

**ROYAL AIR FORCE  
BOMBER COMMAND**

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**SQUADRON PROFILES  
NUMBER 051**



**150 SQUADRON**

*Always Ahead*

**RESEARCHED, COMPILED AND WRITTEN  
BY  
CHRIS WARD**

**ROYAL AIR FORCE  
BOMBER COMMAND  
SQUADRON PROFILES**



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# GENERAL NOTES

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## **GENERAL NOTES**

This profile is a reference work on the activities of the squadron during the Second World War. Bomber Command operated exclusively from stations in the UK, and used overseas bases purely for shuttle operations, or as advanced staging posts for specific purposes. For this reason, periods spent on detachment, or permanent postings to overseas Commands, do not fall within the scope of this work.

This profile is not intended to serve as a comprehensive squadron history, but to provide as much information as possible in a non-anecdotal form. The brief history narrative is basically an account of Bomber Command's war, with the individual squadron's involvement interwoven into it. The publications listed in section 5 are not only recommended reading, but represent the best available sources of information for serious students of the subject. The operational record is based almost entirely on the figures provided in *The Bomber Command War Diaries* by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt, and I am indebted to Martin Middlebrook for allowing me to use them.

An aircraft is included in section 3 if; a) it spent time on squadron charge, no matter how briefly, and irrespectively of whether or not it operated. b) the type was used operationally by the squadron. Where a squadron has a Conversion Flight involving a type with which it is intending to re-equip, but then does not, as in the case of 101 and 460 Squadrons, these have been included, on the basis that they sometimes found themselves on operations. Information is restricted in most cases to; where from, where to, unless it completed its service with the squadron, in which case, some detail of its demise appears. Aircraft which failed to return have the date and target recorded. Where no information follows the serial number of a type still in use when the squadron departed Bomber Command, or at war's end, it can be assumed that the aircraft was still on squadron strength. However, where there is a blank space following the serial number of a type which has been withdrawn from service with Bomber Command, it signifies that I don't know its ultimate fate. An absence of information does not imply that the aircraft flew no operations during its time with the squadron.

Those squadrons which served with the AASF in France between the outbreak of war and the fall of France, were not technically part of Bomber Command from January 1940. Nevertheless, their service is deemed to be on behalf of Bomber Command for the purpose of the relevant Profiles, and their experiences are, therefore, detailed, and their aircraft listed. The Blenheim squadrons of the AASF are also treated as if under Bomber Command.

Finally, information has been drawn from a variety of sources, ranging from Records Branch to individuals with squadron connections, and I am grateful for their contributions. There will inevitably be errors and omissions when dealing with a subject as vast as Bomber Command, and I am happy to be corrected and/or updated by readers.

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# **SECTION 1**



# **BRIEF HISTORY**

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# 150 SQUADRON

MOTTO **ALWAYS AHEAD** (Greek text)

Codes **JN IQ**

Originally formed in Greece on the 1st of April 1918, the very day on which the Royal Air Force came into being, 150 Squadron carried out an air defence role, and remained overseas until disbandment in September 1919. It spent the inter-war years on the shelf, until resurrection on the 8th of August 1938 at Boscombe Down. Equipped with Fairy Battles, the squadron was earmarked to join the Advance Air Striking Force, and moved to France from Benson on the 2nd of September 1939, the day before war was declared. The aircraft involved on that day were, K9379, K9380, K9387, K9389, K9390, K9392, K9483, K9484, L4945, L4946, L4947, L4948, L5225, N2028 and N2093. K9283 was delayed by a technical problem, and was flown out on the following day, while most of the squadron's remaining Battles were sent to 22MU. Under the command of W/C Hesketh, the squadron took up residence at Challerange, and despatched its first operational sorties from there on the 10th, when three aircraft made a reconnaissance of the Franco-German border. The pilots and aircraft on this momentous occasion were the A Flight commander, S/L Macdonald, in K9283, F/O Corelli in K9387 and P/O Poulton in K9389. On the following day, the squadron moved to Ecury-sur-Coole, and spent almost the next week getting itself organised in the primitive conditions, before operating again on the 17th. This was another reconnaissance of the border, and it provided an opportunity for F/L Hyde-Parker and P/Os Gulley and Saunders to get an operational sortie under their belts. Sadly, it fell to 150 Squadron to suffer the first casualty among the AASF Battle squadrons, and it resulted from a non-operational flight on the 20th. Shortly after take-off in the late morning, L5225 developed engine problems, and before P/O Calvert could force-land, the Battle dived in, killing the two passengers on impact, and the pilot sustained severe injuries, to which he succumbed later that evening.

As events turned out, this was but a prelude to a much more serious incident at the end of the month. In the meantime, W/C Hesketh led a formation of six of the squadron's aircraft on a high level photographic reconnaissance of the border on the 25th, and all returned safely, although a few flak splinters came back with some of them. The full implications of war were forcibly brought home to the squadron during a further reconnaissance operation by six of its aircraft in the Saarbrücken area on the 30th. L4945 turned back with engine trouble, and this undoubtedly saved P/O Gulley and crew from the carnage that awaited his colleagues, who were being led by S/L Macdonald. On reaching German airspace at over 20,000 feet, the formation was fired on from the ground, and was then set upon by around fifteen BF109s. K9484 crashed in Germany, killing P/O Saunders and one other, while the third member of the crew parachuted into the arms of his captors, and N2093 was shot down near the border on the French side, F/L Hyde-Parker, the B Flight commander, and one other also surviving by parachute to regain the squadron. K9387 reached France before crashing, and only one member of F/O Corelli's crew escaped with his life, and N2028 was successfully abandoned by P/O Poulton and crew, and they also made it back to the squadron. S/L Macdonald managed to fly back to Ecury-sur-Coole, but crashed on landing in K9283, and his two crewmen sustained injuries. It was a salutary lesson, and as a result of this experience, and a

less costly but similar one involving 88 Squadron ten days earlier, Battles were withdrawn, for the time being at least, from daylight operations.

The remainder of the year was spent conducting a boring round of training and army co-operation exercises, with dummy attacks on BEF columns in the Arras region, and night cross-countries around France. The approaching winter was destined to be particularly harsh, and this further restricted opportunities to fly, as did the "Phony War" mentality, which precluded bombing operations against land targets for fear of reprisal.

## 1940

The winter deepened as the new year progressed, and activity was impossible for long spells. In February, Air Marshal Barratt grouped his squadrons into Wings, and 150 Squadron was assigned to 71 Wing, along with 105, 114 and 139 Squadrons under the overall command of G/C Field. It was March before conditions improved, and this month brought the squadron's first casualty of the year. Late on the 31st, the squadron despatched a number of practice bombing sorties to be carried out at low level. P2244 failed to return, and a report came through on the following morning that it had hit high ground during a low pass in poor visibility, and F/O Devoto and his crew had been killed. Back home, Bomber Command became embroiled in the futile attempts to impede the German advance into Norway, which began on the 9th of April, while some of the Battle squadrons in France occupied themselves with leaflet operations. While being prepared for one of these on the 22nd, one of the squadron's Battles, possibly L4948, was consumed by fire, and only the courage of a party of ground crew prevented the bomb load from going up.

Inevitably, the Phoney War had to end, and when it did with the advance of German forces into the Low Countries on the 10th of May, it heralded an unprecedented month of carnage, and the massacre of the AASF and the Blenheim squadrons of 2 Group, as they were pitched into an unequal fight against the enemy ground defences and marauding fighters. The day began with German bombers attacking the AASF's airfields, and 150 Squadron was brought to a condition of readiness for operations. It was afternoon before it was called into action, and four crews took off to attack troop columns advancing along a road in Luxembourg. They failed to find the intended target, but encountered another column, which was attacked with 250lb bombs and strafing. F/L Parker was leading in L5539, and this fell to ground fire in the target area, killing the pilot and delivering his crew into captivity. L5540 crash-landed in the same area, and F/O Roberts and crew were quickly rounded up, but Sgt White and crew managed to reach Belgium before putting K9390 down, and they emerged from the wreckage unscathed and returned to the squadron three days later. F/O Blom and crew got home in one piece, but K9369 had sustained such damage, that it was declared a write-off. The day had cost the AASF and Bomber Command almost thirty aircraft, including those destroyed on the ground or damaged beyond repair, and this was just the first day of the campaign. At dawn on the following morning, the Luftwaffe paid a visit to Ecury-sur-Coole, and P2334 was destroyed on the ground, as a result of which, B Flight was dispersed to Vatry that evening.



Much of the activity on the 12th would take place at Maastricht, where the bridges over the Maas and the Albert Canal were the focus of attention. It was again afternoon before 150 Squadron was committed, and three crews were briefed to attack a mechanized column in the Neufchâteau area, encountering fierce ground fire as they did so. P2336 exploded in the air, killing P/O Campbell-Irons and his crew, but F/L Weeks and Sgt Andrews carried out their attacks and returned to base, where the latter's P2136 was declared beyond repair. The 13th was a day of relative inactivity, as the crews drew breath and awaited further developments. They came on the 14th, and it was to be a bad day for 150 Squadron. The German advance had reached the Meuse, and was beginning to threaten the Rheims area, around which the AASF bases were situated. It had been a major triumph on the part of the enemy to capture most of the bridges intact, but they had also prepared pontoon bridges, which were now to be brought into play at Sedan and Dinant. Everything available was to be thrown into the attack against these objectives in three major operations during the course of the day. P/Os Gulley and Peacock-Edwards took-off just after 07.30 hours, and within minutes were attacking their assigned targets across the Meuse, before returning safely. In the afternoon, four more of the squadron's crews joined others returning to Sedan for the second major operation of the day against these targets, and the 150 Squadron contingent failed to return. P/O Posselt and crew were all killed in K9483, and a similar fate befell F/O Ing and P/O Boon and their crews in L4946 and P2182 respectively. P5232 also crashed, throwing one man clear, and despite his injuries, he managed to hide out until found by a French patrol, and was taken to hospital. Sadly, his pilot, F/S Barker and the third crew member were killed. During the course of the day, forty aircraft failed to return, over 50% of those despatched, and 105 Squadron was knocked out of the battle altogether.

On the 15th, the squadron was withdrawn to a base at Pouan, and transferred to 75 Wing on the disbandment of 71 Wing. Although prepared for operations, it was the 19th before it was called upon again. Six Battles joined others in an attempt to stem the German tide advancing into Flanders, which would cut off sections of the BEF. P5235 was shot down, P/O Osment and crew falling into enemy hands, and L5583 force-landed on a French airfield and was abandoned to its fate by F/O Frank and crew, who got back to the squadron. On the 23rd, the squadron operated in the morning against armoured fighting vehicles parked near a village, and that night attacked similar targets and troop columns, doing so without loss. A night operation was also mounted by the squadron on the 24th, and on the evening of the 26th, the evacuation from Dunkerque began. That morning, elements from 103, 142 and 150 Squadrons were briefed to bomb the Chateau Roumont, where a meeting of high level Luftwaffe officers was reported to be in progress. P/Os Elliott and Vernon made up the 150 Squadron contribution, and both attacked the target in poor visibility independently of each other. P/O Elliott return safely in P6602, but P/O Vernon was pounced upon by BF110s, which severely damaged his aircraft and necessitated a forced-landing near the enemy lines. L5459 was set on fire and abandoned, while the crew tried to make good their escape, a feat which P/O Vernon accomplished, but his two colleagues were captured.

The squadron continued to carry out night operations through to the end of the month, and on the 3rd of June, moved base again, this time to Houssay. Some of its aircraft and crews flew over to the 12 Squadron base at Echimines, and carried out an operation from there to the

Abbeville area on the 7th. Attacking a road convoy from low level, L5288 was hit by return fire and crashed, and this time F/O Vernon died with his new crew. On the following day, an attack on road communications cost the squadron L5112 and the crew of F/L Weeks, who were all killed. The end was in sight for France, and for the beleaguered squadrons of the AASF, the gallant efforts of whose crews, along with those of 2 Group, had been insufficient to save the country from defeat. The campaign had not yet done with 150 Squadron, however, and the 13th brought a sad finale to its operational exploits launched from foreign fields. Six Battles were sent out in the late morning to attack troop concentrations along the Seine and Marne in the area of Vernon-Poix. They were set upon by a formation of BF109s, which sent L5437 crashing to the ground, and there were no survivors from the crew of P/O Beale. P/O Gulley tried to crash-land L5524, which was on fire, and his efforts saved the lives of his crew, who were taken prisoner, but sadly, he was killed. Later in the day, six more Battles were despatched by the squadron to attack tanks in the Foret de Gault, led by S/L Bradley in L5591. This formation was also attacked by BF109s, and S/L Bradley's aircraft was set on fire, and his gunner wounded. Following a successful crash-landing, the gunner was delivered to hospital, and S/L Bradley and his observer made for Nantes by rail, and were eventually flown home to England. At dawn on the 15th, the squadron despatched its final sorties from France, ten aircraft carrying out armed reconnaissance around Dreux and Evreux, from which one failed to return. When about to bomb a village containing anti-aircraft batteries, P/O Benjamin was bounced by BF109s, and a chase ensued, which took them down to hedge top height. L5541 sustained damage and the gunner was wounded, and this necessitated a crash-landing, which was successfully accomplished, and like S/L Bradley before him, P/O Benjamin delivered his gunner to medical care, and then set off for Nantes, from where he and his observer were returned to England later in the month.

Meanwhile, back at base, the squadron had departed by road, also for Nantes, where they would board a ship on the following day for passage home. At 11.00 hours, all the Battles capable of flying took off for England and landed at Abingdon, but later in the day, they were ordered to proceed to Stradishall, where they were joined by the rest of the squadron on the 19th. It was to be a brief stay, and a further change of address took the Squadron to Newton, alongside the A46, the Leicester to Lincoln road in Nottinghamshire on the 3rd of July. Here the squadron would form part of the reconstituted 1 Group, and share the facilities with 103 Squadron, until their new stations were ready. Both squadrons retained their Battles for the time being, and with the Battle of Britain gaining momentum overhead, and invasion fever gripping the nation, these would be put to use against the invasion craft being gathered in the ports along the occupied coast. In the meantime, however, the first operational sorties launched from Newton involved three aircraft each from 103 and 150 Squadrons, whose crews were briefed to attack oil storage tanks at Rotterdam on the 21/22<sup>nd</sup> of July. Only one of the six bombed the primary target, two went for alternatives and two returned early. Both squadrons despatched a further three aircraft each on the following night to the aerodrome at Schiphol, but the results were inconclusive. A larger effort, this time by twelve Battles, six each from Newton and Binbrook, was directed at aerodromes at Brussels and Antwerp on the 25/26th, but only a single 150 Squadron crew out of the entire force reached its assigned target area, only to be unable to locate the aiming point, and the bombs were jettisoned over the sea before a return to base was made.

The squadron did not operate at all during August, but returned to the fray on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, by which time the anti-invasion campaign, to which Bomber Command committed a considerable effort, had got into full swing. Six crews each from 103 and 150 Squadrons carried out an attack on shipping at Calais during the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup>, and both squadrons returned there on the 9<sup>th</sup> with three aircraft. Similar numbers went to Boulogne on the 10/11<sup>th</sup>, 11/12<sup>th</sup>, 14/15<sup>th</sup>, 15/16<sup>th</sup>, 17/18<sup>th</sup>, 18/19<sup>th</sup> and 20/21<sup>st</sup>, on the last five occasions, elements from Polish squadrons participated. On the 21/22<sup>nd</sup>, the squadron despatched three sorties to Calais, while 103 Squadron continued the assault on Boulogne, but the latter was once more the destination for three 150 Squadron crews on the 23/24<sup>th</sup>, and again on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Ostend provided a change of scenery on the 27<sup>th</sup>, after which the Battle squadrons were stood down until the next moon period began on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October. As events were to prove, 103 and 150 Squadrons had flown their final operations with the obsolete Battle, and when attacks with the type resumed, it was at the hands of the Binbrook squadrons and the Poles. Although these operations had been largely ineffective, 150 Squadron had at least suffered no casualties from the sixteen operations in which it participated. In fact, its only Battle casualty after returning to England was caused by a flare falling off L5528 during preparations for a night sortie on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, and igniting, and in the resulting explosion, seven men were killed, including F/O Blom, a veteran of the campaign in France, and a further man died of his injuries.

On the 2nd of October, 150 Squadron began its conversion onto Wellingtons, L7870 arriving first, followed by nine more by the 9<sup>th</sup>, and the last Battle was disposed of by the 17<sup>th</sup>. Working up to operational status was to take a considerable time, and efforts would be hampered by a second severe wartime winter. The first incident involving a squadron Wellington came on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, when N2998 crash-landed at Newton during training, but no casualties were reported. W/C Hesketh's unusually long period in command of the squadron came to an end, and W/C Paul became the new commanding officer on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December. It had been a curious year for the squadron, characterized by inactivity for long periods during the first and much of the last quarters, five weeks of indescribable strain and action during the middle, and a more gentle wind-down in operational activity during the swansong of the Battle as Autumn came. The New Year would also begin slowly, but from spring onwards, the squadron would find itself embroiled in a routine of regular operations to the major population centres of Germany, and a new era of attrition.

## 1941

The year began with a succession of operations against ports in Germany and the Occupied Countries, the first three nights of January being devoted to Bremen, where some useful if moderate damage was inflicted. Thereafter, Wilhelmshaven was the principal target, receiving six raids by forces of varying size between the 8/9<sup>th</sup> and the end of the month, partly in an attempt to hit the Tirpitz, which was a temporary resident. It was this first raid which launched 150 Squadron into battle with the Wellington, and the contingent returned home safely. A week later, on the 15<sup>th</sup>, a new Air Ministry directive was issued, which ordered the C-in-C Sir Richard Peirse to concentrate his efforts against Germany's synthetic oil production. It was believed that this industry was approaching a critical period, and a list

of seventeen sites was drawn up accordingly, the top nine of which represented 80% of output. A concerted series of attacks, it was suggested, would lead to a reduction in the enemy's capacity to wage war. In the light of the oil campaign prosecuted by the Command from the summer of 1944, during which large numbers of genuinely heavy bombers saturated refineries with massive tonnages of bombs, it is laughable to imagine that the pinprick raids of early 1941 could have more than nuisance value, and this was indeed the case. Nevertheless, Peirse would follow his orders, beginning with attacks on Gelsenkirchen, Homberg and Sterkrade in mid February, but first he despatched the largest force yet to a single target, 222 aircraft, to Hanover on the 10/11th.

In a demonstration of the absence of a firm direction, the oil policy was rescinded on the 9th of March, when a new directive was received. In the face of disasterous losses to U-Boats in the Atlantic, Churchill demanded that the Command should now concentrate its efforts against this menace, and its partner in crime, the long range maritime bomber and reconnaissance aircraft, the Focke-Wulf Kondor, where-ever they could be found, whether at sea, in the ship-building yards or in the factories, and this policy would be pursued faithfully by Peirse for the next four months, although not to the exclusion of all else. A list of the priority targets was headed by Kiel, Hamburg, Vegesack and Bremen, all of which contained U-Boat manufacturing yards, and the last mentioned was also home to a Focke-Wulf factory. Lorient and St Nazaire were also included as U-Boat bases, and it was on return from a disappointing performance against such a target at Lorient on the 21/22<sup>nd</sup> that the squadron suffered its first casualty of the year, when R3288 crashed in North Wales, killing F/O Elliot and all but one of his crew. The first operations in the campaign had been conducted earlier in the month, however, when Hamburg and Bremen were raided on the 12/13<sup>th</sup>, with some degree of success. Some high explosive bombs and incendiaries caused damage to the Blohm & Voss shipyard at the former, and at the latter, the Focke-Wulf factory also took some hits. Hamburg was raided again on the following night, and further damage was inflicted at the shipyard, and over a hundred fires were started in other parts of the city. A telling blow for the period was struck against an oil plant at Gelsenkirchen on the 14/15<sup>th</sup>, when Wellingtons were predominant in an overall force of a hundred aircraft, and thereafter during the month, most of the effort was directed at ports in Germany and France, although Berlin was the destination for a force of Wellingtons and Whitleys on the 23/24<sup>th</sup>.

On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the German cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were reported to be off Brest, and they took up residence on the following day. That night, the first operation was carried out in what was to become a long running saga against the port and its lodgers, which would not be finally resolved until February of the following year, and in the meantime would be a thorn in the flesh of Bomber Command. No hits were scored on this occasion, thus setting a pattern which would be played out over the months ahead, and would result in the loss to the Command of dozens of valuable crews. No less than twelve operations were directed at the port and its guests during April, the largest of which involved ninety four aircraft on the 14/15th, and although hits were occasionally claimed, there was no confirmation of damage to the ships as a result of the Bomber Command attacks. It was later learned, however, that four bombs did strike the Gneisenau on the 10/11th, a few days after it had been severely damaged by a Coastal Command torpedo. Kiel was the month's other principal target,

beginning with a useful attack on the 7/8<sup>th</sup>, for which the largest force yet to a single target, 229 aircraft, was despatched. Those which reached the target area caused widespread damage to housing, and the docks, and two U-Boat yards lost a number of days production. A return was made on the following night, and this time it was the town which bore the brunt of the attack, with damage to public and municipal buildings a feature, and disruption to gas and electricity supplies. There was less success at this target on the 15/16<sup>th</sup>, 24/25<sup>th</sup>, 25/26<sup>th</sup> and on the night of the 30<sup>th</sup>, but the two earlier operations were probably the most effective against urban targets of the war to date. Two attempts were made on Berlin during the month, with inconclusive results, and typical for the period was an operation to Mannheim on the 29/30<sup>th</sup>, for which seventy one aircraft were despatched. Only about fifteen of these managed to drop their bombs within the city, and they managed to destroy just four houses, and inflict minor damage on a few dozen other buildings.

May showed a definite increase in the scale of operations in terms of the numbers despatched, and it was Hamburg which opened the month's account, for which ninety five aircraft took off on the 2/3rd. A number of large fires were left burning, but damage was not extensive, and an attempt by a force of similar size to hit Cologne on the following night was even less effective. The first major attack of the month on Brest on the 4/5th claimed some hits on Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, but these were unconfirmed, and twenty four hours later, 140 aircraft set off for Mannheim. This large effort in the context of the period was not rewarded with success, destroying one house and killing an assortment of livestock, but there were at least no losses among the bomber force. Thirty three residents of Hamburg were bombed out by a force of eighty aircraft on the 6/7th, and thus far, 150 Squadron had not posted missing a single crew since re-equipping with Wellingtons. This state of affairs had to come to an end, and did so on the 7/8th, when over eighty aircraft raided Brest, while fifteen Wellingtons were detailed for an attack on St Nazaire. Just one aircraft failed to return from the latter, and this was 150 Squadron's R1374, which crashed in France with no survivors from the crew of F/L Savage.

A highly effective raid for the period fell on Hamburg on the 8/9th, for which over a hundred and eighty aircraft took off, a hundred of them Wellingtons, and this was the first of three operations against Germany's second city in the space of four nights. Before the second one, a successful assault took place on the twin towns of Mannheim and Ludwigshafen astride the Rhein in southern Germany on the 9/10th, and a small number of war industry factories were destroyed. Major fires took hold in the centre of Hamburg following the raid by a hundred aircraft on the 10/11th, but R1435 failed to return home to Newton, and it was later learned that F/O Spiller and his crew had failed to survive. Hamburg was again the main target on the following night, when encouraging results were obtained, and this concluded a successful series against the city. Mannheim, Hanover and Cologne were the principal targets during the remainder of the month, the last named undergoing four attacks between the 16/17th and 27/28th, although none of them approached the effectiveness of those against Hamburg. On the night of the last Cologne raid, a small force of Wellingtons and Whitleys went to Boulogne, on return from which the squadron's R1044 crashed in Leicestershire, and Sgt Huggett died with four of his crew.

June began with a raid on Düsseldorf on the 2/3rd, and despite claims by over a hundred crews to have bombed the target, only slight scattered damage resulted. This was followed by a period of small scale operations until the 10/11th, when the German cruisers at Brest were once more targeted, although without hits being scored. Haze thwarted a predominately Wellington attack on Düsseldorf on the 11/12th, and on the following night, Wellingtons were sent against railway objectives at Hamm and Osnabrück. Cologne and Düsseldorf were the main targets on each of the nights of the 15/16th and 16/17th, but all four raids were characterized by ineffective bombing. The same two cities would be attacked on the same night on no fewer than six more occasions during the month by forces of varying sizes, although not once with any worthwhile return. Later on the 17th, W/C Carter assumed command of the squadron, which had managed to negotiate operations thus far during the month without loss, but this came to an end at Düsseldorf on the 26/27th, when R1644 fell victim to flak over Holland, and P/O Sievers and his crew died in the ensuing crash. Wellingtons represented the mainstay of the Command at this stage of the war, and they constituted the bulk of the forces sent to Brest on the 1/2nd of July, Bremen on the 2/3rd, Essen on the 3/4th, Brest again on the 4/5th, and Münster on the 5/6th and 6/7th. A new Air Ministry directive issued on the 9th, brought an end to the Command's commitment to the war at sea, and instructed the C-in-C to concentrate on the enemy's communications system and the morale of its civilian population. The Ruhr, as the centre of war production, would feature heavily in the new policy, particularly as it lay at the heart of the railway and inland waterway network. The main railway centres ringing the region were to be attacked during the moon period, while on dark nights, the Rhein cities of Cologne, Düsseldorf and Duisburg would be easier to identify. On nights of doubtful weather conditions, the major cities in more distant parts of northern, eastern and southern Germany were also to be attacked, and there is no question that the Command was better suited to these strategic targets, than to those to which it had been largely assigned during the past four months.

On the 10th of July the squadron moved to Snaith in south Yorkshire, and was the first unit to carry out operations from this station, which would pass into the hands of 4 Group in October 1942. That night, almost a hundred Wellingtons were joined by a contingent of Hampdens to raid Cologne, but only half of the force bombed in the target area, and even their effort was wasted. Performances like this were being studied as part of an enquiry, which would lead in the following month to the publication of the damning Butt Report, an indictment of the effectiveness of the bomber force. Claims by returning crews were frequently enthusiastic, and there is no cause to doubt their genuine belief in the accuracy of the claims, but operations like that against Hamburg on the 16/17th demonstrated the true picture. 107 aircraft took off, and in poor visibility, only fifty two crews claimed to have bombed in the general area of the target, and the Hamburg authorities reported four fires, none of them serious. In return for this failure, a modest four aircraft failed to return, among them 150 Squadron's R1495, in which P/O Bethridge-Topp and four of his crew were killed, and the single survivor was captured. Cologne and Frankfurt likewise escaped all but superficial damage on the 20/21st and 21/22nd respectively, before a concerted effort was made by daylight on the 24th to inflict damage on the German raiders at Brest.

The Scharnhorst caused a late change of plan by departing for La Pallice, and a force of Halifaxes was despatched to that destination to deal with her. The bombing at Brest was to be carried out by an unescorted force of seventy nine Wellingtons, while high flying Fortresses of 90 Squadron and 5 Group Hampdens, the latter under a fighter umbrella, were to draw up the enemy fighters. Hits were claimed on the Gneisenau, although not confirmed, but fierce flak and fighter opposition claimed ten of the Wellingtons and two Hampdens. The attack on the Scharnhorst did result in quite serious damage to the warship, and she was forced to return to Brest where the repair facilities were better. Bad weather continued to blight the Command's efforts to deliver a telling blow during this period, and it contributed to another dismal failure at Cologne on the 30/31st, while also making life difficult for crews returning home. One of six crashes in England involved the squadron's W5719, which came down in Derbyshire following an early return, and Sgt Parrott and his crew were killed.

August began for the heavy squadrons with a busy night on the 2/3rd, which took forces to Hamburg, Berlin and Kiel, the first two employing predominately Wellingtons. A number of large fires were started in Hamburg, but generally speaking, it was another night when results were not commensurate with the effort expended, and the loss of eleven aircraft and crews from the various targets. The same names kept appearing on the target lists, Hamburg, Cologne, Mannheim, Kiel and Frankfurt among others, the last named receiving visits on the 3/4th, 5/6th and 6/7th. The final one of the series claimed the squadron's W5721 and the crew of P/O Landreth, who were all killed. Hanover and Berlin were raided on the 12/13th, both by Wellington dominated forces, and a return was made to the former on the 14/15th by a force of a hundred and fifty aircraft, the crews of which were briefed to use railway stations as their aiming points. Two of the five missing Wellingtons were from 150 Squadron, R1394 disappearing without trace with the crew of Sgt Perry-Keane, and R1016 crashed in Holland, killing one man, while Sgt Elder and the four remaining members of his crew were marched off into captivity.

It was on the 18<sup>th</sup>, that civil servant Mr D M Butt completed his report, and its disclosures were to send shock waves resounding around the Cabinet room, the Air Ministry and Bomber Command. Having studied around four thousand photographs taken during a hundred night operations in June and July, he concluded that only a fraction of bombs were falling within miles of their intended targets, and this revelation would forever unjustly blight the period of tenure as C-in-C of Sir Richard Peirse. It would also provide ammunition for the detractors, who believed that bomber aircraft could be more profitably employed against the U-Boat, and to redress reversals in the Middle East. The pattern of small scale operations continued throughout the month, but there were no further failures to return as far as 150 Squadron was concerned, although two aircraft were written off, happily without crew casualties. T2622 crash-landed at Snaith on return from a training flight on the 22nd, and on the 27/28th, W5722 returned in poor visibility from a marginally effective raid on Mannheim, and was partially abandoned before Sgt Nicholson carried out a successful forced-landing in Suffolk.

The squadron's only losses in September would also arise out of crashes in England, and both would involve the same target and the same crew. Returning from Frankfurt on the 2/3rd, Z8851 crash-landed in Surrey, but Sgt Dickenson and his crew emerged unscathed. On the

20/21st, this crew took X9811, and this time struck a barrage balloon cable on the Yorkshire coast, crash-landed, and again walked away. In between, a force of almost two hundred aircraft was despatched to Berlin, and caused some useful damage on the 7/8th. One of the more effective attacks of the period was delivered on Hamburg on the 15/16th, and this was followed up by two more raids at the end of the month. The major raids of October employing a large Wellington element were to Nuremberg and Bremen on the 12/13th, the former characterized by the number of bombs falling onto outlying communities, Düsseldorf on the 13/14th, Nuremberg again on the 14/15th, Duisburg on the 16/17th, Bremen on the 20/21st and 21/22nd and Mannheim on the 22/23rd. It was from this last one that the squadron posted missing its first and only crew of the month, that of Sgt Bradshaw, who were all killed in T2967. Two nights later, Sgt Wilkinson's T2960 returned from Frankfurt with severe flak damage, and after inspection it was declared to be beyond economical repair.

The recent run of bad weather had been frustrating for Sir Richard Peirse, aware as he was of the critical gaze of the vultures in high places, who would happily have seen the Command disbanded and its aircraft distributed to other causes. Over the past few weeks, quite a number of operations had been subject to a recall signal during the outward flight in the face of worsening conditions. Peirse decided to launch a massive night of operations on the 7/8th, of which the major one was planned for Berlin employing a force of over two hundred aircraft. Another unfavourable weather forecast persuaded AVM Slessor of 5 Group to object to the plan, and he was allowed to withdraw his seventy five strong contingent, and send it instead to Cologne, while fifty three Wellingtons from 1 and 3 Groups were earmarked for Mannheim. In all, a record 392 sorties were despatched on this night, including 169 to Berlin, less than half of which reached the target area to bomb. They left behind them some scattered superficial damage, the Cologne contingent destroyed two houses, and the Mannheim force, which included a 150 Squadron element, dropped none of its bombs in the target area. Twenty eight aircraft were lost from these three raids, and a further nine from minor operations, making the total losses of thirty seven for the night, more than twice the previous highest for a single night. 150 Squadron posted missing the crew of Sgt Atkins in R1606, which crashed into the sea off the Dutch coast with no survivors. This was the last straw for the War Cabinet and the Air Ministry, and Peirse was summoned to a meeting with Churchill to make his explanations. On the 13th, he was instructed to restrict further operations while the future of Bomber Command was considered, and this shackle would remain in place for the next three months. Not until the last night of the month would a force of over a hundred aircraft be committed to a single target, and that was 181 with Hamburg as their destination, 122 of which bombed as planned. In the meantime, forty nine aircraft were sent to Emden on the 15/16th, and four Wellingtons failed to return. The squadron's T2618 force-landed in Yorkshire on return, but no casualties were reported among the crew of P/O Leddra.

Brest was the principal target during December, and received eleven visits of varying sizes during the course of the month, while other French and Belgian ports were also targeted along with Wilhelmshaven in Germany. Cologne was the main city objective as the year wound down, and 150 Squadron suffered no losses as a result of operations. On the 6th, W/C Mellor assumed command of the squadron in place of W/C Carter, who was posted away, and in September 1942, he would assume command of 103 Squadron. An air-test on the 14th



brought about the squadron's last aircraft casualty of the year, when Z8849 crash-landing at Snaith in the hands of Sgt Lewis and crew, who all walked away. It had been a year of treading water for the Command, and one in which little major advance had been made on the previous year, and few successes had been gained. Its efforts had been of little more than nuisance value, and were in fact more a gesture of defiance in the face of an enemy which was still moving forward. The three new aircraft types entering operational service early in the year had all failed to come up to expectations, and each had undergone lengthy periods of grounding while essential modification were carried out. The New Year would bring change, however, and under a new leader, and with a new aircraft which was already in the hands of one squadron, Bomber Command would begin its gradual metamorphosis into a war winning weapon.

## 1942

The year began with a continuation of the obsession with Brest, and no less than eleven raids were mounted against the port, or more accurately its guests, during the course of January. It was going to be a year of persistent losses for 150 Squadron, although there was little evidence of this during the first quarter. A force of over a hundred aircraft set off for Wilhelmshaven on the 10/11<sup>th</sup>, and it was another case of enthusiastic claims by returning crews not being supported by the evidence. Attacks on Hamburg on the consecutive nights of the 14/15<sup>th</sup> and 15/16<sup>th</sup> produced some fires but no major damage, and returning from the latter, Z1078 crashed in the Cheviots killing one of the crew, and the pilot, Sgt Hunt, and one other succumbed later to their injuries. Only eight of eighty three crews reported bombing their primary target of Bremen on the 17/18<sup>th</sup>, and far more actually bombed at Hamburg, where a number of fires were started. A similar failure to reach the briefed targets blighted raids on Bremen on the 21/22<sup>nd</sup>, Hanover on the 26/27<sup>th</sup> and Münster on the 28/29<sup>th</sup>, when on each occasion, half or less of the number despatched actually found the target areas.

There was little activity at the start of February, the largest single operation occurring on the 6/7<sup>th</sup>, when fifty seven Wellingtons and three Stirlings had another crack at Brest. In the early evening of the 11<sup>th</sup>, eighteen Wellingtons returned there, and Z1076 failed to return with the crew of Sgt Dick, and no trace of the Wellington and its occupants was ever found. Just hours after this operation, the situation at Brest resolved itself in a manner which was to heap huge embarrassment on the government and the nation. In the very early hours of the 12<sup>th</sup>, and in atrocious weather conditions, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen, with an escort of destroyers and light craft, slipped anchor and headed for the Channel in an audacious bid for freedom. Such an eventuality had been anticipated by the British Chiefs of Staff, and a plan prepared under the code name Operation Fuller. So secret was it, however, that few of those charged with its implementation seemed to be in possession of the full details of its requirements. It was already late morning when the enemy fleet was first spotted, and only 5 Group was standing by at four hours readiness to mount an attack. The first sorties were launched at 13.30 hours, but the weather would prevent all but a small number of crews from catching a glimpse of their quarry. Despite the commitment of a daylight record of 242 sorties, few attacks were carried out in the squally conditions and extremely low cloud base, and no hits were scored. This disappointment and frustration was compounded by the loss of

fifteen aircraft, to add to all those which had failed to return or were written off as a result of raids against Brest over the preceding eleven months. The enemy ships passed through the Straits of Dover unscathed, and made good their escape into open sea, and although the progress of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau was slowed somewhat after they struck air-laid mines, the entire fleet was safe in home ports by the following morning. On the credit side, this annoying distraction would no longer cause Bomber Command aircraft to be diverted from more suitable targets, and in view of the impending arrival at the helm of a new chief, this could only be beneficial. On the 14th, a new Air Ministry directive dictated that the Command's main thrust should be aimed at the morale of the enemy civilian population, particularly its workers, and this cleared the way for the blatant area bombing of Germany, without the pretence of aiming for industrial and military targets. Waiting in the wings was the new C-in-C, who would pursue this policy with a will.

On the Eve of ACM Sir Arthur Harris's appointment as the C-in-C of Bomber Command, the 21/22nd, a force of Wellingtons and Hampdens was sent on intruder sorties to various parts of Germany, from which 150 Squadron's X9830 failed to return with the crew of P/O Green, who were lost without trace. R1463 crashed in Yorkshire on return, injuring P/O Birkes and one of his crew, and killing the remaining four. Harris arrived at the helm with firm ideas already in place about how to win the war by bombing alone. He had Commanded 5 Group during the first year of hostilities, and would have monitored progress while serving as second deputy to the Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Charles Portal, Peirse's predecessor as C-in-C. Harris recognized the need to overwhelm the defences at an urban target, by pushing the maximum number of aircraft across the aiming point in the shortest possible time, and this would bring an end to the practice whereby crews determined their own individual take-off times, routes, bombing altitudes etc, which had largely been responsible for the pin-prick effect of attacks thus far. Harris also knew that built-up areas are more efficiently destroyed by fire rather than blast, and it would not be long before the bomb loads carried by his crews reflected this thinking. During his first week, Harris sent small forces to ports and other coastal targets, while he prepared for his first major attempt to produce effective bombing, and it was during one such raid, on the 26/27<sup>th</sup>, that the war threw up one of its great ironies. While attacking the floating dock at Kiel, one of forty nine Wellingtons, Hampdens and Halifaxes landed a bomb on the bows of the Gneisenau, now supposedly in safe haven after enduring eleven months of constant bombardment at Brest, and its sea-going career was brought to an end.

In a sign of things to come, on the night of the 3/4th of March, Harris sent a force of 235 aircraft, the largest to date to a single target, to attack the Renault lorry factory at Billancourt in Paris. It was a carefully planned operation, which was to be carried out in three waves from low level, to avoid if possible civilian casualties, with extensive use of flares for illumination, and experienced crews at the head to provide an effective start to proceedings. 223 crews claimed to have bombed the target as briefed in the absence of a flak defence, and a record tonnage of bombs rained down into the target area, creating substantial damage to the factory. Sadly, although almost inevitably, collateral damage could not be avoided, and over three hundred civilians were killed. Bomber Command suffered the loss of just one Wellington, and there were no absentees at Snaith. It was somewhat paradoxical, that Harris, as a champion of area bombing, should gain his first major success by way of a precision target,

but in any event, it was an encouraging start to a new era, although the gradual evolution to effectiveness would be frustratingly slow, and it would be a further six months before the Command began to turn the corner. Three operations were launched on consecutive nights against Essen from the 8/9th, and each was a dismal failure in return for the effort expended, despite the fact that the leading aircraft were equipped with the Gee navigation device. The raid of the 9/10th cost 150 Squadron the crew of S/L Nicholls, who were all killed when DV447 crashed in Germany. The first successful raid using the Gee navigation device came on the 13/14th, and was against Cologne, where substantial damage resulted, which was quite out of proportion to that usually achieved. Thereafter, minor operations occupied the next eleven nights, until a new record force of 254 aircraft was despatched to try again at Essen on the 25/26th. It was another failure, and a smaller force fared no better on the following night, and it would not be until a new electronic device became available in 1943, that a way would be found to see through Essen's protective blanket of industrial haze.

Apart from his understanding of how best to reduce an urban target to rubble, Harris was keenly aware that a target had first to be located, and this had proved to be beyond the capability of the crews on many occasions in the past, not through incompetence on their part, but simply because the means to navigate accurately, and "see" the ground on dark and cloud covered nights over a blacked-out hostile country, did not exist. Until such precise aids to navigation and blind bombing became available, and bearing in mind that Gee was soon to be jammed by the enemy, limiting its range and effectiveness, it was necessary to provide navigators with discernible pin points by which to plot their way across Germany and the occupied countries. Bringing these and the earlier ideas on area bombing together, Harris selected the Baltic port city of Lübeck as the target for a major operation on the 28/29th, which was to be conducted along the lines of the successful assault on Billancourt at the start of the month. The narrow streets and half timbered buildings of this ancient city would aid the spread of fire, and the predominately incendiary bomb loads carried by the 234 participating aircraft reflected this purpose. The coastal location would provide numerous reference points for the navigators, and the paucity of the defences should allow the attack to be pressed home with accuracy. Take-offs occupied a two hour slot between 19.30 and 21.30, and 191 crews claimed to have reached the target area and bombed as briefed. Over four hundred tons of bombs were delivered, and photographic reconnaissance revealed the destruction of over fourteen hundred houses, mostly by fire, and the area of devastation amounted to around 30% of the city's built-up area. It was the first real success for the area bombing policy, and a foretaste of what was in store for Germany over the coming years.

April began with a disastrous Wellington and Hampden attack on railway targets in the towns of Hanau and Lohr on the 1/2nd, which cost 57 and 75 Squadrons twelve Wellingtons between them, while Whitleys and Wellingtons raided the Ford motor works at Poissy in Paris. The latter was not successful, and a return was made by forty Wellingtons and ten Stirlings on the following night, when a more satisfactory outcome was achieved. Just one Wellington failed to return, and this was 150 Squadron's X9814, which crashed in France, killing P/O Powell and all but one of his crew, the sole survivor falling into enemy hands. A new record force of 263 aircraft took off for Cologne on the 5/6th, and those which reached the target area scattered bombs right across the city. Despite the size of the force, a mere

ninety houses were destroyed or seriously damaged, and the death toll among Bomber Command crewmen was well in excess of that on the ground. Failures at Essen on the 6/7th, Hamburg on the 8/9th and Essen again on the 10/11th and 12/13th demonstrated that the Command still had a long way to go in its search for accuracy, and Dortmund escaped all but slight superficial damage on the 14/15th and 15/16th. The former raid cost the squadron the crew of P/O Mardon in DV593, which was shot down by a nightfighter over Holland, killing the pilot, and delivering the remainder of the crew into enemy hands.

In an attempt to repeat the success gained at Lübeck at the end of March, Harris looked to its fellow Baltic port Rostock to host a series of operations during the final week of the month. The presence nearby of a Heinkel aircraft factory was an added attraction, and a proportion of the force would be directed specifically at this. The opening raid on the 23/24th was only moderately successful, and the Heinkel factory escaped damage, doing likewise on the following night, when the town centre was heavily bombed. The squadron's X3305 crashed almost immediately after take off for this operation, and the crew of Sgt Thorogood was killed. The 25/26th was another good night for the attackers, which produced accurate bombing in the town, and W/C Guy Gibson led a small 106 Squadron contingent in a successful assault on the Heinkel factory. The final raid of the series took place on the 26/27th, after which the town's authorities were able to assess that over seventeen hundred buildings had been destroyed, and 60% of the built-up area lay in ruins. Capitalizing on this success, Harris sent almost a hundred aircraft to Cologne on the 27/28th, and damage was inflicted on fifteen hundred houses. Six Wellingtons were among the seven missing aircraft, and two of these were from Snaith. X3288 and X3700 both crashed in the target area, and there were no survivors from the crews of Sgt Hutchinson and P/O Bailey respectively.

May began with a raid on Hamburg by an intended eighty one aircraft on the 3/4th. In the event, only fifty four crews claimed to have bombed through cloud, but they produced remarkable results, which included over a hundred fires, half of which were classed as large. Stuttgart was raided on three consecutive nights beginning on the 4/5th, and not one of them achieved results commensurate with the effort expended. The second operation, on the 5/6th, almost became a disaster for 150 Squadron, and it was undoubtedly fortunate to lose only one crew in the circumstances. This was that of Sgt Bell, who were all killed when X3407 crashed into the sea off the Dutch coast. Two others crashed in England on return, X3451 in Yorkshire, and a flak damaged X3673 on the airfield at Blyton, where it caught fire. Remarkably, the crews of F/S Davenport in the former and Sgt Baxter in the latter, scrambled clear with no serious injuries between them. Sgt Baxter had, in fact, gone back into the blazing fuselage to rescue the wireless operator who was trapped, and was awarded the George Medal for his selfless courage. Sadly, this entire crew would perish in not too dissimilar circumstances three months hence. The only large scale operation thereafter, before almost the end of the month, was by a force of nearly two hundred aircraft with Mannheim as their objective on the 19/20th. Despite the claims of a hundred and fifty crews to have bombed the target, only a small number of bomb loads found the mark. The next ten days saw a gradual build up of aircraft in preparation for Harris's next major advance in tactics, and the arrival on bomber stations of an assortment of aircraft from training units gave rise to much interest and speculation, but no answers.

In order to silence the critics, those who had been calling vociferously for the dissolution of Bomber Command and the distribution of its aircraft to other causes, Harris required a major victory, and, perhaps, a dose of symbolism. When he took up his appointment at the head of Bomber Command, he asked for four thousand heavy bombers with which to win the war, and whilst there was not the slightest chance of getting them, he needed to ensure that those earmarked for him were not spirited away to what he considered to be less deserving causes. Out of this was born the audacious Thousand Plan, Operation Millennium, the commitment in one night of one thousand aircraft, to erase from the map a single important German city target. Bomber Command did not possess a thousand front-line bombers, and in order to achieve the magic figure, Harris needed the co-operation of other Commands, principally Coastal and Flying Training, and this was forthcoming in letters received at Bomber Command HQ on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> respectively. After intervention by the Admiralty, however, Coastal Command underwent a change of heart, and withdrew its contribution. Undaunted, Harris, or more probably his able deputy, AM Sir Robert Saundby, scraped together every airframe capable of controlled flight, or something close to it, and called in the screened crews from their instructional duties. Come the night, Harris would not only achieve the thousand figure, but comfortably surpass it. All that remained in question was the weather, and as the days ticked by inexorably towards the end of May, it was showing no signs of playing ball. There was a real danger that the massive force would draw attention to itself and compromise security, and the time was fast approaching when the operation would have to either take place or be scrubbed for the immediate future. Finally, at "morning prayers" on the 30th, Harris's chief meteorological adviser, Magnus Spence, declared that conditions over north-western Germany would be unsuitable for operations, thus ruling out Harris's first choice of Hamburg as the target, but gave a qualified and somewhat grudging nod in the direction of the Rheinland, where a break in the cloud cover may be expected sometime after midnight, with the possibility of moonlight filtering through to the ground. In this way did the fickle finger of fate decree that Cologne would bear the dubious honour of hosting the first one thousand bomber raid in history.

Operation Millennium was to be conducted along the lines of the successful assault on Lübeck at the end of March, and employ three waves, with the four engined heavy bombers bringing up the rear. The whole force would proceed for the first time in a bomber stream, and pass through the target area in an unprecedented concentration, condensed into a ninety minute period to overwhelm the defences. Take-offs began before 23.00 hours, and by the time that the last had departed well after midnight, 1047 assorted aircraft had taken to the air, some of the older training hacks doing so somewhat reluctantly, lifted more by the enthusiasm of their crews than by engine power, and a number of these, unable to climb to a respectable height, would be among the eventual casualties. Snaith launched thirty Wellingtons, twenty two from 150 Squadron, and the remainder from 21 OTU, although two from the former and one from the latter returned early with technical difficulties. The operation was the outstanding success of the war to date, and the 868 aircraft which reached the target and bombed as planned left behind them over three thousand buildings destroyed, and a further two thousand seriously damaged. The losses, however, at forty one aircraft, represented a new record high, and whilst no 150 Squadron aircraft were among them, X3448 crashed in Lincolnshire on return, and burst into flames, and there were no survivors from the

crew of Sgt Shaw. Harris had always intended to use his giant force a number of times if circumstances allowed, and on the night of the 1/2nd of June, he sent it forth again, this time with Essen as the target. Only 956 aircraft and crews were able to answer the call for a maximum effort, and they were not able to repeat the success gained at Cologne. It was, in fact, a dismal failure, which sprayed bombs all over the Ruhr, and managed to destroy only eleven houses in Essen. The cost of this debacle was thirty one aircraft, but 150 Squadron came through unscathed. A smaller scale follow-up by under two hundred aircraft twenty four hours later was equally ineffective, and on the 3/4th, Harris switched his force to Bremen and scored a minor success.

There was to be just one more raid by the Thousand Force, and this would take place towards the end of the month, but in the meantime, Essen and Emden would be the focus of attention, the former again escaping all but superficial damage on the 5/6th. 150 Squadron posted missing the crew of F/S Kay from this operation, and they were all killed when X3674 was brought down over Holland. On the following night, Emden received the first of its four raids during the month, and suffered the destruction of three hundred houses, and damage to the docks area. Among the nine missing aircraft was the squadron's X3279, and this was shot down into the Waddenzee by a nightfighter, killing F/O Blunt and his crew. After a night's rest, a force of 170 aircraft took off for Essen, and produced another disappointing effort, which cost the Command nineteen aircraft, and for the third operation running, the squadron found itself having to post missing a crew, this time that of F/O Love, who were lost without trace in X3725. Minor operations occupied the next week, before, on the 16/17th, the final raid of five on Essen over a sixteen night period. Results were no better than on the previous occasions, and the steady stream of losses of 150 Squadron aircraft continued, with the failure to return this time of Z1608, the victim of a nightfighter over Holland. At least there were survivors this time, P/O Myall and three of his crew falling into enemy hands. A moderate amount of damage resulted from the three attacks on Emden over four nights from the 19/20th, and this series preceded the final thousand bomber raid, which took place on the 25/26th.

Harris and Saundby managed to muster a force of 960 aircraft to send to Bremen on this night, and ordered by higher authority to participate, Coastal Command contributed a further 102, and although their effort is classed as a separate operation, the total numbers despatched to the target exceeded those sent to Cologne. Not all crews were briefed to deliver a purely area attack, 5 Group for example, was assigned to the Focke-Wulf aircraft factory, and other elements were to target shipyards. While not achieving the success gained at Cologne, results far surpassed those at Essen, but at a cost of a new record forty eight aircraft. 150 Squadron came through unscathed, but not so two nights later, when the first of three follow-up raids was mounted by a force of 119 aircraft. Among the nine missing aircraft were four Wellingtons, and three of them were from Snaith. X3309 was lost without trace with the crew of F/O Osborne, Z1610 was shot down by flak over Holland, killing Sgt Nightingale and his crew, but S/L Hooper and his entire crew escaped with their lives from BJ666, and all fell into enemy hands. In return, the raid caused some useful damage to war industry factories and shipyards, and these again featured in the catalogue of destruction arising out of the further

raids on the 29/30th and 2/3rd of July. On the 29th, W/C Mellor was posted out to be replaced by W/C Jimmy Carter.

It was becoming an expensive year for 150 Squadron, and this was a trend which would continue for the remainder of 1942. Only two major operations were mounted during the first two weeks of July, Wilhelmshaven on the 8/9th, when most of the bombing fell outside of the target area into open country, and Duisburg on the 13/14th, which was equally unrewarding. Inhospitable weather conditions played their part during the latter, and apart from the modest six aircraft which failed to return, four more were lost in crashes in the icing conditions at home. It was this which brought about the demise of the squadron's X3797 in a crash in Suffolk, and Sgt Sykes was killed with two of his crew, while two others sustained injuries. A number of daylight cloud-cover operations were attempted in mid month, and Essen was one of the targets on each of four consecutive days from the 16th. On the 19th, none of the seven Wellingtons and three Lancasters bombed there as planned, and X3755 was lost to flak off the Dutch coast, from where P/O Wilding alone of his crew survived to be rescued by the enemy. The second of the month's Duisburg operations took place on the 21/22nd, and achieved a moderate degree of success, although a proportion of the bombing was wasted in open country. 150 Squadron's run of casualties continued with the failure to return of X3590, which was partially abandoned over Holland on the way to the target, but P/O Skrender and one of his crew perished in the ensuing crash.

Harris sent his forces back to Duisburg on the 23/24th and 25/26th, and only moderate damage resulted, mainly to housing. X3795 didn't make it back to Snaith from the latter raid, having ditched in the North Sea with engine failure, and although one man died, Sgt Horsleman and four others were picked up by the enemy. A force of over four hundred aircraft took off for Hamburg on the 26/27th, and those which reached the target produced an outstanding success for the period, which left over eight hundred fires burning, and destroyed a similar number of houses. Losses were high, however, although for once, 150 Squadron was not represented among them. A return to Hamburg on the following night was badly affected by poor weather over England, and in the event, only 3 Group and 91 Training Group were able to take off, the latter receiving a recall before reaching the target. Another success took place at Saarbrücken on the 29/30th, when almost four hundred buildings were destroyed, but one of 150 Squadron's flight commanders, S/L Cohen, was killed with his crew, when BJ881 crashed in the Pas-de-Calais. The month closed with a very successful attack on Düsseldorf, which again included a contribution from the training units, and it was the first time that a hundred Lancasters had operated.

August began with a series of minor operations until the 6/7th, when Duisburg received the last of its five visits since mid July. 150 Squadron's X3698 managed only to get a mile beyond the airfield before crashing and bursting into flames, and the previously mentioned F/S Baxter and three others died at the scene, while the sole survivor succumbed to his injuries a week later. It will be recalled, that F/S Baxter had been awarded the George Medal for the rescue of one of his crew from the burning wreckage of their Wellington in early May. This was the start of a bad week for the squadron, which participated in the Command's next major operation, to Osnabrück on the 9/10th. A moderate amount of success was achieved for

the modest loss of six aircraft, three Wellingtons and three Halifaxes. Two of the Wellingtons came from Snaith, and both fell victim to nightfighters over Holland. There were no survivors from the crew of Sgt Hughes in Z1593, and only one man escaped with his life from the crew of Sgt Glover in BJ608. Mainz was attacked on the consecutive nights of the 11/12th and 12/13th, and the central districts were particularly hard hit, with some cultural buildings listed among those destroyed. Both operations resulted in casualties to 150 Squadron airmen, although there were no failures to return. X3744 was attacked and damaged by a nightfighter during the former, and one of the crew was killed in the engagement. On return, the Wellington crashed on landing at Coltishall, happily, without injury to P/O Munson and the remainder on board. On the following night, BJ588 was forced to return early and crashed in Lincolnshire, killing Sgt Beaton and two others.

A new era for Bomber Command operations began on the 15th, with the formation of the Pathfinder Force under the then Group Captain Don Bennett. Falling within the nominal control of 3 Group, it lodged somewhat uneasily on 3 Group stations at Wyton, Graveley, Oakington and Warboys amidst an atmosphere of general disapproval on the part of all but one of the AOCs. Only 4 Group's AVM Roddy Carr gave the new force genuine support, the others sharing Harris's dislike of something which appeared to be elitist. To his eternal credit, however, Harris, once overruled by higher authority, gave his unstinting backing to the PFF, and to its commander, Bennett, who was an inspired if controversial choice for the job, and a man whose enormous intellect set him apart from the masses. Harris determined to use his new target finding force at the earliest opportunity, and this arose on the night of the 18/19th, when it led a modest force to the coastal town of Flensburg in the northern-most part of Germany. Despite being selected for its ease of location, Flensburg was totally untouched by bombs, most of which seem to have fallen around the town of Ejsberg in Denmark. It was an inauspicious start for the fledgling force, and there was little improvement at Frankfurt on the 24/25th in the second PFF led operation. Some bombs did fall within the city on this night, but most of the effort was wasted in open country, and sixteen aircraft were lost. Three of the five missing Wellingtons belonged to 150 Squadron, and all three crashed on Belgian soil. Sgt Scorer and two of his crew died in the wreckage of X3414, and a further man succumbed to his injuries later, while the sole survivor fell into enemy hands. There were no survivors from the crew of Sgt Bound in BJ651, and just two from BJ831. This Wellington was damaged by flak before being finished off by a nightfighter, and the pilot, F/S Thompson, was among those killed.

The Pathfinder Force's first success came at Kassel on the 27/28th, when they were able to provide good illumination for the main force crews to exploit, although again, many bomb loads were wasted in open country. Almost every operation was costing 150 Squadron at least one crew, and this night was no exception. The crew in question was that of Sgt Coombes, who were all killed when X3418 was shot down by a nightfighter over Holland. On the following night, one force was sent to Nuremberg, and another to Saarbrücken, the latter without PFF support. Despite favourable visibility, the raid failed to produce more than superficial damage, but for once, 150 Squadron got all of its participants back to England. This didn't indicate that it lost no aircraft, but at least P/O Birks and his crew were able to scramble clear of BJ649 before it burst into flames, having crash-landed at Middle Wallop.



This was the squadron's final loss of another testing month, but any hopes that September would bring some respite were quickly dashed, even though it came through the month's first operation unscathed. This was directed at Saarbrücken on the 1/2nd, but actually fell on the small town of Saarlouis some thirteen miles away, when the Pathfinders posted a major "black", by marking it in error for its industrial neighbour. Amends were made on the following night, however, when Karlsruhe was the victim of an accurate assault, which left many fires burning. The squadron's X3313 was sent crashing into the sea off the French coast, and there were no survivors from the crew of F/S Clarke.

This began an unprecedented series of destructive operations, and if any moment could be identified as the one in which Bomber Command turned the corner in its gradual evolution towards effectiveness, then September 1942 was perhaps it. On the 4/5th, the Pathfinders advanced a step further in their tactics by introducing a three phase system of illuminators, visual markers and backers-up, and Bremen suffered the destruction of over 450 houses and twenty one industrial buildings. Returning from this operation, Sgt Tortman was forced to carry out an emergency landing in Yorkshire, in which Z1671 was written off, but the crew walked away unharmed. Duisburg experienced its heaviest raid to date on the 6/7th, although in terms of what lay in store from 1943 onwards, damage was still very modest. An attempt on Frankfurt on the 8/9th was disappointing by recent standards, most of the bombing falling well away from the city, and it was another bad night for 150 Squadron, which posted missing two crews, and almost lost another one at home. X3304 was damaged by flak, and had to be force-landed in enemy territory, delivering the crew of Sgt Sherratt into captivity. A nightfighter accounted for X3745 over Belgium, and Sgt Graves and his crew did not survive, while BJ591 ran out of fuel and crashed while in the circuit of Lympe airfield, and one man was killed, Sgt Bowker and the remaining members of his crew all sustaining injuries. The Command returned to winning ways at Düsseldorf on the 10/11th, and achieved an outstanding success, which left over nine hundred houses in ruins, and numerous industrial concerns lost vital production for various lengths of time. The second damaging raid of the month on Bremen reduced over eight hundred houses to rubble on the 13/14th, and further incapacitated the city's industrial output. It was not a one-sided affair, however, and twenty one aircraft failed to return, among them the squadron's Z1651, which was lost without trace with the crew of Sgt Grace. Twenty four hours after the above success, a force of under two hundred aircraft delivered upon Wilhelmshaven its most destructive raid to date, and even Essen's industrial haze could not prevent the bombs from getting through in large numbers to cause extensive damage on the 16/17th. During the course of this operation, the squadron's BJ877 was hit by flak over Belgium, forcing the entire crew of Sgt Randle to abandon the Wellington to its fate. The pilot and four others managed to evade capture, but one man did not, and was marched off to a POW camp.

The run of successes came to an end at Saarbrücken on the 19/20th, when ground haze caused bombing to be scattered, and little damage occurred. X3762 failed to return to Snaith on this night, and Sgt Northey and his crew all died in its wreckage in France. Minor operations saw out the remainder of the month, and the squadron registered no further losses. September's successes did not mean that the Command had become the highly effective weapon into which it would ultimately evolve, and failures would continue to outnumber successes for

some time to come, the balance only shifting with the introduction of new electronic aids, principally Oboe, which had been undergoing trials in the hands of the PFF's 109 Squadron. It would be spring before this device was ready for full scale use against the enemy, and summer before it was entirely effective, but it portended the end for the industrial centres of the Ruhr, which would no longer be able to lie concealed under their blanket of haze.

It was this haze, and generally unfavourable weather which saved Krefeld from all but superficial damage on the 2/3rd of October, and there was little improvement at Aachen on the 5/6th. The squadron's BJ829 ran out of fuel on the way home from this one, and was abandoned by F/S Makay and his crew over Kent, all of them arriving safely on the ground. As events would prove, it would be only a temporary reprieve for this crew. An effective attack fell on Osnabrück on the 6/7th, after which, minor operations occupied the next week. As if the squadron was not suffering enough losses to operations, BK311 crashed on approach to Elsham Wolds while training on the 10th, and the pilot, Sgt Allworth, was the sole survivor of his crew, and he sustained injuries. Kiel was the target for a force of over 250 aircraft on the 13/14th, and many crews were deceived by decoy fires and wasted their bombs. Nevertheless, a goodly proportion fell within the confines of the town, and caused a moderate amount of damage. A similar size of force raided Cologne on the 15/16th, where another decoy site lured away most of the bombing, and the operation was a failure. 150 Squadron's X3552 crashed into the sea off the Dutch coast, and Sgt Smith and his crew were all killed.

On the 22/23rd, a campaign against Italian cities began in support of Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa, which would ultimately lead to Montgomery's victory over Rommel at El Alamein. 5 Group raided Genoa on this night, and 3 and 4 Groups returned there on the following night with a Pathfinder element. While this was in progress, seventeen Wellingtons of 1 Group went mining off France and Scandinavia, and BK309 failed to return from the latter destination with the crew of F/O Rees. The pilot and two others survived to become POWs, and two men were killed, and this was the last crew to be posted missing by the squadron as the result of operations from Snaith. Over the next few days, the squadron moved out of Snaith, and took up residence at Kirmington, where it would be joined in December by the home echelon of 142 Squadron.

From this point on, the squadron would spend most of its time mining and moling, and launched its first sorties from its new home on the 28/29th. It was not an auspicious beginning, only five of the nine crews despatched sowing their vegetables as intended, and X3957 crashed into the sea, taking with it the crew of F/O Crane. On return from the sea lanes off St Nazaire, BK310 crashed into high ground in Somerset, killing one man, and injuring Sgt Woodcock and three others. By daylight on the 31st, three crews went moling to Emden, but none of them completed their assigned tasks, and two of them failed to return. Both BK360 and Z1625 were shot down by fighters over Holland, and neither produced a survivor from among the crews of F/S Makay and Sgt Brook respectively. It was the 6th of November before the squadron operated again, when sending three aircraft on unsuccessful moling sorties to Essen, and that night, six more to lay mines off the French coast and the Frisians. Severe icing forced both molers to return early on the 7th, and in the early hours of the 8th, seven crews took off for mining duties, and all returned safely. Nine crews were detailed for

mining on the 8/9th, and all but one successfully completed their assigned tasks. A return to city-busting took eleven of the squadron's crews to Hamburg on the 9/10th, but bad weather conditions thwarted the attackers, and damage to the target was limited. Sgt Prosser and his crew failed to return to Kirmington in X3310, and it was later learned that none of the crew had survived. The squadron contributed three aircraft to a small moling effort to Emden on the 13th, and one of them did manage to complete its task, the first to do so of the eleven sorties despatched by the squadron on this fruitless activity thus far, and it would not be called upon to provide aircraft for similar operations again.

BK301 failed to return from a mining sortie in French waters on the 15/16th, and F/S Perry and crew all perished. The following three nights were also devoted to mining, and the squadron suffered no losses from its twenty one sorties. The campaign against Italy continued throughout November and into December, and it claimed a 150 Squadron crew on the 20/21st. Returning from Turin, BK538 crashed while trying to land at Manston, and P/O Sweet was killed with three of his crew. Harris switched his force to Stuttgart on the 22/23rd, when most of the bombing fell into southern and south-western suburbs. The squadron contributed nine aircraft, all of which returned safely, landing at Oakington after a long flight. On the following night, six crews successfully completed their mining sorties, and on the 28/29th, ten crews carried out the squadron's final operation under its present guise, when mining off the Biscay ports, and BK194 failed to return, and was lost without trace with the crew of Sgt Ceeney. This was the day on which W/C Carter was posted from the squadron, and he would eventually assume command of 97 Squadron of the pathfinders in January 1944, and lose his life while leading it in action in the early hours of D-Day morning.

On the 1st of December the squadron was stood down from operations, and welcomed W/C Barclay as its new commanding officer. An echelon was prepared for overseas duties in North Africa, and on the 9th, thirteen crews in tropicalized Wellingtons, led by W/C Kirwan, departed via Portreath for Blida in Algeria, where they were joined by a similar number from 142 Squadron, becoming established there on the 19th. The activities of the squadron overseas do not fall within the scope of this profile, but it continued to serve magnificently until being disbanded at Regina in Italy on the 5th of October 1944. Among its commanding officers while overseas was W/C Southwell, an officer of great experience, who had previously commanded 57 and 9 Squadrons during their Wellington days with 3 Group. The home echelon of 150 Squadron was joined by that of 142 Squadron, also on the 19th, but there were to be no more operations flown during the remainder of the year, or indeed until late in 1944, when both would be reformed to serve Bomber Command again, 150 Squadron in its present role, and 142 Squadron as a Mosquito unit in 8 Group's Light Night Striking Force. The career of 142 Squadron had closely paralleled that of 150 Squadron, both having served as Battle units with the AASF in France, before returning to the UK to form part of the reconstituted 1 Group. 150 Squadron registered just one more loss before the year was out, BK180 coming to grief while trying to land at Kirmington during training on the 20th, and Sgt Hall and two of his crew were injured. On the 27th of January 1943, 150 and 142 Squadrons were amalgamated to form 166 Squadron under the command of W/C Barclay, and these proud and famous units ceased to exist, at least for the time being, in Bomber Command, although their spirit lived on through the new squadron.

## 1944

On the 1st of November 1944, C Flight of 550 Squadron moved to Fiskerton from North Killingholme, and was renumbered 150 Squadron. Like its parent squadron, the new unit was part of 1 Group, and would fly Lancasters under the command of W/C Avis. The Squadron was the first to operate with the new Rose rear turret, which was much more spacious than the Fraser Nash model, and boasted two 0.50 Brownings, rather than the less effective four 0.303s, and although the rate of fire was less, the range was substantially improved, and this was the prime consideration. Operations began on the 11th of the month, when six of its Lancasters joined a force of over two hundred to attack the Hoesch Benzin oil plant near Dortmund. Much damage was inflicted on the target and nearby housing without loss to the attackers, and all but one of the 150 Squadron crews completed their sorties as briefed. Support for American ground forces was provided by almost twelve hundred Bomber Command aircraft by daylight on the 16th, when the small towns of Heinsberg, Düren and Jülich were all but erased from the map. 1 Group was briefed for the second mentioned, along with 5 Group and a Pathfinder element, and over three thousand of the towns inhabitants died in the ensuing bombing. 150 Squadron again put up six crews, and all returned safely. On the 18/19th, a predominately 1 Group force of 285 aircraft attacked the much bombed oil refinery at Wanne-Eickel, and caused further damage, all ten Lancasters from 150 Squadron again returning home. The squadron's final operation from Fiskerton took six of its crews to Aschaffenburg as part of another large 1 Group effort on the 21/22nd. The targets were railway installations, but the town itself took a sizeable proportion of the bombs, and five hundred houses were destroyed, along with three times that number seriously damaged.

Later that day, the squadron changed address for the last time during the war, and took up residence at Hemswell, where it would be joined by the recently reformed 170 Squadron. Operations from here began on the 27/28th, when thirteen Lancasters were despatched to Freiburg as part of a predominately 1 Group force of 340 aircraft. Nineteen hundred tons of bombs rained down onto this industrially insignificant town, which happened to lie fairly close to an American advance, and was believed to contain large numbers of German troops. Over two thousand houses were reduced to rubble, and somewhere between two and three thousand people were killed. A daylight raid on Dortmund by 1 and 8 Groups on the 29th suffered from bad weather, and the bombing was scattered, but all thirteen 150 Squadron aircraft returned safely. An attempt to hit the Urft Dam and nearby town of Heimbach was abandoned on the 3rd of December because of poor weather conditions, but there was no such luck for Karlsruhe on the 4/5th, and its southern and western districts wilted under an onslaught at the hands of over five hundred aircraft. Again 150 Squadron operated without loss, having on this occasion despatched sixteen Lancasters, and this number was surpassed two nights later, when seventeen were contributed to an overall force of over 450 sent to an oil refinery at Leuna near Merseburg in eastern Germany.

After a five night rest from operations, 1, 4 and 8 Groups carried out a heavy raid on Essen on the 12/13th, and this resulted in 150 Squadron's first loss since its reformation. NN743 was brought down by flak in the target area, and F/L Devereau and his crew were killed. Three nights later, 1, 6 and elements of 8 Group carried out a successful raid on Ludwigshafen, and

seriously affected production at the I G Farben chemicals manufacturers, and hit other important war industry factories. A predominately 1 Group effort devastated the old city of Ulm on the 17/18th, and left large parts of it engulfed in flames, but Koblenz escaped a similar fate on the 22/23rd, when cloud led to wayward bombing, much of which was wasted. After a break to allow the crews to enjoy what would be the final wartime Christmas, two hundred Lancasters of 1, 3, 5 and 8 Groups attacked railway yards at Rheydt by daylight on the 27th, for which the squadron put up five Lancasters, and it sent sixteen to Bonn as part of a modest force of 160 aircraft on the 28/29th. The oil refinery at Scholven-Buer was pounded by three hundred aircraft on the 29/30th, and the year's operations ended for 150 Squadron on New Year's Eve at Osterfeld, where railway yards were the objective. A sad end to the year was brought about by the failure to return from this operation of NG164, in which F/L Hyde and all but one of his crew were killed. Never-the-less, since its reformation two months earlier, the squadron had produced a fine record of just two missing aircraft from 199 sorties.

## 1945

As the New Year dawned, an unmistakable scent of victory wafted in from the Continent, something which even the German offensive in the Ardennes could not disguise. New Year's Day began with hectic enemy activity, as the Luftwaffe launched its ill-conceived and ultimately ill-fated Operation Bodenplatte, to catch Allied aircraft on the ground at the recently liberated airfields of France, Belgium and Holland. At first light, hundreds of fighters screamed across the terrain at treetop height and below, in a series of simultaneous strafing attacks, flying straight into the teeth of the airfield flak defences, and many of those which survived this, were pounced upon by Allied fighters. In return for some success, the Luftwaffe suffered the loss of around two hundred and fifty aircraft, many of the pilots of which were killed, wounded or captured, and it was a setback from which the enemy day fighter force would never recover. It was a busy day and night also for Bomber Command, which operated against synthetic oil, canals and railway targets.

150 Squadron was not called into action until the night of the 2/3rd, when sending eighteen Lancasters to Nuremberg as part of a force of five hundred aircraft provided by 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups. The city's eastern-central districts were pounded to destruction for the loss of six aircraft, two of which crashed in France on the way home. The squadron's casualty occurred at home in tragic circumstances, when NG421, captained by F/O Russell, collided with PB515 of 153 Squadron near Lincoln, and both aircraft plunged to the ground a short distance to the north-east of the city with no survivors. On the 4/5th, eight squadron crews participated in the controversial attack on the small French town of Royan, in advance of an assault by Free French ground forces which were laying siege. The majority of the residents declined an invitation by the German garrison commander to evacuate the town, and many were killed in the ensuing bombing. In the event, the ground forces did not go in, and the garrison remained in place until mid April. Area attacks on Hanover and Munich on the 5/6th and 7/8th respectively were negotiated by the squadron without loss, and this was followed by a week's rest from operations, before a raid was carried out on the synthetic oil refinery at Leuna. This was a highly successful operation by over five hundred aircraft provided by 1, 5, 6 and 8 Groups, and all fourteen Lancasters from 150 Squadron returned safely. Briefings took place

for four main targets for the 16/17th, an area attack on Magdeburg, and three separate raids on oil refineries. The 150 Squadron crews were assigned to the Braunkohle-Benzin plant at Zeitz near Leipzig, and all fifteen returned safely from a successful operation. Four crews were detailed for a 1, 3 and 8 Group attack on a benzol plant at Duisburg on the 22/23rd, and the month's final operation took sixteen crews to the Zuffenhausen district of Stuttgart on the 28/29<sup>th</sup>, which proved to be the last of the many raids directed against this city during the war. The squadron despatched ninety seven sorties during January, and there had been no failures to return, and just the tragic collision at the start of the month to mar the fine record.

The first three nights of February brought a hectic round of operations, beginning at Ludwigshafen on the 1/2nd. The squadron was able to put up eighteen Lancasters for this raid, and seventeen on the following night for the first and only major raid of the war on Wiesbaden, which suffered enormous destruction, and registered the deaths of around a thousand of its inhabitants. The Prosper benzol plant at Bottrop was extensively damaged on the 3/4th, and all sixteen 150 Squadron aircraft returned safely. Support for the ground forces resulted in the towns of Goch and Cleves being heavily bombed on the 7/8th, the latter the target for seventeen Lancasters of 150 Squadron, and again there were no losses. On the following night, 1, 5 and 8 Groups joined forces to attack the synthetic oil plant at distant Pölitz, after which it was unable to produce vital supplies for the remainder of the war. The Churchill inspired series of raids on Germany's eastern cities under Operation Thunderclap was unleashed on Dresden on the 13/14th, in a two phase attack led by 5 Group. Using its low level visual marking system, the Group poured eight hundred tons of bombs into the city, and created fires which acted as a beacon for the 1, 3, 6 and 8 Group second phase aircraft following three hours behind. A further eighteen hundred tons of bombs rained down onto this beautiful and historic city, and around fifty thousand people died in the ensuing firestorm. 150 Squadron despatched a record twenty Lancasters, led by W/C Avis in NG268, and a further thirteen aircraft were contributed twenty four hours later for round two of Thunderclap, which took place unsuccessfully at Chemnitz.

The penultimate major raid of the war by Bomber Command on Dortmund was delivered by a force of five hundred aircraft provided by 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups on the 20/21st, for which the squadron contributed eighteen Lancasters. For the first time thus far in the year, one of its crews failed to return, and F/O Moresby and crew were posted missing in PD421. The aircraft came down in Germany killing four of the crew, but the pilot and two others survived. Duisburg received its last heavy raid of the war on the following night, and on the 23/24th, Pforzheim was subjected to its first and only area attack. Eighteen hundred tons of bombs rained down onto the unfortunate populace in just twenty two minutes, and when the inferno had subsided, the authorities were able to declare a death toll of over seventeen thousand people, the third highest of the war in a German town. Twelve Lancasters failed to return home, and among them was PB780 of 150 Squadron, which crashed in Germany killing F/O Ythier and three of his crew. Of the four men who parachuted to safety, one was believed to have been murdered by his captors. (Bomber Command Losses Vol 6. W R Chorley).

Rather than a slackening in the pace of operations, March brought constant activity, and the squadron was required to provide aircraft on seventeen occasions. Daylight raids fell on

Mannheim and Cologne on the 1st and 2nd respectively, the squadron putting up fourteen Lancasters for each. The latter was the final raid of the war on this battered city, and four days later it fell to American forces. Chemnitz was raided under Operation Thunderclap on the 5/6<sup>th</sup>, and this rectified the failure which had taken place on the night after Dresden. Dessau followed on the 7/8<sup>th</sup>, and massive damage was inflicted on residential and industrial property, and on railway installations. Elements of 8 Group accompanied 1 Group to Kassel on the 8/9<sup>th</sup>, and this proved to be the last attack of the war on this city. A new all time record was set in the late morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>, when 1,079 aircraft took off for Essen for the final time, but this figure stood for only a little over twenty four hours, before being surpassed by a force of 1,108 aircraft, including sixteen Lancasters from 150 Squadron, which set off for Dortmund in the early afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup>, and this was a record which would stand to the end of the war. On the 13/14<sup>th</sup>, the squadron contributed thirteen Lancasters to an attack on the coal mining district of Dahlbusch in Gelsenkirchen, on return from which, NG263 was abandoned by F/L Young and his crew over the Oxfordshire/Berkshire border after two engines caught fire. Sadly, one man failed to leave the aircraft and died in the ensuing crash, while his comrades all came safely to earth. The squadron operated without loss to Misburg on the 15/16<sup>th</sup>, Nuremberg on the 16/17<sup>th</sup>, Hanau on the 18/19<sup>th</sup>, and Bremen by daylight on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and provided fourteen aircraft for a raid on Hildesheim on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was the only major attack of the war on this town, and the accuracy of the bombing left it 70% destroyed, with over sixteen hundred people killed. The squadron registered its first loss of the month, when F/O Philcox and his crew failed to return in ME451, and it was later ascertained that only one man had survived the crash in Germany. As Allied forces began their crossing of the Rhein on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Bomber Command continued its attacks on oil related targets, 150 Squadron sending ten Lancasters to the Harpenerweg plant at Dortmund, along with others from 1, 6 and 8 Groups. PB853 failed to return to Hemswell from this raid, and F/O Morris and crew became the final one from 150 Squadron to be posted missing from operations, a particularly sad loss, as this was the 30<sup>th</sup> operation of their tour. Even more tragic was their fate in the hands of their captors after baling out over Germany. With that country facing imminent defeat, and its towns and cities reduced to rubble, it was not a good time to be a bomber crewman on German soil. All landed safely, but the pilot and four others were murdered, and only two of the crew survived as prisoners. During the course of March, the squadron despatched a magnificent 236 sorties for the loss of just two aircraft and crews.

April brought the expected decrease in operational activity, but the squadron was still required to operate on eight occasions, for which 126 sorties were despatched for no losses. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, W/C Rippon became the squadron's last wartime commanding officer, he having previously served with 166 Squadron. He had, in fact, been in temporary command since the 11<sup>th</sup>, when W/C Avis reported sick. The final bombing operation for the squadron was against the SS barracks at Hitler's Eaglesnest retreat at Berchtesgaden on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, for which sixteen Lancasters were provided. Between the 29<sup>th</sup> of April and the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, the squadron participated in nine "Manna" operations to drop food to those starving Dutch people still under German occupation, and this was followed by twenty one sorties in support of Operation Exodus, the repatriation of Allied prisoners of war, which took place after the end of hostilities on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

In two separate and distinct periods of service with Bomber Command and the AASF, 150 Squadron found itself at the centre of activity, and acquitted itself magnificently on both occasions. At the start of hostilities, theories were being tested and often found wanting, and it was the Battle squadrons of the AASF, the Blenheim squadrons of 2 Group and the Wellington squadrons of 3 Group which were to suffer most. 1941 was a year of treading water and presenting a defiant face to the enemy, and it was a particularly tough time for the crews involved. Up to the end of 1942, Bomber Command was slowly evolving into an organisation which could at last deliver more than propaganda, but it was also a period when the enemy nightfighter force was beginning to make its presence felt, and 150 Squadron was made to suffer a bad time. Although missing the major campaigns of 1943 and 1944, the squadron was present when the Command was at its most awesome and destructive in 1945, and played its part in 1 Group's success. 150 Squadron's record of service is one of which its members can be justly proud. Its duty done, it was disbanded at Hemswell on the 7th of November 1945.



## STATIONS

<b>CHALLERANGE</b>	02.09.39. to 11.09.39.
<b>ECURY-SUR-COOLE</b>	11.09.39. to 15.05.40.
<b>POUAN</b>	15.05.40. to 03.06.40.
<b>HOUSSAY</b>	03.06.40. to 15.06.40.
<b>ABINGDON</b>	15.06.40. to 19.06.40.
<b>STRADISHALL</b>	19.06.40. to 03.07.40.
<b>NEWTON</b>	03.07.40. to 10.07.41.
<b>SNAITH</b>	10.07.41. to 26.10.42.
<b>KIRMINGTON</b>	26.10.42. to 27.01.43.
<b>FISKERTON</b>	01.11.44. to 22.11.44.
<b>HEMSWELL</b>	22.11.44. to 07.11.45.

## COMMANDING OFFICERS

<b>WING COMMANDER A HESKETH DFC</b>	03.03.39. to 03.12.40.
<b>WING COMMANDER G J C PAUL</b>	03.12.40. to 17.06.41.
<b>WING COMMANDER R A C CARTER DSO</b>	17.06.41. to 06.12.41.
<b>WING COMMANDER K J MELLOR</b>	06.12.41. to 29.06.42.
<b>WING COMMANDER E J CARTER</b>	29.06.42. to 28.11.42.
<b>WING COMMANDER R A C BARCLAY</b>	01.12.42. to 27.01.43.
<b>WING COMMANDER J D KIRWAN (Algeria Echelon)</b>	09.12.42. to 15.01.43.
<b>WING COMMANDER A A N MALAN (Middle East Theatre)</b>	15.01.43. to 03.08.43.
<b>WING COMMANDER J M SOUTHWELL (Middle East Theatre)</b>	03.08.43. to 15.10.43.
<b>WING COMMANDER W M MORRIS (Middle East Theatre)</b>	15.10.43. to 01.44.
<b>WING COMMANDER W D BOXWELL (Middle East Theatre)</b>	01.44. to 26.05.44.
<b>WING COMMANDER E R WALKER (Middle East Theatre)</b>	26.05.44. to 05.10.44.
<b>WING COMMANDER G G A VIS DFC</b>	01.11.44. to 19.04.45.
<b>WING COMMANDER P A RIPPON DFC</b>	19.04.45. to 07.11.45.

## AIRCRAFT

<b>BATTLE</b>	08.38. to 10.40.
<b>WELLINGTON IC/III</b>	10.40. to 01.43.
<b>LANCASTER I/III</b>	11.44. to 11.45.

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# **SECTION 2**



# **OPERATIONAL RECORD**

[www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca)

[www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca)

## OPERATIONAL RECORD

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
289	2557	56	2.2

### CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

#### BOMBING

264

#### MINING

25

### BATTLES (Excluding AASF)

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
16	50	0	0.0

### WELLINGTONS

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
200	1667	50	3.0

### CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

#### BOMBING

175

#### MINING

25

### LANCASTER

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
73	840	6	2.2

# TABLE OF STATISTICS

## **Out of 42 Wellington squadrons.**

9th highest number of Wellington overall operations in Bomber Command.  
6th highest number of Wellington sorties in Bomber Command.  
6th highest number of Wellington operational losses in Bomber Command.

## **Out of 59 Lancaster squadrons.**

47th highest number of Lancaster overall operations in Bomber Command.  
48th highest number of Lancaster sorties in Bomber Command.  
52nd highest number of Lancaster operational losses in Bomber Command.

## **Out of 19 squadrons in 1 Group.**

7th highest number of overall operations in 1 Group.  
12th highest number of sorties in 1 Group.  
11th highest number of aircraft operational losses in 1 Group.

## **Out of 6 Battle squadrons in 1 Group.**

Highest equal (with 103 and 142Sqns) number of Battle overall operations in 1 Group.  
3rd highest number of Battle sorties in 1 Group.  
Lowest equal (with 300 and 301Sqns) number of Battle operational losses in 1 Group.

## **Out of 12 Wellington squadrons in 1 Group.**

4th highest number of Wellington overall operations in 1 Group.  
2nd highest number of Wellington sorties in 1 Group.  
2nd highest number of Wellington operational losses in 1 Group.

## **Out of 14 Lancaster squadrons in 1 Group.**

2nd lowest number of Lancaster overall operations in 1 Group.  
Lowest number of Lancaster sorties in 1 Group.  
Lowest number of Lancaster operational losses in 1 Group.

# **SECTION 3**



# **AIRCRAFT LISTING**

[www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca)

[www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca)



## 150 SQUADRON

<b>BATTLE</b>	<b>To October 1940.</b>
<b>K7647</b>	From 142Sqn. To 27MU.
<b>K9204</b>	From XVSqn. To 142Sqn.
<b>K9272</b>	To 52Sqn.
<b>K9282</b>	To XVSqn.
<b>K9283</b>	Crashed on landing at Ecury-sur-Coole on return from reconnaissance sortie 30.9.39.
<b>K9369</b>	From XVSqn. Damaged beyond repair during operation to Luxembourg 10.5.40.
<b>K9379</b>	To 20MU.
<b>K9380</b>	To 6MU.
<b>K9387</b>	FTR from reconnaissance sortie 30.9.39.
<b>K9388</b>	To CGS via Abingdon.
<b>K9389</b>	To 22MU.
<b>K9390 JN-I</b>	FTR from operation to Luxembourg 10.5.40.
<b>K9392</b>	To 103Sqn.
<b>K9417</b>	From 12Sqn. To 6 ASP.
<b>K9444</b>	From 142Sqn. To 27MU.
<b>K9483</b>	FTR Sedan 14.5.40.
<b>K9484</b>	FTR from reconnaissance sortie 30.9.39.
<b>L4938</b>	From XVSqn. To 22MU.
<b>L4942</b>	From 103Sqn. To 22MU.
<b>L4945</b>	To 22MU.
<b>L4946</b>	FTR Sedan 14.5.40.
<b>L4947</b>	To 22MU.
<b>L4948</b>	Lost in France. Details uncertain.
<b>L4953</b>	From 52Sqn. To Abingdon.
<b>L5042</b>	To 142Sqn.
<b>L5057</b>	To 27MU.
<b>L5058</b>	To 9MU.
<b>L5103</b>	To 9MU.
<b>L5106</b>	To 38MU.
<b>L5112</b>	FTR from attacks on communications and troop columns 8.6.40.
<b>L5215</b>	To 110 Wing via 22MU.
<b>L5216</b>	To 88Sqn via 22MU.
<b>L5217</b>	To 110 Wing via 22MU.
<b>L5218</b>	To 22MU.
<b>L5219</b>	To 22MU.
<b>L5220</b>	To 22MU.
<b>L5221</b>	To 22MU.
<b>L5222</b>	To 22MU.

L5223 To 8BGS via 22MU.  
L5224 To 22MU.  
L5225 Crashed on approach to Ecury-sur-Coole while training 20.9.39.  
L5237 From 218Sqn. To 103Sqn.  
L5288 FTR Abbeville 7.6.40.  
L5421 From 6MU. To 12 OTU.  
L5434 To 18 OTU.  
L5437 FTR Vernon-Poix 13.6.40.  
L5447 To 12 OUT via 9MU.  
L5459 FTR Roumont 26.5.40.  
L5469 To 103Sqn.  
L5510 To 38MU.  
L5512 From 103Sqn. Returned to 103Sqn.  
L5524 FTR Vernon-Poix 13.6.40.  
L5528 Destroyed in explosion at Newton 27.7.40.  
L5539 FTR from operation to Luxembourg 10.5.40.  
L5540 JN-C FTR from operation to Luxembourg 10.5.40.  
L5541 FTR from French battle area 15.6.40.  
L5543 From 142Sqn. To Rollason.  
L5545 To 20MU.  
L5548 To 38MU.  
L5563 From Andover. To Rollason.  
L5578 To 142Sqn.  
L5579 From 218Sqn. To 27MU.  
L5583 FTR from the French battle area 19.5.40.  
L5591 FTR Foret de Gault 13.6.40.  
L5593 To Fairey.  
L5630 From 98Sqn. To 12Sqn.  
N2028 FTR from reconnaissance sortie 30.9.39.  
N2093 FTR from reconnaissance sortie 30.9.39.  
N2169 To 9MU.  
P2179 From 12Sqn. To 9MU.  
P2182 From 12Sqn. FTR Sedan 14.5.40.  
P2183 From 12Sqn. To 218Sqn via 1 Salvage Section.  
P2184 From 12Sqn. Lost in France May/June 1940.  
P2244 From 226Sqn. Crashed in France while training 31.3.40.  
P2266 To 4BGS via 22MU.  
P2276 To 4BGS via 22MU.  
P2312 From 103Sqn. To 18 OTU.  
P2327 To 142Sqn.  
P2334 Destroyed in air raid at Ecury-sur-Coole 11.5.40.  
P2336 FTR Neufchateau 12.5.40.  
P5232 FTR Sedan 14.5.40.  
P5235 FTR from battle area 19.5.40.  
P5236 To 12Sqn.

**P6568** To 142Sqn.  
**P6602** To 142Sqn.

**WELLINGTON** From October 1940 to January 1943.

**L7813** To 103Sqn.  
**L7870** To ATA.  
**N2758** To 20 OTU.  
**N2952** From 38Sqn. Became ground instruction machine.  
**N2998** From 38Sqn. Crash-landed at Newton while training 13.11.40.  
**R1016 JN-A** From 305Sqn. FTR Hanover 14/15.8.41.  
**R1042** To 29 OTU.  
**R1044 JN-Y** Crashed in Leicestershire on return from Boulogne 28.5.41.  
**R1216** To 23 OTU.  
**R1374 JN-G** FTR St Nazaire 7/8.5.41.  
**R1375** To 25 OTU.  
**R1394 JN-V** FTR Hanover 14/15.8.41.  
**R1412** To 21 OTU.  
**R1414** To 23 OTU.  
**R1435 JN-H** FTR Hamburg 10/11.5.41.  
**R1444** To 26 OTU.  
**R1463** Crashed in Yorkshire on return from intruder sortie 21/22.2.42.  
**R1469** From 149Sqn. To 7 OTU.  
**R1491** To 15 OTU.  
**R1495 JN-B** FTR Hamburg 16/17.7.41.  
**R1592** From 301Sqn. To 57Sqn.  
**R1606 JN-G** FTR Mannheim 7/8.11.41.  
**R1644 JN-L** FTR Düsseldorf 26/27.6.41.  
**R1716** To 304Sqn.  
**R3288 JN-B** Crashed in Wales on return from Lorient 21.3.41.  
**T2475** From 103Sqn. To 12 OTU.  
**T2510** To 29 OTU.  
**T2574** From 300Sqn. To 21 OTU.  
**T2618** Force-landed in Yorkshire on return from Emden 16.11.41.  
**T2622 JN-D** Crash-landed at Snaith during training 22.8.41.  
**T2960** From 305Sqn. Damaged beyond repair during operation to Frankfurt 24/25.10.41.  
**T2967 JN-J** FTR Mannheim 22/23.10.41.  
**W5667** To 18 OTU.  
**W5719 JN-S** Crashed in Derbyshire following early return from Cologne 31.7.41.  
**W5721 JN-Z** From 305Sqn. FTR Frankfurt 6/7.8.41.  
**W5722** From 305Sqn. Force-landed in Suffolk on return from Mannheim 28.8.41.  
**X3175** From 300Sqn. To 21 OTU.  
**X3279 JN-M** FTR Emden 6/7.6.42.

**X3283** From 9Sqn. To 300Sqn.  
**X3288 JN-H** From 9Sqn. FTR Cologne 27/28.4.42.  
**X3304** FTR Frankfurt 8/9.9.42.  
**X3305 JN-X** From 57Sqn. Crashed almost immediately after take-off from Snaith when bound for Rostock 23/24.4.42.  
**X3309 JN-N** FTR Bremen 27/28.6.42.  
**X3310 JN-A** FTR Hamburg 9/10.11.42.  
**X3313** FTR Karlsruhe 2/3.9.42.  
**X3349** To 23 OTU.  
**X3407 JN-A** From 101Sqn. FTR Stuttgart 5/6.5.42.  
**X3413** From 115Sqn. To 199Sqn.  
**X3414** From 103Sqn. FTR Frankfurt 24/25.8.42.  
**X3418** FTR Kassel 27/28.8.42.  
**X3448 JN-N** From 103Sqn. Crashed in Lincolnshire on return from Cologne 31.5.42.  
**X3450** From 115Sqn. To 26 OTU.  
**X3451** From 75Sqn. To To 419Sqn and back via 75Sqn. Crashed in Yorkshire following early return from Stuttgart 6.5.42.  
**X3459** From 75Sqn. To 300Sqn.  
**X3463** From 9Sqn. To 12 OTU.  
**X3465** To 27 OTU.  
**X3544** To 166Sqn.  
**X3548** To 300Sqn.  
**X3552** FTR Cologne 15/16.10.42.  
**X3590 JN-L** FTR Duisburg 21/22.7.42.  
**X3673** Crashed on landing at Blyton on return from Stuttgart 6.5.42.  
**X3674 JN-H** FTR Essen 5/6.6.42.  
**X3698** Crashed almost immediately after take-off from Snaith when bound for Duisburg 7.8.42.  
**X3700 JN-R** FTR Cologne 27/28.4.42.  
**X3725 JN-N** FTR Essen 8/9.6.42.  
**X3743 JN-D** To 82 OTU.  
**X3744** Crashed on landing at Coltishall on return from Mainz 11/12.8.42.  
**X3745** To 57Sqn and back. FTR Frankfurt 8/9.9.42.  
**X3755** To 57Sqn and back via 75Sqn. FTR Essen 19.7.42.  
**X3762** From 103Sqn. FTR Saarbrücken 19/20.9.42.  
**X3795** FTR Duisburg 25/26.7.42.  
**X3797 JN-A** Crashed in Suffolk on return from Duisburg 14.7.42.  
**X3805** To 15 OTU.  
**X3807** To 23 OTU.  
**X3870** To 199Sqn.  
**X3888** To 166Sqn.  
**X3939** To 166Sqn.  
**X3957** FTR from mining sortie 28/29.10.42.  
**X3965** From 101Sqn. To 166Sqn.  
**X9638** From 22 OTU. Returned to 22 OTU.

**X9683** From 305Sqn. To 18 OTU.  
**X9811** From 25 OTU. Crash-landed on the Yorkshire coast on return from Frankfurt 21.9.41.  
**X9812** To 1481Flt.  
**X9814 JN-O** FTR Poissy 2/3.4.42.  
**X9815** From 300Sqn. To 1481Flt.  
**X9816** To 103Sqn.  
**X9830 JN-H** FTR from intruder sortie 21/22.2.42.  
**X9832** From 149Sqn. To 23 OTU.  
**X9871** From 40Sqn. To 311Sqn.  
**Z1072** To 304Sqn.  
**Z1076** FTR Brest 11/12.2.42.  
**Z1078** Crashed in the Cheviots on return from Hamburg 15.1.42.  
**Z1092** To 22 OTU.  
**Z1150** To 1481Flt.  
**Z1593** FTR Osnabrück 9/10.8.42.  
**Z1608 JN-M** FTR Essen 16/17.6.42.  
**Z1610 JN-K** FTR Bremen 27/28.6.42.  
**Z1625** From 101Sqn. FTR Emden 31.10.42.  
**Z1651**  
**Z1661** From 101Sqn. To 300Sqn.  
**Z1671 JN-D** Force-landed in Yorkshire on return from Bremen 4/5.9.42.  
**Z8833** From 300Sqn. To 103Sqn.  
**Z8840** From 101Sqn. To 103Sqn.  
**Z8849** Crash-landed at Snaith during air-test 14.12.41.  
**Z8851** Crash-landed in Surrey on return from Frankfurt 3.9.41.  
**BJ588** Crashed during emergency landing in Lincolnshire following early return from Mainz 12/13.8.42.  
**BJ591** Crashed on approach to Lympne on return from Frankfurt 8/9.9.42.  
**BJ608** FTR Osnabrück 9/10.8.42.  
**BJ618** To 166Sqn.  
**BJ645** To 166Sqn.  
**BJ649** Crash-landed at Middle Wallop on return from Saarbrücken 28/29.8.42.  
**BJ651 JN-M** FTR Frankfurt 24/25.8.42.  
**BJ666 JN-S** FTR Bremen 27/28.6.42.  
**BJ754** To 26 OTU.  
**BJ766** From 75Sqn. To 156Sqn.  
**BJ776** To 12Sqn.  
**BJ777** To 12Sqn.  
**BJ827** To 27 OTU.  
**BJ829 JN-G** Abandoned over Kent on return from Aachen 5/6.10.42.  
**BJ831** FTR Frankfurt 24/25.8.42.  
**BJ877** FTR Essen 16/17.9.42.  
**BJ881** FTR Saarbrücken 29/30.7.42.  
**BJ961** From 101Sqn. To 166Sqn.

<b>BJ972</b>	From 101Sqn. To 300Sqn.
<b>BJ973</b>	To 166Sqn.
<b>BK139</b>	To 166Sqn.
<b>BK180</b>	Crashed while landing at Kirmington during training 20.12.42.
<b>BK194JN-B</b>	FTR from mining sortie 28/29.11.42.
<b>BK196</b>	To 300Sqn.
<b>BK266</b>	To 17 OTU.
<b>BK267</b>	To 300Sqn.
<b>BK300</b>	To 199Sqn.
<b>BK301JN-Q</b>	FTR from mining sortie 15/16.11.42.
<b>BK309JN-N</b>	From 101Sqn. FTR from mining sortie 23/24.10.42.
<b>BK310</b>	From 101Sqn. Crashed in Somerset during a mining sortie 28/29.10.42.
<b>BK311</b>	From 101Sqn. Crashed on approach to Elsham Wolds during training 10.10.42.
<b>BK360</b>	
<b>BK361</b>	To 166Sqn.
<b>BK511</b>	To 300Sqn.
<b>BK538JN-U</b>	Crashed at Manston following early return from Turin 21.11.42.
<b>DV447</b>	FTR Essen 9/10.3.42.
<b>DV556</b>	To 215Sqn.
<b>DV558</b>	To 304Sqn.
<b>DV578</b>	To 103Sqn.
<b>DV593</b>	FTR Dortmund 14/15.4.42.
<b>DV594</b>	To 304Sqn.
<b>LANCASTER</b>	<b>From November 1944.</b>
<b>JB613 IQ-Y</b>	From 625Sqn.
<b>LM721 IQ-W</b>	From 149Sqn.
<b>ME328 IQ-J/Z</b>	
<b>ME451 IQ-D</b>	FTR Hildesheim 22.3.45.
<b>ME486 IQ-H</b>	
<b>NG163 IQ-C</b>	
<b>NG164 IQ-D</b>	From 625Sqn. FTR Osterfeld 31.12/1.1.45.
<b>NG263 IQ-A</b>	Abandoned over Oxfordshire on return from Dahlbusch (Gelsenkirchen) 13.3.45.
<b>NG264 IQ-B</b>	
<b>NG268 IQ-G</b>	
<b>NG273</b>	To 576Sqn.
<b>NG288 IQ-H</b>	From 12Sqn.
<b>NG291 IQ-K</b>	From 12Sqn.
<b>NG295 IQ-D</b>	
<b>NG333 IQ-S</b>	
<b>NG359 IQ-L</b>	

**NG421 IQ-M** Collided with PB515 (153Sqn) and crashed near Lincoln on return from Nuremberg 2.1.45.

**NN742 IQ-U**  
**NN743 IQ-Z** FTR Essen 12/13.12.44.  
**NN752 IQ-R**  
**NX557 IQ-F**  
**NX582**  
**NX583**  
**PB254** From 460Sqn.  
**PB738 IQ-O**  
**PB746**  
**PB747 IQ-E**  
**PB748** From 12Sqn.  
**PB780 IQ-T** FTR Pforzheim 23/24.2.45.  
**PB781 IQ-V**  
**PB817 IQ-Q**  
**PB853 IQ-P** FTR Harpenerweg Benzol plant at Dortmund 24.3.45.  
**PD421 IQ-F** FTR Dortmund 20/21.2.45.  
**RA544** To 153Sqn.  
**RA584**  
**RA586 IQ-L**  
**RF243 IQ-N**  
**RF245**

**HEAVIEST SINGLE LOSS.**

30.09.39. Saarbrücken. 4 Battles FTR, 1 crashed on return.

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# **SECTION 4**



# **KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS**

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## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<b>A&amp;AEE</b>	Aeroplane and Armaments Experimental Establishment.
<b>AA</b>	Anti-Aircraft fire.
<b>AACU</b>	Anti-Aircraft Cooperation Unit.
<b>AAS</b>	Air Armament School.
<b>AASF</b>	Advance Air Striking Force.
<b>AAU</b>	Aircraft Assembly Unit.
<b>ACM</b>	Air Chief Marshal.
<b>ACSEA</b>	Air Command South-East Asia.
<b>AFDU</b>	Air Fighting Development Unit.
<b>AFEE</b>	Airborne Forces Experimental Unit.
<b>AFTDU</b>	Airborne Forces Tactical Development Unit.
<b>AGS</b>	Air Gunners School.
<b>AMDP</b>	Air Members for Development and Production.
<b>AOC</b>	Air Officer Commanding.
<b>AOS</b>	Air Observers School.
<b>ASRTU</b>	Air-Sea Rescue Training Unit.
<b>ATTDU</b>	Air Transport Tactical Development Unit.
<b>AVM</b>	Air Vice-Marshal.
<b>BAT</b>	Beam Approach Training.
<b>BCBS</b>	Bomber Command Bombing School.
<b>BCDU</b>	Bomber Command Development Unit.
<b>BCFU</b>	Bomber Command Film Unit.
<b>BCIS</b>	Bomber Command Instructors School.
<b>BDU</b>	Bombing Development Unit.
<b>BSTU</b>	Bomber Support Training Unit.
<b>CF</b>	Conversion Flight.
<b>CFS</b>	Central Flying School.
<b>CGS</b>	Central Gunnery School.
<b>C-in-C</b>	Commander in Chief.
<b>CNS</b>	Central Navigation School.
<b>CO</b>	Commanding Officer.
<b>CRD</b>	Controller of Research and Development.
<b>CU</b>	Conversion Unit.
<b>DGRD</b>	Director General for Research and Development.
<b>EAAS</b>	Empire Air Armament School.
<b>EANS</b>	Empire Air Navigation School.
<b>ECDU</b>	Electronic Countermeasures Development Unit.
<b>ECFS</b>	Empire Central Flying School.
<b>ETPS</b>	Empire Test Pilots School.

<b>F/L</b>	Flight Lieutenant.
<b>Flt</b>	Flight.
<b>F/O</b>	Flying Officer.
<b>FPP</b>	Ferry Pilots School.
<b>F/S</b>	Flight Sergeant.
<b>FTR</b>	Failed to Return.
<b>FTU</b>	Ferry Training Unit.
<b>G/C</b>	Group Captain.
<b>Gp</b>	Group.
<b>HCU</b>	Heavy Conversion Unit.
<b>HGCU</b>	Heavy Glider Conversion Unit.
<b>LFS</b>	Lancaster Finishing School.
<b>MAC</b>	Mediterranean Air Command.
<b>MTU</b>	Mosquito Training Unit.
<b>MU</b>	Maintenance Unit.
<b>NTU</b>	Navigation Training Unit.
<b>OADU</b>	Overseas Aircraft Delivery Unit.
<b>OAPU</b>	Overseas Aircraft Preparation Unit.
<b>OTU</b>	Operational Training Unit.
<b>P/O</b>	Pilot Officer.
<b>PTS</b>	Parachute Training School.
<b>RAE</b>	Royal Aircraft Establishment.
<b>SGR</b>	School of General Reconnaissance.
<b>Sgt</b>	Sergeant.
<b>SHAEF</b>	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.
<b>SIU</b>	Signals Intelligence Unit.
<b>SOC</b>	Struck off Charge.
<b>SOE</b>	Special Operations Executive.
<b>Sqn</b>	Squadron.
<b>TF</b>	Training Flight.
<b>TFU</b>	Telecommunications Flying Unit.
<b>W/C</b>	Wing Commander.
<b>Wg</b>	Wing.
<b>WIDU</b>	Wireless Intelligence Development Unit.
<b>W/O</b>	Warrant Officer.



# **SECTION 5**



# **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

[www.bombaycommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombaycommandmuseumarchives.ca)

[www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca)

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[www.bombercommand.org.uk](http://www.bombercommand.org.uk)

[www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca)

# **SECTION 6**



# **STOCK LIST**

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