killed were not the collaborators specified in the Intelligence briefing supplied by Free French Forces sources; nor, apparently, did many Germans die as a result of the raid.)

#### OPERATION 'THUNDERCLAP'

- 56 Despite the severe wintry conditions, the Russian armies sustained their advances on the Eastern front. The Western allies decided to lend them support in a series of raids aimed at breaking civilian morale, with major disruption of military and civil administrative and communication networks, plus railheads serving the Russian Front, by mounting attacks on the conurbations of Berlin, Chemnitz, Dresden, Leipzig and similar distant targets. Codenamed 'Operation Thunderclap' this entailed flights of long duration, in winter, mainly over enemy defended territory. The only factor in the bomber's favour was the long hours of darkness - without which the operation would have been impossible.
- 57 In all, three 'Thunderclap' raids were mounted in January. Munich was attacked on the 7th; 17 aircraft were despatched, but two (PD378 (P4-L) and PB 787 (P4-Q) had to abort. The remainder encountered 10/10 cloud up to 20,000 feet and had to bomb on sky markers. Although results were declared inconclusive, this was the last major attack on the city.

16 aircraft were sent to the Leuna oil plant on the 14th, but NG 184 (P4-U) had to abort when the rear-gunner was taken ill. The other 15 crews, again in 10/10 cloud, aiming at skymarkers dropped by the Pathfinder Force, considered the raid to be scattered and unsuccessful. Perversely, after the war, the Germans stated that

this was one of the most damaging raids ever mounted against the synthetic oil industry!

16 aircraft also attacked the Braunkohle-Benzin synthetic oil plant at Zeitz (about 30 miles south-west of Leipzig) on the 16th. For once, the weather was clear. Good ground-marking by PFF assisted an accurate and concentrated attack, hindered only by moderate flak and slight fighter activity. During this raid, F/O Clyde Byers RCAF whilst flying in PB 872 (P4-X) was posted missing, together with his four Canadian and two RAFVR fellow crew members.

3 The difficulties encountered by Navigators were severe. F/Sgt Freddy Fish found that to reach the Leuna oil plant (which lies 12 degrees east of Greenwich) required flying 250 miles after leaving the allied lines. His last GEE fix was at 8.30 degrees East, so the remaining 175 miles to the target was all on DR (Dead Reckoning). His concentration was disrupted by having to traverse a flak belt of around 50 miles in depth before reaching the target, which was bombed just one minute over (!) their allotted time. Similar conditions applied for the return journey; it was some 97 minutes before he was able to obtain another GEE fix, during which time they had flown 350 miles on DR alone. Similarly the long journey to Munich incorporated a number of course changes, designed to keep the enemy guessing as to the actual target.

9a Due to hostile weather conditions, only two further attacks could be mounted in January. On the 22nd, 19 aircraft were sent to attack the Benzol plant in the Bruckhausen district of Duisburg. The target was clearly identified by moonlight; the attack was concentrated and most successful. Further bombs also crippled the nearby Thyssen steelworks. Bomber Command lost only two aircraft - both from 153 Squadron; NG 185 (P4-A) flown by 33 year old F/O Ken Winder (RAF) with his two Canadian and four RAFVR crew was shot down over Holland; PB 636 (P4-D), flown by F/Lt Alan Jones (RAF) with his two Australian and four RAFVR crew (including the 39 year old F/E, Syd James) was never heard of again.

59b On the 28th, following strenuous efforts by all station and squadron personnel to clear the runways of snow, the squadron sent 17 aircraft to attack the Hirth aero-engine factory at Zuffenhausen (Stuttgart). Flying conditions were poor, solid clouds shrouded the target and bombs had to be aimed at aerial sky-markers. Flak was light to moderate, but enemy fighters were active. PB 638(P4-O), flown by an all-RAFVR crew, piloted by F/O Owen Jones DFC, assisted by

F/Sgt Peter Jenkinson DFM (the Squadron's only Flight Engineer to be awarded this honour) was shot down and crashed at Michelbach, a small village about 12 miles south-east of Heidelberg. (For a remarkable tribute paid to this crew, all of whom were killed, see the final chapter of this squadron history.)

60 Especially among their fellow pilots, the loss of both the 'Jones boys' was particularly felt. Individually they had each carried more 'second dickies' than anyone else; this introduction to operational flying is never forgotten by any pilot - neither is the crew that provides the outing. Although a vital part of the newly joined pilot's training, this was a chore for the host crew, as it created a hindrance to normal crew working. The Flight Engineer suffered the most, as the 'second dickey' occupied his usual station, blocked access to the engine instrument panel and even occupied his seat. But this was never allowed to show, and the 'new boy' was always made to feel welcome.

61 At about this time a situation arose where due to the overall drop in losses and the continuing supply of newly trained pilots, the number of available pilots far exceeded the requirement; coincidentally, the supply of flight engineers was beginning to diminish - furthermore glider pilots were needed both in India and for the Army's Airborne Division. It was decided to remuster NCO pilots to one of these two categories. Those being made flight engineers were however allowed to continue to wear their pilot's brevets - thus many new crews joining the squadron appeared to boast a second pilot - an impression that was not unreasonably fostered by those unfortunate enough to be affected by the decision! (Regrettably, squadron records do not differentiate between these two types of flight engineer and this account must therefore reluctantly follow the same path.)

62 The hazardous nature of operational flying was recorded by 'Big Tom' Tobin who flew on every one of the seven January raids. Extracts from his recollections include:

7 Jan. Munich. Over dense cloud. Met with accurate flak and fighter activity. Near miss with another Lanc. Is my luck running out?

14 Jan. Leuna . Accurate searchlights and flak. Mid-upper turret lines severed. Also hit in port engines, so feathered. 3-engined landing. Engine had to be replaced due to severe damage.



- 16 Jan. Zeitz. Rear turret u/s from hydraulic failure. Flak intense. Suffered flak hole damage, but aircraft flyable.
- 22 Jan. Duisburg. S/outer failed 5 mins from target. Bombed anyway.
- 28 Jan. Zuffenhausen. Moderate fighter activity. Another near miss.

63 Co-operation between Pilots and their Navigators did not prohibit friendly insults being exchanged between 'Drivers' and 'Naviguessers'! The problems they had to face were however not funny, as the following further report by Freddy Fish reveals:

"Nuremburg. 2 Jan. Shortly after take-off the GEE set caught fire. I changed the fuse, but no good. Fire put out by extinguisher, which meant GEE completely u/s. Given this situation, had perforce to follow the stream and turn with it at turning points. Could pick up no pinpoints due to 10/10 cloud, but, on the assumption that the stream was on correct course, was able to calculate estimated winds. As darkness fell we could no longer see the stream, so I went over to dead reckoning (DR) using estimated winds. At approx 7.30 degrees East obtained two fixes on H2S which showed us about 5 miles off track. After 30 minutes the H2S packed up. Then the Wireless Operator's W/T set went u/s and soon after, the Mid-upper gunner's helmet also failed. Navigating solely on DR, saw Target Indicators ahead. Bombed at 19.36hrs (four minutes ahead of our allotted time), but thus obtained an accurate fix over a known position! Going home entirely on DR I tried changing leads on GEE (or H2S) set but it again caught fire and had to be extinguished. Reaching 7 degrees East had to fly a very long leg of 253 miles to French coast (DR time 83 mins). After 78 minutes purely on DR without any confirmatory fixes we hit the slip stream of another aircraft and were relieved to find ourselves back with the main stream. Thus we were able to cross the coast on track and avoid the flak from Dunkirk, reaching England via Orfordness. After identifying the Woodbridge pundit to the left, we were able to navigate by the crew looking out for pundits and occults from which I took an approximate visual bearing to determine our estimated position and thus Scampton would appear about 4 miles ahead on the port quarter. All eyes strained looking for it, and thankfully it appeared just ahead to port flashing the welcome letters 'SA'."

At debriefing Freddy was asked "When was the first time you knew exactly where you were?" He truthfully replied "Not until we were over Nuremberg and being shot at".

- 64 On 31st January the Air Ministry promulgated the decision that in view of a prospective shortage of crews in heavy bomber squadrons; the much shorter penetrations usually made into enemy territory; and the much lesser risks involved compared with those of 1942 and 1943, that the length of a first tour in Main Force groups would be increased to 36 sorties, whilst a second tour would remain at 20 sorties. AOC's of Groups 'would continue to assess sorties involving short penetration or little enemy opposition at less than the value of the full sortie'.

Although crews became aware that tours were being extended to 36 sorties none appeared to have heard of the depreciated value being accorded to some of them - which perhaps is just as well.

- 65 On 16th January, F/Lt A Young replaced F/O R P Hargrave as the Squadron Adjutant.

## SCAMPTON - FEBRUARY 1945

- 66 The number of effective crews on squadron strength rose from 30 to 34. The arrival of 8 newcomers was offset by the loss of 2 crews on ops and by the disruption of another 2 crews from losing key members. Noticeably, a feature of the new crews was in their number of officers - three crews each contained five, one even included a commissioned flight engineer. (Full details of postings and losses are in Appendix A6.)
- 67 Despite receiving six new aircraft, the total effective strength on any one day was never higher than 19. The loss of PD 378 (P4-L) on 3rd February, also NN 803 (P4-2nd O) and NN785 (P4-2nd D) (lost on only their first and second operations), coupled with the lengthy repair programmes required to both LM 754 (P4-E) and LM 752 (P4-S), restricted the number of sorties flown. (Details of aircraft received and lost appear in Appendices B6 and E5).
- 68 (Before continuing this account of the squadron as a whole, no excuses are offered for pursuing the history of one particular skipper and crew. You have already read about F/O Don Freeborn winning his DFC. This covers his return from East Grinstead, following successful plastic surgery.)

F/O Freeborn returned to Scampton on 14th January, to reunite with his original crew. They flew two 'routine' operations on 22nd (Duisburg) and 28th (Zuffenhausen), but on 1st February came under nightfighter attack when leaving Ludwigshafen. Two nights later, after bombing Bottrop, they were caught completely by surprise by a JU88 night fighter employing 'schräge muzik' tactics - the system whereby the enemy fighter climbed steeply into the blind spot of the Lancaster (i.e. directly below, and therefore not visible to anyone within the aircraft), from which its two specially mounted upward-aimed cannons fired straight into the bomber, without hindrance or distraction. Especially on dark nights, when the fighter was hard to distinguish against a total blackout, this practice was devastatingly effective; consequently, few crews survived to return to the UK, and no counter-measure was developed to meet the tactic.

Freeborn's aircraft, PD 378 (P4-L) was hit in the starboard wing, and the S/O engine was soon ablaze. He tried a shallow dive in a vain attempt to put out the fire, but in so doing caused the flames to reach the fuselage via the heating duct. Fearing that the intense heat would create an explosion, he ordered abandonment of the aircraft. His crew

acted on the order - all except the rear-gunner, little Jerry McNamara, who said "hold it right there skipper", and proceeded to open fire on the JU88, as its pilot had carelessly allowed the stricken Lancaster to draw ahead, and in so doing exposed himself to view and was promptly shot down! McNamara then baled out, as did the wounded navigator, 'Steve' Brodie. The aircraft was passing through 4,000 feet when Don Freeborn scrambled down to the nose escape hatch and slid out, feet first; the whiplash of the parachute opening snapped him into a vertical position, and in so doing tore off both his boots. He saw two bright flashes on the ground showing where both aircraft had exploded on impact, before, swinging wildly in his parachute harness, he abruptly landed in water. In a panic, he quickly inflated his Mae West only to discover that the water was less than two feet deep. Bootless, soaked, he set off westward but soon found it impossible to continue. He knocked on a cottage door, was admitted and found he was in liberated territory - safe, and made welcome.

He returned to Scampton to learn that his Canadian navigator had died from injuries suffered during the attack. He also faced the unpleasant fact that on their return from Survivor Leave, three members of his crew - Sgt D Morley (F/E), Sgt H Constable (B/A) and Sgt T Stalley (M/UG) (already a survivor of a previous bale-out) - announced that following a 'shaky-do' on their 3rd op, then kicking their heels for several weeks, only to be shot up on their 6th op and shot down on their 7th, they wished to move out of the crew. Hoping to persuade them to retract, Wing/Co Powley granted them a further period of leave, but they remained adamant. F/O Freeborn therefore assembled the following revised crew:

A/B - F/Sgt H L Cosby (C) (previously with crew of F/O Gregoire, he had broken a leg when falling off a ladder whilst polishing his clear vision panel.)  
F/E - Sgt L T Williams  
Nav - F/Lt R Morrison (on his 2nd tour)  
W/Op - Sgt J Eastman (C)  
M/UG - Sgt A G Pratt (C) (previously in crew of F/O Schopp, he was one of the three survivors of the crash at Laon on 17th December 1944 (see para 46).  
R/G - Sgt G McNamara (C)

## THE NINE MOST MOMENTOUS WEEKS

69 Unappreciated at the time, February ushered in the start of the nine most momentous weeks in the Squadron's history. Over the period

1st February to 4th April the tempo quietly quickened; operations became more frequent; losses mounted and strains began to show. Of the fourteen raids mounted in February, three were in furtherance of 'Operation Thunderclap'; four required precision dropping of mines in enemy sealanes (a novel venture for the squadron); six were against the more familiar Ruhrgebiet and Western Germany; and the final one was 'scrubbed' when crews were well on their way to the Fatherland

### **OPERATION THUNDERCLAP - EAST GERMANY**

- 70 The three attacks on 'Operation Thunderclap' were long and arduous. On 8th February, 15 aircraft were sent to Politz - a small town north-east of Berlin, on the German/Lithuanian border, midway between Stettin (aka Szezcin) and the Baltic sea - which housed a synthetic oil plant; it was also within 30 miles of the advancing Russian forces. Taking off into a cloud base of only 600 feet, the force flew through continuous cloud and atrocious weather until east of Denmark - a nerve-wracking experience. Fortunately, clear skies over the target assisted by a relatively low (i.e. 14,000 feet) dropping height enabled a very accurate attack to be mounted; no further supply of oil was produced by Politz. Naughtily, the homeward flight was routed over neutral Sweden; the Swedes fired A/A but, as noted by Tom Tobin "they aimed to miss by miles".

On 13th February, 15 aircraft were sent to Dresden. Although afterwards it became the subject of considerable and continuing debate, as far as the crews were concerned this was just another attack in aid of the Russian armies, on which (because of the distance involved), only a comparatively small bombload could be carried. Thus each crew took 1 x 2,000lb bomb plus 1,800 incendiaries. In clear weather and aided by gale force westerly winds, it took just over four hours to reach and bomb the target. There could be no argument over the effectiveness of the attack - a massive firestorm (more intensive than that on Hamburg in 1943) swept the city, and could be seen from 100 miles by crews on their 650-mile homeward journeys. They had plenty of time to watch, because they were now fighting against the same fearsome gales that had carried them so swiftly on the outward leg. Although benefiting from a much-reduced all-up weight, it took well over five hours of juggling of the fuel valves by anxious F/Engineers to struggle home. Many made unscheduled landings to re-fuel: others reached Scampton with nearly dry tanks; Tom Tobin shut down both his outer engines, feathered the props,

and upon reaching base, landed without doing the customary circuit - which was just as well, considering the paucity of his remaining fuel.

(A grim PostScript to mull over - of the 105 crew members, who attacked Dresden and returned unscathed, only 66 survived the war. 39 did not.)

The following night, 14th February, the city of Chemnitz received its first major Bomber Command attack, but due to extensive cloud cover, allowing the use of sky-marking techniques only, bombing proved mainly scattered and ineffective. The Squadron suffered another loss when NN 803 (P4-2nd O) crashed over East Germany, whilst on its first operation - in fact, it had recorded only 64 hours of total flight time prior to take-off. The crew, on only their third operation, comprising F/Lt Clem Mills with 4 fellow Canadian and 2 RAFVR members (of whom the F/Engineer, F/Sgt J J Heady, was a remustered pilot - see para 61) were all killed.

It is worth noting that of the 15 crews who flew to Dresden, five from 'B' flight were off to Chemnitz (or mining) just 13 hours from landing, thereby logging 19 hours operational flying in a period of 32 hours; three crews of 'A' Flight set off mining after an 11 hour break. In each case the 'groundborne' time was occupied in de-briefing, eating two meals, a fresh briefing and somehow, if lucky, snatching much needed sleep.

### **'GARDENING' - MINELAYING OPERATIONS**

- 71 Gardening operations were flown on four nights during the month. In view of the way these minelaying operations came to be viewed with justified apprehension by crew members, this type of operation is covered comprehensively by paras 82 to 88 (inclusive)

### **OPERATIONS OVER WEST GERMANY - RUHR DENIAL PLAN**

- 72 Notwithstanding the strain of the long-distance flights on Operation Thunderclap, targets on the Western Front continued to receive attention - particularly those which would isolate the Ruhr from the rest of Germany. The intention of the 'Ruhr Denial Plan' was to knock out railways, canals, viaducts, bridges and 25 marshalling yards, stretching from Bremen to Coblenz and down to the Swiss border.

Thus, on 1st February, 15 aircraft were sent to Ludwigshaven to attack the rail yards. Despite having to aim on sky-markers, serious damage was caused, including a Rhine road bridge. Two aircraft were engaged by fighters NG 201 (P4-T) and NE 113(P4-H) flown respectively by F/O Bolton and F/O Freeborn.

The primary target on 3rd February was a Prosper benzol plant at Bottrop coupled with the local marshalling yard. Despite the inevitable murky UK weather, remarkably clear conditions over the target allowed a very concentrated attack by 16 Squadron aircraft, pressed home in spite of a moderate flak barrage, many searchlights and heavy fighter activity.

An attack on the small town of Kleve, designed to clear the way forward for troops of the 15th (Scottish) Division of XXX Corps in their push to the Rhine, took place on 7th February. Because of the need for precise visual bombing, the master-bomber ordered the force to drop below the cloud base, which was under 5,000 feet. At this remarkably low altitude, crews were able to see the opposing armies' artillery fire; the aerial flares combined with the reflected light from ground explosions off the cloud base, presented an extraordinary sight, which was recorded for posterity by Richard Dimbleby - then a respected war correspondent - who was flying in NG 184 (P4-U) piloted by S/Ldr John Gee. His graphic account of the operation appears, in full (on pages 159/163) in John Gee's book 'Wingspan', which also relates the difficulties of fitting the bulky Dimbleby, his recording engineer, and all the extra equipment, into 'U'.

A tailpiece to the above. This was the 16th (and final) operational flight made by Richard Dimbleby. Thereafter he was attached to the staff of Field Marshall Montgomery to report on terrestrial advances.

Ironically, the complete devastation of Kleve created so many barriers to progress for XXX Corps, that their advance was severely hindered.

- 73 The raids against Dortmund (20th Feb) and Duisburg (21st Feb) were linked in that for each it was their final major Bomber Command attack. Because of adverse weather, specific targets at Dortmund were not identifiable, and results were inconclusive. However, nightfighters were very active: among those shot down was NN 785 (P4-2nd D) on only its second operation, which crash-landed at Stefansbogge, near Hasslinghausen, some 10 miles south-west of Dortmund. Four Canadians, including F/Lt Holman the pilot, his navigator, bomb-aimer and rear gunner, survived to become POW's.

Four others (three of them RAFVR, including a second pilot, P/O Peter Thorne, whose name appears nowhere else in squadron records) were killed.

The attack on Duisburg firstly concentrated on a synthetic oil plant which, being successful, was switched by the master-bomber to the rail marshalling yard. Fighter flares were seen, but defensive measures were confined to a heavy box barrage.

Unfortunately for Pforzheim, a town on the northern edge of the Black Forest, the 23rd February was a clear night when it received its sole Bomber Command raid. Despite some nightfighter activity, the attack went in at 8,000 feet, resulting in devastatingly accurate bombing; the rail yard was totally destroyed, as was some 80% of the town's built-up area.

The last day of February saw 15 aircraft set off in atrocious weather for a daylight attack on Neuss. They were recalled before reaching their target, and had to land (with all bombs aboard) in the same unfriendly conditions. Because they had not reached, let alone crossed, the Mandrell screen, this sortie did not count as an operation.



## MORALE

- 74 Morale is tangible, yet difficult to define. When things are going well, an overall "feel good" factor is generated, resulting in brimming confidence, high spirits, and in sheer joy at being vibrantly alive; moreover, mistakes do not inevitably lead to tragedy. But should calamities follow in quick succession, expectations evaporate; doom and gloom proliferate; even little things seem increasingly to go wrong and inevitably, morale just drains away. The most important task for any Commander is to keep morale high. He must also continue to maintain discipline, and ensure that his men are fit, fully trained and properly equipped to carry out their allotted tasks.
- 75 Flying in the 1940's was still a precarious pursuit. Many aspiring aviators were killed during training. Those that reached an operational squadron had not only to contend with the weather (whatever its moods), but with all the devices that a brave, innovative and stubborn enemy threw up against them. Such was the danger involved, that the chances of surviving a tour of 30 operations were not good. However, it was tacitly felt that your crew would be the one to complete a tour; it was the other unfortunates who would not. This may have been illogical, but had to be fervently believed otherwise confidence would be lost and morale would suffer. The fact that a crew failed to return from an operation was shrugged off by their contemporaries by stating that "they had gone for a Burton". After all, they could have landed elsewhere, or parachuted into Allied - or enemy - hands, and were simply unable to make contact with the Squadron. But most operational aircrew quickly adopted a fatalistic attitude, accepting that "if you get the chop, you get the chop - pray only that it will be quick".
- 76 Entering the spring of 1945, morale in 153 Squadron was high. Crews were able to survey losses without undue concern. W/Co Powley exerted a paternal discipline, which recognised the need for young men to let off steam occasionally as a safety-valve against the frightening reality faced in their operational flights. One way of doing so was the traditional 'end of tour' party, the major feature of which was to hoist a tour-expired individual up a mixed pile of furniture and bodies to plant his naked footprints (liberally smeared with black shoe polish) on the Mess ante-room ceiling. Only slightly less hilarious was the game of Mess Rugby, when teams battled furiously to put the 'ball' (frequently a loaf of bread, which diminished as the struggle raged) over the opponent's baseline.

- 77 It was generally conceded that there were two periods during any crew's operational tour which were more 'accident-prone' than any other. These were the first five and the last five sorties.

The initial period required crews to rapidly adjust to the stern realities of aerial war, where, apart from possible hostile activity, a wary eye had also to be kept on 'friendly' aircraft who were similarly trying to maintain their position in the main stream. Hitting another aircraft's slipstream, in pitch darkness, was a mixed blessing, bringing consolation that you were not alone, combined with fear of a collision. The downward thrust resulting from encountering slipstream frequently meant loss of height, which was not easily regained at higher altitudes. This was a fresh experience to newly joined crews.

The first and final five operations shared one aspect - that of tension. At the beginning was the fear of the unknown, the urge to prove oneself, and coming to grips with a novel situation. Once they had almost completed their tour, crews were conscious that the 'law of averages' was working against them; some even developed the 'operational twitch'.

Of the twenty-two crews lost by 153 Squadron, six (five on their first sortie) failed to reach five operations; seven were lost after recording twenty operations, but only two were on their last five.

- 78 As explained in Para.30, daily life on an operational bomber station erupted on receipt of a "stand-by" order. For the crews named to fly that day, this meant a test flight to prove the servicibility (in all respects) of their allotted aircraft. Many spent some time with their groundcrews, overseeing and frequently participating in clearing minor troubles. (Sgt. Bill Voss recalls, that such was the obsession of F/Lt Purves with the cleanliness of his windscreen, that he was dubbed 'Perspex Purves' by his groundcrew). Having carried out all necessary preparations, crews were left to pursue their own interests, but this remaining period (which included the pre-flight meal) was dictated by the time set for the operational target briefing.
- 79 Target briefings followed a standard ritual. Only the crews detailed on the Order of Battle to fly the operation (plus the designated reserve crew and/or 'spare bods') would be allowed by the RAF Service Policemen to enter the briefing room. After studying the very large-scale wall map showing the target and the routes to be followed to and fro, came the specialist briefings. Crews were told the reason why that particular target had been chosen; how the selected routes

were planned to avoid fighter and flak strongpoints; when 'window' should be dropped; the existence (or not) of allied fighter escorts; the types and weight of bombs to be carried; time, and height, to be over the target; probable enemy spoof targets and simulated raids thereon; the code words which would identify the Master Bomber and the Main Force; the type of marking to expect (including any possible 'sky-marking' such as 'Wanganui') together with the colour of the Target Indicators (T/I's) which would be dropped by the Pathfinder Force to mark the target. Then followed the Met forecast, Engineer and Intelligence briefings (to include the situation of Allied Army lines, for possible escapers) after which Signals would say when crews could break radio silence and what were the colours of the day (for use in Verey pistols). The Station Commander, Group Captain C.R.B.Lloyd, would often attend briefings as an observer to give moral encouragement to the crews.

- 80 Although morale was undoubtedly high, it was soon to be given a severe and sustained test following receipt of orders to undertake operations involving the dropping of mines in enemy waters - code-named 'Gardening' - ushering in probably the nine most momentous weeks in the Squadron's history, during which, as recorded by S/Ldr Gee in his book "Wingspan" on page 185, "the morale of the Squadron was severely dented".

## MINELAYING

- 81 Laying of mines in shipping channels, to hinder or deny the passage of enemy vessels, was first practised in the American War of Independence, but it was the Luftwaffe which pioneered the technique of dropping mines by aircraft. This presented a serious threat, because it rendered impotent allied defences designed only to counter minelaying by surface or submarine means. Whilst the Navy grappled with the problem, the Air Ministry initiated plans to introduce similar tactics.
- 82 It was not long before Bomber Command commenced aerial mine-laying operations in enemy inshore shipping lanes. From the outset the whole operation carried the code-word 'Gardening' and each designated dropping area was given the name of a specific vegetable, tree or plant, thus introducing a system that once notified to squadrons, required little, if any, subsequent amendment, needing only the addition of timing and routing details to be passed to the squadron(s) detailed to mount the attack. It was also the practice of

Bomber Command to rotate Gardening Ops around their squadrons - 153 Squadron was first given this task on 4th February 1945.

- 83 The Squadron quickly found that certain aspects remained constant. Each Gardening operation required the squadron to provide five aircraft - never more, never less - each carrying six airborne magnetic/acoustic mines; each mine was ten feet in length with a diameter of 18 inches and weighed around 1,500 lbs. (including an explosive charge of 740 lbs.) Take-off was usually around dusk and return journey times were about 6 to 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours duration. To avoid detection by enemy radar, the outward route was Base, Scarborough and (staying below 1,000 feet) out over the North Sea. With the exception of Heligoland Bight, on reaching longitude 6E and latitude 58N off the southern tip of Norway (a leg of 384 miles that took a little over two hours flying time), aircraft then climbed towards a point in the Skagerrak, south of the Oslo Fiord and north of the tip of Denmark, before reaching which they had levelled off at their pre-determined dropping height of 11,000 feet. Having verified their position they then set course for their designated area in the Kattegat or further into the Baltic Sea. From this point real problems arose.
- 84a In the Kattegat there are very few deep-water channels suited to larger vessels, and these were well known to both contestants. Knowing just where the mines had to be dropped, enabled the Germans to vector their night-fighters to best effect. The islands of Laeso and Anholt housed air defence controllers and radar stations. Neutral Sweden, with no need to operate a black-out, lay to the east of the bombers' route; Germans fighters came up, hidden by the darkened background of occupied Denmark, to seek out the bombers which were silhouetted against the lights of Swedish towns. Clearly the advantages lay with the defenders.
- 84b When turning south into the Kattegat, crews had to switch on H2S (the airborne radar which showed an image of the area being overflown) presenting them with excellent pictures of the coastlines of Denmark and Sweden, thus assisting them to fly an accurate track past Laeso and Anholt to the drop zone, and allowing navigators to verify the wind speed and direction. Unfortunately, the H2S emissions could be picked up by the night-fighters, who would 'home in' on the transmitting aircraft, whose only defence was to throw out 'Window' non-stop in the hope that it would confuse the attackers' homing devices.

- 84c To reach the actual dropping zone, it was frequently necessary first to accurately determine the aircraft's position from an established location, and then fly directly to the release point, where the bomb doors were opened. Then followed what many crews have subsequently described as the longest minute of their lives - the release of mine number one, followed by a succession of ten second intervals before dropping numbers two, three, four, five and six. All this at a constant speed, height and direction, thereby inviting attack from the lurking fighters. Mercifully there was no requirement to continue whilst the customary confirming aerial photograph of the target was taken - the evidence was recorded by photographing the H2S readings.
- 84d Unlike the saturation raids flown against the German cities, where sheer weight of numbers provided a measure of protection, Gardening drops were conducted by individual attacks - albeit conforming to an overall design - so that crews felt themselves cruelly exposed to any enemy action. The German defences were often augmented by the addition of naval and other gunships, which, with ability to fire predicted flak at these individual targets, proved to be very accurate. Given their mobility they could be encountered almost anywhere along the bombers' route.
- 85 From the foregoing, it will be apparent that Gardening operations were not welcomed by aircrew, who stoically accepted that they were more hazardous than other operations. Many particularly dreaded the fact that flights were made almost entirely over water, and invariably in total darkness. Should the aircraft be shot down or seriously crippled, the chances of survival were so negligible as to be non-existent. To carry out a successful 'ditching' at night would require phenomenal luck for even the most highly-skilled pilot, and the prospect of a subsequent launching of the dinghy in total darkness into a hostile sea, heavily encumbered by full flying kit, did not bear thinking about. Over land, crews could take their chances with a parachute jump; over water, even if successful, this would result in certain death from exposure. As found by sailors on Russian convoy duties, the survival time in northern waters during the winter months was unlikely to exceed two minutes.
- 86 Lacking a satisfactory degree of heating - particularly to the aircraft's gun turrets - a substantial amount of clothing was normally donned before undertaking operational and/or high-level flying. Suspended from a thong round the neck were hung identity discs or "dog-tags", giving name, service number and religious persuasion. The basic

garment was a full-length pair of combinations (or "Long Johns") – although some men chose to wear pyjamas instead, thereby making provision for a little comfort if they should be shot down and become prisoners-of-war. Over this went the uniform Battle Dress - however many preferred to replace shirt, collar and tie by a heavyweight roll-neck white sweater, as favoured by Submariners. The Battle Dress was completed by a whistle attached to the collar, useful to summon attention should the need arise. Then followed a thick, fleecy, warm "coverall" of ankle to shoulder length (often dubbed "the Teddy-Bear suit") which zipped up from crotch to neck; in turn, this was enclosed in a Sidcot flying suit, made from a strong gabardine type of twill, provided with a generous supply of zipped-up pockets on chest, sleeves, legs and waist. Feet were kept warm by a topmost pair of thick, knee-long woollen socks, encased in knee-length and fur-lined boots, which contained a small knife with which to cut off the top portion of the boot, leaving the wearer with a sturdy pair of fur-lined shoes. Many aircrew then donned the regulation-issue silk gloves, woollen mittens and leather gloves – often accompanied by silk scarves. Heads were enclosed in leather helmets, complete with built-in oxygen mask and its connecting tube; intercommunication microphone/receiver earphones and plug-in cord; also goggles with which to protect eyes should the windscreen be shattered. Over all went an inflatable life-jacket (always called "Mae West" after the voluptuous Hollywood actress), and finally, the webbing of the parachute harness.

The sheer bulk and weight of this equipment and clothing hampered normal movement; obviously, once it was immersed in salt water, it became even more weighty and cumbersome.

- 87 In many squadrons, these operations were regarded as useful introductory exercises for the harder tasks ahead; but this was not the case in 153 Squadron where generally the most experienced crews appeared on the Battle Order. Altogether, the squadron mounted 35 Gardening sorties, the task being shared unevenly by 18 of the 24 experienced crews - full details are set out in Appendix G attached. These bare statistics need to be absorbed in conjunction with the following complementary individual accounts:

#### **4th February - Heligoland Bight**

Mines were to be laid to the south-east of the island, covering the Elbe estuary and the Kaiser Wilhelm canal (aka the Kiel canal). On the run up to the drop zone, LM752 (P4-S) suffered a hang up and Ian McGregor asked his pilot, F/O Noel Crane, if they could go round

again. Although this involved a complete circle of the island, off they went and made a satisfactory drop on the second attempt. They were obviously pinpointed and were duly attacked by an ME 410, which shot away their port tailplane and narrowly missed the rear gunner. With some difficulty, they made it back to base. Although the crew survived unscathed, LM 752 (P4-S) was out of service for a month.

#### **14th February - Kiel Bay**

Mines were placed in the harbour approaches. No combats were reported. A hang-up of one mine in PB 786 (P4-2nd Q) flown by F/O Bishop defied all attempts at release, so was taken back, causing considerable alarm to the F/E (Jack Syme) "who landed with his fingers in his ears". Responsibility for disarming the rogue mine fell upon the resident Royal Naval Armament Supply Officer, whose posting to Scampton ensured expert technical oversight of all aspects of the mining activity.

#### **15th February - Baltic Sea**

Before take-off, crews were made aware that bad weather would lead to closure of Scampton, and that diversion orders could be expected. After an uneventful drop, such orders were issued and with one exception, crews landed where directed. In PA 168 (P4-G) radio reception was so poor that by mischance, W/Op Tom Jones misread the co-ordinates, causing his navigator, F/O Dennis MacDonald, to give pilot F/Lt Bill Langford a course to take them toward southern England. On re-checking his data, Tom saw and corrected his error; the course had accordingly to be amended towards an airfield set in a mountainous area of Scotland. After a considerable time, with fuel tanks menacingly low, they saw a circle of lights in the murk below. Prudently, Bill Langford used the emergency 'Darkie' radio channel, and after confirming that he could see the perimeter lights, was given permission to land. They found they were at Full Sutton, in Yorkshire - the home of 77 Squadron (Lancashire's Own), who ironically were actually equipped with Halifaxes! On eventual return to base, they found that the Effects Officer (see para 46b) had already impounded their belongings, but they were able to retrieve them. Tom Jones was however disciplined by the Signal's Leader for "lack of diligence".

#### **24th February - Kattegat**

Immediately following take-off, the S/O engine of PB 872 (P4-2ndX) flown by F/O Noel Crane, cut dead "creating a most exciting veer" reported his navigator. With his casting vote (their's being a very democratic crew) Noel decided to press on regardless, but after heading out over the North Sea, another engine started to play up.

This time, 'home James' was unanimous, but before returning to base, they had to fly around for some time to reduce the all-up weight for landing. On reaching dispersal, they were greeted by a jeep containing the W/Co and a very senior officer visiting the squadron. The W/Co casually asked about the trip, where they had dropped the mines, etc. but on being told they were still on board, the visitors rapidly disappeared. Meanwhile, the other squadron aircraft were dropping their mines over 'Silverthorn' (an area to the south of Anholt). Hardly had they done so when PA 168 (P4-G) piloted by F/O Les Taylor, was attacked by a JU88. His navigator, F/Sgt Arthur Allan, was aware that as the pilot took violent evasive action (the celebrated 'corkscrew') both gunners opened fire and both claimed hits. However the JU88 kept after them across Denmark and out to sea, even making a second pass before diving away. Fortunately, damage to PA 168 (P4-G) was superficial.

### **3rd March - Kattegat**

Once again, area 'Silverthorn' was selected. As they flew south past Aalborg airfield in RA 526 (P4-2ndJ), the crew of F/O Taylor could see the runway lights come on, as enemy aircraft took off to stalk them. It was a very clear night, and both flak and fighters were active. Closely monitoring his radar screen, Arthur Allan observed a strange blip and immediately ordered his skipper into a rate three turn to starboard - a violently abrupt movement. As they straightened out, the rear-gunner, Sgt 'Tiny' Hurst, reported a flak hit on a following Lancaster, which burst into flames and fell away. At de-briefing, crews learned that LM 750 (P4-R) piloted by F/O Leo Gregoire RCAF, had failed to return, having been seen to crash into the waters of Seiero Bight, at the north-west tip of Seeland Island. It is unclear whether this was due to flak or fighter attack. This was his 33rd operation; he and his crew were the first members of the Squadron to die as a direct consequence of the decision to extend the operational tour beyond 30 operations.

### **12th March - Kattegat**

As F/Sgt Freddie Fish navigated NG 488 (P4-2nd A) on the long leg to the tip of Jutland, he was acutely conscious that they were being plotted on enemy radar and, on reaching the coast, the crew were tensed up all the way to the drop zone, which lay some 10 miles south of Anholt. Any sense of relief following the drop was instantly dispelled when a fighter appeared astern bearing a searchlight on its nose (subsequently they learned that this was a BENITO fighter which illuminated a target to enable another fighter, lurking on the opposite



side, to have a silhouette to aim at). With both gunners blazing away, Whizz Wheeler took violent evasive action, eventually gaining cloud cover.

On the homeward journey, the crew recorded 3 Lancasters coming under concentrated, accurate, flak attack. Possibly, one of those could have belonged to 153 Squadron. Certainly, PB 786 (P4-2nd Q) took a direct hit in the S/I engine, which also set the wing on fire. In an attempt to tackle the blaze, F/Eng Reggy Morris hung out of his window with navigator Ian McGregor hanging grimly onto his legs, but to no avail. Skipper Noel Crane then gave an order to bale out, but Ian (not fancying the outcome), suggested that first they try to reach a small island showing up on his H2S screen. Noel's agreement was timely, for the rear gunner, already half way out of his turret, had fortuitously forgotten to disconnect his intercom, so he promptly returned to his usual station. For some reason, F/O Crane then lowered what was left of the under-carriage; the 'sudden rush of air' extinguished the flames! It was now a toss-up whether to aim for the inviting lights of Sweden, or try to get home. Home won. With a badly damaged, unbalanced aircraft and dubious fuel readings they made pitifully slow progress, unable to maintain height, eventually issuing a 'Mayday' call; meanwhile Ian and W/Op, Johnny Peel, took a series of 'G' fixes, plotted them, and then notified them to the RAF Air/Sea Rescue Launch service. (The 'Boat Boys' subsequently advised that thanks to the information provided they had PB786 (P4-2nd Q) on their plotting table from halfway across the North Sea, and could have effected a rapid pick-up if needed. The meticulous efforts of the W/Op and navigator were featured in a later edition of 'Tee Em' as an example of correct Air/Sea Rescue co-operation). Undaunted, Noel nursed his stricken aircraft at just about zero feet, back to Carnaby where he pulled off a landing on only one leg - everyone walked away without a scratch. Quite a way to finish your operational tour!

Sadly at debriefing it was learned that RA 526 (P4-2nd J) piloted by F/O Ken Ayres and his all-RAFVR crew, had been posted missing. At a much later date it transpired that they crashed near the island of Samsó - in fact, five of the crew now lie buried on the island. The navigator F/Sgt Reg McMinn was never found. The B/A, P/O Bob Maine, parachuted to safety, was made POW by the Germans, and eventually released by the Americans who arranged his return to the U.K.

Mention must be made of an incident, which entered Squadron lore. S/Ldr Tom Rippingale invariably chose to fly in Lancaster LM 754

(P4-E) despite the fact that its S/I engine regularly gave so much trouble that he often had to radio the Control Tower to announce "E-Easy - three engines". On his return from Gardening, he was surprised to find 'Smoky Joe' was still functioning properly, so mischievously Tom called up to announce "E -Easy - four engines". On reaching his dispersal, he found the station fire tender and the "blood wagon" (ambulance) waiting his arrival. It transpired that Control, never having been advised of anyone landing on four engines, had decided that Tom had stated "four injured" and they had therefore taken all necessary precautionary measures!

### **3rd April - Samsó Belt, Southern Kattegat**

Aware of the growing disquiet among the crews ordered to fly Gardening Operations, which he judged was having an insidious effect on Squadron morale, W/Co Powley put himself on the Battle Order for this attack, by captaining S/Ldr Gee's crew. In showing that he was prepared to share the dangers, he not only sought to inspire confidence but also demonstrated true leadership qualities. Arthur Allan recalls that at an earlier briefing, Francis Powley had commented that "153 Squadron was going through a rough spell, but things would improve". He was however apprehensive. In his book "Wingspan", John Gee quotes W/Co Powley as saying "I have been worried about this operation for the past few days and I have a premonition about it. If I had the guts I would take myself off the Order of Battle, but if I did I would never again be able to look the squadron in the face". These were fateful words. Patrolling the Samsó Belt that night in JU88 - Code Letter D5+AL - was Major Werner Husemann, the commander of I/NJG 3 (First Squadron, Night Fighter Unit #3), a skilled night fighter with 30 plus kills to his credit. Over the designated drop area, although very dark, the sky was clear and visibility moderate. Flak was non-existent, leaving the path clear for the night-fighters. Major Husemann proceeded to destroy Lancasters RA 544 (P4-2nd U) flown by Wing Commander Powley and also NX 563 (P4-2nd R) flown by F/Lt Arthur Winder. (2nd U was on its sixth operational mission; 2nd R was on its fourth). Both aircraft are known to have crashed into the Kattegat. There were no survivors.

- 88 Given the shattering outcome of the night's activities, it was perhaps just as well for Squadron morale that there were no more Gardening Operations. The Squadron had mounted 34 effective sorties in sowing 203 mines, but had suffered a mauling in losing 27 of its most experienced aircrew including its well respected and popular Commanding Officer, together with 4 aircraft (plus two more requiring extensive repairs). No longer leading a crew, S/Ldr Gee was posted

out, creating a further disruption in the Squadron's leadership structure. Lacking means to assess the effectiveness of their sea-mining operations, it was undoubtedly a heavy price that the Squadron had paid.

## SCAMPTON - MARCH 1945

- 89 The nine most momentous weeks of the Squadron's existence included the whole of March, which emerged as a period of intense, concentrated, operational activity, coinciding with a degree of disruption caused by the arrival of 14 new crews, and the departure of 13. From the beginning to around the middle of March, the Squadron could normally muster around 31 crews, but this figure rose eventually to 37. (Full details of postings and losses are in Appendix A7.)
- 90 The situation on aircraft was markedly different. Starting with a total of 18, no fewer than 12 were lost (7 on operations, 2 badly damaged in February - NE 113 (P4-H) and PB 472 (P4-K) - were never replaced, and 3 were declared 'DBR' - Damaged Beyond Repair). Only 9 new aircraft were received, so that on any given day the actual strength of the Squadron was limited to 17; frequently fewer. (Details of aircraft received and lost appear in Appendices B7 and E6).
- 91 American forces crossed the Rhine at Remagan (using the railway bridge) early in March, and during the rest of the month allied ground forces moved across in strength, en route bypassing enemy strongholds, such as Holland. But contrary to any false impression that they were finished, the Luftwaffe mounted "Operation Gisella" on the night of 3rd/4th March, when over 200 intruder raids were mounted against UK airfields, causing many casualties to operational and advanced training bases of bomber aircraft. However, Scampton and 153 Squadron escaped untouched.
- 92 Targets allotted to the Squadron during the month fell into three broad categories - oil installations and transport centres in East Germany; sea-mining; and continued isolation/neutralisation of the Ruhr. More than half the raids were made in daylight, frequently with strong fighter escorts.

### THE FIFTH MOMENTOUS WEEK 1st - 7th MARCH

- 93 On the afternoon of 1st March, 16 aircraft joined the last large Bomber Command attack on Mannheim - at least they set out to do so. Conditions over the target necessitated bombing on skymarkers, and results were inconclusive; however subsequent reconnaissance revealed that many bombs hit the nearby town of Ludwigshafen - just across the Rhine. Whilst crossing over The Wash on its homeward

flight, NG 184 (P4-U) inexplicably exploded, killing F/O Jack Rhodes and all his crew, including the rear-gunner, F/Sgt Hugh Cuthbertson, RCAF, who was one of only three to survive the crash at Laon on December 17th (see para 46).

- 94 At day break on 2nd March, and within thirteen hours of landing back from Mannheim, nine crews had been de-briefed, slept, eaten two meals, attended a fresh briefing and were actually airborne en route for Cologne, together with seven other crews. Exceptionally clear weather conditions, combined with precise Pathfinder Force markings, resulted in a highly effective raid. With once again the miraculous exception of its cathedral, Cologne, by now almost a front line city, suffered considerable damage in this last RAF raid - only four days later it was occupied by American troops. During the bombing run, LM 752 (P4-S) flown by F/Lt Jock Lennox and crew, on the second operation of their second tour, was hit by flak, but they were able to bomb and get back to base without much difficulty, although there were some indications that not all of the hydraulic systems were responding particularly well. When attempting to land at Scampton, only the starboard undercarriage wheel could be lowered, so they were diverted to Carnaby. F/O Ron Fullelove (Nav) recorded that Jock did a superb job of landing on only one wheel; none of the crew was injured; unsurprisingly, P4-S suffered so much damage (particularly to the port wing) that the aircraft was classified 'DBR'.
- 95 Four of the five crews that set off on the following night's Gardening trip had flown in the raid on Cologne, including that of F/O Gregoire who, flying in LM 750 (P4-R) failed to return. (See para 87.)
- 96 Having been on 'stand by' throughout 4th March, the Squadron was ordered to send 13 aircraft to Chemnitz on 5th March, on yet another 'Thunderclap' operation. 'Met' accurately predicted severe icing conditions, which caused many crashes on both outward and homeward journeys. Among those lost was PB 872 (P4 - 2nd X), flown by F/O Bill Bailey who crashed in Czechoslovakia, killing all the crew. (There is a heart-warming tailpiece to this incident, which will be fully related, in a later chapter.) Despite the foul weather experienced, the target city was successfully attacked using sky-marking techniques, and suffered severe fire damage in the central and southern areas, which included several important factories, most especially the Siegmars plant producing tank engines which was totally destroyed.

Several crews reported seeing 'Scarecrows' which can best be described as an aerial explosion that gives an impression of a bomber receiving a direct hit and disintegrating completely. During the course of de-briefings, crews had regularly been reporting seeing far more aircraft exploding in mid-air than were actually failing to return. The disparity in numbers alerted RAF Intelligence to the new device, and crews were duly warned about 'scarecrows' in their briefings. Even though this may have been an elaborate ploy to sap their morale, at the very least it could act as a disturbing distraction, aimed to frighten crews during the run-up to the target.

- 97 This being the period of moonless nights, no-one was greatly surprised that on 7th March a further 'Thunderclap' target was selected - the town of Dessau, lying midway between Berlin and Leipzig. 153 Squadron despatched 14 of its remaining 16 aircraft, which encountered cloud all the way out and back, resulting in a sketchy attack. The outward journey took the Main Force north of the Ruhr on a course seemingly destined for Berlin. There was intense nightfighter reaction to the perceived threat; combats occurred all along the route. One fighter, crossing through the stream of bombers, nearly collided with Tom Tobin who recalled - "He was so close that I felt I could shake hands with him, as we whistled past!"

The night recorded a significant milestone, F/O George Bishop, RCAF, and except for the F/Eng, his all-Canadian crew, became the first to complete the new tour requirement of 36 operations, all of which were flown with 153(B) Squadron. They flew the last twelve of these operations in only five weeks.

#### **THE SIXTH MOMENTOUS WEEK 8th - 14th MARCH**

- 98 The selected target for March 8th was Kassel, which lay mid-way between the advancing armies of Russia and the Allies, but well ahead of both. Although the weather over the UK was bad for take-off and landing, that over the target was excellent, and crews had no trouble in identifying the target indicators and in pressing home a decisive attack. Fierce fires were still visible from well over 60 miles distance on the homeward leg - and to S/Ldr Rippingale on his approach!

This late arrival at the target was occasioned by a most unusual incident. While well along the runway, PB 783 (P4 2nd 'I') with its tail up and nearing lift-off, suddenly swerved off the tarmac and ground-

looped on the grass. It transpired that F/O Bruce Potter (flying his 28th operation) had collapsed at the controls; only a quick response by the F/E, Sgt Wooley, in closing off all power, averted more serious consequences. Wing/Co Powley invited the crew to fly the operation with a "spare" pilot but, concerned for their Skipper and somewhat shaken by their experience, they firmly declined. The W/Co therefore ordered the night's Reserve Crew to take off instead - which explains how S/Ldr Rippingale departed at least 15 minutes behind everyone else, to blaze a conspicuous and solitary path to a well-lit target. This late arrival on the scene could have had dire consequences, but he passed unscathed through skies that had seen intense flak and fighter activity at the height of the raid. Among the casualties was NG 218 - (P4 2nd 'B') which, in the care of F/O Searle, just made it back to Manston emergency airfield, suffering a holed petrol tank, which grounded it for a week.

F/O Potter was admitted to hospital and never rejoined the Squadron.

- 99 The daylight raid on Essen on March 11th was distinguished by three items of interest; it was the last Bomber Command attack on this heavily bombed city which shortly after was occupied by American ground troops; the total force despatched was 1079 bombers (750 Lancasters 293 Halifax's, 36 Mosquitoes) which briefly became the largest number of aircraft ever concentrated against one target in one attack; and it also marked the return to 'Ops' of F/O Freeborn with his re-constituted crew! The target was completely obscured by 10/10 cloud necessitating bombing on sky markers. As F/O Noel Crane dryly noted - "The only result observed was cloud disturbance" but although conditions effectively grounded the Luftwaffe it did not deter the German flak batteries, which initially put up a formidable box barrage.

German anti-aircraft fire took two forms - predicted and box barrage. As its title suggests, predicted fire placed shells to explode at a given point in the sky at the same time as the target aircraft arrived there. The gunners were aided by ground plotters, radar scanners, radar controlled searchlights and to an increasing degree by their own aircraft who flew alongside the main bomber stream (but well outside the reach of any air-gunner) from which they could radio the vital information of height, bearing and speed. If a bomber survived the opening salvo of predicted fire, the pilot could take evasive action to position his aircraft away from the next salvo, and to go on doing so until he put himself out of range. It was a deadly guessing game, but

many crews survived to tell the tale. By contrast, a box barrage was created by firing shells from every gun at a rapid rate, filling the expected approach route to the target with a formidable curtain of bursting explosives and metal. By night, it vaguely resembled a lethal fireworks display, with the clouds reflecting aerial flashes and ground explosions. By day, a menacing pall of lingering black smoke blocked the run-up path. It seemed impossible to penetrate such hostile skies, for there was only one way to do so - straight into the inferno, fly as directed by the Bomb Aimer and, once having dropped the bombs (and agonisingly maintained course, speed and height to take the corroborating photograph), put the nose down and get the blazes out of there as fast as possible. If you were unlucky you were hit - no particular evasive skill could be invoked. Many aircraft were hit, but not necessarily fatally.

By dint of considerable effort, 153 Squadron had contributed all 15 of its remaining aircraft to this 'milestone' 1,000 plus raid, from which only three failed to return. Unfortunately, this loss included NG 201 (P4-2nd T) being flown by F/O Eric Gibbins and his young all-RAFVR crew; it would appear probable that the aircraft was stricken by a 'cookie' dropped from a higher-flying bomber.

- 100 March 12th saw a new record of aircraft despatched to a single target - one that has never been bettered! The total force of 1,108 bombers (748 Lancasters, 292 Halifax's and 68 Mosquitoes) delivered a record 4,851 tons of bombs through cloud on hapless Dortmund, causing intense devastation to the centre and southern areas. 153(B) Squadron contributed 9 of its remaining 14 aircraft - the other 5 were required for the evening's Gardening operation. The force was escorted by USAAF long-range Thunderbolts, who flew too close for Tom Tobin's comfort - he much preferred to have Spitfire or Mustang escorts flying high above him. A nice touch was added to the day - LM 550 (P4-C), in the capable hands of F/Lt Bill Langford, recorded its 100th operation.

That same evening, 5 aircraft set off mine laying, but as recorded in para 87, only 3 made it back to Scampton. RA 526 (P4 2nd J) was shot down, while PB 788 (P4-2nd Q) had to be classified 'DBR' after a belly landing at Carnaby.

- 101 By the evening of 13th March, the Squadron could muster only 12 aircraft, one of which ME 424 (P4-2nd N) was undergoing a quick overhaul. The remainder took off around dusk, to attack the Benzol plant at Gelsenkirchen, which lies about 5 miles north of Essen.



Conditions favoured the bombers - clear skies and a slight ground haze, through which the marking flares were easily identified. An accurate and concentrated attack ensued, enlivened by a massive explosion around 20.45hrs reported by many crews. Once again, the enemy sought to divert the attack by setting off decoy fires accompanied by false markers. For some reason, the Germans were unable to successfully copy the RAF flares, so their decoys were usually identified and ignored. In fact, more crews tended to be misled by the 'creep-back' factor, occasioned by earlier arrivals dropping their bombs too soon.

F/O Martin had to abort the mission. He was piloting LM 754 (P4-E) which, true to form, had engine trouble; this time the P/I caught fire. In accordance with squadron practice, he jettisoned his 'cookie' (4,000lb bomb) in The Wash before attempting a 3-engine landing with his remaining load. (In 153 Squadron, a blind eye was closed if 'new' crews, i.e. those with 10 Ops or fewer, disposed of the cookie in this way; 'experienced' crews were expected to bring the whole load back.)

Either way, it entailed landing at a higher speed than normal. On reaching dispersal, it was part of the standard 'shut down' procedure to open the bomb bay doors, to facilitate inspection by ground crew - and to verify that all bombs had gone. However, there was always the chance that when a load had been brought back one bomb would drop off; a heart stopping moment!

(Some 50 years after the event, it was alleged that a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) flew on this particular raid, as a passenger in NG500 (P4-2nd V), piloted by F/O Bob Purves, RCAF. If true, this would constitute a unique incident. The allegation is still under investigation.)

## **THE SEVENTH MOMENTOUS WEEK 15th - 21st MARCH**

- 102 The target selected for March 15th was the Deurag oil refinery on the N/E outskirts of Hannover. 10 aircraft were detailed to take part, but a serious engine malfunction in PB 642 (P4-W) prevented it from going. Although favoured by good visibility and accurate marking, the main weight of the attack fell south of the target. Some degree of heavy flak, in moderate barrage form, was encountered.

This raid provided one of the most bizarre incidents of any squadron's history. Approaching the target in the usual manner at the controls of NG 488 (P4-2nd A), F/O Ted Parker suddenly found himself in mid-air - no aeroplane, no crew, nothing apart from his seat type parachute. In some inexplicable manner his aircraft had disintegrated, projecting him into the night sky, but Ted was never able to explain the cause. There had been no warning of any approaching fighter nor any indication of flak - one moment he was flying his machine, the next he was all on his own in space. He landed by parachute, evaded capture and arrived back at Scampton on 7th May. None of the rest of his crew survived.

- 103 For the last heavy bomber raid against Nuremberg on March 17th, the Squadron was able to contribute 10 aircraft. Extensive low cloud cover extended for much of the route, but this cleared at the target, allowing an extremely devastating attack to develop resulting in major fires in the Steinbuhl district and the complete obliteration of the city's gasworks. Conditions favoured the defenders; German night-fighters found the bomber stream on its way to the target, and shot down 24 Lancasters (10.4% of the 1 Group force) including PB 642 (P4-W) (see para 102 above), being flown by P/O Peter Parsons and crew on their first operation.

Nuremberg was a showpiece creation of the Nazi regime, and, as usual, the flak was intense and heavy. On the run-up to the target, Sgt Dave Broughton, F/Eng in NK 556 (P4 3rd-J) was seated on the de-icing tank in the nose step dispensing 'window' whilst the Bomb Aimer was doing his job, when the skipper, F/O Joe Sharp announced that the S/O engine was on fire. Dave returned to his seat to find that although the engine instruments showed no indication of trouble, flames reached back to the tail plane. He feathered the engine and, since the flame gradually diminished, he did not activate the extinguisher (thereby preserving it for possible restart). The bombs were dropped; they set course for base, but constantly lost ground on the mainstream whilst Dave watched his dials and balanced the fuel tanks. On landing it was found that a number of incendiaries had landed on them, one of which had lodged next to the S/O self-sealing oil tank, missing all fuel lines and controls but burning several holes through the bottom cowling. The engine was undamaged!

- 104 By comparison with previous raids, the next two were almost routine outings. On March 18th, Hannau was attacked at the unusual hour of 4.30am, leaving many industrial buildings ablaze; on 21st, in daylight, the Deutsche Vacuum oil plant at Bremen was put out of production.

With repaired and replacement aircraft becoming available, the Squadron was able to contribute 14 crews on each attack.

Intriguingly, with available crews far outnumbering serviceable aircraft, overmanning presented a problem. By and large, the experienced crews flew, while the newcomers kicked their heels. Of the 205 sorties flown in March, only 6 were contributed by new arrivals - in fact, only 4 of the 14 new crews partook at all. During the same period, many of the 'old hands' flew on 10 operations.

- 105 On 21st March, at around breakfast time, 15 aircraft took off to attack the rail junction and marshalling yard at Hildesheim, which lies some 20 miles south-east of Hanover. S/Ldr Gee relates how their route lay over the Ruhr area where, not surprisingly, they came under heavy A/A fire, to the extent that "the smoke and explosions of the shells bursting could be smelled and heard clearly". Six aircraft were hit; all survived to bomb their target and return to base. Given a strong long-range fighter escort and in clear visibility, the force was able to drop accurately without distraction. This was the only major Bomber Command raid against Hildesheim.

#### **THE EIGHTH MOMENTOUS WEEK 22nd - 28th MARCH**

- 106 On March 24th British Airborne and ground forces successfully crossed the Rhine at Wesel. Meanwhile, the Americans were gradually encircling and isolating the Ruhr, where the defenders remained obstinate and defiant. To soften their resistance and to further deny their resources, a force was sent to attack the Benzoi plant at Harpenerweg - a suburb of Dortmund - also the Mathias Stinnes plant at Bottrop. The Squadron despatched 10 aircraft, who flew without escort but saw no enemy fighters despite clear weather all the way (both sides were doubtless fully engaged supporting or attacking the Rhine crossing). The marker flares were a bit short, so the Master Bomber instructed crews to overshoot them; a very accurate and concentrated attack ensued, although S/Ldr Rippingale had to return prematurely due once again to failure with the P/I engine on LM 754 (P4-E).

This raid saw a remarkable exploit by F/Lt Whizz Wheeler and crew. Flying in ME 541(P4-3rd A), after bombing they set a course to take them over the town of Hagen. Whizz remarked to his Navigator "some of the others are going off to port. Are we OK?" Feeling his competence was in question, Freddie Fish huffily replied "they're off

track; we are dead on track". Absolutely and unfortunately right - for at that same moment, sitting out on their own, they were hit hard by predicted flak. Both inner engines were set afire and the starboard petrol tank was holed, causing petrol to stream back over the wing (had the flame reached the petrol all would have been lost). Immediately both engines were switched off, fire extinguishers operated, and despite the loss of the S/I constant speed unit, both propellers were feathered (i.e. blades turned edge-on, to minimise drag). To douse the fires, Whizz put the aircraft into a steep 8,000-foot dive, levelling off at 12,000 feet. This proved successful, so they collectively took stock.

They had lost, and were still losing, a lot of petrol, they had no hydraulic power (needed to lower the flaps and wheels); the throttle controls and many of the instruments were damaged; no way could they get back to base. They still had two engines working, and although they had insufficient power to maintain height, they had a little in hand. They therefore needed to land somewhere in Europe. All navigators constantly received sheets of information concerning emergency landing facilities, navigational beacons, etc. to such a degree that they could not bother to read them. Fortunately, Freddie did - and even carried them on operations. He quickly gave Whizz a course for Eindhoven, about 60 miles northwest in liberated Holland, which provided a 24-hour 'Darkie' (emergency) radio system and three usable runways. However, Darkie advised Whizz that due to enemy action only 500 yards of runway was available. His situation was clearly critical.

He had an emergency compressed air system sufficient to lower flaps, plus fuel and power to reach the airfield, but insufficient to enable him to climb for a second try if he did not land at the first attempt. Visibility was very poor so Whizz asked for a guiding red Verey flare. This appeared on his starboard side just as he was lining up to land on the parallel autobahn! He managed a flat skid turn to enable him to approach the runway, just above stalling speed, narrowly avoiding the control wagon (Whizz distinctly recalled the startled look on the duty erk's face as the wheels just cleared the caravan). They were down, and thankfully able to pull up short of the craters ahead.

Apart from his F/E the crew had taken up crash stations. To see what was going on the W/Op somewhat stupidly jettisoned his escape hatch and stuck his head out. The slipstream caught under his helmet and, but for prompt anchoring action by Freddie, he would have been

sucked out. His predicament caused great laughter among the rest; it was overheard on the intercom by Whizz who, trying desperately hard to cope in a frightening situation, did not appreciate the joke.

After a night at Eindhoven, they were ferried in a Dakota back to Down Ampney, Glos, and subsequently Bill Langford provided transport back to Scampton. P4-3rd A was in such a sorry state that it was classified DBR.

- 107 On 27th March, 14 aircraft were sent to Paderborn. (There should have been 15 but RF 205 (P4-2nd W), on its first operation, lost an engine on take off and had to abort after jettisoning its load). There was little opposition from either air or ground forces but dense cloud necessitated bombing only on sky markers.
- 108 On 17th March, F/Lt J A Turner was appointed Squadron Navigator Leader.

## SCAMPTON - APRIL 1945

- 109 The first week of April was also the last of the Squadron's nine most momentous weeks; moreover, during the month, significant changes occurred in its command structure; the 'turnover' of crews continued unabated; with the allied armies advancing swiftly eastwards, operational targets became fewer; because the Russian armies matched this progress, operation 'Thunderclap' was no longer required. All the signs indicated the prospect of an early end to the war in Europe - but there was still work to be done to bring it about.
- 110 Both 'A' and 'B' flights were affected by the arrival of a further 13 new crews and the departure of 11. (Full details appear in Appendix A8). This meant that over the space of under 7 weeks, whilst losing 24 mainly very experienced crews, no fewer than 27 new crews had to be absorbed. By the end of April the squadron was able to muster 40 crews - but only 5 of these had flown over 15 operations! The majority (24 crews) could claim less than 5. The dearth of experienced crews was matched by a lack of officers of Flight Lieutenant rank needed to provide suitable support as deputies for their Flight Commanders.
- 111 The supply of replacement aircraft showed an improvement over previous months (details of aircraft lost and acquired appear in Appendix B8 and B8a) but the maximum available strength levelled off at 18. Losses suffered by 'B' flight were not all compensated, with the quirky outcome that 'A' flight ended with 10 aircraft, whilst 'B' flight only had 8.

### THE NINTH MOMENTOUS WEEK - 29 MARCH TO 4 APRIL

- 112 April 1st is a special day of commemoration for the Royal Air Force and it was given added lustre on Sunday, 1st April 1945 in a switch from the use of MPH to knots. This offered few problems to the Navigators and Bomb Aimers union, but needed re-thinking by pilots, who all had to put in a few practice take-offs and landings to accustom themselves to the use of lower IAS (Indicated Air Speed) instrument readings. Many faster than needed landings were noted in the early part of the month - old habits die hard!
- 113 Somewhat less popular was the arrival of 625 Squadron from Kelstern to share in the use of RAF Scampton. For almost six

months, 153 Squadron had enjoyed monopoly status at Scampton and the necessary preparations for this move resulted in many changes to their well-ordered routine. Several NCO's had to vacate their accommodation (often a misappropriated OR's married quarter, cosily housing a whole crew) and occupy shared barrack dormitories. In order to make room for any more senior members of the incoming squadron some of the junior 153 Squadron officers were similarly required to move out of centrally heated mess rooms into rather less comfortable Officer's MQ's. Hangar and office space had to be surrendered to house 625 Squadron personnel. The airfield facilities were parcelled out to allow dispersal pans to be used intelligently. There was no open hostility but few crew members were happy at the resultant feeling of overcrowding, be it in the mess halls, the bars, the ante-rooms, the cinema, the link trainer, the bus queues for Lincoln, and many other places (including the increased competition at Station dances!).

- 114 Immediately after lunch on 3rd April, ten aircraft set off to attack Nordhausen - a town in the Hartz mountain region, which was home to the scientists and workers engaged on production of secret weapons in the nearby underground tunnels; work previously carried out at Peenemunde. Over the Continent, including the target area, there was 10/10 cloud cover up to 10,000 feet. The Master Bomber initially ordered crews to attack from 8,000 feet but soon realised this was useless and directed the force to bomb from above the clouds, using all available navigational aids. No results could be observed. Despite a total absence of fighters or flak, it was generally held to be a wasted effort. (Post-war research found that the attack successfully destroyed the main target - understood to be a military barracks - but at the time it was, unfortunately, occupied by concentration camp prisoners and forced workers of all nationalities.)

This attack was witnessed by the Station Commander, G/Capt Lloyd flying as a passenger in NX 556 ( P4 -3rd J), piloted by F/O Les Taylor. He instructed the crew (who were on their 29th op) to ignore him and behave as they normally would. F/Sgt Arthur Allan recalls that the Groupie was quite polite and friendly, but much to the crew's relief did not offer to fly it.

- 115 On April 4th the squadron was again ordered to supply 5 aircraft for 'Gardening' and every other available machine for a 'maximum effort' night attack on the oil refinery at Leutzkendorf. Take-off by the 12 crews was timed to allow this long flight to be made in complete darkness. Cloud over the target was slight, allowing accurate

marking and bombing, although results were later assessed as only moderate. The attack was delivered from 12,500 feet; above the light flak barrage, and below the heavy flak bursting at 15,000 feet! On returning to Scampton, crews encountered a low cloud base with limited visibility, but murky as it was, nothing could match the gloom pervading their debriefings, when they first learned of the loss of their popular commanding officer on his ill-fated 'Gardening' operation. (See para 87, last sub-para).

In his book 'Wingspan', S/Ldr John Gee relates how this particular operation repeatedly fluctuated between ON and OFF thereby underlining the precarious balance inherent in operational flying - had the operation not twice been 'scrubbed' W/Co Powley would not have been available to fly it. Fate determined otherwise. Strangely enough, the crew of F/Lt Winder (also lost that night) were in an identical position. F/O Tobin recalled that he was originally selected to fly this operation, but when it was first ordered his navigator was suffering from ear trouble and was refused medical clearance to fly. Consequently, F/Lt Winder and crew were put ON instead, and remained there even after the ear trouble had cleared up.

- 116 S/Ldr Rippingale temporarily assumed command of the squadron, pending the arrival of a new Wing Commander. To Whizz Wheeler's delight, he had one pleasant announcement to make - the reduction of the operational tour back to 30 ops. This meant that Whizz and his crew could now be regarded as 'tour expired'

### THE NEW LOOK SQUADRON

- 117 April 9th saw the arrival of Wing Commander Guy F Rodney, DFC AFC to take over command of the squadron. He had already completed two operational tours on bombers. Like his predecessor, he was a Canadian holding a regular commission in the RAF. One of his first tasks was to conduct a briefing of 17 crews (8 flying on their first operation) for an attack on Kiel that same night.
- 118 Kiel naval base faced the Baltic Sea. It housed three major shipyards as well as the Deutsche-Werk U-boat construction complex. With deep water channels and easy access to the North Sea via the Kiel canal, it represented the last bastion of German naval power. Conditions favoured the attackers - clear visibility enabled positive identification of both the primary and secondary target areas, enabling crews to carry out the Master Bomber's orders efficiently and



accurately. The major targets were extensively damaged, as were the battle cruisers 'Emden' and 'Admiral Hipper' - their sister ship 'Admiral Scheer' was hit and capsized. The Luftwaffe created a celestial 'flarepath' (a system of marking with aerial flares, either side of the approaching bomber stream, to enable fighters lurking in the darkness outside the flarepath to swoop in to mount beam attacks against any bomber silhouetted by the opposite line of flares - and to be gone again before the Air Gunners could pick them up). Fortunately, no back-up fighters appeared.

- 119 On April 10th, the target selected was the town of Plauen, which lay to the south-west of Zwickau, about 20 miles from the Czechoslovakian border. Although not code-named as such, it could well have formed part of the "Operation Thundertrap" programme, since the primary target was the rail marshalling yard. With the advancing Russians still 100 miles away, the squadron contributed 15 aircraft, who, despite some haze blurring the T/Is over the target, were able to make a concentrated and accurate attack-aptly described by bombaimer F/Sgt Norman Fenerty, flying in RA 582 (P4-2nd L) piloted by fellow Canadian F/O Vernon Martin, as a "good prang".
- 120 The whole squadron was intrigued by being ordered up on 13th April to practice low level flying and map-reading. No crew needed second bidding to comply, and great fun ensued at sometimes belting around at the official height of 400 feet - but frequently much lower. Despite some speculation over the purpose of this practice, no official announcement or explanation was forthcoming.
- 121 The 13 crews attending briefing on 14th April could be excused their excitement on realising their target was to be Berlin. It mattered not that they would actually attack Potsdam - a pleasant suburb of the German capital - Berlin would appear in their logbooks. In fact, this was the first time since March 1944 that 4-engined Bomber Command aircraft would enter the Berlin defence zone. It was also the last - Russian troops would be fighting in the city's eastern approaches on 18th April and would completely encircle it by the 25th.

Clear skies east of the Rhine ensured ready identification of the target - nominally barracks and railway yards - and aided by accurate Pathfinder marking, combined with the absence of night-fighters or serious flak, bombing proved devastating. However, some crews

could not resist the understandable temptation to deposit their bombs on Berlin city itself.

- 122 Targets were now proving elusive. On many days the squadron was stood down, occupying the time on honing various skills, so it was a relief to be ordered to attack the island of Heligoland on 18th April. By 'borrowing' an aircraft from 625 Squadron, 153 Squadron was able to despatch 19 crews; this included 5 undertaking their first operation, 2 (F/Os Sinnema and Tobin) completing their tours, and W/Co Reddick (from HQ 1 Group) making a 'guest' appearance with the crew of F/O Red Penman. The 'payload' for each aircraft was an unprecedented 14,000lbs weight of high explosive bombs.

As he trundled down the runway, throttles set to give 3,000 rpm, boost at plus 14lb/sq.in. (the maximum), flaps down 20 degrees, painfully trying to build up enough speed to lift his heavily laden machine off the ground, F/O Johnnie Johns ruminated that none of the 450-odd flying hours spent in training had taught, or even touched upon, this crucial technique. Just as he was running out of runway he finally became airborne, alarmingly close to the boundary hedge, still pondering whether or not he would clear the towers of Lincoln Cathedral. Obviously, he did.

The operation proved to be little more than a training exercise. Perfect weather meant clear skies all the way; the target was visible from 30 miles out. The attack was intense, accurate and lethal. Slight flak soon stopped. The fighter escort of Mustangs and Thunderbolts proved superfluous.

- 123 S/Ldr J C Day and crew joined the squadron on 18th April to replace S/Ldr John Gee as Commander, 'B' flight.

- 124 On Sunday, 22nd April, the squadron provided 15 aircraft for an attack on the city of Bremen. At briefing, crews were told that British forces surrounded the city, and that particular care must be taken to observe the instructions of the Master Bomber (who would be in close touch with the Army Commander, XXX Corps) to avoid the risk of bombing our own troops.

The squadron flew in a loose gaggle and reached Bremen at 1800 hours, to find the target area obscured by low cloud, mixing with the smoke and dust caused by the preceding first wave of 195 Lancasters of No. 3 Group. Together with the rest of Nos 1 and 4 Groups the

Squadron was ordered to circle, only to be instructed at 18.12 hours to abandon the operation and return to base with their bombs.

On the outward journey, Sgt Jack Western, sitting in the rear turret of RA 582 (P4 - 2nd L) was exchanging hand signals with his opposite number (and room mate) F/Sgt Cameron Booty (RCAF), flying in ME 424 (P4 - 2nd N) when a solitary anti-aircraft gun put up five shells. The first two rattled (but did not hit) 'L'. The third burst between the two aircraft, and one of the others hit 'N'squarely in the H2S bulge. The aeroplane came apart, the mid-upper gunner free-falling alone; he clearly had no time to grab his parachute. The severed rear end of the plane fell, turning over and over. The hapless rear gunner was trapped by centrifugal force and had no chance of getting out. Other Squadron members watched as the front portion fell in a flat spin, resembling a dying Autumn leaf, until it crashed into the waters of the Jadebussen (Jade Bay)

F/O Arthur (Cocky) Cockcroft and his crew, who had gained a reputation for repeatedly being the first to reach base after an operation, died instantly.

- 125 On 25th April (the day that the Russian and American armies met on the River Elbe) at the distinctly unsocial hour of 2.30 am, crews were briefed to attack Hitler's personal Alpine hideout- the "Eagles Nest" located at Berchtesgarden. The object was two-fold; to serve notice to the so-called Werewolf movement that they would be ill-advised to try and create a southern stronghold, dedicated to further resistance; and hopefully, to catch the Fuehrer at home. The squadron was led by W/Co Rodney - who had to abort the mission, due to S/I engine failure on LM 550 (P4 - C) - but unknown to him (and most others) he was well represented by his Gunnery, Navigation and Bombing Leaders, who quite unofficially, smuggled themselves aboard ME 485 (P4-3rd D), piloted by F/O Don Freeborn, before take-off. In the event, apart from its propaganda value, the attack was inconclusive. Poor weather conditions over the Alps, allied to recent snowfalls which distorted identification of landmarks, and confusion caused when the gaggle leader failed to turn at the correct point, all resulted in aircraft bombing on diverse headings. Some of the nearby barracks were hit, but the primary target was untouched.

## A REVIEW OF THE SQUADRON'S EFFORTS

- 126 Although not appreciated at the time, Berchtesgarden was the squadron's final bombing raid. During its 201 days existence it had despatched 1,057 sorties (and prepared for many more), dropped 4,654 tons of bombs and sown 204 sea-mines. Sadly it had lost 147 young men; only 6 aircraft of those originally acquired (5 of them held by 'A' flight) survived. Ahead lay an uncertain future - including the grim prospect of having to continue the battle in the Far East.
- 127 The international flavour of the squadron's manpower arose from the fact (as mentioned at para 12 ) that aircrew were provided by the British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Royal Air Forces. Moreover, other nationalities were represented; among the RCAF were men from the USA : the RNZAF included Maoris : the RAF had South Africans, Dutch, West Indians, and Southern Irishmen, in addition to men from every part of the four home countries. Some of the "Colonials" mistakenly believed that because of conscription (officially the " Direction of Labour" ), British fliers had no choice in the matter. This was not so. Every aircrew member volunteered to undertake flying duties - in fact, many had first to relinquish the shelter afforded by a ' Reserved Occupation ' status, in order to do so.

The number of overseas members enriched , but could not alter, the fact that the Squadron was basically RAF. During its brief lifespan as a Bomber Squadron, 94 crews ( 658 men ) joined for duty. These comprised 483 RAF, 131 RCAF, 29 RAAF, and 15 RNZAF. At any one time over the winter of 1944/5, the 'proportionate spread' of both 'A' and 'B' flights was roughly five RAF to two RCAF - although towards Easter 1945, a considerable drop in the number of RCAF members produced a very different ratio.

- 128 A total of 82 crews ( 574 men ) comprising 408 RAF, 125 RCAF, 26 RAAF, and 15 RNZAF, flew operationally. However, the loss of 147 men ( or 25.6% of the total partaking ) during the final seven months of the war in Europe, underlines the perils they all faced, even at that late stage, when flying on bomber operations. As can be seen in the Squadron Roll of Honour, the losses were suffered somewhat unevenly, ie RAF 95 ( or 23.25% of its total strength ), RNZAF 2 ( one Maori- 13.3%), RAAF 3 (11.5%) and RCAF 47 (including two Americans ) ( giving the RCAF a loss rate of 37.6% ). The number lost from 'A' flight was 56; 'B' flight lost 91. A total of 15

men (6 RAF and 9 RCAF) survived after being shot down over Europe - strangely enough, all were from 'A' flight.

129 Aircraft losses followed a similar pattern. In all, 'A' Flight flew 22 Lancasters, losing 9 operationally (also 1 withdrawn). 'B' Flight flew 32 different machines, suffering the loss of 18 on operations (2 others were withdrawn). When hostilities ceased, 'A' Flight contained two "Centurions" (Lancasters that had flown at least 100 operations) - LM 550 (P4 - C) and ME 812 (P4 - F) both of which, together with NG 218 (P4 - 2nd B), recorded over 50 operations with 153 Squadron.

## OPERATION 'MANNA' - APRIL/MAY 1945

- 130 Although much of Holland was safely in allied hands, a large pocket in Western Holland (including Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and other major cities) was still occupied by the Germans; food stocks were exhausted and the civilian population - especially the old, sick and young - were dying from starvation. Foreseeing this situation, Allied contingency planners eventually devised a system whereby food could be air-dropped by bombers, using panniers (called 'blocks') four of which could be fitted in a standard Lancaster bomb bay. Each block held 71 sacks (giving a total weight of 1254 lbs per block) variously containing sugar, dried egg powder, margarine, salt, cheese, tinned meat, flour, dried milk, coffee, cereals, tea, high vitamin chocolate, potatoes, etc.- all supplied from the Ministry of Food's reserve stockpiles. Before the introduction of 'blocks', a variety of possible delivery systems had been devised by squadrons acting individually. As is customary, user trials were flown, one of which involved 153 Squadron. Fl/Lt Bill Langford recalls:-

"On April 21st, I flew 'V' Victor to Netheravon, carrying a mixture of goodies, in sacks, slung from ropes on a Heath Robinson device in the bomb bay. We were to demonstrate to an assembly of RAF and Army brass, just how food would be dropped to the starving Dutch. Approaching the airfield at around 200 feet, wheels and flaps down for minimum flying speed, we lined up the white cross on the ground, and pressed the button..... when it all went wrong! Sacks of peas, tins of Spam, and all sorts of containers rained from the sky, scattering the assembled brass in all directions. Not what was envisaged! However, 'It was all right on the night'."

A similar presentation also took place at Scampton after lunch on April 21st when F/O 'Red' Penman, flying PA 264 (P4-3rd O), successfully carried out a demonstration drop on the airfield in front of Marshall of the Royal Air Force, Lord Trenchard, who was visiting the station that day. The MRAF (the first ever Chief of Air Staff, known as "the father of the RAF") later gave a rousing pep talk to the whole of 153 and 625 Squadrons.

- 131 Negotiations with the German Occupying Authority for a limited truce to allow food drops to begin, assumed a critical state as the death toll rapidly mounted. At Scampton, as on other stations involved, crews practised low flying techniques and simulated drops. Eventually, on Sunday 29th April, the codeword "Operation Manna" was issued; this was an inspired choice, for not only does it stand for "bread from

Heaven" but it means exactly the same in Dutch. 153 Squadron promptly despatched 18 aircraft (each carrying 284 bags of food) to a dropping zone at The Hague - all following drops were on Dundigt Racecourse, Over the ten-day period ending 8th May, the Squadron mounted 111 sorties, shared between all 40 of the active crews, to successfully deliver 271 (long) tons of life-saving provisions (for details see Appendices D8 and E8). In total, the RAF dropped 7,029.9 (long) tons; the USAAF contributed 4,155.8 (short) tons.

Many crews were initially apprehensive over the realisation that they would be flying, in broad daylight, at very low level, in full view of the German A/A defences, whose gun barrels could be seen to be tracking their flight. However, the reception by the beleaguered Dutch people, who flocked on to the streets, the rooftops and all open spaces, to wave anything to hand, calmed all fears. Subsequent sorties were flown with panache, at much lower levels, while crews (most of whom parcelled up their flying rations and attached them to "parachutes" made of handkerchiefs, as personal gifts for the children) exchanged waves with those below. After dropping their loads, many pilots continued to fly at very low altitudes, wagging their wings and 'buzzing' the crowds to give them a thrill, with their bomb-aimers flashing "V" for victory on the Aldis signalling lamp. It became a carefree, cheerful occasion for the aircrews, and many could not believe that Manna drops were to be allowed to count towards an operational tour.

For the Dutch population, the food drops signalled something even more significant than an end to starvation. They saw the streams of bombers flying extremely low in broad daylight; they saw that the German forces did not open fire upon these vulnerable targets. They were quick to draw the obvious conclusion (oddly, not so apparent to aircrews) - that this historic event heralded the ending of the war! They hailed the fliers as their "liberators". The Dutch have never celebrated V/E day. For them, there is only the one, unforgettable celebration - the 7th May - a national holiday - which they very rightly call 'Liberation Day'.

- 132 On 8th May - V/E day - which marked the end of warfare in Europe, the Squadron made its final Manna drops.

## OPERATION 'EXODUS' - MAY 1945

- 133 With the cessation of hostilities, urgent action was needed to secure the repatriation of British and Commonwealth prisoners-of war (POW's) who were scattered all across the Continent. The Dakotas of Transport Command, which were ferrying supplies to the forward units, were used to bring POW's back to Brussels. Lancasters of Bomber Command were then employed to bring the men back to British airfields. In all, 74,000 men returned this way.

Many of the passengers had been taken POW before the advent of four-engined bombers, and they were suitably impressed with what they saw - and if the rudimentary conditions they had to endure, sitting bunched together on the bare metal floor of the aeroplane, fell short of that in any airliner, they generally rated it as the best flight they would ever make!

153 Squadron flew on two of these missions - on 11th May (12 aircraft) which returned via Ford; and on 26th May (15 aircraft) coming back via Dunsfold. Each aircraft carried 24 passengers plus a reduced crew of 6.

Amongst those partaking on 26th May was Bill Langford in LM 550 (P4-C), which, prior to its transfer from No.166 Squadron, was known as "B-Beer" with a beer-barrel decorating its nose! Following its 100th operation, Bill arranged for 100 small foaming tankards to be added alongside the barrel.

Coincidentally, and unaware of each others' presence, one of the waiting POW's was his elder brother, Richard, who, like his fellow "Pongoes", was walking around inspecting those enormous flying machines with four engines and two tails, when he chanced upon one with a beer barrel and pots of beer decorating its nose. He said to a companion "I wonder if that has anything to do with my kid brother?", not realising that it was so. At the same time Bill was wandering around the airfield, wondering if his POW big brother could possibly be there. There was no story-book ending. They did not meet.

## RE-ORGANISATION OF NO.153 SQUADRON

- 134 With the ending of the war in Europe, both the Australian and Canadian governments ordered the repatriation of their aircrews, thereby severing abruptly the tremendous comradeship that had



been mutually shared, both in dire moments of action and in many happy hours of relaxation on the ground. Given the mixed composition of many crews, this resulted in a major reshuffle, because many of the remaining RAF and RNZAF personnel had to be re-crewed to fill the vacancies. However, not all could be absorbed, because, to add further disruption, the Squadron's effective strength was simultaneously reduced to 32 crews. Suffering particularly from this re-shuffle was the wholly RAF element of Flight Engineers and Pilot F/E's, ten of whom were declared surplus to requirements - as also were eleven Air Gunners. On the other hand, every Navigator was absorbed.

In the midst of all this upheaval, it would be easy to overlook the return to the Squadron on 7th May of F/O Joe Parker, shot down on 15th March (see para 102). He inherited S/Ldr Ripplingale's crew, when the latter was posted to a staff job in HQ 1 Group on completion of his second tour of ops.

As shown in Appendix A.9, four new crews (including that of S/Ldr 'Paddy' Flynn who took over command of "A" flight) reported during May, but not in time to partake in 'Manna'. May also saw a new adjutant - F/O (acting F/Lt) Gerry Brill - whose appointment enabled him to keep a close eye on his business in Leeds - an opportunity he enthusiastically embraced!

Details of the re-organised Squadron appear at Appendix A 10, which also records the number of operations credited and indicates aborted missions.

Similar details of individuals posted as 'tour-expired' and those 'declared surplus to requirements' are given at Appendix A 11.

- 135 To enable Bomber Command to participate in the attacks on Japan, a new group called "Tiger Force" was created. Although 153 Squadron was not chosen as part of this group, rumours abounded as throughout June and July all crews partook in an intensive flying training programme, designed to maintain high standards of readiness. Beginning the last week of June, a note of realism was introduced with a series of simulated daylight raids (code-named Exercise "Post-Mortem") on Flensburg, the purpose of which was to assess the capability of captured enemy early warning and radar systems. On each of five such occasions the squadron contributed eleven aircraft. Various tactical approaches resembling real attacks were adopted, including the use of 'Window' and enforced radio

silence. The sixth and final 'attack' was mounted on July 5th against Fredericia.

Some of the June/July training flights were officially designated as 'Ruhr cross-country' flights, but were quickly dubbed 'Cook's Tours' by aircrew as they presented an opportunity to fly reasonably low over the devastated areas of Germany to witness the damage caused by bombing. Up to four passengers were permitted; these often included ground crew personnel, both airmen and WAAF, as a means of expressing thanks for their contribution to the efficient daily running of the squadron.

Disposal of unwanted 30lb incendiary bombs was carried out in late July, August and early September, by dropping them into the North Sea and Cardigan Bay. In all, 45 sorties were required to clear the stockpile.

### THE RELEASE (DEMOB) SCHEME

- 136 To ensure an equitable method of demobilising 'hostilities only' servicemen, the Government introduced a system featuring a points scheme, based on age and length of active service, which was applied to all men, irrespective of rank, trade, or the uniform worn. However, in practice, each trade received individual treatment, so arranged that in general, aircrew were released much sooner than any other group (although allowance was made for skilled men to be claimed by their previous employers under special Class 'B' arrangements). The actual release documents, designed to facilitate a speedy passage through the demobilisation centre, comprised a multi-page booklet of considerable detail, together with a companion set required for local retention.

Each unit was required to nominate its own Release Officer, responsible for every aspect of the oppressive documentation involved. W/Co Rodney selected F/O Johns (mainly because of his Civil Service administrative background) and thereafter used him as an unofficial, hardworked, assistant adjutant.

The first persons to be released were F/O J.M.Sharp - Pilot (Class 'A') and F/Lt C.G.Alexander - Navigator (Class 'B'); both on 8th August.

## OPERATION 'DODGE'

- 137 British Servicemen trying to return from the Mediterranean found that damaged roads and railways created enormous bottlenecks, causing lengthy delays on any cross-continental journey. Shipping was mostly committed to supplying the Far East campaign. Many of the Servicemen had been abroad for years without home leave; an increasing number were due for demobilisation. One obvious solution was to employ Lancasters as troop carriers. Thus was born "Operation Dodge" (a sly and cruel reference to the unjustified label of "D-Day Dodgers" coined by those involved in the Normandy D-Day landings)

Two Italian airfields were deemed suitable for use (Pomigliano/Naples and Bari). 153 Squadron was allotted to the former. A pattern of operation was quickly established. The outward journey flew south over France, reaching the Mediterranean at Marseilles (between the Alps and the Pyrenees) then east to Corsica and Elba before heading for Pomigliano - which lies north of Naples. The following day was a rest day, which allowed for sight-seeing around Naples (including Pompeii) and souvenir hunting.

The third day required an early call (3.30 am) and a hazardous ride in the back of a 3-ton lorry, narrowly avoiding horse-drawn, un-lighted, market-bound, farm wagons, traversing very bad roads, all in pitch darkness. On reaching the airfield, and re-united with their aircraft, crews met their 'payload' of twenty soldiers (plus their kitbags, which were stowed in the bomb bay). To avoid the searing heat of Italy in August, an early take-off was essential. The return journey re-traced the outward path as far as Lyons, when course was set for Dunkerque, Colchester and finally Glatton, where passengers were disembarked and, after undergoing Customs clearance, crews returned to their home stations.

Conditions for the 20 passengers, seated only on blankets on the floor of the Lancaster aft of the main spar, were pretty grim. Throughout a journey of six-and-a-half hours they were huddled together, with no view of the world outside their metal surroundings, subjected to the unremitting noise of four Merlin engines. Some marginal relief was afforded by visits to the cockpit area during the flight, but not all chose to do so.

Over the period 2nd August to 14th September, 153 Squadron despatched 43 'Dodge' flights, bringing back 860 passengers. With

the exception of one aircraft (L) which was forced to stop-over a few days at Marseilles with engine trouble, all flights were uneventful. Crews soon became adept at changing from battle dress blues to tropical khaki outfits over the Med!

### 'H2S MARK IV'

- 138 In the inscrutable way of all Headquarters, 'someone' decreed that of all the 79 Bomber squadrons existing on V/E day, 153 Squadron was to be tasked to conduct service user trials of a brand-new, secret radar device known simply as "H2S Mark IV". This equipment was installed in five of 'B' flight's aircraft (P4 - 'O','P','R','T' and 'V') and, on 10th August, ten crews (seven from 'B' Flight) were nominated to carry out the work (their initiation had actually begun on 1st August). Their selection was guided by their low release numbers rather than any other factor. They were initially formed as a sub-section of 'B' flight and were led by F/Lt Jock Lennox. (Affected crews are indicated by a 'Y' beside the Pilot's name in Appendix A.10
- 139 Japan surrendered on 14th August. Within three months of V/J day, Bomber Command had disbanded ten of the fourteen squadrons in No.1 Group.

First to go was No. 153 Squadron. On Friday, 21st September, all personnel stationed at Scampton took part in a 'Disbandment of Squadron' parade. Members of 153 Squadron were inspected by the Air Officer Commanding, No.1 Group, following which a precis of the Squadron history was read out. The Squadron badge,(having been retrieved from the Wing Commander's safe) was carried on parade by the Assistant Adjutant, prior to him formally handing it over to the custody of a Group Staff Officer for onward transmission to the Air Ministry. The parade included three 'Founder Members' - W/O W.C. Harrison (W/Op - just one short of his second tour), F/Lt P.O. Baxter (Engr. Leader) and F/Lt R.W.Stewart (Signals Leader). The Squadron was declared 'stood down' pending its official date of disbandment (28th September 1945) in order to facilitate clearance of all personnel from R.A.F. Scampton.

### "Y" FLIGHT

- 140 The need to continue user trials on the H2S Mark IV was met by simply transferring all 10 crews of the sub-section of 'B' flight -

together with their 5 modified aircraft - to No.12 Squadron, stationed at RAF Binbrook. That this was only a temporary arrangement was conveyed in their revised title of 'Y' Flight. Although the aircraft were relettered from P4 to PH (and individually ME 384 became 'F'; NG 500 -'C'; ME 544 -'A'; PA 313 -'T'; leaving PA 264 as 'O') the Flight acted as a separate, independent unit, concentrating only on pressing ahead with the trial programme, much of which necessarily took place when the rest of the Squadron was stood down. The feeling of being independent, but united in effort, generated a real esprit de corps among the 70 men of 'Y Flight' - all from 153 Squadron.

- 141 The purpose of the trials was to examine the potential capacity of the H2S Mark IV in three areas, ie:-

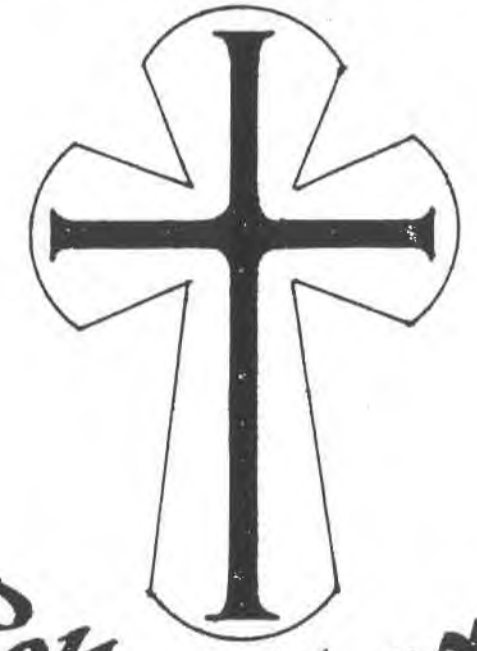
'Fixing'. As the Bomb Aimer took a photograph of the H2S screen his Navigator took a very accurate GEE fix - taken to the third decimal place - something rarely done before and possibly never since. It was customary to take at least 25 such fixes during a 3-hour flight.

'Wind-finding'. Unlike earlier models, the centre of the H2S could be moved manually up/down and sideways and by interpreting the various readings on a standard 'Dalton' Navigation Computer, an accurate wind direction/strength was easily found. Normally 10 readings were made in one hour.

'Bombing'. Having first determined the wind (and fed it to the standard Mk XIV Bomb Sight) the target was selected and pinpointed on the H2S screen. The Bomb Aimer, seated at the Navigator's side, gave the customary instructions (left left, steady, right, back a bit) to the Pilot and when the H2S indicated that they were on target he said "bombs gone" and took his photo - simultaneously, the Navigator noted the precise GEE fix.

- 142 Initially, flights centred on the Midland towns of Corby and Derby but extended to Portland Bill and Harwich before culminating in reconnaissances over London, Exeter, Liverpool and Clydeside. Each aircraft was flown some 200 hours - each crew contributing around 100 hours in wintry days and nights. The results of their labours were fed to the 'back-room boys' whose findings were not communicated to the crews. It was understood that the final trial would provide visual proof of the equipment's capability, by the dropping of live (practice) bombs on a derelict ship in the Wash - sadly, this was vetoed.

- 143 On conclusion of the trials, 'Y' Flight was disbanded and any crew not absorbed into 12 Squadron proper was posted out. The five aircraft were all scrapped. The last traces of No. 153 (Bomber) Squadron quietly disappeared.



*Roll of Honour*

## **No. 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON RAF ROLL OF HONOUR**

### **COMMEMORATING THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES WHILST ON OPERATIONAL FLIGHTS**

In time of war, an operational squadron is where boys grow into men. At the beginning they are aglow with the spirit of adventure, and willingly accept the challenge to prove themselves. Indeed, very many are actually afraid "it will all be over" before they can partake.

However, after a while, that first fine careless rapture fades. The job still remains to be done, despite mounting strain, both physical and mental, and increasing hazards. Inevitably crews become aware of the dangerous nature of operational flying, and harden themselves to face the facts reflected by steadily mounting casualty lists. Many begin to ponder when (not if) it will be their name that will appear. They school themselves to endure reality, and the only fear they allow is the fear that they may somehow fail. This is the dread that haunts brave men.

The highest form of courage is not absence of fear - that may indicate a defective imagination - but to know fear and to overcome it. Genuine courage recognises the dangers ahead, sees the dread possibilities which lie awaiting, but, nevertheless, resolutely pushes on. Perhaps the crews themselves summed it up best with their dictum - "Press on regardless".

The attached Roll of Honour commemorates those who did not make it back. It is fitting that their names will stir the memories of many readers. By deliberate intent, the list is presented alphabetically, without heed to rank, age, nationality or whatever.

The list is presented in three parts:-

Part I - The 17 cemeteries (in 6 countries) which contain marked graves

Part II - The exact location of the 99 men buried in known graves.

Part III - The 48 men with no known grave, whose names are recorded on the indicated panels of the Runneymede Memorial.

(All available information is given. Readers are requested to advise the Honorary Squadron Historian with any relevant additional details, to help complete this record).

## ROLL OF HONOUR - 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - PART I

Following is a list of the cemeteries containing the graves in which members of 153 Squadron, who died on active service, are known to lie.

(For ease of presentation, each cemetery has been allotted a "code letter", which appears on the main Roll of Honour, under the column headed 'buried at'.

Cross-reference between the two lists enables the precise location of individual graves to be determined).

<b>Code Letter</b>	<b>Name of Cemetery</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Country</b>
a	Reichswald Forest War Cemetery	Cleeves (or Kleve)	Germany
b	Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery	Berlin	Germany
c	Clichy New Communal Cemetery	Clichy, Paris	France
d	Durnbach War Cemetery	Durnbach, Bavaria	Germany
e	Shiregreen Cemetery	Sheffield	England
f	St. Pancras Cemetery	Finchley, London	England
g	Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery	Nijmegen	Holland
h	Stonefall Cemetery	Harrogate	England
j	Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery	Hautot-Sur-Mer	France
k	Cambridge City Cemetery	Cambridge	England
l	Limmer (Hanover) War Cemetery	Hannover	Germany
m	St. Mary Churchyard, Great Bircham	Norfolk	England
p	Prague War Cemetery	Prague	Czechoslovakia
r	Sage War Cemetery	Nr. Oldenburg	Germany
s	Becklingen War Cemetery	Becklingen	Germany
t	Tranebjaerg Churchyard	Isle of Samso	Denmark
v	Venray War Cemetery	Venray	Holland



## ROLL OF HONOUR - 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - PART II

Date	Cat.	Rank	Name	Age	Number		Buried at
06 Mar	N	F/O	ADLAM Reginald George	23	4212786	RNZAF	(p) Grave 2 C 4
14 Oct	AG	Sgt	ALLANSON Thomas		1590136	RAFVR	(a) Grave 16 D 5
13 Mar	P	F/O	AYRES Kenneth Albert DFC	25	161085	RAFVR	(t)
06 Mar	P	F/O	BAILEY William James	20	189698	RAFVR	(p) Grave 2 C 7
14 Oct	BA	F/O	BELLAMY Glenn Crawford	26	J/37834	RCAF	(a) Grave 16 D 9
22 Apl	AG	F/S	BOOTY Cameron Harrison	19	R/281134	RCAF	(r) Grave 8 C 2
03 Feb	N	F/O	BRODIE Warren Argo		J/38744	RCAF	(g) Grave 15 D 9
14 Oct	P	F/O	BROUILLETTE Joseph Ross	22	J/36348	RCAF	(a) Grave 20 G 13
21 Feb	W/Op	F/S	BURTON Harold James		1872241	RAFVR	(a) Grave 4 F 1
14 Feb	AG	F/S	CARYI Charles Joseph		R/183314	RCAF	(b) Grave 1 F 12
22 Apl	AG	F/S	CHAPMAN Kenneth F.	19	R/279088	RCAF	(s) Grave 14 F 3
29 Nov	N	F/S	CHORNOUS William R.	20	R/191275	RCAF	(a) Grave 4 B 16
02 Nov	FE	Sgt	CLARK Andrew	33	1826183	RAFVR	(a) Grave 2 D 4
22 Apl	P	F/O	COCKROFT Arthur Clarence		185326	RAFVR	(s) Grave 14 F 4
11 Mar	N	F/S	COLE Cecil		1621978	RAFVR	(a) Grave 1 B 7
28 Jan	AG	F/S	COLES James	22	1684124	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 23
13 Mar	AG	Sgt	COX Derrick	20	305065	RAFVR	(t)
17 Dec	FE	Sgt	DAVIES Edward Whelan	28	1880665	RAFVR	(c) Grave 16 13 1
29 Nov	AG	F/S	DAVIES Lorne Graham		R/211900	RCAF	(a) Grave 4 B 15
06 Mar	W/Op	Sgt	DIXON Jack	24	1463894	RAFVR	(p) Grave 2 C 8
28 Jan	N	F/S	DORMER John Francis	29	1603839	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 22
14 Oct	P	P/O	DRAPER Cornelius George	30	184671	RAFVR	(a) Grave 16 C 15
02 Jan	BA	F/S	DURLING Maurice (of USA)	22	R/195383	RCAF	(h) Grave H D 20
22 Apl	BA	F/S	DUTTON Kenneth Lister	21	1623460	RAFVR	(s) Grave 14 F 1
02 Jan	AG	F/S	EBERLE Arthur Jason	21	R/201129	RCAF	(h) Grave H D 19
22 Jan	W/Op	Sgt	EVANS Robert	21	1671641	RAFVR	(v) Grave 7 B 1-2
02 Nov	AG	Sgt	FAHSELT Richard Elmer	20	R/254327	RCAF	(a) Grave 2 D 6
28 Jan	AG	F/S	FERGUSON Harold	23	989177	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 24

17 Mar	AG	Sgt	FINCH Edward	22	1865655	RAFVR	(d) Grave 11 A 17
17 Mar	FE	F/S	FINLAYSON John Kennedy	23	1314004	RAFVR	(d) Grave 8 G 26
29 Nov	AG	Sgt	FITZPATRICK Lambert J.		R/210722	RCAF	(a) Grave 4 C 2
28 Jan	BA	F/S	FLETCHER Edward Walter	21	1549302	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 21
02 Nov	W/Op	Sgt	FREEBORN John William	20	1891501	RAFVR	(a) Grave 2 D 5
22 Jan	FE	Sgt	GEORGE David Burrows	22	1796593	RAFVR	(v) Grave 7 B 4
11 Mar	P	F/O	GIBBINS Eric William		173411	RAFVR	(a) Grave 1 B 4
11 Mar	AG	Sgt	GOUGH Bernard Terence	20	1807770	RAFVR	(a) Grave 1 B 2
14 Oct	AG	F/S	GREENE William		R/224448	RCAF	(a) Grave 20 G 11
22 Jan	AG	F/S	HAMILTON Gerald Burton	18	R/280563	RCAF	(v) Grave 7 B 1-2
13 Mar	W/Op	F/S	HEAD Dennis	20	1867797	RAFVR	(t)
17 Dec	N	F/O	HETHERINGTON George D.F.	23	J/38232	RCAF	(j) Grave N 26
02 Jan	AG	F/S	HOSKINS Donald Dunk	19	R/259913	RCAF	(h) Grave H E 1
06 Mar	FE	Sgt	HOWARD James	27	1898834	RAFVR	(p) Grave 2 C 10
28 Jan	FE	F/S	JENKINSON Peter Raeburn DFM	23	1826262	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 20
28 Jan	P	F/O	JONES Owen Meredith C. DFC	32	176235	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 19
29 Nov	W/Op	W/O	JONES Raymond		990103	RAFVR	(a) Grave 4 C 3
17 Mar	AG	Sgt	KEENLEYSIDE William Scott	22	1826847	RAFVR	(d) Grave 11 A 16
14 Oct	W/Op	F/S	KERFOOT Albert Henry		1473056	RAFVR	(a) Grave 16 C 10
14 Oct	BA	F/S	LAMMAS Robert Charles E.		1581207	RAFVR	(a) Grave 16 C 13
14 Oct	AG	Sgt	LAWRENCE Neville	19	1818865	RAFVR	(a) Grave 16 C 14
17 Dec	BA	F/O	LECKIE John Lyle	27	J/38412	RCAF	(j) Grave N 8
14 Oct	W/Op	F/O	LINDSAY James		J/19994	RCAF	(a) Grave 16 D 8
01 Mar	W/Op	F/S	LIVICK John Edward		1135648	RAFVR	(k) Grave 15102
15 Mar	BA	F/O	LODGE Howard Johnson	24	164707	RAFVR	(l) Grave 2 E1-11
02 Nov	AG	Sgt	LORD Clifford Allen		R/273608	RCAF	(a) Grave 2 D 7
02 Nov	N	F/S	McCANN Joseph Maurice A.		R/203261	RCAF	(a) Grave 2 D 3
02 Nov	P	F/O	McCORMACK Robert J.	21	J/88840	RCAF	(a) Grave 2 D 9
14 Feb	N	F/O	MacDONALD Lorne Albert	19	J/42188	RCAF	(b) Grave 1 F 16

21 Feb	FE	Sgt	MARTIN Arthur	28	1160427	RAFVR	(a) Grave 4 E 15
06 Mar	AG	Sgt	MEECHAM William Boyd	19	3022129	RAFVR	(p) Grave 2 C 6
28 Jan	W/Op	F/S	MILBURN John Wilson	22	1567899	RAFVR	(d) Grave 5 H 25
06 Mar	BA	F/O	MORRIS Edward John S.	21	164354	RAFVR	(p) Grave 2 C 5
29 Nov	BA	F/S	MORRISON Archibald Frew		R/133023	RCAF	(a) Grave 4 C 4
21 Feb	AG	P/O	NEIL Edric Stephen	19	J/95455	RCAF	(a) Grave 4 E 16
15 Mar	FE	P/O	NEVENS John Joseph	22	190971	RAFVR	(l) Grave 2 E1-11
22 Jan	AG	Sgt	O'GORMAN Thomas		1901574	RAFVR	(v) Grave 7 B 1-2
14 Oct	FE	Sgt	PANTHER Arnold John P.	19	1880849	RAFVR	(a) Grave 16 C 11
17 Mar	P	P/O	PARSONS Peter John	23	188557	RAFVR	(d) Grave 8 G 27
22 Apl	FE	Sgt	PHILPOT D.J.		1684876	RAFVR	(s) Grave 14 F 2
14 Oct	N	F/O	PICARD Alfred Alexander		J/37732	RCAF	(a) Grave 16 D 10
02 Jan	N	F/S	POGSON Charles Herman	21	R/193831	RCAF	(h) Grave H E 2
22 Apl	N	F/S	POORE Cameron Harrison	21	1587647	RAFVR	(r) Grave 8 C 1
29 Nov	P	F/Lt	POW William Renton	22	122734	RAFVR	(a) Grave 4 B 14
15 Mar	AG	F/S	PRESTON Arthur Wallace		R/281135	RCAF	(l) Grave 2 E1-11
17 Mar	BA	Sgt	QUINTON Albert Reginald	25	914247	RAFVR	(d) Grave 8 G 28
22 Jan	N	Sgt	RABIN Alfred Jack	22	1804931	RAFVR	(v) Grave 7 B 1-2
02 Jan	P	F/O	REID Daniel Clifford	22	J/89185	RCAF	(h) Grave H D 18
01 Mar	P	F/O	RHODES Jack	25	171812	RAFVR	(m) Grave 1 4 8
02 Jan	FE	Sgt	RICHARDS Reginald Charles		1398924	RAFVR	(f) Grave 5H 164
02 Nov	BA	F/S	ROBERSTON Clifford Conrad		R/182689	RCAF	(a) Grave 2 D 2
29 Nov	FE	Sgt	SAMUEL John Charles		1853730	RAFVR	(a) Grave 4 B 13
17 Dec	P	F/O	SCHOPP Harold (of USA)	26	J/89018	RCAF	(j) Grave N 9
11 Mar	BA	P/O	SHIELD William Leonard	21	196126	RAFVR	(a) Grave 1 B 1
06 Mar	AG	Sgt	SIMPSON Walter	19	3020020	RAFVR	(p) Grave 2 C 9
15 Mar	N	F/O	SMALL George Henry	20	J/41413	RCAF	(l) Grave 2 E1-11
22 Jan	BA	F/O	SMITH Matthew Arnold		J/40650	RCAF	(v) Grave 7 B 3
17 Mar	W/Op	F/S	SWAP Morgan		429052	RNZAF	(d) Grave 8 G 29
02 Jan	W/Op	Sgt	TAYLOR Roy	19	1590841	RAFVR	(e) Grave E 4869

15 Mar	W/Op	P/O	TAYLOR Robert		J/95507	RCAF	(l)	Grave 2 E1-11
13 Mar	FE	Sgt	TAYLOR William Charles	24	1897176	RAFVR	(t)	
21 Feb	P	P/O	THORNE Peter	22	184358	RAFVR	(a)	Grave 4 E 14
17 Mar	N	Sgt	WAGER Sydney Derrick	20	1627794	RAFVR	(d)	Grave 11 A 15
14 Oct	AG	Sgt	WATKINSON Dennis Robert		1863421	RAFVR	(a)	Grave 16 C 12
11 Mar	FE	Sgt	WEST Edward Thomas		1247383	RAFVR	(a)	Grave 14 A 4
14 Oct	N	Sgt	WILKINSON Cecil		1684691	RAFVR	(a)	Grave 16 C 9
15 Mar	AG	Sgt	WILLIAMS Leo		553298	RAF-Reg	(l)	Grave 2 E1-11
14 Feb	AG	WO1	WILSON John Howard		R/130331	RCAF	(b)	Grave 1 F 12
13 Mar	AG	Sgt	WILSON Robert	20	1597046	RAFVR	(t)	
22 Jan	P	F/O	WINDER Kenneth William	33	53989	RAF-Reg	(v)	Grave 7 B 5
22 Apl	W/Op	F/S	WOOD Frank	21	1107638	RAFVR	(r)	Grave 8 B 13

## ROLL OF HONOUR - 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - PART III

### THE RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL, COOPERS HILL, EGHAM, SURREY

Inscribed at the Runnymede Memorial, which is located between Windsor and Staines, are the names of over twenty thousand Airmen who have no known grave. Included are the undermentioned from No. 153 (Bomber) Squadron.

Date	Cat	Rank	Name	Age	Number		Recorded On
23 Jan	W/Op	WO	BATEUP John Edwin	22	424283	RAAF	Panel 283
01 Mar	AG	F/S	BICKNELL Terence James		1802233	RAFVR	Panel 270
04 Apl	AG	Sgt	BIRRELL Ian Ashley	19	1823774	RAFVR	Panel 273
04 Apl	AG	F/O	BLAKE Arthur Samuel		54690	RAF-Reg	Panel 266
16 Jan	P	F/O	BYERS Clyde Willis	21	J/88732	RCAF	Panel 278
01 Mar	N	F/O	CLARK Phillip Charles H.	28	163521	RAFVR	Panel 266
04 Apl	W/Op	F/S	COFFEY John Bracken	27	1062192	RAFVR	Panel 270
11 Mar	W/Op	F/S	CRADDOCK Sydney	20	1680404	RAFVR	Panel 270
16 Jan	W/O	WO1	CROW Robert King		R/124020	RCAF	Panel 281
23 Jan	BA	F/S	CULLEN Charles Leslie	24	1439614	RAFVR	Panel 270
01 Mar	AG	F/S	CUTHBERTSON Hugh	28	R/257639	RCAF	Panel 281
04 Apl	W/Op	W/O	DICKSON Andrew Stanley	21	425834	RAAF	Panel 283
16 Jan	AG	F/S	FRANK Michael	21	R/174852	RCAF	Panel 281
03 Mar	P	F/O	GREGOIRE Leo Joseph R.		J/8739	RCAF	Panel 279
04 Apl	BA	F/O	GRIFFITH Edward Owen	35	159139	RAFVR	Panel 267
14 Feb	P/FE	F/S	HEADY John Joseph O'Brien		1615776	RAFVR	Panel 271
04 Apl	BA	F/S	HIGGINS William		1497198	RAFVR	Panel 271
16 Jan	BA	F/S	IRVING Fredrick Cleveland	23	R/174852	RCAF	Panel 282
23 Jan	FE	Sgt	JAMES Sydney Strettle	39	1869987	RAFVR	Panel 275
03 Mar	FE	Sgt	JAMES William Leslie	23	941154	RAFVR	Panel 275
23 Jan	P	F/Lt	JONES Alan Edgar DFC	26	47423	RAF-Reg	Panel 265
16 Jan	FE	Sgt	KELLEHER John Barry M.		1796693	RAFVR	Panel 275
01 Mar	FE	Sgt	KINGDOM Melvin Francis	20	1897641	RAFVR	Panel 275
03 Mar	BA	WO2	McCOY Kenneth Lloyd D.		R/143248	RCAF	Panel 281

23 Jan	N	F/S	McDONELL Jack James	20	428340	RAAF	Panel 284
03 Mar	W/Op	WO	McGREGOR Douglas Scott DFM		976183	RAFVR	Panel 269
13 Mar	N	F/S	McMINN Reginald John	22	1565939	RAFVR	Panel 272
16 Jan	N	F/S	McLENAGHAN Eric Charles	20	1577073	RAFVR	Panel 272
04 Apl	AG	F/S	MADDEN Charles	25	1365066	RAFVR	Panel 272
14 Feb	P	F/Lt	MILLS Clement Robert	27	J/6675	RCAF	Panel 278
11 Mar	AG	Sgt	MITCHELL John	21	1675573	RAFVR	Panel 270
04 Apl	AG	F/S	NEAL Roy	23	1358579	RAFVR	Panel 272
04 Apl	P	W/Com	POWLEY Francis Sidney (of Canada) DFC AFC	29	39601	RAF-Reg	Panel 264
03 Mar	AG	F/S	SABINE John Ernest	20	R/201885	RCAF	Panel 282
04 Apl	FE	Sgt	SADDLER Charles Frank	24	1869776	RAFVR	Panel 276
03 Mar	N	WO2	SANDOMIRSKY Marvin Max		R/181716	RCAF	Panel 281
14 Oct	FE	Sgt	SCAMMEL Arthur		1853075	RAFVR	Panel 237
16 Jan	AG	F/S	SHILLIDAY Robert Charles		R/174852	RCAF	Panel 282
23 Jan	AG	Sgt	SIMPSON Albert		1238641	RAFVR	Panel 276
04 Apl	N	F/S	SIMS Leslie George	21	1394295	RAFVR	Panel 272
14 Feb	BA	F/O	STANZEL Ross Samuel	20	J/42702	RCAF	Panel 280
5 Apl	FE	Sgt	THOMSON George Edward	19	1825993	RAFVR	Panel 277
23 Jan	AG	Sgt	TRAFFORD Reuben Victor		638898	RAFVR	Panel 277
04 Apl	N	F/O	TURNER Leonard Carlisle		160755	RAFVR	Panel 268
01 Mar	BA	F/O	WEBB Donnart George		159140	RAFVR	Panel 268
03 Mar	AG	P/O	WEBBER William Waldemar	28	J/94336	RCAF	Panel 281
14 Feb	W/Op	Sgt	WICKS William Henry	19	1866506	RAFVR	Panel 277
04 Apl	P	F/Lt	WINDER Arthur Joseph		64893	RAFVR	Panel 266

### THE FORMATION OF No. 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON

The "Founder Members" comprised the 27 crews transferred in from No.166 Squadron; they are mentioned in paragraphs 8 and 12 and were as follows:-

(Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).)

#### "A" FLIGHT

Pilot	S/Ldr Rippingale T.	F/Lt Jones A.E.	F/O Kuyser W.C.
F/Eng	Sgt Taylor R.C.	Sgt James S.S.	P/O Cockerill A.J
B/A	F/O Howling H.L.	Sgt Cullen C.L.	F/O Fenn D.E.
Nav	F/O Coxon H.B.	F/Sgt McDonnall J.J.(A)	Sgt Wall T.
W/Op	F/O Edwards C.I.	Sgt Williams D.L.	F/Sgt Carbutt J.
MU/G	Sgt Lewington D.	Sgt Trafford R.V.	Sgt Greenacre D.
R/G	F/Sgt Craig W.	Sgt Simpson S.A.	Sgt Attwood F.T.
Pilot	F/O Taylor L.H.	F/O LaFlamme A.J.(C)	F/O Wheeler L.A.
F/Eng	Sgt Yearsley J.F.	Sgt Etherington F.	Sgt Morandi V.P.G.
B/A	F/Sgt Hows A.G.	F/Lt Monckton G.J.	F/O Durman E.C. (N/Z)
Nav	Sgt Allan A.	F/O McArthur G.(C)	Sgt Fish F.F.
W/Op	Sgt Thornton F.S	F/Sgt Schofield H.(C)	F/Sgt Turner W.I.H. (A)
MU/G	Sgt Hammacott F.C	Sgt Pollitt S.	Sgt Hodges A.
R/G	Sgt Hurst S.R.	Sgt Toogood F.	Sgt Scott A.
Pilot	F/O Searle J.	F/O Freeborn D.E.(C)	P/O Capper W.C. (N/Z)
F/Eng	Sgt Robinson D.	Sgt Morley D.A.R.	Sgt Sparvell L.W.
B/A	F/Sgt Wavish R.P.R.	Sgt Constable H.V.(C)	F/Sgt Bale G.B. (N/Z)
Nav	F/Sgt Thomasson W.	F/O Brodie W.A.(C)	F/Sgt Morris T.C.
W/Op	F/Sgt Hunt K.D.	Sgt Eastman J.A.(C)	Sgt Luckcraft G.
MU/G	Sgt Flavell W.T.	Sgt Stalley T.L.	Sgt Nunn L.M.
R/G	Sgt Thomas I.J.	Sgt McNamara J.C.(C)	Sgt Ramsay J.B.
Pilot	F/O Bishop G.R.(C)	F/O Holman W.H.(C)	F/O Potter G.B.
F/Eng	Sgt Syme J.S.B.	Sgt Martin A.	Sgt Woolley G.P.
B/A	F/O Charko Z.H.(C)	Sgt Reynolds V.S.(C)	F/O Thomas W.H.
Nav	F/O Jackson J.A(C)	F/O Taylor R.C.(C)	Sgt Boyle J.
W/O	Sgt Lott E.W.(C)	Sgt Burton H.J.	P/O Askew J.S.(A)
M/UG	Sgt Bolak T.F.(C)	Sgt Neil E.S.(C)	Sgt Smith D.
R/G	Sgt Dash R.E.(C)	Sgt Kall A.D.(C)	Sgt Hambrook H.J.
Pilot	F/Lt French M.B.	F/O Groves K.G.(A)	
F/Eng	Sgt Boyd A.	Sgt Clay E.	
B/A	Sgt Tigar G.F.A.	F/Sgt Selkirk R.R.(A)	
Nav	F/O Ogle L.P.(C)	F/Sgt McDonnell N.D.(A)	
W/Op	F/Sgt Fisher R.C.	F/Sgt Kirby H.B.J.(A)	
M/UG	Sgt Dulson J.R.	F/Sgt Healey W.C.(A)	
R/G	Sgt Cox R.V.	F/Sgt Foot W.H.J.	

## "B" FLIGHT

(Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).)

Pilot	F/Lt Legg D.D.	F/O Williams R.H.(N/Z)	F/O Willis J.E.(C)
F/Eng	Sgt Ross A.J.	Sgt Dickson J.	Sgt Horner J.G.
B/A	F/O Jones D.L.	F/Sgt Taylor A.H.	W/O Cumming T.M.(C)
Nav	F/O Henderson I.D.	P/O Duignan D.H.	F/O Boyce W.A.(C)
W/Op	F/Sgt Rawlings R.(C)	Sgt Crookes A.R.	F/O Pringle W.S.(C)
M/UG	Sgt Andrew J.A.	Sgt Heath A.R.	F/Sgt Stewart J.W.(C)
R/G	Sgt Peat R.	Sgt Carter J.S.	F/Sgt Sandys C.H.(C)
Pilot	F/O White J.H.F.	W/O Crane N.J.	F/O Jones O.M.C.
F/Eng	Sgt Thompson W.	Sgt Morris R.A.	Sgt Jenkinson P.R.
B/A	F/Sgt Amy P.R.(C)	Sgt Whitehead J.W.	F/Sgt Fletcher E.W.
Nav	Sgt Blackmore V.R.S	Sgt MacGregor I.D.	Sgt Dormer J.R.
W/Op	Sgt Cameron C.J.	F/Sgt Peel J.L.	Sgt Milburn J.W.
M/UG	F/Sgt Cardy W.A.(C)	Sgt Smith E.	Sgt Coles J.
R/G	Sgt Brilliant L.H.	Sgt Passant F.T.A.	F/Sgt Ferguson H.
Pilot	P/O Gibbins E.W.	F/O Gregoire L.J.R.(C)	P/O Mettam H.A.(A)
F/Eng	Sgt West E.T.	Sgt James W.L.	Sgt Simon F.W.
B/A	Sgt Shield W.L.	F/Sgt Cosby H.L.(C)	F/O Saladine K.R.(A)
Nav	Sgt Cole C.	F/Sgt Sandomirsky M.M.(C)	W/O Barton O.(A)
W/Op	Sgt Craddock S.	W/O Harrison W.C.	F/Sgt Evans W.T.(A)
M/UG	Sgt Gough B.	F/Sgt Sabine J.E.(C)	F/Sgt Lockyer C.S.(A)
R/G	Sgt Mitchell J.	F/Sgt Webber W.W.(C)	F/Sgt Kennedy S.G.(A)
Pilot	P/O Draper C.G.	P/O Grundy D.H.(C)	F/O Bolton F.B.(C)
F/Eng	Sgt Panther A.J.	Sgt King D.W.	Sgt James L.P.
B/A	Sgt Lammas R.C.E.	Sgt McLaughlan R.C.(C)	F/O Willis C.C.(C)
Nav	Sgt Wilkinson C.	F/Sgt Sowter R.T.(C)	F/O Kitching T.
W/Op	F/Sgt Kerfoot A.H.	Sgt Figg L.F.	W/O McAllister S.(C)
M/UG	Sgt Watkinson D.R.	Sgt Jarvis E.C.	F/Sgt McLeod F.C.(C)
R/G	Sgt Lawrence N.	Sgt Mackenzie E.J.	F/Sgt Kinsman D.R.(C)
Pilot	F/O Brouillette J.R.E.(C)		
F/Eng	Sgt Scammell A.		
B/A	F/O Bellamy G.C.(C)		
Nav	F/O Picard A.A.(C)		
W/Op	P/O Lindsay J.(C)		
M/UG	Sgt Greene W.(C)		
R/G	Sgt Allanson T.		



## Appendix A2

### POSTINGS IN DURING OCTOBER 1944:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
12	S/Ldr Gee J.W. DFC	Sgt Saddler G.C. Sgt Higgins W.	Sgt Sims L.G. F/S Dickson A.S.(A)	F/S Neal R. Sgt Madden C
21	F/O Morris P.H.(A)	Sgt Davis J.C. Sgt Gillies J.H (A)	F/S Kee K.A.(A) F/S Masters R.L.(A)	F/S Banden M.(A) F/S Griffin J.N.(A)
21	F/O McCormack R.J. (C)	Sgt Clark A. F/S Robertson C.(C)	Sgt McCann J.M.A.(C) Sgt Freeborn J.W.	Sgt Lord C.A. (C) Sgt Fahselt R.F.(C)
21	P/O Tobin T.P.(A)	Sgt Smart P.S. F/S Muggleton R.C.	Sgt Tilson A.F. F/S Rollason P.J.(A)	F/S Dolling W. Sgt Maloney P.J.(C)
23	P/O Dighton T.A.	Sgt Smith R. Sgt Rowbotham A.	Sgt Mckinlay K.S. Sgt Adamson G.	Sgt Tapper C. Sgt Brand K.C.
23	F/O Rhodes J.	Sgt Kingdom M.F. F/O Webb D.G.	F/O Clark P.C.H. Sgt Livick J.E.	Sgt Bicknell T.J. F/S Baulk W.J.
23	F/Lt Winder A.J.	Sgt Thompson G.E. F/O Griffith E.O.	F/O Turner L.C. Sgt Coffey J.B.	P/O Blake A.S. Sgt Birrell I.J.
29	P/O Byers C.W. (C)	Sgt Kelleher J.B. Sgt Irving F.C.(C)	Sgt McLenaghan E.C. W/O Crow R.K.(C)	Sgt Shilliday R.(C) Sgt Frank A.G.(C)
29	P/O Schopp H.H.(C)	Sgt Davies E.W. F/O Leekie J.L.(C)	F/O Hetherington D.(C) Sgt Taylor R.	Sgt Cuthbertson H (C) Sgt Pratt A.G.
29	F/O Sinnema H.	Sgt Daly T.A. F/S Porter E.F.W.	P/O Smith A.W. F/S Smith E.A.	Sgt Lally J. Sgt Wynne I.
30	F/Lt Holland J.P.	Sgt Beauchamp C.H. F/O Turner E.G.	Sgt Nattress R.M. Sgt Turner G.	F/Lt Burgoyne T. F/O Groves C.A.

### POSTINGS OUT DURING OCTOBER 1944

- 14 F/O Brouillette J.R. (C) and crew - 1st operation - Missing (Duisburg)
- 14 P/O Draper C.G. and crew - 1st operation - Missing (Duisburg)

## POSTINGS IN DURING NOVEMBER 1944:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
04	F/Lt Langford H.W.	Sgt. Thompson W.D. F/O Rea-Taylor B.	F/O McDonald D.S. F/S Jones T.E.	Sgt. Hallam D.W. Sgt Hawkins K.A.
12	F/Lt Dury A.E.	Sgt Woods D.A. F/O Dickinson C.	F/O Brand A.S. F/S Bourke K.A.	Sgt Gallacher J.M. P/O Strange K.W.
16	F/Lt Pow W.R.	Sgt Samuel J.C. F/S Morrison A.(C)	F/S Chornous W.R.(C) W/O Jones R.	Sgt Davies L.G. (C) Sgt FitzPatrick L (C)
16	P/O Reid D.C. (C)	Sgt Richards R.C. Sgt Durling M.(C)	Sgt Pogson C (C) Sgt Taylor R.	Sgt Hoskins D. (C) Sgt. Eberle A. (C)
23	F/Lt Firth L.K.(C)	Sgt Clowes P. F/S White R.W.(C)	F/O Denbeigh G (C) Sgt Jones W.A.	Sgt Laur L.E. (C) Sgt Lawrence G.L.(C)
28	F/O Purves R.W.(C)	Sgt Hardiman A.C. W/O Vollans J. (C)	F/O Burke W.M (C) F/S Storey J.A.(C)	Sgt Crowther J. F/S Woolmer A.G.(C)
30	P/O Ayres K. (DFC)	Sgt Taylor W.C. P/O Maine R.	Sgt McMinn R.J. Sgt Head D.	Sgt Wilson R. Sgt Cox D.

## POSTINGS OUT DURING NOVEMBER 1944:-

- 02 F/O McCormack R.J. (C) and crew - 1st operation - Missing - Dusseldorf
- 08 P/O Grundy D.H. (C) and crew - 4 operations - to 550 Squadron, North Killingholme
- 28 F/Lt Dury A.E. and crew -3 operations - to 150 Squadron, Hemswell (on Formation)
- 28 F/O Morris P.H.(A) and crew - 4 operations - to 150 Squadron, Hemswell (on Formation)
- 29 F/Lt Pow W.R. and crew - 1st operation - Missing - Dortmund
- 29 F/Lt Holland J.P. - 2 operations - injured. Admitted to hospital.

## POSTINGS IN DURING DECEMBER 1944:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
01	F/S Robertson R. (to replace F/Lt Holland - injured)			
02	F/O Winder K.W.	Sgt. George D.B. F/O Smith M.A.(C)	Sgt Rabin A.G. Sgt Evans R.	Sgt Hamilton G.B.(C) Sgt O'Gorman T.
03	P/O Haines E.W.	Sgt Smith K. Sgt Wilco F.J.	Sgt Sellars J.A. Sgt Moonan J.	Sgt Dear E.C.B. Sgt Taylor L.E.
09	F/O Cockroft A.	Sgt Philpot D.J. Sgt Dutton K.L.	Sgt Poore D.F. F/S Wood F.	Sgt Chapman K.F.(C) Sgt Booty C.H.(C)

## POSTINGS OUT DURING DECEMBER 1944:-

12	F/O Groves K.G. (A) and crew	30 operations	Tour completed
12	F/O Williams R.H. (NZ) and crew	30 operations	Tour completed
15	P/O Capper W.C. (NZ) and crew	30 operations	Tour completed
22	F/O LaFlamme A.J. (C) and crew	30 operations	Tour completed
29	F/O White J.H.F. and crew	30 operations	Tour completed
17	F/O Schopp H.H. (RCAF-of USA) and crew - 11 operations - Missing - Ulm		
30	F/S Robertson R. and crew of F/Lt Holland - 3 operations - Posted		

## POSTINGS IN DURING JANUARY 1945:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
02	F/O Sharp J.M.	Sgt.Broughton D.S. F/O Andrews B.	F/S Butler J.A.(C) W/O Youle E.P.(C)	Sgt.Evans S. F/S McKnight W.G.(C)
24	F/O Bailey W.J.	Sgt.Howard J. F/O Morris E.J.	F/O Adlam R.R.(N/Z) Sgt.Dixon J.	Sgt Meecham W.B. Sgt Simpson W.
24	F/O Parker E.J.	P/O Nevens J.J. F/O Lodge H.J.	F/O Small C.H.(C) W/O Taylor R.(C)	Sgt Preston A.W.(C) Sgt Williams L.
30	F/Lt McLarty A.(C)	F/S Huddlestone D. F/O Crawford D.(C)	F/O Stevenson J.M.(C) Sgt Calderbank J.	Sgt Peacock W. Sgt Brear C.
30	F/Lt Mills C.R.(C)	Sgt Sheady J.J.O. F/O Stanzel R.(C)	F/O MacDonald L.A.(C) Sgt Wicks W.H.	F/S Wilson J.H.(C) Sgt Caryi J.A.(C)

## POSTINGS OUT DURING JANUARY 1945:-

02 F/O Reid D.C.(C) and crew - 7 operations - All killed following collision over Sudbrooke, Lincolnshire

16 F/O Byers C.W.(C) and crew - 13 operations - Missing - Zeitz

22 F/O Winder K.W. and crew - 6 operations - Missing - Duisburg

22 F/Lt Jones A.E., D.F.C. and crew - 21 operations - Missing - Duisburg

28 F/O Jones O.M.C., D.F.C. and crew - 16 operations - Missing - Zuffenhausen

05 F/O Mettam H.A.(A) and crew - Posted to No.582 (P.F.F.) Squadron, Little Staughton

16 P/O Haines E.W. and crew - posted out

29 F/O Dighton T.A. and crew - Posted to No.582 (P.F.F.) Squadron, Little Staughton

## POSTINGS IN DURING FEBRUARY 1945:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
13	F/Lt Sudual D.A.	Sgt.Kane H.K. F/O Smith R.	Sgt. Bowry E.E. Sgt. Ridgers R.E.	F/S Murphy D. (A) Sgt. Denhurst.W.R.
16	W/O McCourt D.	Sgt Marriot J.B. F/O Hatton G.A.	F/O Neilson A. (N/Z) F/S Young D.G. (N/Z)	Sgt. Gardiner P.G. Sgt Edwards D.
17	F/O Martin V.S.(C)	Sgt. Baker D.N. Sgt. Fenerty N.(C)	F/O Eisen J (C) Sgt.Hauxwell H.L.	Sgt Gray R. (C) Sgt. Western J.
17	F/O Penman M.	Sgt. Nicholl T.B. F/O Murphy I.M.(C)	F/O Colman C.W. Sgt. Brown S.S.	F/O Richardson O.J. Sgt. Pepper J.H.
18	F/Lt Lennox J. DFC	F/S Sykes E. P/O Evans J.R.	F/O Fullelove R. DFM F/O Chalmers J.M.DFM	F/S Watt D. P/O Page D.A.
18	P/O Ryan M.F.A.(C)	Sgt Nelson W.I.P. Sgt. Dean W.J.(C)	F/S Read N.J. Sgt. Lowes T.M.	Sgt. Cameron J.A.(C) Sgt Albright E.W.(C)
23	F/Lt Speed P.W.	P/O Whittingstall F/O Meadows C.A.	F/O Bates R.H. (N/Z) F/O Hill C.D.	Sgt Fowler R.A. Sgt. Lloyd E.
25	F/Lt McWilliams (C)	Sgt.Muddle H.V. F/O Arnold J.P.(C)	F/O Mulligan E.H (C) F/S Smith W.J.(C)	F/O Ruse E. (C) F/O Taylor E. (C)

## POSTINGS OUT DURING FEBRUARY 1945:-

- 03 F/O Brodie W.A. (C) - Navigator - 7 operations - died of wounds
- 14 F/Lt Mills C.R. (C) and crew - 3 operations - Missing - Chemnitz
- 20 F/O Holman W.H. (C) and crew - 17 operations - Missing - Dortmund
- 28 P/O Ryan M.F.A. (C) - Pilot - 1 operation - invalided out

## POSTINGS IN DURING MARCH 1945:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
06	P/O Parsons P.J.	F/S Finlayson J.K. Sgt.Quinton A.R.	Sgt Wager S.D. F/S Swap M. (N/Z)	Sgt Finch E. Sgt Keenleyside W.S
09	P/O West A.A.	F/S Brooks H.C. Sgt Cutting G.R.	Sgt MacMillan E. Sgt Teagle W.	Sgt Crocker G.W. Sgt Adkin J.F.
10	F/S Veale D.W. (A)	Sgt Harrison J.H. F/S Mountcastle L.	Sgt Farren B. Sgt Stewart D.S.	Sgt Keegan T. Sgt Lloyd F.H.
15	P/O Lowry L.W.(N/Z)	F/S Goodwin A. Sgt McLeod M.	Sgt Caldecott G.T. F/S Miller J.D.(C)	W/O Woolfenden B.P. W/O Wadsley N.P.
15	F/O Stott A.E.	F/S Lowerson J. F/S Govier C.M.	F/S Smith R.I. Sgt Dixon J.G.	Sgt Bickley W.G. Sgt Webb G.
17	F/Lt Williams L.(A) (To replace F/O Potter)			
19	W/O Gaskell R.C.	Sgt Griffiths J.D. Sgt Pope R.E.	F/O Bott S. F/S Hopwood R.T.(N/Z)	Sgt Coggins G.L. Sgt Andrews G.
19	F/O Heaton J.A.	Sgt Evans A. Sgt Kirkman N.	F/S Edmonds W. (A) Sgt Owen L.A.	Sgt Crosset A. Sgt Gist J.
19	W/O Swales R.N.(N/Z)	Sgt Atkins A.A. F/S Brooks N.(N/Z)	F/O Magowan W.A. F/S Reid J.T. (N/Z)	Sgt Parker W. Sgt Reilly S.
21	F/S Birch H.R.	F/S Sutherland T. F/O Taylor H.T.	F/O Batt P.T. Sgt Smith W.	Sgt McKechnie R.G. Sgt Simpson J.
21	F/O Norris R.C.	W/O Sutton G.W. Sgt Pearson L.R.	Sgt Learoyd E J. Sgt Sullivan W.	Sgt Cox P.A. Sgt Davies J.
25	F/Lt Kilner P.H.	F/S Spinks L.O. Sgt Bridger G.H.	Sgt Corcoran W.G. Sgt Barker K.P.	Sgt Mepstead R.J. Sgt Pinkham W.J.
30	P/O Gosling J.E.	Sgt Scorer Sgt Cooper G.D.	Sgt Pease R. Sgt Dawson D.S.	Sgt Clyne A. Sgt Tucker E.T.
30	F/S Howitt J.	Sgt Roberts P.J. Sgt Castle H.D.	Sgt Franklin H.L.(C) Sgt McDougal A.	Sgt Warren R.R. Sgt Wilson J.
31	P/O Douglas J.F.	F/S Short R.W. Sgt Watson D.H.	Sgt Ward S.F. Sgt Smith J.C.	Sgt Randall J.J. Sgt Simmonds V.

**POSTINGS OUT DURING MARCH 1945:-**

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

01 F/O Rhodes J. and crew - 26 operations - Aircraft exploded over the Wash  
03 F/O Gregoire L.J. (C) and crew - 29 operations - Missing - Minelaying  
05 F/O Bailey W. and crew - 6 operations - Missing - Chemnitz  
11 F/O Gibbins E.W. and crew - 26 operations - Missing - Essen  
12 F/O Ayres K.A. and crew - 23 operations - Missing - Minelaying  
15 F/O Parker E.J. and crew - 8 operations - Missing - Misburg  
16 F/O Parsons P.J. and crew - 1st operation - Missing - Nurnberg

09 F/Lt Sudual D.A. and crew - 3 operations - Posted out  
07 F/O Bishop G.R. (C) and crew - 36 operations - Tour completed  
12 F/O Crane N.J. and crew - 31 operations - Tour completed  
22 F/O Willis J.E. (C) and crew - 31 operations - Tour completed  
24 F/O Wheeler L.A. and crew - 30 operations - Tour completed  
27 F/Lt French M.B. and crew - 28 operations - Tour completed  
08 F/O Potter G.B. - 27 operations - Admitted to Hospital

## POSTINGS IN DURING APRIL 1945:-

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

Date	Pilot	F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
05	F/S Malone D.E.C.	F/S Garnham J. Sgt Burns J.	Sgt Townsend V. Sgt Black D.M.	Sgt Oakes E. Sgt Bolton D.L.
05	F/O Ramsden M.A.(N/Z) - (To replace P/O Ryan)			
06	F/O Johns J.A.	F/S Hall J. Sgt Nation D.M.	F/S Foley K. Sgt Jennings V.L.	Sgt McLeod F. Sgt Murray R.S.
06	W/O Eckersall H.	F/S Hawker E.E. F/O Downes M.	F/O Proctor J.A.(C) Sgt Taylor J.	Sgt Webb N.A. Sgt Duffield J.
07	F/S Salter W.K.	Sgt Lacey G. F/O Loree J. (C)	F/O Smith N.(C) Sgt Fell S.	Sgt Hanna J. Sgt Law A.
12	F/S Oldcorn R.A.	F/S Dickenson K.M. Sgt Vaughan V.J.	F/S Melville F.R.C. Sgt Davies D.T.	Sgt Brady J. Sgt Cowley J.
16	P/O McClellan J.M.	F/S Cracknell G. F/S Heathcote I.	F/O Johnson R.E. W/O Emmet J.	F/S Monaghan J. F/S Luke P.M.
18	F/O Clark W.	Sgt Francomb V.G. Sgt Bell A.	F/O Sears N. F/O Dorrity C.C.	Sgt Kirkpatrick J. Sgt Ings T.S.
18	S/Ldr Day J.C.	P/O Saker J.S. P/O Railton-Jones	F/O Bishop T.P. DFM F/S Arndell J.	P/O Crowley J.F. F/O Whitewood L.
20	W/O Sherwin B.	F/S Dalgero G. Sgt Broadhead J.	Sgt Foster G. Sgt Powell H.C.	Sgt Smee L.B. Sgt Robertson S.
20	P/O Soundy J.H.	Sgt Mably R.P. Sgt Robertson W.	F/S Fitzgerald J.E.(A) F/S Harris A. (A)	Sgt Heelback G. Sgt Gibbs A.
26	F/O Drown R.W.	F/S Martin R.E. F/O Hasdell P.B.	F/S Hellyer J.B. Sgt Worsten A.	Sgt Cooper R.D. Sgt Francis P.E.
27	F/O Conley W.G.	Sgt Ledsham F.L. F/O Taylor C.M.	F/Lt Alexander G. F/S Gibbs E.B. (A)	Sgt Beswick T.W. Sgt Zesimedes P.
28	F/Lt Cooper R.C.	F/S Kraus P. Sgt Pitt A.	F/S Fell M. W/O Wade J.W.	Sgt Lindlay E. Sgt Wrench F.L.



**POSTINGS OUT DURING APRIL 1945:-**

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

03	F/O Bolton F.B. (C) and crew	- 36 operations - Tour completed
04	F/O Taylor L.H. and crew	- 30 operations - Tour completed
04	F/Lt Legg D.D. and crew	- 27 operations - Tour completed
10	F/Lt Williams (A) and crew of F/O Potter	- 30 operations - Tour completed
10	F/Lt Firth L.K. (C) and crew	- 32 operations - Tour completed
18	F/O Sinnema H. and crew	- 29 operations - Tour completed
18	F/O Tobin T.P. (A) and crew	- 29 operations - Tour completed
25	F/O Searle J. and crew	- 31 operations - Tour completed
04	F/Lt Winder A.J. and crew	- 25 operations - Missing - Minelaying
04	W/Co Powley F.S. DFC AFC (and crew of S/Ldr Gee)	- 17 operations - Missing - Minelaying
22	F/O Cockroft A. and crew	- 24 operations - Missing - Bremen
16	S/Ldr Gee J.W. D.F.C.	- 16 operations (2nd tour) - Posted to No. 1656 HCU, Lindholme

**POSTINGS IN DURING MAY 1945:-**

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Pilot</b>	<b>F/Engineer Air Bomber</b>	<b>Navigator W/Operator</b>	<b>M/U Gunner Rear Gunner</b>
05	S/Ldr Flynn F.R.	F/S Lygo J.H. F/S Richins G.W.	F/S Mayhew C.H.D. F/S Blackwood J.	F/Lt Pettitt F.H. Sgt Miles G.F.N.
07	F/O Melchin D.(C)	Sgt Pitchford S.M. F/O McMillan L.D.(C)	F/S Telfer G.L.(C) F/O Ogden B.N. (C)	Sgt Jackson D.E.(C) F/S Segall H.B. (C)
10	F/O Adams H.H.	F/S Brown E.A. F/Lt Lake F.L.	F/O Sawyer F.S. Sgt Winters J.H.	F/S Watt F.N. F/S Draycott K.J.
18	F/O Fawcett G.R.	F/S Pearce R.H.J. F/O Pasley J.M.W.	F/O Lindsay D.D. F/O Edwards S.J.	W/O Espey J.R. W/O Shaunessy J.

**POSTINGS OUT DURING MAY 1945:-**

01 F/Lt R.W.Purves (C) and crew - 30 operations - Tour completed

**POSTINGS IN DURING JUNE 1945:-**

Australians marked (A); Canadians marked (C); New Zealanders (N/Z).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Pilot</b>	<b>F/Engineer Air Bomber</b>	<b>Navigator W/Operator</b>	<b>M/U Gunner Rear Gunner</b>
30	F/Lt Hodge G.M.	Sgt Wardle P. Sgt Hackett B.	F/S Muir A.J. (N/Z) Sgt Fraser M.	Sgt Cole G.B. Sgt Ayers G.

**No. 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - 'A' FLIGHT CREW LIST - JUNE 1945**  
(Showing number of operations credited/aborted)

<b>Pilot</b>	<b>F/Engineer Air Bomber</b>	<b>Navigator W/Operator</b>	<b>M/U Gunner Rear Gunner</b>
S/Ldr Flynn (Nil)	F/S Lygo (Nil) Sgt Richins (Nil)	Sgt Mayhew (Nil) Sgt Blackwood (Nil)	F/Lt Pettitt 1/- Sgt Miles (Nil)
F/Lt Langford 27/-	Sgt Thomson 27/- F/O Rea-Taylor 25/-	F/O McDonald 27/- F/S Jones T 27/-	Sgt Hallam 27/- Sgt Hawkins 26/-
F/O Sharp 22/-	Sgt Broughton 21/- F/O Andrews 21/-	F/L Morrison (2nd) 16/- F/S Calderbank 19/-	Sgt Evans 21/- Sgt Peacock 18/-
F/O Penman (2nd) 16/-	Sgt Nicoll 17/- F/O Downes 6/-	F/O Colman 17/- F/S Brown 17/-	F/O Richardson 6/- Sgt Pepper 16/-
F/Lt Kilner 12/-	F/S Spinks 11/- Sgt Bridger 11/-	Sgt Corcoran 11/- Sgt Barker 11/-	Sgt Mopstead 11/- Sgt Pinkham 10/-
F/Lt Speed 12/-	P/O Whittingstall 11/- F/O Meadows 12/-	F/O Bates (NZ) 11/- F/O Hill 10/-	Sgt Fowler 11/- Sgt Mitchell 9/-
F/O Parker 9/-	P/O Taylor 21/2 F/O Howling 8/-	F/O Coxon (2nd) 18/1 F/O Edwards 19/2	F/S Craig 20/1 F/S Lewington 22/2
F/S Birch 10/-	F/S Sutherland 8/- F/O Taylor H 8/-	F/O Batt 8/- Sgt Smith W 8/-	Sgt McKechnie 8/- Sgt Simpson 7/-
F/O Heaton 'Y' 9/-	F/S Evans 7/- Sgt Kirkman 7/-	Sgt Farren 5/1 Sgt Owen 7/-	Sgt Crossett 6/- Sgt Gist 7/-
F/O Douglas 7/-	F/S Short 6/- Sgt Watson 6/-	F/S Ward 6/- Sgt McDougall 6/-	Sgt Randall 5/- Sgt Simmonds 5/-
F/O Conley 2/-	Sgt Ledsham 2/- F/O Taylor C 2/-	F/Lt Alexander 2/- F/S Hauxwell 15/1	Sgt Zesimides 2/- Sgt Beswick 2/-
F/S Oldcorn 2/-	F/S Dickinson 1/1 Sgt Vaughan 2/1	F/S Melville 2/- Sgt Davies 2/1	Sgt Brady 2/1 Sgt Cowley 3/-
F/O McClellan 'Y' 2/-	Sgt Cracknell 2/- Sgt Heathcote 2/-	F/O Johnson 2/- F/S Emmet 2/-	Sgt Monaghan 2/- Sgt Luke 1/-
F/O Drown 1/-	F/S Martin 1/- F/O Hasdell 1/-	F/S Hollyer 1/- Sgt Worston 1/-	Sgt Cooper 1/- Sgt Francis 1/-
F/O Adams (2nd) Nil	F/S Brown (2nd) Nil F/Lt Lake (2nd) Nil	F/O Sawyer (2nd) Nil Sgt Winters Nil	W/O Watt F (2nd) Nil F/S Draycott (2nd) Nil
F/O Fawcett 'Y' (2nd) Nil	F/S Pearce (2nd) Nil F/O Pasley (2nd) Nil	F/O Lindsay (2nd) Nil F/O Edwards (2nd) Nil	W/O Esploy (2nd) Nil W/O Shaunessy (2nd) Nil

Appendix A10 continued

No. 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - 'B' FLIGHT CREW LIST - JUNE 1945  
(Showing number of operations credited/aborted)

Pilot		F/Engineer Air Bomber	Navigator W/Operator	M/U Gunner Rear Gunner
S/Ldr Day (2nd) 4/-		P/O Saker (2nd) 4/- P/O Railton-Jones (2nd) 4/-	F/O Bishop (2nd) 4/- F/S Arndell (2nd) 4/-	F/O Crowley (2nd) 4/- F/O Whitewood(2nd)4/-
F/Lt Lennox (2nd) 14/-	'Y'	F/S Sykes (2nd) 14/- P/O Evans (2nd) 14/-	F/O Fullelove (2nd)14/- F/O Chalmers (2nd)14/-	F/S Watt D (2nd) 13/- F/O Page (2nd) 14/-
P/O McCourt 14/-		Sgt Marriot 13/- F/O Hatton 14/-	F/O Neilson (NZ) 13/- F/S Young (NZ) 13/-	Sgt Gardiner 13/- Sgt Edwards 13/-
F/O West 13/-	'Y'	F/S Brooks 12/- F/S Cutting 12/-	F/S McMillan 12/- F/S Teagle 12/-	Sgt Crocker 12/- Sgt Adkin 11/-
F/O Stott 9/-	'Y'	F/S Lowerson 8/- F/S Govier 7/-	Sgt Smith R. 8/- Sgt Dixon 8/-	Sgt Webb 8/- Sgt Bickley 8/-
F/O Norris 8/-	'Y'	W/O Sutton (2nd) 6/- Sgt Pearson 6/-	Sgt Learoyd 6/- F/S Sullivan 6/-	Sgt Cox P. 6/- Sgt Davies 6/-
F/O Gosling 9/-		Sgt Scorer 8/- F/S Cooper 8/-	F/S Pease 8/- Sgt Dawson 8/-	Sgt Clyne 8/- Sgt Tucker 8/-
W/O Gaskell 7/-	'Y'	Sgt Griffiths 5/- F/S Pope 5/-	F/O Bott 5/- F/S Hopwood (NZ) 5/-	Sgt Coggin 5/- Sgt Andrews 5/-
F/Lt Ramsden (NZ) 5/-		Sgt Nelson 5/- F/S Mountcastle 6/1	F/S Read 5/- Sgt Lowes 5/-	F/S Keegan 5/- Sgt Lloyd 5/1
W/O Swales (NZ) 6/-		Sgt Atkins 5/- F/S Brooke (NZ) 6/-	F/O Magowan 6/- F/S Reid (NZ) 6/-	Sgt Parker 4/- Sgt Reilly 5/-
F/S Malone 5/-	'Y'	F/S Garnham 4/- Sgt Burns 4/-	Sgt Townsend 4/- Sgt Black 4/-	Sgt Oakes 4/- Sgt Bolton 4/-
F/O Lowry (NZ) 9/1		F/S Goodwin 8/- Sgt McLeod 8/1	F/S Caldecott 8/- F/S Stewart 5/1	W/O Wadsley 8/- W/O Woolfenden 8/1
F/O Johns 4/-	'Y'	F/S Hall 3/- F/S Nation 3/-	F/S Foley 3/- Sgt Jennings 3/-	Sgt Murray 3/- Sgt McLeod 3/-
W/O Sherwin 4/-		F/S Dalgarno 4/- Sgt Broadhead 4/-	Sgt Foster 4/- Sgt Powell 4/-	Sgt Smee 4/- Sgt Robertson 3/-
F/Lt Cooper 3/-		F/S Kraus 3/- Sgt Pitt 3/-	F/S Fell 3/- W/O Wade 3/-	Sgt Lindley 2/- Sgt Wrench 3/-
F/O Clark 1/-		Sgt Francomb 1/- Sgt Bell 1/-	F/O Sears 1/- F/O Dorrity 1/-	Sgt Kirkpatrick 1/- Sgt Ings 1/-

**POSTINGS OUT DURING JUNE 1945**  
**due to repatriation and consequent reorganisation.**

(Showing number of operations credited/aborted)

**RAF**

Pilot - S/Ldr T.W.Rippingale DSO (2nd) 20/2 ; F/S J.Howitt 7/- ;

P/F/E - F/S D.Huddleston 19/-                      Sgt D.N.Baker 16/-                      F/S E.E.Hawker 5/-  
                     Sgt R.P. Mably 3/-                                      Sgt G.Lacey 2/-

F/Es - Sgt L.T.Williams 30/-                      Sgt P.J.Roberts 6/-                      Sgt H.V.Muddle 13/-  
                     Sgt J.H.Harrison 5/1                                      Sgt S.M.Pitchford - Nil.

B/As - F/S H.D.Castle 6/-                                      Sgt W.Robertson 3/-

W/Ops - W/O W.C.Harrison (2nd) 19/1                      Sgt J.C.Smith 6/-                      Sgt M.Fell 2/-  
                     Sgt J.Taylor 5/-

A/Gs - F/S V.Dennis (2nd) 4/-                      Sgt J.Western 15/1                      Sgt G.Heelback 3/-  
                     Sgt N.A.Webb 5/-                                      Sgt A.Law 2/-                                      Sgt A.Gibbs 3/-  
                     Sgt C Brear 19/-                                      Sgt J.Wilson 6/-                                      Sgt J.Duffield 5/-  
                     Sgt J.Hanna 2/-                                      Sgt R.Warren 6/-

**RAAF**

Pilot - W/O D.W.Veale 5/1

Navs - F/S W.Edmonds 7/-                                      F/S J.E.Fitzgerald 3/-

W/Ops - F/S A.Harris 3/-                                      F/S E.B.Gibbs 2/-

**RCAF**

Pilot - F/O D.B.Freeborn DFC 24/1                      F/Lt A.F.McLarty 20/-                      F/O D.Melchin Nil  
                     F/O V.S.Martin 16/1                                      F/Lt J.A.Williams 14/-

B/As - W/O H.L.Cosby 28/1                                      F/O D.S.Crawford 19/-                      F/S N.E.Fenerty 15/1  
                     F/O D.E.Loree 2/-                                      F/O J.P.Arnoldi 13/-                      F/O L.D.McMillan Nil  
                     F/O I.M.Murphy 16/-                                      F/O C.M.Taylor 2/-                      F/S W.J.Dean 4/-

Navs - F/S J.A.Butler 21/-                                      F/O J.M.Stevenson 19/-                      F/O J.Eisen 15/1  
                     F/S G.L.Telfer Nil                                      F/O E.H.Mulligan 13/-                      F/S C.Franklin 6/-  
                     F/O J.A.Proctor 5/-                                      F/O N.Smith 2/-

W/Ops - W/O E.P.Youle 21/-                                      W/O J.A.Eastman 23/1                      F/S W.J.Smith 13/-  
                     F/S J.D.Miller 8/1                                      F/O B.N.Ogden Nil

A/Gs - F/S A.G.Pratt 28/1                                      F/S J.A.Cameron 5/-                      F/S R.Gray 14/1  
                     F/O E.Ruse 12/-                                      F/S E.W.Albright 5/1                      Sgt D.E.Jackson Nil  
                     F/S H.B.Segall Nil                                      W/O J.C.McNamara 25/1                      F/S W.G.McKnight 21/-

## Appendix B1

The 18 aircraft mentioned in para. 10, taken over from No.166 Squadron, are as listed below.

They were allotted No.153 Squadron identification letters as shown:-

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
NG 185	A	JB 297	B	LM 550	C
PB 636	D	LM 754	E	ME 812	F
PA 168	G	NE 113	H	PB 633	J
NG 218	K	PB 638	O	NG 189	P
PD 343	Q	LM 750	R	LM 752	S
NG 190	T	NG 184	U	PB 642	W

Resulting from the losses of JB 297 (B) and NG 190 (T) the following changes were made before moving to Scampton:-

NG 218 (K) was re-lettered 'B' (hereafter referred to as "2nd B").

Replacement Lancaster Serial No. ND 757 allotted letter 'V'.

## Appendix B2

The following aircraft were acquired at Scampton during October 1944:

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
PB 639	I	PB 472	K	PB 515	N
PD 380	X	NG 201	2ndT		

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## Appendix B3

The following aircraft were acquired during November 1944:

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
PD 378	L	PB 786	2nd Q	NG 167	Y

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## Appendix B4

The following aircraft were acquired during December 1944:

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
PB 783	2nd I	NG 335	2nd V	PB 872	2nd X

(Note: Original 'V' (ND 757) transferred to No. 1656 HCU).

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## Appendix B5

The following aircraft was acquired during January 1945:

Lancaster Serial No. - ME 384.      Squadron Letter - 2nd P.

## Appendix B6

The following aircraft were acquired during February 1945:

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
NG 488	2nd A	NN 785	2nd D	RA 526	2nd J
ME 424	2nd N	NN 803	2nd O	NG 500	3rd V

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## Appendix B7

The following aircraft were acquired during March 1945:

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
ME 541	3rd A	ME 485	3rd D	NX 556	3rd J
PA 264	3rd O	NX 563	2nd R	ME 544	3rd T
RA 544	2nd U	RF 205	2nd W	RA 545	3rd X

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## Appendix B7a

For various reasons (mainly due to damage arising from enemy action) the following aircraft were permanently withdrawn from squadron service:-

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Date 1945	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Date
NE 113	H	20 February	ME 541	3rd A	24 March
PB 472	K	21 February	PB 786	2nd Q	12 March
LM 752	S	2 March			



## Appendix B8

The following aircraft were acquired during April 1945:-

Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter	Lancaster Serial No.	Squadron Letter
NX 573	4th A	RA 582	2nd L	PA 313	3rd R
?	3rd U (Squadron records do not show the Lancaster Serial number of this aircraft - in fact, they constantly show it as RA 544, which was the number of its predecessor, the 2nd 'U').				

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## Appendix B8a

Lancaster Serial No. ME 384 - the 2nd 'P' - was withdrawn (for reasons unspecified), on 20 April.

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - OCTOBER 1944

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load			
												4,000 lbs	1,000lbs	500 lbs	Incendiary
Oct 7	Emmerich		11	11	11.30	14.20	11,500	16.20	4.50			1			2,520
Oct 8		S/D													
Oct 9		S/D													
Oct 10		S/D													
Oct 11	Fort Frederik Henrik		7	5	14.30	16.55	4,500	18.00	3.30	3			13	4	
Oct 12	Fort Frederik Henrik		3	3	06.30	08.30	5,500	09.40	3.10				13	4	
Oct 13		S/B	13												
Oct 14	Duisburg		13	13	06.30	08.45	18,500	11.20	4.50		2		13	4	
Oct 15	Move to Scampton														
Oct 16		S/D													
Oct 17		S/D													
Oct 18		S/B	15												
Oct 19	Stuttgart		5	5	17.15	20.30	17,000	24.00	6.45			1			1,800
Oct 19	Stuttgart		10	10	21.15	01.05	18,000	04.45	7.30				9	4	
Oct 20		S/D													
Oct 21		S/B	15												
Oct 22		S/B	12												
Oct 23	Essen		17	17	16.30	19.45	19,000	21.40	5.10	1		1	5	8	
Oct 24		S/B	15												
Oct 25	Essen		15	15	12.40	15.30	17,500	17.40	5.00				11	4	
Oct 26		S/B	15												
Oct 27		S/B	15												
Oct 28	Cologne		16	16	13.15	15.45	18,000	18.30	5.15			1	5	6	
Oct 29		S/B	17												
Oct 30	Cologne		17	17	17.40	21.00	18,500	23.30	5.50			1	6	6	
Oct 31	Cologne		16	14	18.00	21.10	19,000	23.30	5.30	2		1	6	6	
			126	Total Operational Hours - 566						6	2	H.E. - 433 TONS INCENDIARY - 84 TONS			

**SUMMARY:-**

On 10 days a total of 126 sorties were flown in attacking 11 targets (4 more aircraft failed to make take-off).

8 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 117 sorties.

7 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for the move to Scampton, and for further training to be carried out.

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - NOVEMBER 1944

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load			
												4,000 lbs	1,000 lbs	500 lbs	Incendiary
Nov 1		S/D													
Nov 2	Dusseldorf	S/D	18	18	16.00	19.15	19,000	21.50	5.50	1	1	1	6	6	
Nov 3		S/B	15												
Nov 4	Bochum	S/D	17	17	17.15	19.20	17,500	21.20	4.05	2		1			2,070
Nov 5		S/D													
Nov 6	Gelsenkirchen	S/D	15	14	11.50	14.01	17,000	16.20	4.30			1	6	7	
Nov 7		S/D													
Nov 8		S/D													
Nov 9	Wanne Eickel	S/D	17	17	07.45	10.45	21,000	13.00	5.15			1		16	
Nov 10		S/D													
Nov 11	Dortmund	S/D	7	7	16.20	19.00	19,000	21.30	5.10			1	6	6	
Nov 12		S/B	13												
Nov 13		S/D													
Nov 14		S/B	12												
Nov 15		S/B	13												
Nov 16	Duren	S/B	13	13	13.00	15.35	11,000	17.45	4.45			1			2,160
Nov 17		S/B	16												
Nov 18	Wanne Eickel	S/D	18	18	15.45	19.01	18,000	22.00	6.15			1		16	
Nov 19		S/D													
Nov 20		S/D													
Nov 21	Ascheffenburg	S/D	17	17	15.30	19.15	14,500	22.00	6.30	1		1		16	
Nov 22		S/B	13												
Nov 23		S/B	15												
Nov 24		S/B	13												
Nov 25		S/B	14												
Nov 26		S/B	16												
Nov 27	Freiburg	S/D	20	20	16.00	20.05	13,000	23.30	7.30			1	5	7	
Nov 28		S/D													
Nov 29	Dortmund	S/D	20	19	12.00	15.05	18,000	17.20	5.20			1	6	8	
Nov 30		S/D													
			160	Total Operational Hours - 928						4	2	H.E. - 712 Tons Incendiary - 123 Tons			

## SUMMARY :-

On 10 days, a total of 160 sorties were flown in attacking 10 targets (2 more failed to make take off)

10 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 140 sorties

10 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for further training to be carried out

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - DECEMBER 1944

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load					
												4,000 lbs	1,000 lbs	500 lbs	Incendiary		
Dec 1		S/B	16														
Dec 2		S/D															
Dec 3	Urft Dam		11	11	07.30	Did not drop		12.00	4.30		1		14				
Dec 4	Karlsruhe		16	16	16.30	19.30	19,500	23.00	6.30				13				
Dec 5		S/B	16														
Dec 6	Leuna		19	19	16.30	20.45	18,000	00.30	8.00	1		1	3	6			
Dec 7		S/D															
Dec 8		S/D															
Dec 9		S/B	17														
Dec 10		S/D															
Dec 11		S/B	17														
Dec 12	Essen		18	18	16.00	19.35	20,000	21.45	5.45			1		16			
Dec 13		S/D															
Dec 14		S/B	18														
Dec 15	Ludwigshafen		15	15	14.45	18.28	19,000	21.00	6.15				13				
Dec 16		S/B	18														
Dec 17	Ulm		18	18	15.20	19.32	13,000	22.45	7.25		1	1				1,590	
Dec 18		S/D															
Dec 19		S/B	6														
Dec 20		S/B	10														
Dec 21		S/B	19														
Dec 22	Coblenz		15	15	15.15	18.53	19,500	21.00	5.45				13				
Dec 23		S/D															
Dec 24		S/B	10														
Dec 25		S/D															
Dec 26		S/B	12														
Dec 27	Rheydt		12+6	6	11.45	15.00	20,000	17.00	5.15			1	6	5			
Dec 28	Bonn		16	16	15.30	18.47	16,000	21.15	5.45				8	8			
Dec 29	Geisenkirchen		18	18	15.15	19.00	19,500	21.20	6.05			1		16			
Dec 30		S/D															
Dec 31	Osterfeld		11	10	15.00	18.50	19,000	21.00	6.00			1	6	6			
			162	Total Operational Hours - 1,096					1	2	H.E. 665 Tons Incendiary - 99 Tons						

## SUMMARY :-

On 11 days, a total of 162 sorties were flown in attacking 11 targets ( 1 other failed to make take-off)

11 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 171 sorties

9 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for further training to be carried out.

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - JANUARY 1945

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load					
												4,000 lbs	1,000lbs	500 lbs	Incendiary		
Jan 1		S/D															
Jan 2	Nuremberg	S/D	18	18	15.00	19.35	17,000	23.30	8.30		1	1				1,470	
Jan 3		S/D															
Jan 4	Royan	S/D	18	18	02.00	05.30	9,000	09.00	7.00			1		16			
Jan 5		S/D															
Jan 6		S/B	17														
Jan 7	Munich	S/D	17	17	18.00	22.30	18,000	03.15	9.15	2		1				1,320	
Jan 8		S/D															
Jan 9		S/D															
Jan 10		S/D															
Jan 11		S/D															
Jan 12		S/D															
Jan 13		S/B	15														
Jan 14	Leuna	S/D	16	16	19.00	24.00	21,000	03.20	08.20	1		1		12			
Jan 15		S/D															
Jan 16	Zeitz	S/D	16	16	17.15	22.15	18,500	01.25	8.10		1	1		12			
Jan 17		S/D															
Jan 18		S/B	12														
Jan 19		S/B	12														
Jan 20		S/D															
Jan 21		S/B	14														
Jan 22	Duisburg	S/D	19	19	16.45	20.05	19,500	22.30	5.45		2	1		16			
Jan 23		S/D															
Jan 24		S/D															
Jan 25		S/D															
Jan 26		S/D															
Jan 27		S/D															
Jan 28	Zuffenhausen	S/D	17	17	19.15	00.15	18,000	03.00	7.45	1	1	1		12			
Jan 29		S/B	15														
Jan 30		S/D															
Jan 31		S/B	15														
			121	Total Operational Hours - 886					4	5	H.E. - 544 Tons Incendiary - 22 Tons						

## SUMMARY :-

On 7 days, a total of 121 sorties were flown in attacking 7 targets

7 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 100 sorties

17 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for further training to be carried out.

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - FEBRUARY 1945

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load				
												4,000 lbs	2,000 lbs	500 lbs	Incendiary	Mines
Feb 1	Ludwigshafen		15	15	15.45	19.20	16,000	22.30	6.45			1			1,520	
Feb 2		S/D														
Feb 3	Bottrop		16	16	16.00	19.00	16,500	21.45	5.45		1	1		16		
Feb 4	Gardening		5	5	17.30			22.10	4.40							6
Feb 5		S/B	14													
Feb 6		S/D														
Feb 7	Kieve		14	14	18.45	22.06	5,000	00.15	5.30			1		16		
Feb 8	Politz		15	15	19.00	23.18	14,000	04.00	9.00	1		1		10		
Feb 9		S/B	15													
Feb 10		S/B	16													
Feb 11		S/B	12													
Feb 12		S/D														
Feb 13	Dresden		15	15	21.15	01.30	17,500	07.00	9.45				1		1,800	
Feb 14	Gardening		5	5	18.00			01.15	7.15							6
Feb 14	Chemnitz		9	8	20.00	00.38	19,000	05.15	9.15		1	1		1,400		
Feb 15	Gardening		5	5	17.00			23.30	6.30							6
Feb 16		S/D														
Feb 17		S/D														
Feb 18		S/D														
Feb 19		S/D														
Feb 20	Dortmund		15	15	21.20	01.10	20,000	04.15	6.55		1	1			1,520	
Feb 21	Duisburg		14	14	19.30	23.06	19,000	01.40	6.10			1			1,800	
Feb 22		S/D														
Feb 23	Pforzheim		17	17	15.40	20.04	8,000	23.45	8.05			1			1,620	
Feb 24	Gardening		5	5	17.00			23.30	6.30	1						6
Feb 25		S/D														
Feb 26		S/D														
Feb 27		S/D														
Feb 28	(Neuss)		15	15												
			164	Total Operational Hours - 1,056					2	3	H.E. - 350 Tons Incendiary - 299 Tons Mines - 114 (82 Tons)					

## SUMMARY :-

On 13 days, a total of 164 sorties were flown in attacking 14 targets ( 1 other failed to make take-off)

4 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 57 sorties

11 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for further training to be carried out.

## NOTE:-

February 28th - all aircraft recalled after take-off. Not counted as an operation

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - MARCH 1945

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load				
												4,000 lbs	500 lbs	250 lbs	Incendiary	Mines
Mar 1	Mannheim		16	16	11.45	15.10	19,000	18.00	6.15		1	1			1,770	
Mar 2	Cologne		16	16	06.45	10.05	20,000	12.30	5.45			1	12	4		
Mar 3	Gardening		5	5	16.35			23.10	6.35		1					6
Mar 4		S/B	13													
Mar 5	Chemnitz		13	13	16.30	21.45	16,000	02.10	9.40		1	1			1,200	
Mar 6		S/D														
Mar 7	Dessau		14	14	16.50	22.00	15,000	02.30	9.40			1			1,200	
Mar 8	Kassel		15	14	16.55	21.32	20,000	23.45	6.50			1			1,470	
Mar 9		S/B	15													
Mar 10		S/D														
Mar 11	Essen		15	15	11.25	15.04	18,000	17.00	5.35		1	1	12	4		
Mar 12	Dortmund		9	9	12.50	16.34	19,000	18.30	5.40			1	12	4		
Mar 12	Gardening		5	5	17.30			24.00	6.30		1					6
Mar 13	Gelsenkirchen		11	11	17.20	20.45	15,000	23.15	5.55	1		1	12	4		
Mar 14		S/D														
Mar 15	Misburg		10	9	17.00	21.20	18,000	01.00	8.00		1	1	11	3		
Mar 16	Numberg		10	10	17.20	21.30	17,000	01.45	7.25		1	1			1,470	
Mar 17		S/D														
Mar 18	Hannau		14	14	00.15	04.30	11,500	07.30	7.15	1		1			1,700	
Mar 19		S/D														
Mar 20		S/D														
Mar 21	Bremen		14	14	07.30	10.00	15,000	12.15	4.45			1	12	4		
Mar 22	Hildesheim		15	15	11.10	14.05	15,000	16.40	5.30			1			1,920	
Mar 23		S/D														
Mar 24	Harpenerweg		10	10	13.00	16.30	19,000	18.00	5.00	1		1	12	4		
Mar 25		S/D														
Mar 26		S/D														
Mar 27	Paderborn		15	15	14.30	17.40	17,500	19.40	5.10	1		1			1,620	
Mar 28		S/B	12													
Mar 29		S/B	12													
Mar 30		S/D														
Mar 31		S/D														
			205	Total Operational Hours - 1,342					4	7	H.E. - 563 Tons Incendiary - 265 Tons Mines - 60 (55Tons)					

## SUMMARY :-

On 16 days a total of 205 sorties were flown in attacking 17 targets (2 more failed to make take-off)

4 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 52 sorties

11 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for further training to be carried out

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONAL DIARY - APRIL 1945

Date	Target		No. Detailed	No. Took off	Time of take off	Bombed	Bomb Height (Ft)	Time landed	Duration Hrs, Mins	No. Aborted	No. Missing	Bomb Load					
												4,000 lbs	1,000 lbs	500 lbs	250 lbs	Mines	
Apr 1		S/D															
Apr 2		S/B	7														
Apr 3	Nordhausen		10	10	13.20	16.18	14,000	19.30	6.10				11	2			
Apr 3	Gardening	S/B	5														
Apr 4	Gardening		5	5	19.00			01.50	6.50		2						6
Apr 4	Leutzkendorf		12	12	21.10	01.30	12,500	05.30	8.20			1		10			
Apr 5		S/D															
Apr 6		S/D															
Apr 7		S/B	15														
Apr 8		S/D															
Apr 9	Kiel		17	17	19.15	22.38	15,000	01.30	6.15			1		16			
Apr 10	Plauen		15	15	18.05	23.10	16,500	03.00	8.55	1		1		10			
Apr 11		S/D															
Apr 12		S/B	14														
Apr 13		S/D															
Apr 14	Potsdam		13	13	17.45	22.50	20,000	03.20	9.35			1		10			
Apr 15		S/D															
Apr 16		S/B	18														
Apr 17		S/D															
Apr 18	Heligoland		19	19	09.40	12.34	17,000	14.30	4.50				12	4			
Apr 19		S/D															
Apr 20		S/D															
Apr 21		S/B	11														
Apr 22	Bremen		15	15	15.20	Did not drop		20.40	5.20		1						
Apr 23		S/D															
Apr 24		S/D															
Apr 25	Berchtesgarden		13	13	04.50	09.53	18,000	13.10	8.20	1		1	4	1	1		
Apr 26		S/D															
Apr 27		S/D															
Apr 28		S/D															
Apr 29																	
Apr 30																	
Humanitarian aid - Operation 'Manna' (Food dropping to Holland) See Appendices D8 and E8																	
				119	Total Operational Hours - 922					2	3	H.E - 495 Tons Mines 30 (27.5 Tons)					

## SUMMARY :-

On 8 days a total of 119 sorties were flown in attacking 9 targets

6 days of stand-by (S/B) entailed full preparations to launch a further 70 sorties

2 days were involved in food-dropping

14 days of stand-down (S/D) allowed for further training to be carried out



**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - OCTOBER 1944**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Emmerich	Fort Frederik Henrik	Fort Frederik Henrik	Duisburg	Stuttgart	Essen	Essen	Cologne	Cologne	Cologne	Total October	Comments
Date	7th	11th	12th	14th	19th	23rd	25th	28th	30th	31st		
<b>PILOT</b>												
FM Bishop	W4 994			E	H	2nd B	2nd B	2nd B	2nd B		7	
FM Bolton			G		N	V					3	Missing 14th Oct
FM Brouillette				T							1	
FM Capper	C				I	I				C	4	
FM Crane	H				S	S	S	S	S	K	7	
FM Draper				B							1	Missing 14th Oct Seriously wounded 19th Oct
FM Freeborn	ME 746		D		D						3	
FM French Gee						H U	H	H	H	I	5	
FM Gibbins	ND 707						R	R	X	X	5	
FM Gregoire		W		W				X	R		4	
FM Groves		G		J	J	J	J	J	E	J	8	
FM Grundy					R	W					2	
FM Holman	PD 224	C		F	E	E	E	K			7	
FM Jones A				D		F		D	D	D	5	
FM Jones O		Q		Q		N	N		N	N	6	? Tour-ex
FM Kuyser					A	A					2	
FM Lafamme	F				F						2	
FM Legg	NG 136			P	P	P	P	P	P		7	
FM Mettam							V	V	W	W	4	
FM Potter		A								2nd B	2	
FM Rippingale Rhodes									C	F	1	
FM Searle	B			C			I	I		F	5	
FM Taylor	P			G	G	G	G	C	G	G	8	
FM Wheeler				H			A	A	A	A	5	
FM White					W	R	W	W			4	
FM Williams	NF 986				Q	Q	Q	Q	Q		6	
FM Willis			E	O	O	O	U		O	O	7	
29 Crews	11	5	3	13	15	17	15	16	17	14	126	

FM - Founder Member

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - NOVEMBER 1944**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Dusseldorf	Bochum	Gelsenkirchen	Wanne Eickel	Dortmund	Duren	Wanne Eickel	Aschaffenburg	Freiburg	Dortmund	Total November	Total Flown	Comments
Date	2nd	4th	6th	9th	11th	16th	18th	21st	27th	29th			
<b>PILOT</b>													
Bishop				2nd B		2nd B	2nd B	2nd B			4	11	
Bolton	2nd T	2nd T	2nd Q	2nd T				2nd T	2nd T		6	9	
Byers			V	R					Y	2nd T	4	4	
Capper	C	C	C	C	P	C	C			C	8	12	
Crane			S	S					S	S	4	11	
Dighton	K	K	J				K	H		K	6	6	
Dury					2nd T			W	P		3	3	Posted to 150 Sqdn 28th Nov
Firth										2nd B	1	1	
French	H		K				H		H	H	5	10	
Gee		U						U			2	5	
Gibbins	L	X	X		L	X	X	X	X		8	13	
Gregoire		R	R				R	R	R	R	6	10	
Groves		J		J		H	J			J	5	13	
Grundy	R	W									2	4	Posted to 550 Sqdn 8th Nov
Holland								C	E		2	2	
Jones A	D	D		D				D	D	D	6	11	
Jones O	N	N		U							3	9	
LaFlamme					O	D	L	K	F	F	6	8	
Langford									C	E	2	2	
Legg				P		2nd Q	P			P	4	11	
McCormack	I										1	1	Missing 2nd Nov
Mettam	W			V	S	V	Y	O	K		7	11	
Morris	X	G	E					J			4	4	Posted to 150 Sqdn 28th Nov
Potter	2nd B	2nd B		E		E	D				5	7	
Pow										X	1	1	Missing 29th Nov
Rippingale			L								1	2	
Rhodes	P	P				U	U		U	O	6	8	
Schopp			2nd B	G	U			E	J	A	6	6	
Searle	E	E				L	E	L	L		6	11	
Sinnema				X				P			2	2	
Taylor	G		D			G			2nd B	L	5	13	
Tobin		S	P				2nd Q		O		4	4	
Wheeler	F	F		L		K	A	A	A		7	12	
White				W			W		W	W	4	8	
Williams				K	R				N	U	4	10	
Willis	O		O	O		R	O				5	12	
Winder	S	O					S	Y		Y	5	5	
<b>37 crews</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>160</b>		

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - DECEMBER 1944**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Urft Dam	Karlsruhe	Leuna	Essen	Ludwigshafen	Ulm	Coblenz	Rheydt	Bonn	Gelsenkirchen	Osterfeld	Total December	Total Flown.	
Date	3rd	4th	6th	12th	15th	17th	22nd	27th	28th	29th	31st			Comments
<b>PILOT</b>														
Ayres			2nd B				E	E	E	E	E	6	6	
Bishop	L	2nd B		2nd B	2nd B	2nd E	2nd E	2nd B		H	2nd B	9	20	
Bolton		2nd T		2nd T	2nd T	2nd T			2nd T	2nd T		6	15	
Byers		S	2nd T		R	R			O	O		6	10	
Capper	J		2nd I	H	2nd I							4	16	Tour ex -15th Dec
Cockroft											N	1	1	
Crane	S		S	S						S		4	15	
Dighton		H	K	K	K				K			5	11	
Firth		A				L	2nd I		F	F	F	6	7	
French	F						K		H			3	13	
Gee	U			U			U					3	8	
Gibbins					2nd V	Y						2	15	
Gregoire	R		R				R	R	R			5	15	
Groves		J		J								2	15	Tour ex -12th Dec
Haines									2nd X	N		2	2	
Holman										K		1	8	
Jones A.	K	D	D							D	D	5	16	
Jones O			N		N	N	N					4	13	
LaFlamme		F	F	D	F	F	F					6	14	Tour ex- 22nd Dec
Langford		L	J			K						3	5	
Legg	P								Y			2	13	
Mettam			2nd V	2nd V		2nd V	2nd V	2nd V				5	16	
Potter		E		2nd I		2nd I			2nd I	2nd I	K	6	13	
Purves		R		W		S	S		S	R	S	7	7	
Reid					O	O	Y	U		2nd V	R	6	6	
Rippingale	E											1	3	
Robertson						E			W	L		3	3	Posted - 30th Dec
Rhodes		U	U	Y	U	U				U	U	7	15	
Schopp		K	L	E	H	J						5	11	Missing-17th Dec
Searle					L		L		L			3	14	
Sinnema		W	O	R	2nd Q	2nd Q	2nd Q		2nd Q	2nd Q		8	10	
Taylor			E	L								2	15	
Tobin					W						W	2	6	
Wheeler			H	A		A			A	A		5	17	
White	W		W				W		N	W		5	13	Tour ex- 29th Dec
Williams		2nd Q	2nd Q	2nd Q								3	13	Tour ex- 12th Dec
Willis	A	O		O			O					4	16	
Winder A			Y					Y		2nd X		3	8	
Winder K					E	H						2	2	
39 Crews	11	16	19	18	15	18	15	6	16	18	10	162		

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - JANUARY 1945**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Nuremberg	Royan	Munich	Leuna	Zeitz	Duisburg	Zuffenhausen	Total January	Total Flown.	
Date	2nd	4th	7th	14th	16th	22nd	28th			Comments
<b>PILOT</b>										
Ayres	E	E	E		2nd B	E		5	11	
Bishop	2nd B	2nd B	C			2nd B		4	24	
Bolton	2nd T	2nd T	2nd V	2nd T				4	19	
Byers	O			2nd V	2nd V			3	13	Missing 16th Jan
Cockroft		2nd Q			2nd X	R	Y	4	5	
Crane			S	S		S	S	4	19	
Dighton	K		K	K	H		K	5	16	Posted to 582 (PFF) Sqdn
Firth	F	F			G		F	4	11	
Freeborn					K	2nd B		2	5	
French	H	H	H	H		H		5	18	
Gee			U		U			2	10	
Gibbins	Y					2nd X	2nd X	3	18	
Gregoire		R	R	R	R		R	5	20	
Haines	2nd I	S	O	Y				4	6	Posted 16th Jan
Holman	L	K	F		A	F	H	6	14	
Jones A	D	D	D		D	D		5	21	Missing 22nd Jan
Jones O			2nd Q	2nd Q			O	3	16	Missing 28th Jan
Langford				A	L	C		3	8	
Legg		O					2nd P	2	14	
Mettam	2nd V	2nd V						2	18	Posted to 582 (PFF) Sqdn
Potter	C	2nd I	2nd I	2nd I			2nd I	5	18	
Purves	S				S	2nd T		3	10	
Reid	N							1	7	Missing 2nd Jan
Rippingale				E			E	2	5	
Rhodes	U	L		U		U		4	19	
Searle			L			L	L	3	17	
Sinnema					2nd Q	2nd Q	2nd Q	3	13	
Taylor				2nd B		G	U	3	18	
Tobin	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	7	13	
Wheeler	A	A	A				C	4	21	
Willis				O	O	O		3	19	
Winder A		Y	Y		2nd T	Y		4	12	
Winder K		C		D	2nd I	A		4	6	Missing 22nd Jan
<b>33 Crews</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>121</b>		

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - FEBRUARY 1945**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Ludwigshafen	Bottrop	Gardening	Kleve	Politz	Dresden	Gardening	Chemnitz	Gardening	Dortmund	Duisburg	Pforzheim	Gardening	Total Flown	Total Flown	
Date	1st	3rd	4th	7th	8th	13th	14th	14th	15th	20th	21st	23rd	24th			Comments
<b>PILOT</b>					H	C	R				2ndJ	2ndJ	2ndJ	6	17	
Ayres								3rdV		2ndQ		2ndX		4	4	
Bailey													2ndB	8	32	
Bishop	2ndB	2ndB		2ndB			2ndQ			2ndB			2ndB	8	32	
Bolton	2ndT	2ndT		2ndT	2ndT	2ndT			2ndT	2ndT	2ndT	2ndT		9	28	
Cockroft	2ndP			2ndP	U						3rdV	2ndN		5	10	
Crane	S		S				2ndT		R			3rdV	2ndX	6	25	
Firth	F	F		F	F	F				K	F	F		8	19	
Freeborn	H	L												2	7	
French		H		H				2ndA						3	21	
Gee	U			U		U								3	13	
Gibbins	2ndX	2ndX				2ndX		2ndX		2ndX				5	23	
Gregoire					R	R	U			2ndP	R	R	R	7	27	
Holman					C			2ndD		2ndD				3	17	Missing 20th Feb
Langford		C						F	G		Y			4	12	
Legg		2ndP	R		2ndP	2ndP		2ndP			2ndP			6	20	
Martin												G		1	1	
McLarty				2ndA	K					H	K	C		5	5	
Mills				W	2ndX			2ndO						3	3	Missing 14th Feb
Parker						K				G	G	2ndA		4	4	
Penman												2ndQ		1	1	
Potter		2ndI	2ndB		2ndI	H	2ndI			2ndI	2ndI	2ndI		8	26	
Purves		S		R	3rdV					3rdV				4	14	
Rhodes	Y	U	U							U	C	U		6	25	
Ryan												W		1	1	Invalidated out 28th Feb
Searle	L			K					2ndB					3	20	
Sharp	K			2ndI	2ndQ	2ndA				2ndA	2ndA	E		7	7	
Sinnema	2ndQ	2ndQ		2ndQ		2ndQ		W						5	18	
Taylor	G	G		G		G							G	5	23	
Tobin					W	W				W	W			4	17	
Wheeler	2ndI	K	G		2ndA									4	25	
Willis	R	R									2ndQ			3	22	
Winder		Y		Y	Y				2ndI	Y		Y		6	18	
32 Crews	15	16	5	14	15	15	5	8	5	15	14	17	5	149		

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - MARCH 1945**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Mannheim	Cologne	Gardening	Chemnitz	Dessau	Kassel	Essen	Dortmund	Gardening	Gelsenkirchen	Misburg	
Date	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	8th	11th	12th	12th	13th	15th	Comments
<b>PILOT</b>												
Ayres	2nd J	2nd J			2nd J	2nd J	2nd J		2nd J			Missing 12th March
Bailey	2nd I			2nd X								Missing 5th March
Bishop	2nd B	2nd B	2nd B		2nd B							Tour ex 7th March
Bolton	2nd T		2nd T								Y	
Cockroft	2nd N	2nd N		2nd N	3rd V	2nd N	2nd N			Y		
Crane	2nd X		2nd I		2nd T	2nd T	Y		2nd Q			Tour ex 12th March
Firth					F	F	F	F		F		
Freeborn							3rd D	3rd D		3rd D	3rd D	
French	2nd A			2nd A								
Gee								2nd N				
Gibbins						3rd V	2nd T					Missing 11th March
Gregoire		R	R									Missing 3rd March
Langford	C	C		2nd B		C	C	C		C		
Legg	2nd P			2nd P							2nd P	
Lennox	2nd O	S										
Martin					3rd D		2nd I			E	C	
McCourt		W						2nd P	2nd P			
McLarty				F	G		G					
McWilliams					2nd A	G						
Parker	F	F		2nd J							2nd A	Missing 15th March
Parsons												
Penman					Y	2nd P	W	Y		2nd A		
Potter					2nd I							To Hospital 7th March
Powley					E							
Purves	3rd V	2nd X		3rd V			3rd V			3rd V		
Rhodes	U											Missing 1st March
Rippingale		E				E	E		E			
Searle	E	2nd I		E		2nd B		2nd I		2nd I	2nd I	
Sharp						2nd A						
Sinnema		2nd Q		2nd Q	2nd Q	2nd Q	2nd Q			W		
Speed											G	
Stott												
Sudual	G	2nd A		2nd I								Posted 7th March
Taylor		G	2nd J						G	G		
Tobin	Y			W	W	W		W				
Veale												
West											2nd N	
Wheeler							2nd A		2nd A			
Willis		2nd P		Y	2nd P		2nd P				3rd V	
Winder		Y				Y		3rd				
40 Crews	16	16	5	13	14	14	15	9	5	11	9	

153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - MARCH 1945  
"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"

	Nuremberg	Hannau	Bremen	Hildesheim	Harpenerweg	Paderborn	Total March	Total Flown	
Date	16th	18th	21st	22nd	24th	27th			Comments
<b>PILOT</b>									
Ayres							6	23	Missing 12th March
Bailey							2	6	Missing 5th March
Bishop							4	36	Tour ex 7th March
Bolton		Y	Y		3rd T	3rd T	7	35	
Cockroft	2nd N		2nd N			2nd N	10	20	
Crane							6	31	Tour ex 12th March
Firth	F	F	F	F		F	10	29	
Freeborn		3rd D	3rd D	3rd D			7	14	
French	E		G	G	3rd D	G	7	28	Tour ex 27th March
Gee		2nd U		2nd U			3	16	
Gibbins							2	25	Missing 11th March
Gregoire							2	29	Missing 3rd March
Langford	C		C	C			10	22	
Legg			2nd P		2nd P	2nd P	6	26	
Lennox	3rd O		3rd O			3rd O	5	5	
Martin				3rd J			5	6	
McCourt		2nd R		2nd R		2nd R	6	6	
McLarty				3rd A	2nd B	2nd B	6	11	
McWilliams		2nd I	2nd I	2nd I		2nd I	6	6	
Parker							4	8	Missing 15th March
Parsons	W						1	1	Missing 16th March
Penman				3rd X		3rd X	7	8	
Potter							1	27	To Hospital 7th March
Powley					2nd U		2	2	
Purves	3rd V	3rd V		2nd N		2nd W	9	23	
Rhodes							1	26	Missing 1st March
Rippingale			E		E	E	7	12	
Searle				E			8	28	
Sharp	3rd J	E			F	3rd J	5	12	
Sinnema	Y		2nd U		Y	2nd U	10	28	
Speed							1	1	
Stott		2nd N					1	1	
Sudual							3	3	Posted 7th March
Taylor		G					5	28	
Tobin				3rd O	3rd O		7	24	
Veale		C	3rd V				2	2	
West		3rd O					2	2	
Wheeler		2nd B	3rd A		3rd A		5	30	Tour ex 24th March
Willis	G	2nd P	3rd J	2nd P			9	31	Tour ex 22nd March
Winder				Y		Y	5	23	
40 Crews	10	14	14	15	10	15	205		

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - APRIL 1945**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**

	Nordhausen	Gardening	Leutzkendorf	Kiel	Plaue	Potsdam	Heligoland	Bremen	Berchtesgarden	Total April	Total Flown	
Date	3rd	4th	4th	9th	10th	14th	18th	22nd	25th			Comments
<b>PILOT</b>												
Birch				E	E		2nd L	E		4	4	
Bolton	3rd T									1	36	Tour Ex 3rd April
Cockroft				2nd N		2nd N	2nd N	2nd N		4	24	Missing 22nd April
Day									2nd W	1	1	
Douglas							F			1	1	
Eckersall							4th A			1	1	
Firth		2nd I		F	G					3	32	Tour ex 10th April
Freeborn			3rd D	3rd D	3rd D	3rd D	3rd D	3rd D	3rd D	7	21	
Gaskell				2nd W						1	1	
Gosling				Y	2nd N	Y				3	3	
Heaton				G						1	1	
Howitt				4th A	4th A					2	2	
Johns							3rd O			1	1	
Kilner				C	C	3rd J	3rd J	F	4th A	6	6	
Langford			C			C		C		3	25	
Legg			2nd P							1	27	Tour ex 4th April
Lennox	3rd O		3rd O		3rd O	3rd O				4	9	
Lowry				3rd V	3rd V		3rd V	3rd R	3rd R	5	5	
Malone							3rd R			1	1	
Martin	F			2nd L	2nd L			2nd L	F	5	11	
McCourt			2nd N	3rd X						2	8	
McLarty		E			2nd B	2nd B	G	2nd B		5	16	
McWilliams	C						2nd I	2nd I	2nd I	4	10	
Norris				2nd P	2nd P				3rd O	3	3	
Penman	3rd X					3rd X		3rd X	3rd X	4	12	
Powley		2nd U								1	3	Missing 4th April
Purves		3rd V						3rd U	3rd V	3	26	
Rippingale						E		G		2	14	
Reddick							3rd X			1	1	
Rodney									C	1	1	
Searle						4th A	C		G	3	31	Tour ex 25th April
Sharp			3rd J	3rd J	3rd J			3rd J	3rd J	5	17	
Sinnema							3rd T			1	29	Tour ex 18th April
Speed			F	2nd B	2nd I	G				4	5	
Stott	4th A		3rd X			2nd P	2nd P	2nd W		5	6	
Swales							Y			1	1	
Taylor	3rd J		2nd B							2	30	Tour ex 4th April
Tobin	2nd W		2nd W		2nd W	2nd W	2nd W			5	29	Tour ex 18th April
Veale							E			1	3	
West	Y		3rd T	3rd T	3rd T		#	3rd T	3rd T	7	9	#625 Sqdn T/2
Williams	3rd D		4th A	2nd I						3	3	Posted 10th April
Winder		2nd R								1	25	Missing 4th April
42 Crews	10	5	12	17	15	13	19	15	13	119		



**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - APRIL/MAY 1945**  
**"WHO FLEW WHICH AIRCRAFT, WHERE AND WHEN"**  
**OPERATION 'MANNA' - HOLLAND**

Date	29th April	30th April	1st May	2nd May	3rd May	4th May	5th May	7th May	8th May	Total
PILOT										
Birch	3rd X		2nd B							2
Clark		3rd U								1
Conley					4th A			3rd J		2
Cooper						2nd W		3rd X		2
Day	3rd U		3rd U					3rd U		3
Douglas	2nd B	2nd B						F		3
Drown								3rd R		1
Eckersall	C	2nd L		C			3rd D			4
Freeborn		3rd D			3rd D			3rd D		3
Gaskell	2nd W		2nd W		2nd L			2nd W		4
Gosling	Y			3rd U	Y			Y		4
Heaton	2nd I		2nd I	2nd I			2nd B		C	5
Howitt	3rd D			E			2nd I		E	4
Johns					3rd U		3rd U			2
Kilner	4th A		4th A	G		4th A				4
Langford		G								1
Lennox	3rd O		3rd O		3rd O				3rd O	4
Lowry		3rd R		3rd R			Y		3rd T	4
Malone					2nd W			3rd O		2
Martin	2nd L		2nd L	2nd L			2nd L		2nd B	5
McCourt	3rd R		3rd R			3rd R		G		4
McLarty					2nd B			2nd B		2
McLennan		2nd I								1
McWilliams					2nd I			C		2
Norris		3rd O		3rd V		F				3
Oldcorn								2nd L		1
Penman			3rd X		3rd T					2
Purves	3rd V		3rd V		F			3rd V	3rd V	5
Ramsden		3rd T		2nd W		3rd T				3
Rippingale		4th A		4th A						2
Rodney		3rd X			3rd J			4th A		3
Salter					3rd R			3rd T		2
Sharp	3rd J		3rd J	3rd J			3rd J			4
Sherwin		3rd V		3rd T		3rd O				3
Soundy		3rd J		2nd B		G				3
Speed	G		G		G			E		4
Stott		2nd W								1
Swales	E			3rd X						2
Veale	F		3rd D							2
West	3rd T		3rd T							2
40 Crews	18	14	14	14	14	7	7	17	6	111

### 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - OCTOBER 1944 AIRCRAFT USED

Date Target		7th Emmerich	11th Ft Frk Henrik	12th Ft Frk Henrik	14th Duisburg	19th Stuttgart	23rd Essen	25th Essen	28th Cologne	30th Cologne	31st Cologne	TOTAL
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter											
'A' Flight NG 185	A		Potter			Kuysler	Kuysler	Wheeler	Wheeler	Wheeler	Wheeler *A*	7
JB 297	B	Searle *B*			Draper *M*							2
NG 218	2nd B						Bishop	Bishop	Bishop	Bishop	Potter	5
LM 550	C	Capper	Holman		Searle				Taylor	Rippingale	Capper	6
PB 636	D			Freeborn	Jones A	Freeborn *D*			Jones A	Jones A	Jones A	6
LM 754	E			Willis	Bishop	Holman	Holman	Holman		Groves	Searle	7
ME 812	F	LaFlamme			Holman	LaFlamme	Jones A			Rhodes	Rhodes	6
PA 168	G		Groves	Bolton	Taylor	Taylor	Taylor	Taylor		Taylor	Taylor	8
NE 113	H	Crane			Wheeler	Bishop	French	French	French	French	French	7
PB 639	I					Capper	Capper	Searle	Searle	Gee	French	6
PB 633	J				Groves	Groves	Groves	Groves	Groves		Groves	6
PB 472	K								Holman		Crane	2
PB 378	L											
'B' Flight PB 515	N					Bolton	Jones O	Jones O		Jones O	Jones O	5
PB 638	O				Willis	Willis	Willis			Willis	Willis	5
NG 189	P	Taylor			Legg	Legg	Legg	Legg	Legg	Legg	Legg	7
PD 343	Q		Jones O		Jones O	Williams	Williams	Williams	Williams	Williams	Williams *Q*	7
LM 750	R					Grundy	White	Gibbins	Gibbins	Gregoire		5
LM 752	S					Crane	Crane	Crane	Crane	Crane		5
NG 190	T				Brouillette *M*							1
NG 184	U						Gee	Willis	Gee			3
ND 757	V						Bolton	Mettam	Mettam			3
PB 642	W		Gregoire		Gregoire	White	Grundy	White	White	Mettam	Mettam	8
PD 380	X								Gregoire	Gibbins	Gibbins	3
W4 994	Using	Bishop										1
ME 746	aircraft	Freeborn										1
ND 707	borrowed	Gibbins										1
PD 224	from	Holman										1
NG 136	No 166	Legg										1
NF 986	Squadron	Williams										1
		11	5	3	13	15	17	15	16	17	14	126

**\*M\* - Missing**

JB 297 (B) - 14th October

NG 190 (T) - 14th October

**\*A\***

Aircraft hit by 1,000 lb bomb which went straight through starboard wing. Crew managed to fly back to base

**\*B\***

Aircraft damaged, crew OK.

**\*D\***

Aircraft hit, pilot wounded, force-landed Manston

**\*Q\***

Aircraft hit tree on landing approach. Severe damage, diverted Carnaby. Following major repairs re-issued to 550 Sqdn

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - NOVEMBER 1944  
AIRCRAFT USED**

Date Target		2nd Dusseldorf	4th Bochum	6th Gelsenkirchen	9th Wanne Eickel	11th Dortmund	16th Duren	18th Wanne Eickel	21st Aschaffenburg	27th Freiburg	29th Dortmund	Total	Total Ops Flown on 153 (B) Sqdn
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter												
'A'Flight													
NG 185	A							Wheeler	Wheeler	Wheeler	Schopp	4	11
NG 218	2nd B	Potter	Potter	Schopp	Bishop		Bishop	Bishop	Bishop	Taylor	Firth	9	14
LM 550	C	Capper	Capper	Capper	Capper		Capper	Capper	Holland	Langford	Capper	9	15
PB 636	D	Jones A	Jones A	Taylor	Jones A		LaFlamme	Potter	Jones A	Jones A	Jones A	9	15
LM 754	E	Searle	Searle	Morris	Potter		Potter	Searle	Schopp	Holland	Langford	9	16
ME 812	F	Wheeler	Wheeler							LaFlamme	LaFlamme	4	10
PA 168	G	Taylor	Morris		Schopp		Taylor					4	12
							*G*						
NE 113	H	French					Groves	French	Dighton	French	French	6	13
PB 639	I	McCormack										1	7
		*M*											
PB 633	J		Groves	Dighton	Groves			Groves	Morris	Schopp	Groves	7	13
PB 472	K	Dighton	Dighton	French	Williams		Wheeler	Dighton	LaFlamme	Mettam	Dighton	9	11
PD 378	L	Gibbins		Rippingale	Wheeler	Gibbins	Searle	LaFlamme	Searle	Searle	Taylor	9	9
'B'Flight													
PB 515	N	Jones O	Jones O							Williams		3	8
PB 638	O	Willis	Winder A	Willis	Willis	LaFlamme		Willis	Mettam	Tobin	Willis	9	14
NG 189	P	Rhodes	Rhodes	Tobin	Legg	Capper		Legg	Sinnema	Dury	Legg	9	16
PB 786	2nd Q			Bolton			Legg	Tobin				3	3
LM 750	R	Grundy	Gregoire	Gregoire	Byers	Williams	Willis	Gregoire	Gregoire	Gregoire	Gregoire	10	15
LM 752	S	Winder A	Tobin	Crane	Crane	Mettam		Winder A		Crane	Crane	8	13
NG 201	2nd T	Bolton	Bolton		Bolton	Dury			Bolton	Bolton	Byers	7	7
NG 184	U		Gee		Jones O	Schopp	Rhodes	Rhodes	Gee	Rhodes	Williams	8	11
ND 757	V			Byers	Mettam		Mettam					3	6
PB 642	W	Mettam	Grundy		White			White	Dury	White	White	7	15
PD 380	X	Morris	Gibbins	Gibbins	Sinnema		Gibbins	Gibbins	Gibbins	Gibbins	Pow	9	12
											*M*		
NG 167	Y							Mettam	Winder A	Byers	Winder A	4	4
		18	17	14	17	7	13	18	17	20	19	160	

**\*M\* - Missing**

PB 639 (I) - 2nd November

PD 380 (X) - 29th November

**\*G\***

PA 168 (G) - 16th November - Aircraft damaged by flak. Successfully landed at Woodbridge (repaired - see January 1945)

**\*N\***

PB 515 (N) - 4th November - Aircraft badly damaged by flak.

## 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - DECEMBER 1944 AIRCRAFT USED

Date Target		3rd Urf Dam	4th Karlsruhe	6th Leuna	12th Essen	15th Ludwigs-hafen	17th Ulm	22nd Coblenz	27th Rheydt	28th Bonn	29th Gelsen-kirchen	31st Osterfeld	Total	Total Ops Flown on 153 (B) Sqn
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter													
'A'Flight														
NG 185	A	Willis	Firth		Wheeler		Wheeler			Wheeler	Wheeler		6	17
NG 218	2nd B		Bishop	Ayres	Bishop	Bishop	Bishop	Bishop	Bishop			Bishop	8	22
LM 550	C												0	15
PB 636	D		Jones A	Jones A	LaFlamme						Jones A	Jones A	5	20
				"D"	"D"									
LM 754	E	Rippingale	Potter	Taylor	Schopp	Winder K	Robertson	Ayres	Ayres	Ayres	Ayres	Ayres	11	27
ME 812	F	French	LaFlamme	LaFlamme		LaFlamme	LaFlamme	LaFlamme		Firth	Firth	Firth	9	19
PA 168	G												0	12
NE 113	H		Dighton	Wheeler	Capper	Schopp	Winder K			French	Bishop		7	20
PB 783	2nd I		Capper	Capper	Potter	Capper	Potter	Firth		Potter	Potter		7	7
PB 633	J	Capper	Groves	Langford	Groves		Schopp	"M"					5	18
PB 472	K	Jones A	Schopp	Dighton	Dighton	Dighton	Langford	French		Dighton	Holman	Potter	10	21
PD 378	L	Bishop	Langford	Schopp	Taylor	Searle	Firth	Searle		Searle	Robertson		9	18
'B'Flight														
PB 515	N			Jones O		Jones O	Jones O	Jones O		White	Haines	Cockroft	7	15
PB 638	O		Willis	Sinnema	Willis	Reid	Reid	Willis		Byers	Byers		8	22
NG 189	P	Legg											1	17
		"P"												
PB 786	2nd Q		Williams	Williams	Williams	Sinnema	Sinnema	Sinnema		Sinnema	Sinnema		8	11
LM 750	R	Gregoire	Purves	Gregoire	Sinnema	Byers	Byers	Gregoire	Gregoire	Gregoire	Purves	Reid	11	26
LM 752	S	Crane	Byers	Crane	Crane		Purves	Purves		Purves	Crane	Purves	9	22
NG 201	2nd T		Bolton	Byers	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton			Bolton	Bolton		7	14
NG 184	U	Gee	Rhodes	Rhodes	Gee	Rhodes	Rhodes	Gee	Reid		Rhodes	Rhodes	10	21
NG 335	2nd V		Mettam	Mettam	Mettam	Gibbins	Mettam	Mettam	Mettam		Reid		7	7
PB 642	W	White	Sinnema	White	Purves	Tobin		White		Robertson	White	Tobin	9	24
PB 872	2nd X									Haines	Winder A		2	2
NG 167	Y			Winder A	Rhodes		Gibbins	Reid	Winder A	Legg			6	10
		11	16	19	18	15	18	15	6	16	18	10	162	

**\*M\* - Missing**

PB 633 (J) - 17th December over Laon, only 3 crew survived

**\*D\***

PB 636 (D) - 6th December- All air speed indicators U/S. Aborted. Bombs jettisoned.

PB 636 (D) - 12th December - Aircraft badly damaged by flak.

**\*P\***

NG 189 (P) - 3rd December - Aircraft hit by flak. With engine ablaze, crash landed at Brussels. Crew unhurt. (Aircraft subsequently destroyed later by enemy air attack on aerodrome)

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - JANUARY 1945  
AIRCRAFT USED**

Date Target		2nd Nuremburg	4th Royan	7th Munich	14th Leuna	16th Zeit	22nd Duisburg	28th Zuffenhausen	Total	Total Ops Flown On 153 (B) Sqdn
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter									
'A' Flight NG 185	A	Wheeler	Wheeler	Wheeler	Langford	Holman	Winder K *M*		6	23
NG 218	2nd B	Bishop	Bishop		Taylor	Ayres	Bishop	Freeborn	6	28
LM 550	C	Potter	Winder K	Bishop			Langford	Wheeler *A*	5	20
PB 636	D	Jones A	Jones A	Jones A	Winder K	Jones A	Jones A *M*		6	26
LM 754	E	Ayres	Ayres	Ayres	Rippingale		Ayres	Rippingale *E*	6	33
ME 812	F	Firth	Firth	Holman			Holman	Firth	5	24
PA 168	G					Firth	Taylor		2	14
NE 113	H	French	French	French	French	Dighton	French	Holman	7	27
PB 783	2nd I	Haines	Potter	Potter	Potter	Winder K		Potter	6	13
PB 472	K	Dighton	Holman	Dighton	Dighton		Freeborn	Dighton	6	27
PD 378	L	Holman	Rhodes	Searle *A*		Langford	Searle	Searle	6	24
'B' Flight PB 515	N	Reid *M*							1	16
PB 638	O	Byers	Legg	Haines	Willis	Willis	Willis	Jones O *M*	7	29
ME 384	2nd P							Legg	1	1
PB 786	2nd Q		Cockroft	Jones O *A*	Jones O	Sinnema	Sinnema	Sinnema	6	17
LM 750	R		Gregoire	Gregoire	Gregoire	Gregoire	Cockroft	Gregoire	6	32
LM 752	S	Purves	Haines	Crane	Crane	Purves	Crane	Crane	7	29
NG 201	2nd T	Bolton	Bolton		Bolton	Winder A	Purves		5	19
NG 184	U	Rhodes		Gee	Rhodes *A*	Gee	Rhodes	Taylor	6	27
NG 335	2nd V	Mettam	Mettam	Bolton	Byers	Byers *M*			5	12
PB 642	W	Tobin	Tobin	Tobin	Tobin	Tobin	Tobin	Tobin	7	31
PB 872	2nd X					Cockroft	Gibbins	Gibbins	3	5
NG 167	Y	Gibbins	Winder A	Winder A	Haines		Winder A	Cockroft	6	16
		18	18	17	16	16	19	17	121	

**\*M\* - Missing**

PB 515 (N) - 2nd January  
 NG 335 (2nd V) - 16th January  
 NG 185 (A) - 22nd January  
 PB 636 (D) - 22nd January  
 PB 638 (O) - 28th January

**\*A\* - Aborted**

PD 378 (L) - 7th January - S/I Engine failure  
 PB 786 (2nd Q) - 7th January - Oxygen failure rear turret  
 NG 184 (U) - 14th January - Rear Gunner taken ill  
 LM 550 (C) - 28th January - Engine failure

**\*E\* Combat Damage**

LM 754 (E) - 28th January - Attacked by enemy fighter - crew OK. Aircraft U/S, but repairable (see February 23rd)

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - FEBRUARY 1945  
AIRCRAFT USED**

Date Target		1st Ludwigs hafen	3rd Bottrop	4th Gardening	7th Kieve	8th Politz	13th Dresden
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter						
'A'Flight							
NG 488	2nd A				McLarty	Wheeler	Sharp
NG 218	2nd B	Bishop	Bishop	Potter	Bishop		Bishop
LM 550	C		Langford			Holman	Ayres
NN 785	2nd D						
LM 754	E						
ME 812	F	Firth	Firth		Firth	Firth	Firth
PA 168	G	Taylor	Taylor	Wheeler	Taylor		Taylor
NE 113	H	Freeborn *E*	French		French	Ayres	Potter
PB 783	2nd I	Wheeler	Potter		Sharp	Potter *A*	
RA 526	2nd J						
PB 472	K	Sharp	Wheeler		Searle	McLarty	Parker
PD 378	L	Searle	Freeborn *M*				
'B'Flight							
ME 424	2nd N						
NN 803	2nd O						
ME 384	2nd P	Cockroft	Legg		Cockroft	Legg	Legg
PB 786	2nd Q	Sinnema	Sinnema		Sinnema	Sharp	Sinnema
LM 750	R	Willis	Willis	Legg Crane *E*	Purves	Gregoire	Gregoire
LM 752	S	Crane	Purves				
NG 201	2nd T	Bolton *E*	Bolton		Bolton	Bolton	Bolton
NG 184	U	Gee	Rhodes	Willis	Gee	Cockroft	Gee
NG 500	3rd V					Purves	Bailey
PB 642	W				Mills	Tobin	Tobin
PB 872	2nd X	Gibbins	Gibbins			Mills	Gibbins
NG 167	Y	Rhodes	Winder A		Winder A	Winder A	
		15	16	5	14	15	15

**\*M\* - Missing**

PD 378 (L) - 3rd February - crew baled out but Navigator died of wounds

**\*A\* Aborted**

PB 783( 2nd I) - 8th February - Engine failure. Bombs jettisoned

**\*E\* Incidents**

NE 113 (H) - 1st February - Attacked by N/F

NG 201 (2nd T) - 1st February - Attacked by N/F

LM 752 (S) - 4th February - Badly damaged by enemy N/F

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - FEBRUARY 1945  
AIRCRAFT USED**

Date Target		14th Gardening	14th Chemnitz	15th Gardening	20th Dortmund	21st Duisburg	23rd Pforzheim	24th Gardening	Total	Total Ops Flown on 153 (B) Sqn
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter									
'A'Flight										
NG 488	2nd A		French		Sharp	Sharp	Parker		7	7
NG 218	2nd B			Searle	Bishop		Bishop	Bishop	9	37
LM 550	C					Rhodes	McLarty		5	25
NN 785	2nd D		Holman		Holman *M*				2	2
LM 754	E						Sharp		1	34
ME 812	F		Langford			Firth	Firth		8	32
PA 168	G			Langford	Parker	Parker	Martin	Taylor	10	24
NE 113	H				McLarty				6	33
PB 783	2nd I	Potter		Winder A	Potter	Potter	Potter		9	22
RA 526	2nd J					Ayres	Ayres	Ayres	3	3
PB 472	K				Firth	McLarty *E*			7	34
PD 378	L								2	26
'B'Flight										
ME 424	2nd N						Cockroft		1	1
NN 803	2nd O		Mills *M*						1	1
ME 384	2nd P		Legg		Gregoire	Legg			8	9
PB 786	2nd Q	Bishop			Bailey	Willis	Penman		9	26
LM 750	R	Ayres		Crane		Gregoire	Gregoire	Gregoire	11	43
LM 752	S								3	32
NG 201	2nd T	Crane		Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton		10	29
NG 184	U	Gregoire			Rhodes		Rhodes		9	36
NG 500	3rd V		Bailey		Purves	Cockroft	Crane		6	6
PB 642	W		Sinnema		Tobin	Tobin	Ryan		7	38
PB 872	2nd X		Gibbins		Gibbins		Bailey	Crane *A*	8	13
NG 167	Y				Winder A	Langford	Winder A		7	23
		5	8	5	15	14	17	5	149	

**\*M\* - Missing**

NN 803 (2nd O) - 14th February

NN 785 (2nd D) - 20th February

**\*A\* Aborted**

PB 872 (2nd X) - 24th February - S/O failed. Mines brought back

**\*E\* Incidents**

PB 472 (K) - 21st February - Hit by 31 'friendly' incendiaries. Withdrawn for major overhaul

153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - MARCH 1945  
AIRCRAFT USED

Date Target		1st Mannheim	2nd Cologne	3rd Gardening	5th Chemnitz	7th Dessau	8th Kassel	11th Essen	12th Dortmund	12th Gardening	13th Gelsen kirchen
Lanc Serial	Sqn Letter										
'A'Flight NG 488 ME 541 NG 218	2nd A 3rd A 2nd B	French Bishop	Sudual Bishop		French Langford	McWilliams Bishop	Sharp Searle *E*	Wheeler Langford		Wheeler	Penman
LM 550 ME 485 LM 754	C 3rd D E	Langford Searle	Langford Rippingale		Searle	Martin Powley	Langford Rippingale	Langford Freeborn Rippingale	Langford Freeborn	Rippingale	Langford Freeborn Martin *A*
ME 812 PA 168 NE 113 PB 783	F G H 2nd I	Parker Sudual Bailey	Parker Taylor		McLarty	Firth McLarty	Firth McWilliams	Firth McLarty	Firth	Taylor	Firth Taylor
RA 526 NX 556	2nd J 3rd J	Ayres	Ayres	Crane Taylor	Sudual Parker	Potter Ayres	*E* Ayres	Martin Ayres	Searle	Ayres *M*	Searle
'B'Flight ME 424 PA 264 ME 384 PB 786	2nd N 3rd O 2nd P 2nd Q	Cockroft Legg Lennox	Cockroft Willis Sinnema		Cockroft Legg Sinnema	Willis Sinnema	Cockroft Penman Sinnema	Cockroft Willis Sinnema	Gee McCourt		McCourt
LM 750	R		Gregoire	Gregoire *M*							
LM 752	S		Lennox *DBR*							Crane *DBR*	
NG 201	2nd T	Bolton		Bolton		Crane	Crane	Gibbins *M*			
ME 544 NG 184	3rd T U	Rhodes *M*									
RA 544 NG 500 PB 642 RF 205 PB 872	2nd U 3rd V W 2nd W 2nd X	Purves Purves Crane	McCourt Purves		Purves Tobin Bailey *M*	Cockroft Tobin	Gibbins Tobin	Purves Penman	Winder A Tobin		Purves Sinnema
RA 545 NG 167	3rd X Y	Tobin	Winder A		Willis	Penman	Winder A	Crane	Penman		Cockroft
		16	16	5	13	14	14	15	9	5	11

**\*M\* - Missing**

NG 184 (U) - 1st March  
LM 750 (R) - 3rd March  
PB 872 (2nd X) - 5th March  
NG 201 (2nd T) - 11th March  
RA 526 (2nd J) - 12th March

**\*A\* - Aborted**

LM 754 (E) - 13th March - P/I Fire. Cookie jettisoned. Remaining bombs brought back

**\*DBR\* - Damaged Beyond Repair**

LM 752 (S) - 2nd March  
PB 786 (2nd Q) - 12th March

**\*E\* - Incidents**

NG 218 (2nd B) - 8th March - Petrol tank holed. Landed Manston. A/C duly repaired  
PB 783 (2nd I) - 8th March - A/C swung on take-off run due to pilot fainting. Reserve A/C - LM 754 (E) was dispatched



153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - MARCH 1945  
AIRCRAFT USED

Date Target		15th Misburg	16th Nuremberg	18th Hannau	21st Bremen	22nd Hildesheim	24th Harpenerweg	27th Paderborn	Total	Total Ops Flown on 153 (B) Sqdn
Lanc Serial	Sqdn Letter									
'A' Flight										
NG 488	2nd A	Parker *M*							9	16
ME 541	3rd A				Wheeler	McLarty	Wheeler *DBR*		3	3
NG 218	2nd B			Wheeler				McLarty	9	46
LM 550	C	Martin	Langford	Veale	Langford	Langford			11	36
ME 485	3rd D	Freeborn		Freeborn	Freeborn	Freeborn	French		9	9
LM 754	E		French	Sharp	Rippingale	Searle	Rippingale *A*	Rippingale	14	48
ME 812	F		Firth	Firth *A*	Firth	Firth	Sharp	Firth	14	46
PA 168	G	Speed	Willis	Taylor	French	French		French	13	37
NE 113	H									
PB 783	2nd I	Searle		McWilliams	McWilliams	McWilliams		McWilliams	13	35
RA 526	2nd J								8	11
NX 556	3rd J		Sharp		Willis	Martin		Sharp	4	4
'B' Flight										
ME 424	2nd N	West	Cockroft	Stott	Cockroft	Purves		Cockroft	12	13
PA 264	3rd O		Lennox	West	Lennox	Tobin	Tobin	Lennox	6	6
ME 384	2nd P	Legg		Willis	Legg	Willis	Legg	Legg	14	23
PB 786	2nd Q								7	33
LM 750	R								2	45
NX 563	2nd R			McCourt		McCourt		McCourt	3	3
LM 752	S								1	33
NG 201	2nd T								5	34
ME 544	3rd T						Bolton	Bolton	2	2
NG 184	U								1	37
RA 544	2nd U			Gee	Sinnema	Gee	Powley	Sinnema	5	5
NG 500	3rd V	Willis	Purves	Purves	Veale				11	17
PB 642	W		Parsons *M*						8	46
RF 205	2nd W							Purves *A*	1	1
PB 872	2nd X								3	16
RA 545	3rd X					Penman		Penman	2	2
NG 167	Y	Bolton	Sinnema	Bolton	Bolton	Winder A	Sinnema	Winder A	15	38
		9	10	14	14	15	10	15	205	

\*M\* - Missing

NG 488 (2nd A) - 15th March  
PB 642 (W) - 16th March

\*A\* - Aborted

ME 812 (F) - 18th March - S/I failure. Bombs jettisoned  
LM 754 (E) - 24th March - P/I failure. Bombs jettisoned  
RF 205 (2nd W) - 27th March - Engine failed on take off. Bombs jettisoned

\*DBR\* - Damaged Beyond Repair

ME 541 (3rd A) - 24th March

153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATIONS FLOWN - APRIL 1945  
AIRCRAFT USED

Date Target		3rd Nordhauser	4th Gardening	4th Leutz-kendorf	9th Kiel	10th Plauen	14th Potsdam	18th Heligoland	22nd Bremen	25th Berchtes-garten	Total	Total Ops Flown on 153(B) Sqdn
LANC SERIAL	Sqn Letter											
'A' Flight												
NX 573	4th A	Stott		Williams	Howitt	Howitt	Searle	Eckersall		Kilner	7	7
NG 218	2nd B			Taylor	Speed	McLarty	McLarty		McLarty		5	51
LM 550	C	McWilliams		Langford	Kilner	Kilner	Langford	Searle	Langford	Rodney *A*	8	44
ME 485	3rd D	Williams		Freeborn	Freeborn	Freeborn *A*	Freeborn	Freeborn	Freeborn	Freeborn	8	17
LM 754	E		McLarty		Birch	Birch	Rippingale	Veale	Birch		6	54
ME 812	F	Martin		Speed	Firth			Douglas	Kilner	Martin	6	52
PA 168	G				Heaton	Firth	Speed	McLarty	Rippingale	Searle	6	43
NE 113	H											
PB 783	2nd I		Firth		Williams	Speed		McWilliams	McWilliams	McWilliams	6	41
NX 556	3rd J	Taylor		Sharp	Sharp	Sharp	Kilner	Kilner	Sharp	Sharp	8	12
PB 472	K											
RA 582	2nd L				Martin	Martin		Birch	Martin		4	4
'B' Flight												
ME 424	2nd N			McCourt	Cockroft	Gosling	Cockroft	Cockroft	Cockroft *M*		6	19
PA 264	3rd O	Lennox		Lennox		Lennox	Lennox	Johns		Norris	6	12
ME 384	2nd P			Legg	Norris	Norris	Stott	Stott			5	28
PB 786	2nd Q											
NX 563	2nd R		Winder A *M*								1	4
PA 313	3rd R							Malone	Lowry	Lowry	3	3
LM 752	S											
ME 544	3rd T	Bolton		Powley *M*	West	West	West	Sinnema	West	West	7	9
RA 544	2nd U										1	6
?	3rd U									Purves	1	1
NG 500	3rd V		Purves		Lowry	Lowry	Lowry	Lowry	Stott	Purves	5	22
RF 205	2nd W	Tobin		Tobin	Gaskell	Tobin	Tobin	Tobin	Stott	Day	8	9
RA 545	3rd X	Penman		Stott	McCourt	McCourt	Penman	Reddick	Penman	Penman	7	9
NG 167	Y	West			Gosling		Gosling	Swales			4	42
NG 993	*2nd T*	(borrowed from 625 Sqdn - 2nd T)						West			1	1
		10	5	12	17	15	13	19	15	13	119	

\*M\* - Missing

NX 563 (2nd R) - 4th April  
RA 544 (2nd U) - 4th April  
ME 424 (2nd N) - 22nd April

\*A\* Aborted

ME 485 (3rd D) - 10th April - Rear Turret u/s  
LM 550 (C) - 25th April - S/I Engine Failure

**153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - OPERATION 'MANNA'  
AIRCRAFT USED**

Date Target		29th April	30th April	1st May	2nd May	3rd May	4th May	5th May	7th May	8th May	Total	Total Ops Flown on 153(B) Sqn
LANC SERIAL	Sqn Letter											
'A' Flight												
NX 573	4th A	Kilner	Rippingale	Kilner	Rippingale	Conley	Kilner		Rodney		7	14
NG 218	2nd B	Douglas	Douglas	Birch	Soundy	McLarty		Heaton	McLarty	Martin	8	59
LM 550	C	Eckersall			Eckersall				McWilliams	Heaton	4	48
ME 485	3rd D	Howitt	Freeborn	Veale		Freeborn		Eckersall	Freeborn		6	23
LM 754	E	Swales			Howitt				Speed	Howitt	4	58
ME 812	F	Veale				Purves	Norris		Douglas		4	56
PA 168	G	Speed	Langford	Speed	Kilner	Speed	Soundy		McCourt		7	50
PB 783	2nd I	Heaton	McLennan	Heaton	Heaton	McWilliams		Howitt			6	47
NX 556	3rd J	Sharp	Soundy	Sharp	Sharp	Rodney		Sharp	Conley		7	19
RA 582	2nd L	Martin	Eckersall	Martin	Martin	Gaskell		Martin	Oldcorn		7	11
'B' Flight												
PA 264	3rd O	Lennox	Norris	Lennox		Lennox	Sherwin		Malone	Lennox	7	19
PA 313	3rd R	McCourt	Lowry	McCourt	Lowry	Salter	McCourt		Drown		7	10
ME 544	3rd T	West	Ramsden	West	Sherwin	Penman	Ramsden		Salter	Lowry	8	17
	3rd U	Day	Clark	Day	Gosling	Johns		Johns	Day		7	8
NG 500	3rd V	Purves	Sherwin	Purves	Norris				Purves	Purves	6	28
RF 205	2nd W	Gaskell	Stott	Gaskell	Ramsden	Malone	Cooper		Gaskell		7	16
RA 545	3rd X	Birch	Rodney	Penman	Swales				Cooper		5	14
NG 167	Y	Gosling				Gosling		Lowry	Gosling		4	46
		18	14	14	14	14	7	7	17	6	111	

## No. 153 (BOMBER) SQUADRON - MINELAYING OPERATIONS - 1945

Date Place	4th Feb Heligoland Bight		14 Feb Kiel Bay		15th Feb Baltic		24th Feb Kattegat		3rd Mar Kattegat		12th Mar Kattegat		3/4th April Kattegat		Total
	Op.No	A/C Letter	Op.No	A/C Letter	Op.No	A/C Letter	Op.No	A/C Letter	Op.No	A/C Letter	Op.No	A/C Letter	Op.No	A/C Letter	
PILOT															
Legg	16	R													1
Potter	20	2nd B	23	2nd I											2
Wheeler	24	G									27	2nd A			2
Willis	22	U													1
Crane	21	S	22	2nd T	23	R	25	2nd X	27	2nd I	31	2nd Q			6
							*A*					*DBR*			
Ayres			14	R			17	2nd J			23	2nd J			3
											*M*				
Bishop			29	2nd Q			32	2nd B	35	2nd B					3
Gregoire			23	U			27	R	29	R					3
									*M*						
Bolton					25	2nd T			30	2nd T					2
Langford					11	G									1
Searle					20	2nd B									1
Winder A					16	2nd I							25	2nd R	2
													*M*		
Taylor							23	G	25	2nd J	26	G			3
Rippingale											9	E			1
Firth													30	2nd I	1
McLarty													12	E	1
Powley													3	2nd U	1
(Gee's crew)													*M*		
Purves													24	3rd V	1
Duration	4 hrs 40 mins		6 hrs 15 mins		7 hrs		6 hrs 30 mins		6 hrs 30 mins		6 hrs 30 mins		6 hrs 50 mins		35

**\*M\* - Missing**

R - 3rd March - Shot down  
 2nd J - 12th March - Shot down  
 2nd R - 3rd/4th April - Shot down  
 2nd U - 3rd/4th April - Shot down

**\*A\* - Aborted**

2nd X - 24th February - Engine Failure

**\*DBR\* - Damaged Beyond Repair**

2nd Q - 12th March

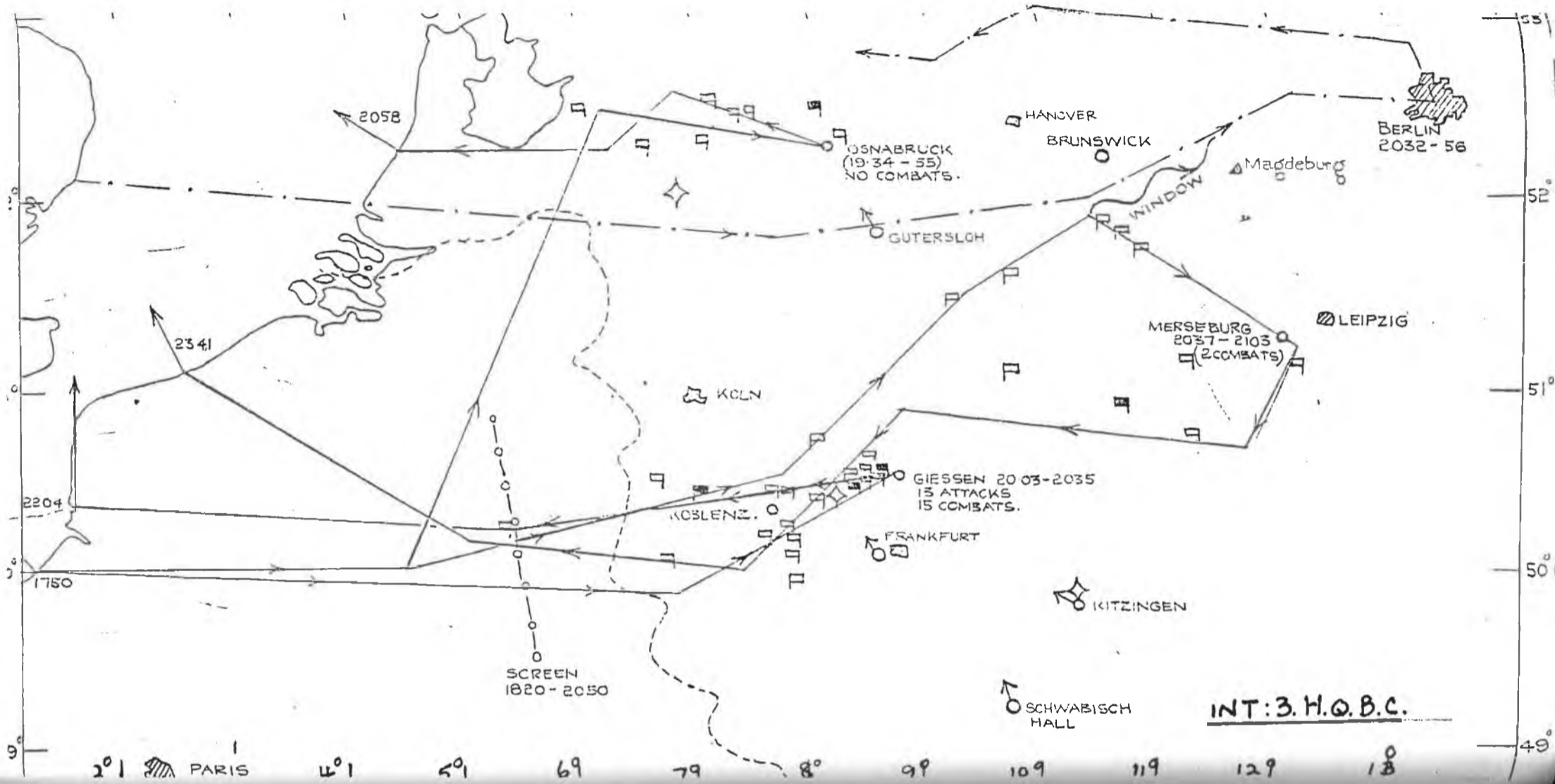
APPENDIX M1

NIGHT OPERATIONS 6/7TH DEC. 1944

1 and 3 Groups (497 A/c) - MERSEBURG.  
4 and 6 Groups (453 A/c) - OSNABRUCK

5 Group (265 A/c) - GIESSEN  
8 Group (42 Mosquito) - BERLIN

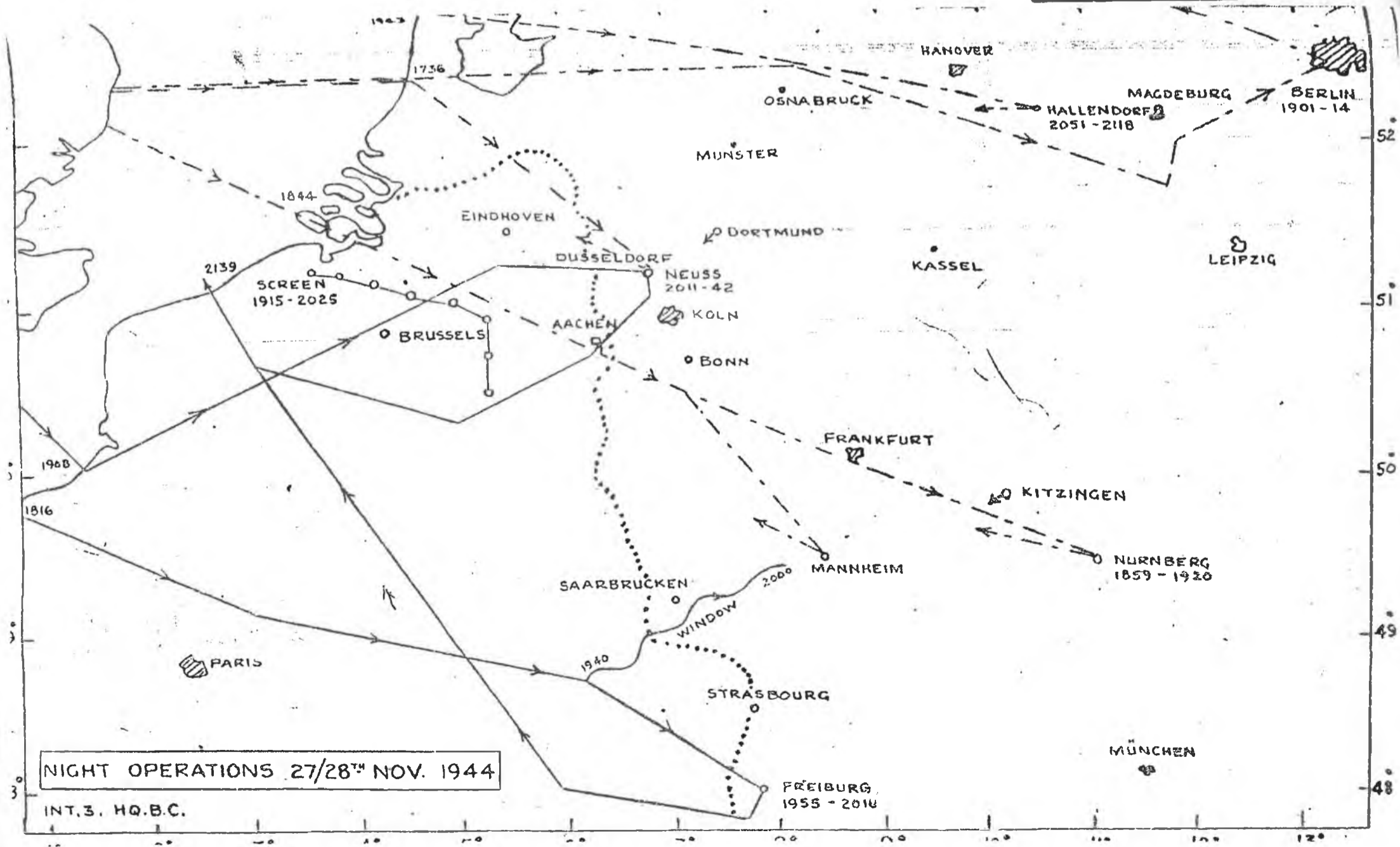
100 Group (94 A/c) - SCREEN + OTHER  
COUNTER MEASURES.



APPENDIX M2

NIGHT OPERATIONS 27/28TH NOV. 1944

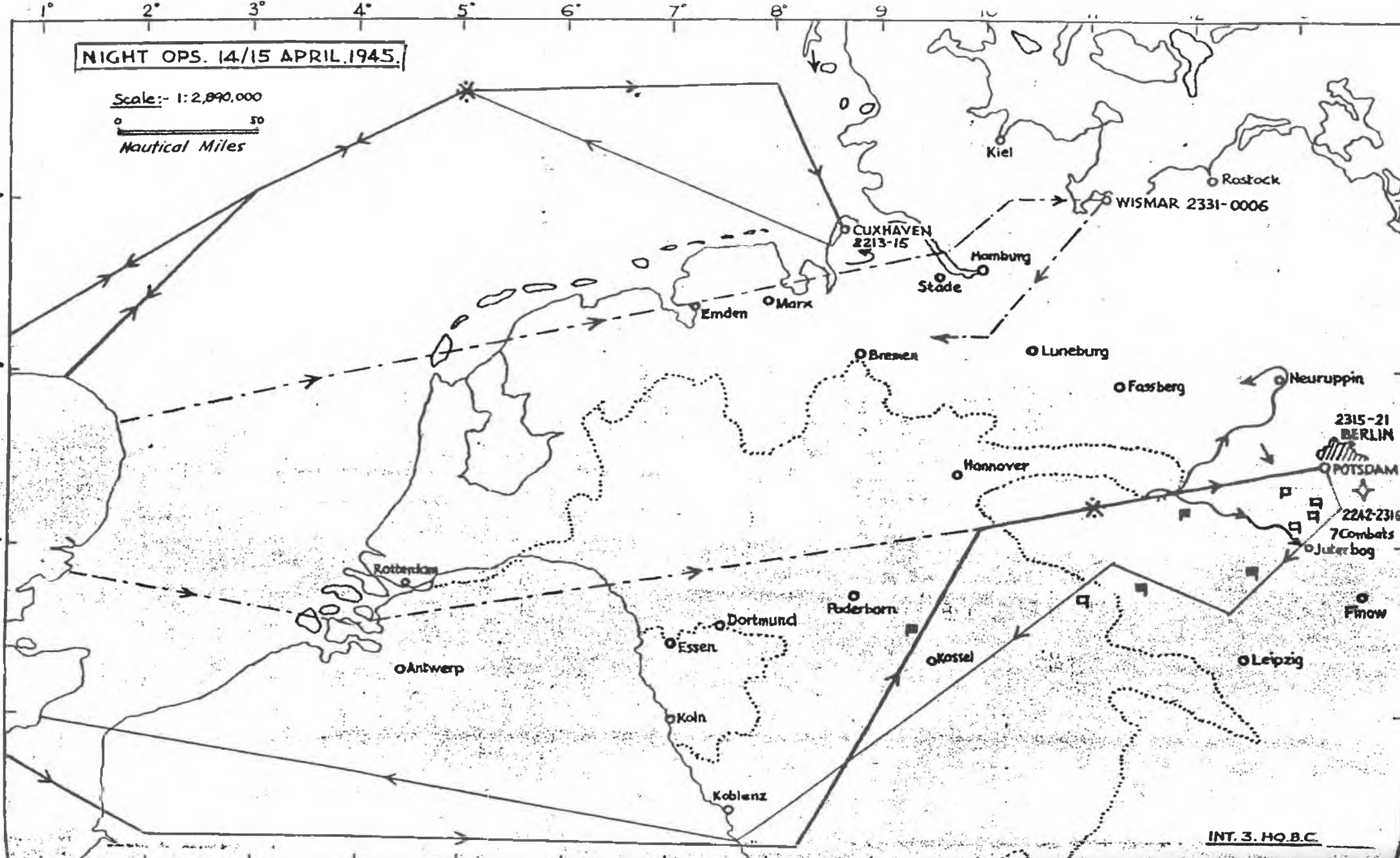
INT. 3. H.Q.B.C.





NIGHT OPS. 14/15 APRIL 1945.

Scale:- 1:2,890,000  
0 50  
Nautical Miles



INT. 3. HO B.C.