

**ROYAL AIR FORCE
BOMBER COMMAND**

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**SQUADRON PROFILES
NUMBER 9**



**35 (MADRAS PRESIDENCY)
SQUADRON**

Uno Animo Agimus

RESEARCHED, COMPILED AND WRITTEN

BY

CHRIS WARD

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35 SQUADRON



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CONTENTS

GENERAL NOTES.

SECTION 1: A BRIEF HISTORY.

SECTION 2: OPERATIONAL RECORD.

SECTION 3: AIRCRAFT LISTING.

SECTION 4: KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS.

SECTION 5: SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

SECTION 6: STOCK LIST.

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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) its type was used operationally by the squadron. 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 However, where there is a blank space following the serial number of a type which has been withdrawn from service with Bomber Command, it signifies that I don't know its ultimate fate.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. However, a number of them retained their Fairey Battles on return to the UK, and formed part of the reconstituted 1 Group. The AASF service of these squadrons is recorded, and their aircraft listed, but Battle squadrons which relinquished the type on their return to Bomber Command, do not have this period detailed. The Blenheim squadrons of the AASF are 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 I



BRIEF HISTORY

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35 (MADRAS PRESIDENCY) SQUADRON

MOTTO UNO ANIMO AGIMUS. We act with one accord.

Code TL

35 Squadron has a history dating back to the 1st of February 1916, when it was formed as a corps reconnaissance unit, before moving to France in January 1917 to operate in an artillery observation and photographic role. In June 1919, the squadron was disbanded, and spent almost ten years on the shelf, before resurrection as a day bomber unit in March 1929. A ten month spell in the Sudan was followed by a return to the UK in August 1936, and in April 1938, the squadron began to equip with Fairey Battles. Unlike the majority of the Battle squadrons, however, 35 Squadron was not sent to France with the Advance Air Striking Force at the outbreak of war, but remained at home to fulfil a training function. On the 8th of April 1940, the squadron was absorbed into 17 OTU, and lost its identity.

The squadron was reformed at Boscombe Down on the 5th of November 1940, where it was attached to the A&AEE, with the specific purpose of introducing the Halifax into operational service. Under the command of Wing Commander R W P Collings, the squadron received its first example of the type, L9486, on the 13th, and a week later moved to Leeming to join 4 Group. Although the new crews were experienced men, none were conversant with four engined aircraft, and a distinct lack of available examples of the Halifax restricted training to the extent that it was necessary to borrow from the Ministry of Aircraft Production the first prototype, L7244, for dual instruction, and this was flown in by the commanding officer on the 23rd. After a short period of residence at Leeming, the squadron moved to Linton-on-Ouse on the 5th of December, and there it would reside for the remainder of its time with 4 Group, before becoming a founder member of the Pathfinder Force in August 1942.

1941

The squadron doubled its number of production aircraft, when L9487 arrived on the 4th of January, and this was followed on the 12th by L9489. Tragedy struck on the 13th, when L9487 crashed in Yorkshire during a fuel consumption test, and F/O Henry DFC and his five passengers were killed. It was at about this time, that a young pilot called Leonard Cheshire joined the squadron following a spell with 102 Squadron, where he had flown Whitleys with a degree of distinction. Cheshire had, in fact, just become the first junior officer to be awarded the DSO, this in recognition of an epic trip to Cologne, which had almost been his last. A harsh winter also hampered the progress of the squadron to operational status, and hydraulics problems grounded the few aircraft on charge during mid month, and this would be a recurring theme. The supply of Halifaxes remained little more than a trickle, but by early March, fifteen crews were under instruction, and seven of them were declared operational in time for the squadron to venture into battle for the first time on the 10th of March. On the previous day, a new Air Ministry directive had brought an abrupt end to an oil campaign which had been reaffirmed by a directive as recently as mid January. Increasing losses to U-Boats in the Atlantic had forced a change of priority, and a new campaign was to be launched against these craft, and their partners in crime, the long range reconnaissance bomber, the

Focke-Wulf Kondor. Both were to be attacked where-ever they could be found, at sea, in their bases, at their point of assembly and in the engine and component factories, and a new list of targets was drawn up accordingly. This was headed by Kiel, Hamburg, Bremen and Vegesack, wherein lay a total of seven shipyards, but Lorient and St Nazaire, where the main U-Boat bases were situated, were also included.

However, for the six 35 Squadron crews who eventually took off on this momentous night of the 10/11th, led by W/C Collings in L9486, there was to be a relatively gentle introduction to operations, with an attack on the docks at Le Havre. Four crews located and bombed the target, one attacked a secondary, and a sixth suffered flak damage and was forced to abort. On return, L9489 was intercepted by an RAF nightfighter and was shot down to crash between Aldershot and Guildford and only the pilot, S/L Gilchrist, and one other managed to extricate themselves from the stricken bomber and survive. On the 12/13th, three crews joined a mixed force of eighty eight aircraft to attack the Blohm and Voss U-Boat yards at Hamburg, where some success was achieved, and this was followed up twenty four hours later by over a hundred aircraft, two of which were 35 Squadron Halifaxes, and further damage was inflicted on the shipyards. This was the squadron's last operation for a month, but the intervening time would be well spent in further training. On the 29th, the German cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were reported to be off Brest, and by the following day they had taken up residence. This was to be the start of a long running saga which would prove to be a major distraction to the Command, and would not be resolved for more than ten months, during which time many crews would be sacrificed.

In order to facilitate the formation of a second Halifax unit, which was to be 76 Squadron, crews were detached from 10 Squadron to undergo training with 35 Squadron, and this began on the 15th of April. That night the squadron went to war again, when sending five Halifaxes to Kiel, on return from which, Sgt Lashbrook force-landed L9493 in Yorkshire and struck a tree, fortunately without serious injury to the crew. The persistent hydraulics problems grounded the squadron again for periods during the remainder of April and May, during which time the rest of the Command devoted much of its time to attacking Kiel and Brest, but Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Cologne and Mannheim also featured. It was not until the night of the 11/12th of June that the next operation to involve 35 Squadron took place. It was a record night for the squadron, with a total of nine Halifaxes despatched as part of a mixed force, whose crews were briefed for Duisburg, while Wellingtons and Stirlings attacked Düsseldorf. Few if any bombs fell on the target cities, but Cologne reported a reasonable degree of damage, presumably having been bombed as an alternative target. On the following night, crews were briefed for five targets, 35 Squadron sending eight Halifaxes to Hüls in company with three from 76 Squadron, which was operating for the first time. Only one 35 Squadron crew, that of Sgt Lashbrook, bombed the target, and Sgt Bovington's L9498 overshot on return to base and crashed, although again without serious consequences for the crew.

A new record of ten Halifaxes was despatched by the squadron to Hanover on the 15/16th, where a large fire was started. Having delivered its bombs, L9506 was attacked by enemy fighters, and sustained damage to an engine and the controls. The rear gunner continued firing and drove the enemy off, and F/O Murray successfully crash-landed the Halifax at Bircham

Newton. A further three crews went to the same destination on the 17/18th, and on the 20/21st, the two Halifax squadrons operated together as part of a force of over a hundred aircraft, whose objective was the Tirpitz at Kiel. The ship was not identified, and an ineffective raid on the town itself ensued. Further attempts involving the Halifax force were made on the 23/24th and 26/27th, before trying again in daylight on the 30th. 35 Squadron despatched six aircraft in two vics, led by S/L J B Tait, who had recently joined the squadron following a brief spell in temporary command of 51 Squadron, and whose personal association with the Tirpitz would bring him fame as the commanding officer of 617 Squadron in November 1944. In the face of heavy and accurate flak, an effective attack was delivered which put bombs into the target. The formation was intercepted by fighters and came under attack, and L9499 was last seen on fire and going down. When it failed to arrive back at Linton-on-Ouse, it became the first 35 Squadron aircraft to go missing from an operation, and it was later learned that F/L Robison and five of his crew had been killed. Following this operation, S/L Tait was awarded the first of his record number of DSOs.

After four months dedicated to largely maritime related operations, July brought a shift in focus. It also brought to 35 Squadron a new commanding officer, W/C Robinson, who had just completed a four month tour as the commanding officer of 78 Squadron. The career of W/C Collings would continue to flourish, and he would return to the operational scene in June 1943 as a Group Captain in command of 156 Squadron, a post which he combined with that of station commander at Warboys. In February 1944 he was appointed station commander at Bourn, before moving on to a similar post at Little Staughton in March. A new Air Ministry directive was issued on the 9th, highlighting the enemy's transportation system and the morale of its civilian population as weak points. Railways were precision targets requiring moonlight and clear conditions, and when these obtained, the major centres ringing the Ruhr were to be attacked to isolate the region, and prevent the movement in of raw materials and the export of finished goods. On dark nights, area attacks were to be launched against the Rhein cities of Cologne, Düsseldorf and Duisburg, and on nights of generally unfavourable conditions, more distant targets would be selected in northern, eastern and southern Germany. There would still be occasional concessions to the U-Boat campaign, however, and the situation at Brest would continue to divert a proportion of the Command's resources. A minor operation to Frankfurt on the 7/8th cost the squadron L9502 and the crew of F/O Langmead, who all survived by parachuting into captivity. On the following night, thirteen Halifaxes and one Stirling went to the distant oil plant at Leuna near Merseburg, and L9521 fell victim to a nightfighter over Holland, before crashing into a house. Sgt Bovington and three of his crew survived as POWs, while three of the crew and four Dutch civilians were killed. Fourteen Halifaxes joined a mixed force for a raid on Hanover on the 14/15th, and many fires were claimed, and eight of the type accompanied a predominately Wellington contingent to Mannheim on the 21/22nd, and failed to find the mark.

As mentioned earlier, the preoccupation with the German cruisers at Brest would drag on until their audacious and embarrassing break-out in February 1942 resolved the matter once and for all. In the meantime, however, a number of daylight operations were mounted in July, in a concerted effort to cripple the ships. The Scharnhorst had managed to sneak out of Brest shortly before an operation planned for the 24th, and was spotted at La Pallice, some two

hundred miles further south. Two operations had to be prepared, therefore, one by a force of Wellingtons at Brest to catch the Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen, while Fortresses of 2 Group and fighter escorted Hampdens of 5 Group acted as a diversion, and the other by fifteen Halifaxes of 35 and 76 Squadrons at La Pallice. Having taken off from a forward base at Stanton Harcourt shortly after 10.30 hours, the Halifaxes were greeted by fierce flak and fighter opposition, but never-the-less, delivered an accurate attack, which necessitated the Scharnhorst's return to Brest, where there were better repair facilities. Five of the Halifaxes were shot down, two of them from 35 Squadron, and the others received varying degrees of battle damage. A combination of flak and a fighter accounted for L9512, which was successfully abandoned by F/S Greaves and his crew, and they all fell into enemy hands. The crew of L9527 was less fortunate, however, and F/S Godwin was killed along with four others. The policy of despatching small numbers of aircraft to various targets simultaneously rarely produced effective results, but it was persisted with throughout the remainder of the year, and, in fact, until a new Commander-in-Chief arrived in 1942 to provide a firm direction. Hanover and Hamburg were the main objectives on the 25/26th, while a force of seven Stirlings and two Halifaxes went to Berlin, and lost three of their number. The missing Halifax was 35 Squadron's L9507, in which P/O Cooper and his crew were killed. The month ended with an intended attack by over a hundred aircraft, including seven Halifaxes, on Cologne on the 30/31st, but inhospitable weather conditions prevented most crews from locating the target, and very few bombs found the mark.

August began for the heavy brigade with raids to Hamburg, Kiel and Berlin on the 2/3rd, a contingent of eight Halifaxes joining forty Wellingtons and five Stirlings for the last mentioned. The small numbers and hazy conditions guaranteed a futile effort, but at least no Halifaxes were lost. Railway targets at Karlsruhe occupied eight Halifaxes and eighty other assorted aircraft on the 5/6th, and a number of districts were hit. Essen escaped with slight superficial damage when attacked on the 7/8th by a force which included twelve Halifaxes, and this was followed on the 12/13th by another tilt at Berlin, by a larger force than that employed at the start of the month. The numbers proved to be of no consequence as less than half of them reached their objective, and nine failed to return home, a massive 12.8% of those despatched. 35 Squadron's contingent all made it home, but L9497 lost an engine to flak, and crash-landed in Norfolk, injuring one of the crew of P/O McGregor-Cheers. Another long range operation took some of the squadron's crews to Magdeburg on the 14/15th, where railway installations were the target. Cloud obscured the assessment of results, and L9500 failed to return having crashed in Germany, and there were no survivors from the crew of P/O Lisle. It was a similar story at Cologne two nights later, when six Halifaxes joined forces with Wellingtons and Whitleys in an effort to hit railway installations. Weather conditions would continue to frustrate operations for much of the remainder of the year, both in terms of impenetrable cloud over the targets, and inhospitable flying conditions, which frequently included severe icing. Numerous operations would be subject to recall, after the weather worsened during the outward flight.

The 18th was the day on which civil servant Mr D M Butt completed his study of the Command's operational effectiveness, and his report was to send shock waves resounding around the War Cabinet and the Air Ministry. Having pored over 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. It was a massive blow to morale, and demonstrated that thus far, the efforts of the crews had been almost totally ineffective in reducing Germany's capacity to wage war. The claims of the crews were shown to be wildly optimistic, as were those of the Command which frequently found their way into the newspapers as propaganda, and Sir Richard Peirse's tenure as C-in-C would be forever blighted by the report's revelations. The next target for the Halifax brigade was Kiel on the 19/20th, when six accompanied a hundred other aircraft to attack railway installations. Thick cloud and icing conditions over north-western Germany discouraged almost half of the force from pressing on, and hardly any bombs fell on the town. P/O McGregor-Cheers and his crew enjoyed only a temporary reprieve following their deliverance after the Berlin operation. Just twelve days elapsed between that and a trip to Düsseldorf on the 24/25th, when forty assorted aircraft bombed on estimated position, and three of them failed to return. L9572 crashed in Belgium on the way home, and this time none survived. A respectable force of over a hundred aircraft raided Duisburg on the 28/29th, an attack which at best was only marginally effective, and it cost the squadron another crew, that of P/O Adkins in L9501, which crashed in Germany. The penultimate operation of the month involved just five Halifaxes, in an operation to Frankfurt which was dominated by Hampdens and Whitleys. Bad weather was again blamed for the lack of accuracy, and damage was scattered and light. Matters proceeded in identical fashion at Cologne on the last night of the month, when seven Halifaxes and a few Manchesters and Stirlings played a supporting role to Wellingtons and Hampdens.

September began for the squadron with a raid on Berlin on the 2/3rd, while a larger force went back to Frankfurt. It was an expensive night, which resulted in two empty dispersals at Linton on the following morning, those which should have been occupied by L9508 and L9560. F/O James and one other were killed in the former, and P/O Fraser died with four of his crew, when the latter was brought down in Germany. Berlin was the main target on the 7/8th, for which 197 aircraft were despatched, six of them Halifaxes. Sixty aircraft turned back or bombed alternative targets, but those which pressed on produced a useful amount of damage, and bombed out almost three thousand people. The 10/11th found a squadron contingent crossing the Alps into Italy to bomb Turin, where good results were claimed, but L9566 failed to return, and the crew of F/O Williams joined the swelling ranks of POWs. L9526 arrived back after nearly eight hours in the air, and P/O Cresswell brought it to a forced-landing in Norfolk, without injury to the crew. An unusually effective raid for the period fell on Hamburg on the 15/16th, which resulted in much property damage and some fires. The sole Halifax casualty among the eight aircraft which failed to return was 35 Squadron's L9503, in which the pilot, P/O Brown, was killed, while his crew survived as POWs. There was little activity for the Halifaxes during what remained of the month, until a large raid by a mixed force on distant Stettin on the 29/30th, from which the Halifax contingent all returned.

Brest was October's first destination for Halifaxes on the 2/3rd, and all six returned safely amid claims by the crews that bombs had burst near the warships. The first major raid of the war on Nuremberg, the birthplace of Nazism, came on the 12/13th by 150 aircraft. Many outlying communities found themselves under the bombs, but Nuremberg itself was scarcely

touched, and as the succeeding years would show, it would generally be an elusive target. The squadron's L9579 returned low on fuel, and was partially abandoned by its crew, after which, Sgt Williams carried out a crash-landing near the airfield, and the remaining crew members emerged unscathed. A follow-up raid on Nuremberg two nights later was only fractionally more effective, and the five Halifaxes involved returned safely. The Halifax was still only a junior partner in operational terms, but the new Mk II versions of the type were now rolling out of the factories, and 35 Squadron received its first two examples, R9364 and V9979, on the 25th. This occurrence following on the heels of a period of relative inactivity since Nuremberg, a spell which was broken when six Halifaxes were sent with Wellingtons and Whitleys to Mannheim on the 22/23rd. Less than half of the force arrived in the target area, having encountered icing conditions, and the attack failed.

A major night of operations was planned for the 7/8th of November, and they went ahead despite an unfavourable weather forecast. The main raid was to Berlin, and it had been intended that over two hundred aircraft should take part, but doubts about the weather prompted the 5 Group AOC to object, and he was allowed to withdraw his seventy five strong element, and send it instead to Cologne. A third force of Wellingtons drawn from 1 and 3 Groups was assigned to Mannheim, and a number of minor operations were also laid on. A new record number of 392 sorties were involved in all the night's activity, and 169 of them set course for the Capital over a period of a few hours throughout the evening. 35 Squadron contributed four crews to the main raid, those of P/O Norman, Sgt Williams, P/O Cresswell and Sgt Bradshaw in L9569, L9600, L9606 and L9671 respectively, all of which attacked the primary target and returned. In fact, less than half of the Berlin force managed to reach their objective, and twenty one failed to return. The Cologne force came through without loss, but produced only the slightest damage, and the Mannheim contingent missed its target altogether while losing seven Wellingtons. Other Halifaxes and assorted aircraft were sent on Rover patrols around the Ruhr, or minelaying in Norwegian waters, and of these, L9603 was shot down by a nightfighter over Holland, and P/O Whitaker and two of his crew were killed, the remainder falling into enemy hands. The losses totalled a new record thirty seven aircraft, more than twice the previous highest for a single night. This was the final straw for the Air Ministry, and Sir Richard Peirse was summoned to a meeting with Churchill to make his explanations. On the 13th, he was ordered to restrict future operations while the future of the Command was considered at the highest level.

German ports and those along the occupied coast dominated the second half of the month, but the Halifaxes were not heavily committed until the 25/26th, when eleven of them were joined by seven Stirlings for another attempt on the German cruisers at Brest. A further eleven were contributed to a force of 180 aircraft sent to Hamburg on the last night of the month, and those which reached the target produced a reasonable degree of damage for the loss of thirteen of their number. Only one Halifax failed to return, 35 Squadron's L9582, from which F/S Hamilton and five of his crew parachuted into captivity. December followed a similar pattern, with the ports receiving the bulk of the attention, although Cologne was raided by a small force on the 11/12th, and 35 Squadron posted missing the crew of P/O Buckley in L9600, which went down off the Belgian coast with no survivors. Brest came in for more attention, culminating with Operation Veracity on the 18th, a daylight attack on the port by

Halifaxes, Stirlings and Manchesters. 10 Squadron was now also equipped with Halifaxes, and this was its first operation with the type, each squadron contributing six aircraft to the total of forty seven which took off. In clear weather conditions, the Halifax brigade approached in tight formation, W/C Robinson leading the 35 Squadron element in V9978. Flak damaged both port engines, one of which caught fire, and despite this being extinguished, W/C Robinson was unable to feather the propellers and maintain height, and he was forced to ditch some sixty miles off the English coast. The Halifax remained afloat for a considerable time, and a rescue of the entire crew took place later in the day. The single crew injury was a broken ankle sustained by F/L Rivaz, the rear gunner, who had flown in Cheshire's Whitley crew at 102 Squadron. The operation cost six aircraft in all, but good results were claimed, and smoke was seen to issue from the Gneisenau.

Encouraged by the apparent success of the raid, a second Operation Veracity was launched on the 30th by the Halifax contingent alone, accompanied by an escort of Spitfires. Fierce flak and fighter opposition was met, and the squadron's V9979 succumbed to the former, and crashed in the target area, killing S/L Middleton and his crew. This was one of three Halifaxes to fail to return, and although bombs were reported to have fallen in the right area, no hits were claimed on the warships. That was the final operation in a year which had seen the squadron tentatively introduce the Halifax into operational service. Persistent technical problems had been a source of frustration, and the cause of long periods of inactivity, but the new year would provide ample opportunity for the aircraft to demonstrate its potential. However, the operational scene was about to be graced by the arrival of a new aircraft, which would eclipse the Halifax, and become the "Shining Sword" in the hands of a new leader. Generally speaking, it had been a disastrous year for the Command, during which precious little advance on the previous year had been achieved. The new heavy bombers had each failed to come up to expectations, and had spent much of their operational career undergoing essential modifications. The Butt Report had provided ammunition for the critics of Bomber Command, who believed that bomber aircraft could be more profitably employed elsewhere, particularly against the U-Boat, and to redress reversals in the Middle East. The crews had done their best with the equipment available, but their best had proved to be insufficient to be effective against an as yet all conquering enemy.

1942

The year began as 1941 had ended, with the obsession with Brest and its three German guests, and no less than eleven operations of varying sizes were launched against it during the course of January. Harsh weather conditions contributed to a period of relatively low activity for the squadron, which operated only five times during the month, and lost no aircraft. On the 22nd, S/L Cheshire relinquished his post as flight commander on his posting to the Halifax conversion unit at Marston Moor, and on the 26th, W/C Robinson was also posted away at the conclusion of his tour in command, although he would return. He was replaced by W/C J N H Whitworth, who was known to his peers as "Charles", and who had served in 1940 as a flight commander with 10 Squadron. There was little to occupy the squadrons at the start of February, and just two small scale raids were sent against Brest, on the 6/7th and on the evening of the 11th. A matter of hours after the latter, the situation at Brest was finally

resolved when the Scharnhorst, Gneiseau and Prinz Eugen, with a strong escort of destroyers and other craft, broke out of harbour in atrocious weather conditions, and headed into the English Channel in an audacious bid for freedom. This precise eventuality had been anticipated, and a plan prepared under the code-name Operation Fuller. Unfortunately, many of those at grass roots level, who would be expected to put the plan into action, had not been fully advised of its requirements, and some were completely ignorant of its existence. By the time that the fleet was spotted in the late morning of the 12th, only 5 Group squadrons were standing by at four hours readiness. It was 13.30 hours before the first aircraft got away, and despite the commitment of a new daylight record of 242 sorties, few crews made contact with their quarry, and those attacks which were carried out in the squally conditions and low cloud failed to find the mark. 35 Squadron despatched four sorties, but it was already too late, and to the great embarrassment of the British government, the ships passed through the Straits of Dover and into open sea. The fact that both Scharnhorst and Gneisenau struck mines recently laid by 5 Group, and sustained a degree of damage, was scant consolation, and some very brave airmen lost their lives in the fifteen Bomber Command aircraft which were lost as a result of this debacle. On the credit side, this annoying itch had been scratched for the last time, and the Command could now concentrate more of its resources against targets to which it was better suited. On the 14th, a new Air Ministry directive authorized the blatant area bombing of Germany, without the pretence of aiming at specific industrial and military objectives, and reaffirmed the assault on the morale of the enemy civilian population, in particular its workers. Waiting in the wings was the leader who would pursue this policy with a will.

A round of minor operations filled in the gap between Operation Fuller and the arrival of the new commander-in-chief, ACM Sir Arthur Harris, on the 22nd. Harris arrived at the helm with firm ideas already in place about how to win the war by bombing alone. He recognized the need to overwhelm the defences by pushing the maximum number of aircraft across the aiming point in the shortest possible time, and knew also that urban areas are destroyed most efficiently by fire and not by blast. From his appointment until the end of the month, Kiel and Wilhelmshaven became the objects of attention, and there were no incidents involving 35 Squadron. In one of the war's great ironies, however, during a raid on Kiel by forty nine aircraft, including six Halifaxes, just two weeks after arriving at a supposedly safe port after ten months of being hounded by Bomber Command at Brest, the Gneisenau was struck by a bomb, which ended her sea-going career once and for all. In a sign of things to come for Germany and the occupied countries, Harris launched a record breaking attack on the Renault lorry factory at Billancourt in Paris on the 3/4th of March. It was a three wave raid, employing the largest number of aircraft to date to a single target, and was led by experienced crews, with extensive use of flares to provide illumination. 223 crews claimed to have bombed the target, mostly from low level to avoid French civilian casualties through colateral damage, and extensive damage was inflicted, which halted production for four weeks. Twenty Halifaxes took part, and the great success of the entire undertaking, which cost just one Wellington, was marred only by the almost inevitable civilian deaths, which amounted to over 350. 35 Squadron's R9445 was hit by flak, and severely damaged in the ensuing emergency landing at Oakington, but F/O Jones and his crew were able to walk away. It was somewhat

paradoxical, that Harris, as a champion of area bombing, should gain his first major success via a precision target.

Essen, home to the giant armaments producing Krupps organisation, would be constantly on Harris's list of targets, and a mini campaign of three raids in three nights began on the 8/9th. It was a disappointing series, which produced little damage, and the second one cost the squadron R9450, which was lost in the North Sea on the way home, with no survivors from the crew of F/S Ganly. On the 12th, W/C Whitworth concluded his brief period in command of the squadron, and handed over to W/C "Jimmy" Marks, one of the Command's new breed of dynamic young officers, whose skills had been tempered in the heat of battle. Group Captain Whitworth would be the station commander at Scampton in March 1943, when W/C Guy Gibson arrived to form 617 Squadron for the attack on the dams two months later. During the month, the Halifax squadrons were screened from operations for periods, while their aircraft were replaced by new ones equipped with the Gee navigation device. As a result of this, no Halifaxes took part in the hugely successful raid on Lübeck on the 28/29th, which was conducted on similar lines to those employed for the Billancourt operation at the start of the month. This fire-raising attack left over fourteen hundred buildings destroyed and an even greater number damaged, and was the first real success for the area bombing policy. At the end of the month, 10, 35 and 76 Squadrons sent detachments to Scotland, to renew acquaintance with the Tirpitz, which was now sheltering at Aasen Fjord in Norway. The operation was mounted on the night of the 30/31st, the 35 Squadron element taking off from Kinloss, each loaded with four 1,000lb spherical mines, which were designed to roll down the hillside adjacent to Tirpitz's mooring, and explode under her hull. Thirty four aircraft took part, but in the event, the Tirpitz was not located in conditions of poor visibility, and the surviving crews turned for home. Four Halifaxes crashed in the target area, presumably brought down by flak, and a further two were lost in the sea on the way home, probably having run out of fuel. It was a bad night for 35 Squadron, its worst to date, and three crews were posted missing. R9496 and W1015 were both shot down in the target area, without survivors from the crews of F/S Archibald and F/S Steinhauer respectively, and R9438 took F/S Bushby and crew to their deaths in the sea. The crews remained in Scotland for five more days, awaiting an opportunity to return to Norway, but in the absence of a favourable weather forecast, a further operation was postponed.

April was a month of major operations against German city targets, beginning with Cologne and Essen on the 5/6th and 6/7th, but these did not involve the Halifax squadrons. Hamburg followed on the 8/9th, then Essen two nights later and again on the 12/13th, and Dortmund on the 14/15th, all of which did include Halifaxes. It was a disappointing series of raids, which scattered bombs over a large area of the Ruhr, and produced little effective damage at the intended targets, while a considerable number of valuable aircraft and crews were lost. Halifaxes still represented only a small proportion of the effort, just eleven of them contributing to a force of 170, which took off for Hamburg on the 17/18th. The one hundred or so aircraft which reached the target did at least leave numerous large fires in their wake, but still the results were not commensurate with the enormous effort expended. Bowed by the success at Lübeck at the end of March, Harris attempted to repeat it at Rostock, also on the Baltic coast, in a four raid series over four nights between the 23/24th and 26/27th. An

additional attraction was the nearby Heinkel aircraft factory, and some of the effort was directed specifically at this target. The series was another major success, and left approximately 60% of the town's built up area in ruins.

So far, 35 Squadron had negotiated its operations during the month without loss, and on the 27th, a squadron detachment left Kinloss, and joined up with other Halifaxes and Lancasters for another tilt at Tirpitz. Attacking from low level, the formation was met by fierce anti-aircraft fire, and a number of aircraft were brought down, including that of W/C Don Bennett, the commanding officer of 10 Squadron, and soon to be AOC of the Pathfinder Force. 35 Squadron's W1020 was shot down by flak and crashed near Trondheim, and F/L Pools and his crew were killed. Another victim of the barrage was W1048, which P/O McIntyre skillfully brought to a crash-landing on the frozen Lake Hocklingen, before disappearing into the surrounding countryside with four of his crew to ultimately evade capture. The sixth crew member sustained a broken leg, and he fell into enemy hands. The burning Halifax melted the ice, and eventually settle on the bottom of the lake, from where, in 1973, it was recovered, and now resides in an unrestored state in the Bomber Command Hall at the RAF Museum at Hendon. Tirpitz had escaped damage, and in all, four Halifaxes and a Lancaster had been lost. A smaller force returned on the following night, and this time hits were claimed, although not confirmed, and a further two Halifaxes failed to return. Both of these were from 35 Squadron, and were again the victims of flak, W1053 crashing in Norway, and W7656 in the target area. P/O Roe and four of his crew in the former Halifax survived and became POWs, and F/L Petley and three of his crew in the latter experienced a similar outcome.

The first major operation in May took a Halifax element to Hamburg on the 3/4th, in company with other types. Although a third of the medium sized force failed to reach the target, a disproportionately large amount of damage resulted, and the squadron's contingent all returned safely to Linton-on-Ouse. Not so following the third raid on consecutive nights on Stuttgart on the 6/7th, a series which failed almost totally to hit the city. W1050 was shot down by a nightfighter over Luxembourg, P/O Gardiner and one other surviving as POWs, and W1051 swung off the runway when landing, and collided with a Halifax of the conversion flight, but Sgt Brown and his crew emerged from the wreckage unscathed. Warnemünde, with its nearby Heinkel aircraft factory, were attacked on the 8/9th at a high cost of nineteen aircraft, and this was followed by a period of minor operations until the 19/20th, when a force approaching two hundred aircraft took off for Mannheim. It was another ineffective raid, and among the eleven missing aircraft were two from 35 Squadron. W1101 came down in the target area, killing F/S Reed and all his crew, and W7658 fell to a combination of flak and nightfighters over France, P/O Valters and three of his crew losing their lives, while two of the survivors evaded capture. The next ten days saw little activity, but a great deal of speculation, which was heightened, when an assortment of aircraft from the training units began to assemble on bomber airfields from Yorkshire to East Anglia. Following the Butt report of 1941, the value of an independent bomber force had been questioned in high places, most notably at the Admiralty, where the opinion was, that its aircraft could be put to better use to eliminate the U-Boat threat to Allied convoys in the Atlantic. The effectiveness of the Command's operations had been less than satisfactory, and losses high, and Harris needed to demonstrate the potential of his force to ensure its future

survival. On taking up his post, he had asked for four thousand bombers with which to win the war, and whilst there was never a 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.

The Thousand Plan, the launching of a thousand aircraft in one night to a single target, was born out of this need, but the symbolic figure was beyond the reach of the Command's front-line units, and it was necessary to call upon the services of other Commands, most notably Coastal and Flying Training to bolster the numbers. Both confirmed their willingness to provide aircraft and crews in letters received at Bomber Command HQ on the 22nd and 23rd respectively, but after objections from the Admiralty, Coastal Command underwent a change of heart and withdrew its contribution of aircraft, although it did send a handful of navigators to help out. Undaunted, Harris, or more probably his deputy, AM Sir Robert Saundby, scraped together every airframe capable of controlled flight, or something approaching it, and pulled in the screened crews from their instructional duties. Come the night, Operation Millennium would not only achieve the magic figure of one thousand, but would comfortably surpass it. As the days ticked by towards the end of May, only the weather remained in question, and this was definitely not playing ball. Having been assembled now for a number of days, a very real danger existed that the giant force would draw attention to itself and compromise security, and the point was fast being reached when the operation would either have to take place, or be postponed for the time being. Finally, at "morning prayers" on the 30th, Harris's chief meteorological advisor, Magnus Spence, announced that the Rheinland was likely to experience a break in the cloud and provide some moonlight, while Harris's first choice of Hamburg would be completely concealed, and thus did the fickle finger of fate decree that Cologne would have the dubious honour of hosting the first one thousand bomber raid in history.

The 1,047 aircraft began their take-offs shortly after 22.30 hours, some of the older hacks from the training units climbing somewhat reluctantly into the air, lifted more by the enthusiasm of their crews than by engine power, and a number of these, unable to rise to a respectable height, would either fall easy prey to the defences, or fall from the sky through technical failures. 35 Squadron's contribution to the operation was twenty one Halifaxes, of which one returned early, and the remainder reached and bombed the primary target to come home safely. The attack was conducted in three waves, with the genuinely heavy aircraft bringing up the rear, and although Cologne would suffer more destructive raids in the future, it was, by any standards, an outstandingly successful operation, which left in its wake large areas of damage and over three thousand buildings destroyed. It also demonstrated what the Command could achieve, and provided Harris with ammunition with which to fight his corner, this to an extent helping to reduce the formally loud criticism to a whisper. On the debit side, Millennium had cost a new record of forty one aircraft, and this reduced the availability of aircraft for the second Thousand raid. Harris, having assembled such a large force with its attendant difficulties, was keen to use it again immediately, and consequently 956 aircraft were prepared for Essen on the 1/2nd of June. This was a dismal failure, which sprayed bombs all over the Ruhr with few falling on the intended target, and the disappointment was compounded by the loss of a further thirty one aircraft, although again, 35 Squadron came through unscathed. This operation was followed up by a moderate force on

the 2/3rd, which also failed to achieve anything more than superficial damage, and this time it cost the squadron R9444, which was despatched by a combination of flak and nightfighters, although Sgt Hilton and his crew managed to parachute to safety, albeit as captives.

An effective attack on Bremen on the 3/4th was succeeded by a series of three further raids on Essen, and four on Emden during the remainder of the month, which spanned the period leading to the third and final use of the Thousand force. R9439 failed to return from Emden on the 6/7th, and was lost without trace with the crew of Sgt Davies, and two nights later, the squadron suffered its worst reversal to date during another ineffective raid on Essen. A nightfighter accounted for W1021 while homebound, but F/S Watson and his crew all survived as POWs, and W7701 crashed in Belgium, killing five of the crew of Sgt Pack, while he managed to evade capture. The other two Halifaxes found the sea, W7699 taking with it P/O MacKenzie and his crew, while W1049 underwent a controlled ditching off the Norfolk coast, having suffered flak damage, and F/S McKenzie and his crew were picked up. Minor operations occupied the next eight nights, before W1117 fell victim to a nightfighter over Holland during another disappointing raid on Essen on the 16/17th, and F/S Hammond died with all but one of his crew. The Emden series concluded on the 22/23rd, and failed to achieve more than scattered damage, and then 960 aircraft were prepared for the final use of the Thousand force, the target for which would be Bremen on the 25/26th. On this occasion, Coastal Command was ordered by higher authority to participate, and the actual number of aircraft going to Bremen exceeded the 1047 which took off for Cologne, even though the Coastal Command effort is classed as a separate raid.

Whilst not achieving the success gained at Cologne, the operation far surpassed the disappointment of Essen, and some useful industrial damage resulted on top of the usual catalogue of residential destruction. Forty eight aircraft failed to return, a new record loss, and this time the squadron was represented by W1105, which was brought down by flak in Germany, and F/O Mays and four of his crew were killed. Three follow up raids were launched during the succeeding week, and further useful damage resulted without loss to the squadron. It was now the turn of Duisburg to receive a series of four raids during the second half of July, beginning on the 13/14th. This operation was not successful, and W1154 was partially abandoned over England on return, following engine failure. Five of the crew successfully employed their parachutes, but the bodies of F/S Casey and one of his crew were found in the wreckage of their Halifax. Their colleagues in W7761 were also experiencing difficulties, in this case with a hung-up bomb which could not be jettisoned. Sgt MacDonald and crew took to their parachutes over Yorkshire, and they all arrived safely on the ground.

A particularly tragic event occurred on the 21st, while R9489 was being air-tested in preparation for the night's operation to Duisburg. On board were two army sergeants gaining air experience, and they died with Sgt Murray and his crew, when the Halifax crashed in Yorkshire following an engine fire. A moderate degree of damage was inflicted on Duisburg that night, and again on the 23/24th, and the final raid of the series, on the 25/26th, again found the mark, although less effectively. W1147 failed to return from this operation having crashed in Holland, and F/O Maple and five of his crew were killed, while the seventh man evaded capture. Two major operations were mounted against Hamburg during the final week

of the month, the first of which, on the 26/27th, was outstandingly accurate, with residential areas bearing the brunt of the damage. It was a relatively expensive night for the attackers, however, which lost twenty nine of the four hundred bombers committed, and 35 Squadron posted missing the crew of Sgt Smith, who went into the sea with W7760. Saarbrücken followed on the 29/30th, where a heavy blow was delivered, and the month was put to bed at Düsseldorf on the night of the 31st, in an operation which included elements from the training units. Despite some bomb loads being wasted in open country, it was another successful raid, but the defences hit back by claiming a further twenty nine bombers, including the squadron's W1100, which was hit by flak on the way home, and crashed onto an island in the Scheldt Estuary killing two of the crew, while P/O Spencer and four others survived as POWs. Duisburg opened the August account on the 6/7th, followed by Osnabrück on the 9/10th and Mainz on the 11/12th and 12/13th. The last named was the target for the bulk of those operating on the 11/12th, while sixteen aircraft went to Le Havre. Among the latter was 35 Squadron's W1242, which was abandoned by its crew after flak rendered it no longer airworthy, and P/O Saunders and his crew made it safely down to the ground, where they fell into enemy hands.

On the 15th, the new target finding force came into being as the Pathfinders, under the command of the then Group Captain Don Bennett, a man with unparalleled qualifications and experience as an airman and navigator. He was blessed with a brilliant mind, making him prone to set standards which few others could achieve, and this, allied to his reputedly humourless personality, produced a demanding and exacting, although highly respected leader. It had been he who had been entrusted with setting up the Atlantic Ferry Service earlier in the war, to bring much needed aircraft over from America. His operational experience with Bomber Command had been gained as the commanding officer of 77 and 10 Squadrons, and during this period he thought nothing of taking a sprog crew into battle to instill in them confidence. It was while serving with the latter that his airmanship and resourcefulness had been ably demonstrated earlier in the year, when he was forced to crash-land his badly shot-up Halifax in Norway during an attack on the Tirpitz. He evaded capture, and within a month returned to his squadron to resume command. Harris had always opposed in principle the idea of an elite target finding force, a view upheld by all but one of his Group commanders, 4 Group's AVM Roddy Carr being the exception, but typically of the man, once overruled by higher authority, he gave it his unstinting support. His choice of Bennett, a relatively junior officer, to lead the Pathfinder Force was both controversial and inspired, and it undoubtedly ruffled a few feathers, particularly those of the 3 Group AOC, AVM Baldwin, under whose control the new force would nominally fall, and on whose stations it would lodge somewhat uneasily until being granted Group status in its own right. Four heavy squadrons were transferred from their Groups as founder members, and 35 Squadron was selected as 4 Group's representative, moving to its new base at Graveley to take up duties. The first Pathfinder led operation was scheduled to be Osnabrück on the 17/18th, but in the event, its element was withdrawn, and the operation proceeded without them. During that day, 109 Squadron officially became the first Pathfinder Mosquito unit, and from that point until the end of the year, it would continue its development work with "Oboe", the device which would at last introduce precision to Bomber Command operations.

On the following night, the fledgling force took to the air for the first time, when it led a raid on the supposedly easily identifiable Baltic port of Flensburg. It was an inauspicious beginning, with not a single bomb finding the target, and the PFF suffered its first casualty, when the squadron's W1226 was damaged by a nightfighter, and was ditched by Sgt Smith, who along with his crew survived the experience and became a POW. The Pathfinder's second operation took it to Frankfurt on the 24/25th, and again difficulty was experienced in identifying the target, leading most of the bombing to fall wide. Some damage was inflicted, however, but any success was marred by the loss of sixteen aircraft, five of them Pathfinders, and 35 Squadron posted missing P/O Gardiner and his crew in W7765, which fell to a nightfighter over France, killing the pilot and one other. The first real success for the new force came at Kassel on the 27/28th, when its illumination of the target area was exploited by the main force crews, and widespread damage resulted. Scattered bombing saved Nuremberg from serious consequences on the 28/29th, and the squadron lost two Halifaxes to the defences. Flak accounted for W7676 over Holland, and W7700 came down in France, and there were no survivors from the crews of Sgt John and P/O Taylor respectively.

From this point on, the squadron would enjoy a period of low losses, which would see it through well into the spring of the coming year. The first half of September brought a hectic round of operations, beginning with Saarbrücken on the 1/2nd. It resulted in another "black" for the Pathfinder crews, who marked the small town of Saarlouis in error, and much damage and misery was inflicted upon the residents of this non-industrial town. The Pathfinders made amends on the following night, by accurately marking Karlsruhe for the main force to exploit the opportunity, and many fires could be seen burning by the departing crews. Bremen suffered a heavy blow on the 4/5th, and Duisburg two nights later, and following an ineffective raid on Frankfurt on the 8/9th, the run of successes continued at Düsseldorf on the 10/11th, Bremen on the 13/14th, Wilhelmshaven on the 14/15th and Essen on the 16/17th, where the Krupps works suffered further useful damage. It was an unprecedented series of effective operations, which was evidence of the coming together of tactics and innovations, and if any period could be described as the turning point in Bomber Command's gradual evolution to becoming a war-winning weapon, then this was it. It was not to be an overnight transformation, and failures would continue to outnumber successes for some time to come, but the signs were there, and the components were in place, and once Oboe was introduced into main force operations in the following spring, the Ruhr at least would no longer be able to hide. Briefings took place for two targets on the 19/20th, the larger force destined for Saarbrücken, where scattered bombing produced only superficial damage. It was a sad night for 35 Squadron, which posted missing its commanding officer, W/C Marks, who remained at the controls of W7657 to allow his crew time to escape after their Halifax was attacked by a nightfighter over France. He died with two others of his crew, and the remainder became POWs. There is little doubt, that his great tactical awareness would have taken him on to greater things had he survived, but like so many of the best squadron commanders, he lost his life while leading his men into battle. His loss brought a familiar and popular face back to the squadron, that of W/C Robinson, who began his second spell as commanding officer on the 20th.

The pace of operations slackened for what remained of September, and Krefeld opened the October account on the 2/3rd, an unsuccessful raid, and little better was produced at Aachen on the 5/6th. 35 Squadron lost its only crew of the month from the latter, W1047 going down over France, with no survivors from the crew of S/L Kerry. Moderately successful attacks were delivered on Osnabrück on the 6/7th and Kiel a week later, but a decoy site near Cologne drew away most of the bombs on the 15/16th. The last week of October saw the start of a new campaign against Italian targets in support of the North Africa campaign, which would ultimately bring victory to Montgomery over Rommel at El Alamein. Genoa was raided by 5 Group on the 22/23rd, and by elements of 3 and 4 Groups with Pathfinder support twenty four hours later. Milan played host to a daylight attack by 5 Group on the 24th, and was visited again that night by 1 and 3 Groups again with Pathfinders in attendance. In November, Genoa and Turin became the main focus of attention, with Hamburg and Stuttgart the only German targets of note during the month. The squadron operated without loss until the 18/19th, when it almost had to post missing another commanding officer, following a bizarre incident during a smallish operation to Turin. Returning over the Alps in DT488, a number of hung-up flares ignited in the bomb bay, and started a fire in the fuselage. W/C Robinson ordered his crew to abandon the aircraft, and after they were clear, he prepared to do likewise, whereupon the fire died down. Resuming his position at the controls, he single-handedly navigated and flew the aircraft home to a crash-landing at Colerne, from which he walked away, while his crew was being marched off into captivity.

The squadron continued to operate for the remainder of the year, a period of less frenetic activity, and no further crews were lost. Frankfurt escaped damage on the 2/3rd, and most of the bombs intended for Mannheim on the 6/7th also missed the mark. The final operations of the Italian campaign were mounted against Turin on the 8/9th, 9/10th and 11/12th, and Duisburg and Munich were attacked with little success on the 20/21st and 21/22nd respectively. The last quarter of 1942 had brought a shift in emphasis for 35 Squadron and the other founder members of the Pathfinders. After a hesitant start they were at last getting to grips with the requirements of their exacting role, in which steady reliability was the key to success. 1943 would bring with it major offensives, and a heavy responsibility would lie on the shoulders of the Pathfinder crews. If they failed, so would the carefully laid plans of Sir Arthur Harris.

1943

The year began with a series of small scale raids as part of the Oboe trials programme, involving the Mosquitos of 109 Squadron, and Lancaster elements from 1 and 5 Groups. Essen was the principal target, and was raided seven times in the first two weeks of January, with a solitary visit to Duisburg in-between. During this period, on the 8th, the Pathfinder Force was granted Group status as 8 Group, and its resident stations were transferred over from 3 Group. On the 14th, a new Air Ministry directive authorized the area bombing of those French ports which housed U-Boat bases and support facilities, and a list of four such targets was drawn up accordingly, headed by Lorient. This preceded two operations on consecutive nights to Berlin in mid month, where custom designed target indicators were used by the PFF contingent for the first time. Neither operation was effective, although the first raid, on the

16/17th, brought about the total destruction of the 10,000 seater Deutschlandhalle, the largest covered venue in Europe, and the loss of just one Lancaster. The second Berlin trip cost the squadron its first crew of the year, when W7886 crashed into the sea off the Danish coast, killing four of those on board, S/L Brownlie and two others becoming POWs. Lorient was the month's other main focus, receiving a total of five raids, but the 30/31st saw perhaps the most significant operation of the year to date, the first operational use of H2s, which was being pioneered on this night by 7 and 35 Squadrons at Hamburg, where only moderate success was gained.

February opened with a disappointing attack on Cologne on the 2/3rd, which was followed by a return to Hamburg on the 3/4th. This attack again failed to achieve concentration, and a flak damaged W7923 crashed on landing on return to base, without injury to F/O Thomas and his crew, who walked away. Their's, however, would be only a temporary reprieve. Earlier in the day, W/C Robinson's promotion to Group Captain came through, but he would remain in post for the time being. Most of the month was occupied with French and German ports, and it was Lorient which claimed the above named crew on the 13/14th, after W7885 was hit by flak and was abandoned over France. F/O Thomas and four of his crew managed to evade capture, while one man fell into enemy hands, and one went down with the Halifax. It was a highly successful operation, which was repeated on the 16/17th, after which the town was left a desolate ruin. Three disappointing raids on Wilhelmshaven preceded attacks on Nuremberg on the 25/26th and Cologne on the 26/27th, the latter enjoying a reasonable degree of success. The last night of the month took a large force to St Nazaire, in a continuation of the offensive against U-Boats and their support facilities. It was a very destructive raid, on return from which, W7906 crashed on landing at Harrowbeer airfield in Devon, following the loss of one engine while outbound, and another while on the way home. Despite the problems, S/L Dean demonstrated his leadership qualities by pressing on to the target, and he and his crew emerged unscathed from their wounded Halifax.

The first major campaign of the year was preceded by an assault on Berlin on the 1/2nd of March, and although bombing was scattered over an enormous area, some useful damage occurred at the target. Seventeen aircraft failed to return, among them W7877 of 35 Squadron, which fell to a nightfighter over Holland, with just one survivor from the crew of S/L Elliott. Hamburg followed on the 3/4th, and misinterpretation of the H2s returns led to much of the bombing falling outside of the intended area, although that which did find the mark left numerous fires burning. This was a prelude to the Ruhr offensive, the aim of which was to lay waste to the towns and cities of Germany's industrial heartland, the hub of its war materials production base. Central to this was Essen, home of the giant Krupps organisation, and this city was selected to host the opening round of the campaign on the 5/6th. Four Hundred and forty aircraft took off for this momentous occasion, 35 Squadron contributing just six Halifaxes, one of which was among an unusually high number of early returns with technical difficulties. These combined with others bombing alternative targets, reduced the numbers reaching Essen to 362, but they were able to deliver an outstandingly accurate attack on this hitherto elusive city. Leading the squadron contingent in W7779 was S/L Dean, and the other aircraft and pilots were; W7907 F/L Reeve, W7804 F/L Malkin, W7837 F/O Sale, and W7881 F/S Hickson. All returned safely to Graveley following this first genuinely

successful operation against this target, and the tally of destruction included over three thousand houses, and some useful damage to fifty buildings within the Krupps works.

It would be a full week before the next Ruhr operation took place, again with Essen as the target, and in the meantime, Harris switched his force to southern Germany. Nuremberg was raided on the 8/9th with good results, despite many bombs missing the city altogether. Unusually for an operation to this destination, losses amounted to only eight aircraft, but among them was W7851, which was shot down by a nightfighter over France, and F/O Brown died with two of his crew, while one of the survivors evaded capture. A similar reasonably successful outcome attended an attack on Munich on the 9/10th, but Stuttgart escaped serious damage two nights later, when most of the bombing fell in open country. On the credit side, 35 Squadron had posted missing just four crews since the start of the year, and March would continue to be a good month in that regard. Round two of the Ruhr campaign took more than four hundred aircraft back to Essen on the 12/13th, where the Krupps works found itself in the centre of the bombing area, and while the overall number of buildings destroyed in the city was markedly less than a week earlier, Krupps sustained substantially more damage. A lull in main force operations kept the crews at home until the 22/23rd, when St Nazaire received a heavy blow, and this was followed by Duisburg on the 26/27th, an operation which failed largely because of technical problems afflicting the Oboe Mosquito contingent. There was disappointment also at Berlin on the succeeding night, where damage was light, fortunately though, at a low cost in crews. 35 Squadron posted missing F/O Espy and his crew in W7907, which was a victim of flak over Germany, and there were no survivors. The operation was repeated on the 29/30th, and once more the results did not match the effort, particularly in view of the failure to return of twenty one aircraft.

April would prove to be the least rewarding month of the current campaign, largely because a high proportion of the operations would be mounted against targets beyond the range of Oboe in other regions of Germany. It began, however, with another successful raid on Essen on the 3/4th, as Oboe continued to demonstrate its worth and potential, but this was followed by three disappointing raids on Kiel, Duisburg and Frankfurt over the next six nights, the last named accounting for F/O Lambert and his crew, whose DT806 fell to a nightfighter over France on the way to the target, with only the pilot and two others surviving. The creep-back phenomenon produced some good industrial destruction at Stuttgart on the 14/15th, but the operation cost the squadron another crew, that of P/O Wilkes in HR678, which was downed by a nightfighter, killing the pilot and three others. A double strike was mounted on the 16/17th, the main one an attempt by over three hundred Lancasters and Halifaxes to knock out the Skoda armaments works at distant Pilsen in Czechoslovakia, while a predominately Wellington and Stirling force carried out a diversionary raid on Mannheim. The former was a dismal failure, which cost a massive thirty six aircraft, split evenly between the two types, and included F/L Owen's W7873. He and two of his crew survived the destruction of their Halifax by flak, and his two colleagues evaded capture. One of the few major successes of April, came at another long range target, Stettin, on the 20/21st. Accurate Pathfinder marking was exploited by the main force, and the centre of this Baltic port was devastated. A partially successful attack was delivered on Duisburg on the 26/27th, and further useful damage was inflicted on Essen on the last night of the month, this concluding a generally disappointing

phase of operations. May, however, would see new records set, and bring some outstanding successes. On the 1st, G/C Robinson relinquished his command of the squadron on his appointment to the post of station commander at Graveley, thus continuing an association with the squadron which would ultimately lead to his untimely end. The new commanding officer was W/C Dean, who was promoted from flight commander.

May's account opened with the largest non-1,000 raid to date, of 596 aircraft, heading for Dortmund on the 4/5th. Some bomb loads were lured away by a decoy fire, but the central and northern districts were heavily damaged, and the death toll of 690 people was the largest to date at a German target, although this record would stand for less than two weeks. It was not a one-sided affair, however, the defences claiming thirty one aircraft, none of which were from Graveley. The squadron did lose two aircraft, as events turned out, both on their return to England. W7887 arrived home low on fuel, and was successfully abandoned by Sgt Williams and his crew over Northamptonshire, and they all arrived safely on the ground. Less fortunate was the squadron's other crew in DT489, which crashed in Huntingdonshire, killing Sgt Cobb and five others. After so many close shaves over the preceding twelve months, Duisburg finally succumbed to an accurate and concentrated attack on the 12/13th. Over fifteen hundred of its buildings were destroyed, and an enormous tonnage of shipping was sunk or damaged in the port. DT801 did not reach the target, having been despatched by a nightfighter on the way. Two of the crew were killed, and a further four fell into enemy hands, but the pilot, F/L Julian Sale, evaded capture, and returned to the squadron to fight another day. Another squadron aircraft which failed to reach its target was HR736, which was destroyed by fire on the 13th, while being bombed up for another go at the Skoda works at Pilsen that night. In the event, the operation failed again, while the bulk of the main force went to Bochum and fared better, producing a reasonable degree of damage. 617 Squadron went into the history books on the 16/17th, with its epic attack on the dams, and this operation produced a new record death toll of over 1,200 people, sadly, many of them forced foreign workers.

By the time that briefings took place for the next major operation, the main force crews had enjoyed a nine day break. It was to be another record breaking night, with Dortmund again receiving the dubious honour of hosting the largest non-1,000 force to date, this time of 826 aircraft. It was a devastating success, which destroyed around two thousand buildings, although at thirty eight aircraft, the cost was high, and it began a spate of losses for 35 Squadron, which would see it lose seven aircraft and crews in the space of eight nights. DT488 failed to return from this operation, having crashed in Germany, with just one survivor from the crew of F/O Harvey. Two nights later, the pilot, Sgt Hall, was the sole survivor of his crew, after W7825 was brought down in the target area while participating in an ineffective attack on Düsseldorf. Another two nights, another operation, and another loss, this time HR795, the victim of a nightfighter, which left Sgt Ayres and five of his crew dead during a moderately successful raid on Essen. One of the most successful operations of the entire campaign was launched on the 29/30th, on the twin towns of Barmen and Elberfeld, known jointly as Wuppertal. This night saw the Barmen half all but destroyed by fire, and an estimated 3,400 people lost their lives, far surpassing the previous highest death toll in a German city target. The attackers also paid the high price of thirty three missing aircraft, and

four empty dispersals at Graveley on the following morning, told their own grim tale of 35 Squadron's fortunes. W7876, DT804, HR793 and HR833 all fell to nightfighters over Belgium and Holland, but there were at least survivors from each crew. Sgt Sargent and four of his crew parachuted into captivity from the first mentioned, while just one man from the crew of F/O Hoos enjoyed a similar fate from the second. S/L Johnson and one other were killed in the third, their six colleagues falling into enemy hands, and finally, W/O Lee died with four of his crew. It was a sobering end to a month which had cost the squadron eleven aircraft and nine crews, figures which would be repeated in the month which lay ahead.

The first ten days of June brought a welcome rest for the hard pressed crews, who were not aloft once more until the 11/12th, for a maximum effort operation to Düsseldorf. Extensive damage was caused to the central districts, and it might have been greater but for a misplaced marker, which lured some crews into bombing open country. While this was in progress, an all 8 Group raid went ahead at Münster, relying entirely on H2s for guidance. The results were encouraging, and significant damage resulted, but almost 7% of the small force failed to return, among them two Halifaxes, both of which were from 35 Squadron. DT805 was shot down by a nightfighter over Holland, and all but the pilot, F/L Howe, survived as POWs. JB785 also fell to a nightfighter, and took P/O Herbert and four of his crew to their deaths. Successful operations followed to Bochum on the 12/13th, where the town centre was heavily bombed, Oberhausen two nights later, which was equally effective, but cost seventeen Lancasters, and Cologne on the 16/17th, although bombing here was scattered, and only half of the force attacked in the face of bad weather.

A series of five raids in eight nights concluded the month, beginning at Krefeld on the 21/22nd. Seven hundred aircraft took off, and delivered a highly concentrated attack, which devastated the central districts and destroyed over five and a half thousand houses. The conditions were ideal for nightfighters, however, and they exploited their opportunity to share in a total of forty four bombers shot down, and 35 Squadron suffered its worst night of the war. F/O Clarke's W7878 crashed off the Dutch coast with no survivors, and BB361 also went into the sea, taking with it Sgt Andrews and his crew. F/L Lane and crew were more fortunate, all surviving the destruction by a nightfighter of HR685, albeit as guests of the Reich. Two further aircraft were despatched by nightfighters over Holland, HR799 and HR848, P/O Hickson and five of his crew trudging off to prison camp from the former, along with F/S Quigly and two of his crew from the latter. BB361 lost an engine to flak while outbound, but continued on to the target and bombed. A second engine failed over the sea on return, and a controlled ditching off the Norfolk coast had a happy outcome, when Sgt Milne and all the others on board were picked up safely.

On the following night it was the turn of Mülheim to suffer grievously under the rain of bombs, and eleven hundred houses were destroyed, while a further twelve thousand suffered varying degrees of damage. Another night of heavy losses saw thirty five aircraft fail to return, the majority of them Halifaxes and Stirlings. After a night's rest, Elberfeld suffered the same fate as its twin Barmen, as the eastern half of Wuppertal was pounded to destruction. Around 94% of its built-up area was reduced to rubble, this amounting to three thousand houses destroyed, and eighteen hundred people lost their lives. Never-the-less, the

attackers were again made to pay, and this time thirty four aircraft failed to make it back home. The run of successes came to an end at the important oil town of Gelsenkirchen on the 25/26th, when bombs were sprayed over a wide area of the Ruhr, and the Command paid heavily for its efforts, losing another thirty aircraft. The final major raid of June was to Cologne on the 28/29th, the first of a three raid series spanning the turn of the month, and it developed into the city's most devastating ordeal of the war. Over four thousand people lost their lives on this night, and a further 230,000 lost their homes amid the destruction of 6,400 buildings. Among the twenty five failures to return were the squadron's HR812 and HR850, the former shot down by a nightfighter, and from which Sgt Beveridge and three of his crew escaped with their lives, and the latter falling to flak, with the pilot, F/L Cobb, alone paying the ultimate price, while his crew became POWs. The outstanding success of this latest five raid series was marred by a total loss of 168 aircraft, of which eight were from Graveley, but July would bring an end to the Ruhr campaign, and the crews would not be sad at bidding farewell to "Happy Valley".

Cologne, having closed the June account, opened that of July, and again suffered severe damage under the bombs of a six hundred strong heavy force. HR673 failed to reach the target, having fallen to a nightfighter over Belgium on the way, and Sgt Milne and his crew were killed. On the 8/9th, a smaller force of Lancasters returned to complete a highly successful series against this much bombed city, and the final tally amounted to eleven thousand buildings destroyed, 5,500 people killed and a further 350,000 rendered homeless. Fortunes changed on the following night, when Gelsenkirchen escaped serious damage at the expense of Bochum and Wattenscheid, which received most of the bombs intended for their neighbour. Aachen was the target for the 13/14th, and within minutes of the start of the attack, the town was a sea of flames. Halifaxes made up the bulk of the force, and fifteen of these were among the twenty aircraft which failed to return. HR819 was 35 Squadron's single representative among the missing, and only one man survived from the crew of F/S Saywell.

Although two more operations to the region would be mounted at the end of the month, the Ruhr campaign had now effectively run its course, and despite its heavy losses, was a huge success, upon which Harris could look back with some genuine satisfaction. Vast areas of Germany's industrial heartland lay in ruins, with the prospect of more of the same in the future. The aircraft factories were more than keeping pace with bomber losses, and new crews were streaming in from the Empire Training schools in America, Canada, Australia and South Africa. With confidence high in the ability of his Command to deliver a knockout blow almost wherever he chose, Harris now embarked on a new offensive, a short, sharp series of raids, with the aim of erasing from the map a major German city, and thereby to rock the very foundations of German morale. Hamburg, as Germany's second city, had obvious political significance, and its status as an industrial centre, particularly of U-Boat production, was undeniable. However, there were other considerations of an operational nature, which made it an ideal choice to host Operation Gomorrah. Firstly, it lay close to a coastline to aid navigation, could be easily reached during the few hours of darkness afforded by mid-summer, and beyond the range of Oboe, which had proved so decisive at the Ruhr, boasted the wide River Elbe to provide a strong H2s signature for the navigators high above.

Launched on the night of the 24/25th, it was attended by the first operational use of "Window", the tin-foil backed strips of paper, designed to blind the enemy nightfighter, gun-laying and searchlight radar. A force of almost eight hundred aircraft took off as the clock approached 22.00 hours, 35 Squadron sustaining an immediate casualty, when HR803 suffered engine failure soon after take off and crashed, F/S Matich and crew walking away unscathed. The bomber stream approached Hamburg from the north-west, and despite misplaced markers and a pronounced creep-back, a swathe of destruction was cut from the city centre back along the line of flight across the north-western districts, and out into open country, where a proportion of the bombing was wasted. Never-the-less, much destruction resulted and fifteen hundred people lost their lives, and the efficacy of Window was apparent from the lack of combats during the outward flight, and the complete absence of the normally efficient co-ordination between the searchlights and flak batteries. A very modest twelve Bomber Command aircraft were lost, some of these while off course during the outward flight, and outside the protection of the bomber stream and Window screen. Essen was targeted on the following night to take advantage of the body blow dealt to the enemy's defensive system by Window. It was another huge success, which caused particularly heavy damage to the Krupps works. Losses amounted to twenty six aircraft, among which was 35 Squadron's JB787, which was brought down by flak in the target area, delivering F/O Milmine and two of his crew into enemy hands.

After a night's rest a force of over seven hundred aircraft returned to Hamburg, and what followed was both unprecedented and unforeseeable. As on the first raid, the marking was slightly misplaced, and was concentrated into the densely populated working class districts of Hamm, Hammerbrook and Borgfeld. The main force crews followed up with unaccustomed accuracy and scarcely any creep-back, and the resultant fires quickly began to join together in the tinderbox conditions brought about by a spell of unusually hot and dry weather. A gigantic conflagration developed, which sucked in oxygen from surrounding areas at hurricane speeds to feed its voracious appetite, uprooting trees and flinging them into the inferno, where temperatures reached a thousand degrees celcius. This was the first recorded example of the meteorological event which became known as a firestorm, and which on this night, the 27/28th, claimed the lives of over forty thousand people. Losses from this operation reached seventeen heavy bombers, still a low figure for a German target, and the squadron's contingent all returned safely. By the time of the third Hamburg raid on the 29/30th, a mass exodus had taken place, and although many bombs fell into the already devastated firestorm area, another heavy blow was struck against other residential districts. The losses went up to twenty eight aircraft, and this included two Halifaxes from 35 Squadron. A combination of flak and a nightfighter accounted for the crew of F/L Pexton in HR851, from which two survived, and a nightfighter alone despatched HR906, and F/S Spooner died with five of his crew. Following a successful attack on Remscheid on the 30/31st, which actually brought down the final curtain on the Ruhr offensive, the fourth and last raid of Operation Gomorrah took place on the 2/3rd of August. It was ruined by violent electrical storms encountered during the outward flight, and many aircraft failed to reach the target, the crews jettisoning their bombs over Germany or the North Sea. Little new damage resulted at Hamburg, and thirty aircraft failed to make it home. One of them was the squadron's HR863, which crashed in Germany, killing Sgt Solomon and five others. During the campaign, the squadron

despatched eighty six sorties, seventy one of which attacked the primary target, and three failed to return. (The Battle of Hamburg Martin Middlebrook).

Italy was now teetering on the brink of capitulation, and Bomber Command was invited to nudge it over with a mini campaign starting on the 7/8th. 1, 5 and 8 Groups attacked Genoa, Milan and Turin on this night, but it was an all Lancaster effort, and 35 Squadron therefore was not included. Before it got involved, it contributed to raids on Mannheim and Nuremberg on the 9/10th and 10/11th. Both operations were successful, but the former cost the squadron HR908, from which F/S Brown and two of his crew escaped with their lives, and the latter accounted for HR861, F/L Ware and three of his crew also surviving. Milan was the destination for almost five hundred Lancasters and Halifaxes on the 12/13th, while elements of 3 and 8 Groups went to Turin. Both operations were considered successful, and an all Lancaster force returned to Milan on the 14/15th and 15/16th. The offensive against Italy concluded on the 16/17th, a smallish raid by 3 and 8 Groups on Turin, from which S/L Haggarty and his crew were posted missing in HR880, and only two men survived. Some of the Stirling contingent was diverted on return from this operation, and many of them were unable to return to their stations on the 17th in time to be made ready for the night's highly important undertaking.

Since the very early days of the war, intelligence had been filtering through regarding German research into rocketry. Little credence was initially given to such reports, but by now, and in the face of stubborn scepticism on the part of Churchill's chief scientific advisor, Professor Lindemann, or Lord Cherwell as he became, photographic reconnaissance had provided incontrovertible proof of the existence of the rocket programme. Even when presented with a photograph of a V-2 taken by a PRU Mosquito in June 1943, Lindemann was able to put forward an alternative explanation, and it required the combined urgings of Duncan Sandys and the brilliant scientist Dr R V Jones to convince Churchill of the need to act at the earliest possible opportunity, and this arose on the night of the 17/18th.

The plan called for three separate aiming points to be attacked, the housing estate, the factory buildings and the experimental centre, each assigned to a specific wave of bombers, with the Pathfinders tasked with the responsibility of shifting the point of attack accordingly. 35 Squadron's contribution to the 596 strong force was ten Halifaxes, led by S/L Cranswick in HR926. Cranswick's career as a bomber pilot was probably unsurpassed, and more will be said of him later. The operation was under the overall control of 83 Squadron's G/C Searby, who would act as Master of Ceremonies, a role pioneered by Gibson at the Dams, and he would remain in the target area until the last possible minute. A diversionary spoof operation by eight Mosquitos of 8 Group's 139 Squadron at Berlin was designed to draw off the nightfighters, and give the attackers a clear run at their respective targets. The initial marking of the housing estate went awry, and the markers fell more than a mile beyond their intended position, and onto the forced workers camp at Trassenheide. Many of the early 3 and 4 Group bomb loads cascaded among the wooden barracks, inflicting grievous casualties on the friendly foreign nationals who were trapped inside. Once rectified, however, the bombing dealt effectively with the housing area, and a number of important members of the research team were killed. 1 Group hit the factory as briefed, and it was when the 5 and 6 Group crews

were in the target area attempting to bomb the experimental site, that the nightfighters belatedly arrived from Berlin, and they proceeded to take a heavy toll of bombers both in the skies above Peenemünde, and on the route home towards Denmark. All of 35 Squadron's aircraft reached and bombed the target, but HR862 fell to flak over Peenemünde, and F/S Raggett and four of his crew lost their lives. This was just one of forty failures to return, but at least sufficient damage had been visited upon the target to delay the development programme of the V-2 by a number of weeks, and ultimately to force the testing of the weapon to be withdrawn eastwards into Poland.

It was becoming an expensive month for 35 Squadron, and matters would become worse with the start of a new campaign, which began on the 23/24th. Harris had long believed that Berlin held the key to ultimate victory. As the seat and symbol of Nazi government, its destruction, in his opinion, would do more damage to civilian morale than that of any other single target. With the assistance of the American 8th Air Force, he had stated that he could "wreck Berlin from end to end", and bring an early conclusion to the war, without the need for the kind of protracted and bloody land campaign that he had personally witnessed during the Great War. There was never the slightest chance of enlisting the Americans, however, as they were committed to a land invasion, but undaunted as ever, Harris determined to go to Berlin alone, in a campaign which, with an autumn break, would drag on until spring of the following year, and test his crews' resolve to the absolute limit. Over seven hundred aircraft took off for the Capital on this first night, and delivered an attack which fell south of the intended city centre aiming point, and many bombs missed Berlin altogether. Those which found the mark, however, inflicted substantial industrial and residential damage in the southern districts, but at a high price in the face of a spirited defence. A massive fifty six aircraft were lost, the largest number to date, and 35 Squadron was particularly badly afflicted. HR846 and HR865 both fell victim to nightfighters, the former over Berlin, and the latter on the way there. Remarkably, both pilots, F/S Williams and P/O Hahey, and all but two of their crew members survived as POWs. Not so fortunate were the occupants of F/L Webster's HR928, which was shot down by a nightfighter near Berlin, with the loss of all on board. G/C Robinson, the station commander at Graveley, and twice formerly commanding officer of the squadron, had chosen to fly on the operation with this crew, and the loss of such a popular figure was a sad blow to all at Graveley. Finally, JB786 crashed in the target area, and F/S Arter and two of his crew perished.

A disappointing attack fell on Nuremberg on the 27/28th, without the participation of the squadron's HR914, which, having suffered engine failure shortly after take-off, crash-landed on return to base. Fortunately, the crew of F/O Jones emerged from the wreck none the worse for their experience. Before the next Berlin raid was launched on the last night of the month, the twin towns of Mönchengladbach and Rheydt were subjected to a heavy assault, which left both of them extensively damaged. The Berlin operation was an expensive failure, the superficial damage not commensurate with the effort of launching over six hundred aircraft, and the loss of forty seven of them. The squadron posted missing the crew of S/L Surtees in HR878, which crashed in Holland, and he and one other became guests of the Reich, while the remaining survivor evaded capture. This operation brought to an end a period of sustained

losses for the squadron, which stretched back to May, and it would not be until the end of September, that it would once more be necessary to post missing a crew.

In the meantime, operations continued, with Berlin as the target without a Halifax contribution on the 3/4th, and this was moderately effective, and drew the curtain on the campaign for the time being. The twin cities of Mannheim and Ludwigshafen astride the Rhein in southern Germany were attacked on the 5/6th, and this was another outstanding success, which laid waste to over a thousands buildings at each location. Munich followed on the 6/7th, but bombing was conducted on estimated positions, and was scattered over mostly western and southern districts. A series of operations against French targets began on the 8/9th, with the bombing of heavy gun emplacements near the small coastal resort town of Le Portel. This was the final phase of Operation Starkey, a rehearsal for invasion which had begun on the 16th of August, and which was intended to deceive the enemy into believing that the invasion was imminent. The marking of the batteries codenamed Religion and Andante was conducted by Oboe Mosquitos of 105 and 109 Squadrons, with Halifaxes from 35 and 405 Squadrons in support. The main force was drawn from 3 Group Stirling squadrons, with Wellingtons from the training units of 91 and 93 Groups. Much confusion surrounded the marking, which was conducted in two phases, and the subsequent bombing was inaccurate, and caused massive destruction to the town of Le Portel. (For a detailed analysis of this operation, see the excellent book, *The Starkey Sacrifice*, by Michael Cumming, published by Sutton). The 15/16th was devoted to a highly accurate attack by 3, 4, 6 and 8 Groups on the Dunlop Rubber factory at Montlucon in central France, for which 35 Squadron's W/C Dean acted as Master Bomber. The same Groups went to Modane in southern France on the 16/17th to attack railway yards on the important route to Italy, but their location in a steep valley made marking and bombing difficult, and the operation failed. Hanover was selected for a four raid series over the next month, beginning on the 22/23rd, and it would prove to be a difficult and expensive nut to crack. This first attempt suffered from stronger than forecast winds, and the bombing was concentrated some miles from the city centre. It was the trip to the same target on the 27/28th which cost the squadron its next crew, that of the recently commissioned P/O Matich, who had survived the take-off crash when bound for the first Hamburg raid in July. Good fortune remained with the pilot, however, after HR907 was shot down by a nightfighter near the target, and he evaded capture, while four other members of his crew remained on extended leave in a POW camp. The month closed with a punishing assault on Bochum on the 29/30th, and this preceded a hectic first eight nights of October, particularly for the Lancaster squadrons.

It began with the Halifaxes staying at home, while Lancasters raided Hagen on the 1/2nd and Munich on the 2/3rd. The Halifaxes returned to the fray at Kassel, which was attacked with a degree of success on the 3/4th, and Frankfurt reeled under a heavy blow on the following night. HX148 was hit by flak during the course of this operation, and crashed in Kent on return. There were no fatalities among the crew of F/L Wood, although some crew members sustained injuries. A similar incident also had non-fatal consequences four nights later, when HR777 returned with nightfighter damage from Bremen, an operation which was laid on as a diversion for the night's main raid on Hanover. This time, a crash-landing occurred in Norfolk, and all of F/O Muller's crew were injured to some extent. The attack on Hanover was

a massive success, in which almost four thousand buildings were destroyed, and a further thirty thousand suffered damage to some extent. Twenty four hours earlier, an all Lancaster force had headed for Stuttgart, bolstered by the presence for the first time of 101 Squadron's ABC equipped Lancasters, which would perform a radio counter measures role, while still carrying a full bomb load. The final raid on Hanover was delivered by an all Lancaster force on the 18/19th, and was another disappointment. It preceded by two days an operation in atrocious weather conditions against Leipzig again by Lancasters, and the results were inconclusive. Kassel received its second major raid of the month on the 22/23rd, and this time the five hundred strong force unleashed a firestorm. Approximately 53,000 apartments were either destroyed or damaged, and over six thousand people were killed, but the cost in bombers, at forty three, was high. Flak was responsible for the demise of P/O Durrant's HR926, and he survived with four of his crew, albeit as POWs.

For the next eleven nights, the crews of the heavy brigade enjoyed a long and welcome break from operations. Although they didn't know it, preparations were in hand to resume the Berlin offensive, now that the long dark nights of winter had returned. The rest period was broken by a heavy and concentrated attack on Düsseldorf on the 3/4th of November, which left in its wake extensive industrial and residential damage. HR866 crashed on landing on return, but P/O Holmes and his crew walked away. Minor operations occupied the next week, and it was not until the 11/12th that the Halifaxes next took to the air, attacking railway yards and installations at Cannes, to cut the main railway into Italy. The operation failed to achieve its aims, and three of the four missing Halifaxes were from Graveley. HR929 lost an engine while outbound, but F/O Petrie-Andrews continued on to the target to bomb, before attempting in vain to reach Sardinia. Forced to ditch the Halifax, he and his crew were rescued. The remaining two squadron aircraft were shot down over France by nightfighters on the way home. F/L Dallin and five of his crew survived the destruction of HR798, two of them evading capture, but P/O Daniel was the sole survivor of his eight man crew in HR985, and he also ultimately evaded.

On the 17th, W/C Dean completed his tour as commanding officer, and was appointed to command the PFF Navigation Training Unit, although, like his predecessor, he would return. He was replaced by W/C Daniels, one of the Command's characters, whose operational career had begun in September 1940 as a Whitley pilot with 58 Squadron. By 1942, he was a Squadron Leader, and completed a second tour with fellow PFF founder members, 83 Squadron. That night, 8 Group sent a force to Ludwigshafen, and all except for one Lancaster returned safely. On the following night, the road to Berlin was rejoined by an all Lancaster heavy force, while a predominately Halifax and Stirling contingent carried out a diversion at Mannheim and Ludwigshafen. Some useful industrial damage contributed to a moderately successful raid at the latter, and the diversion appeared to draw off sufficient nightfighters to produce lower than normal losses at the Capital. F/L Baker and his crew failed to return from Mannheim in HR676, and there were no survivors. A maximum effort raid on Berlin on the 22/23rd destroyed three thousand houses, and was the most successful of the war against the "Big City". It proved to be the swansong for the Stirling over Germany, and from now on it would be relegated to useful, if secondary duties. A follow up by a smaller predominately Lancaster force at the Capital on the next night was aided by the glow of fires still burning

beneath the clouds, and it was also extremely effective. Halifaxes made the major contribution to an operation to Frankfurt on the 25/26th, but scattered bombing reduced the effectiveness of this raid, from which eleven Halifaxes and one Lancaster failed to return. The squadron posted missing the crew of LW326 which crashed in Belgium, P/O Lander and four of his crew surviving, and falling into enemy hands. During the course of the month, the vastly improved Hercules powered Mk III Halifaxes began to arrive at Graveley, and they would be ready for operations by mid December.

Berlin opened the December account on the 2/3rd, its fifth raid since the resumption of the campaign. Fifteen Pathfinder Halifaxes joined the Lancasters and Mosquitos, which, more by luck than judgement, scored with some useful industrial damage to important war industry factories, but paid a high price in missing aircraft and crews. The dispersals at Graveley of HR876 and HX167 stood empty next morning, the crew of the former, captained by F/S Stinson, dying in its wreckage in Germany, while Norwegian 1st Lt Hoverstad, alone of his crew, paid the ultimate price in allowing his crew to abandon the stricken aircraft, and all fell into the waiting arms of their captors. Leipzig underwent its worst night of the war at the hands of a mixed force of five hundred aircraft on the 3/4th, and suffered a catalogue of industrial and residential damage. Twenty four bombers were lost, including LW343, which crashed in Holland, F/O Cheal and two of his crew escaping with their lives. A further period of main force inactivity followed, which was broken for the Lancaster squadrons by another trip to Berlin on the 16/17th. The problems began in earnest when the crews returned to find their airfields fog-bound, and twenty nine Lancasters crashed or were abandoned as their crews sought in vain for somewhere to land, and around 150 crewmen were killed.

The rest period continued for the Halifax crews until the 20/21st, when Frankfurt was selected to receive a visit from over six hundred heavy bombers. Various factors caused the bombing to go astray, and only moderate success was gained. This was the night on which 35 Squadron took Mk III Halifaxes to war for the first time, and HX270 was the first of them to go missing, crashing in Belgium with four survivors from the crew of F/L Wright. A fire broke out in HX328 as it approached Graveley on return, and but for the pilot, S/L Sale, and one other, whose parachute had been consumed, the crew abandoned the Halifax, and came safely to earth. Having landed, the two remaining men scrambled clear, and watched the aircraft go up. Only seven Halifaxes accompanied a large Lancaster force to Berlin on the 23/24th, and the operation was a disappointment, but there were no losses to report from Graveley. The year came to an end with another Berlin trip on the 29/30th, the first of three over an unprecedented five night period spanning the turn of the year, and some damage was inflicted, but not in proportion to the effort expended by a force totalling nearly seven hundred aircraft. HR986 was one of twenty to go missing, and F/O Williams and five of his crew died in the crash in Germany.

Generally speaking, 1943 had been a year of major gains for the Command. Advances in technology and target marking techniques had led to an increase in accuracy and concentration, and few targets had escaped lightly, even when matters did not go according to plan. The ever-resourceful Luftwaffe, however, had quickly recovered from the effects of Window, and emerged a leaner, more efficient and deadlier force, and Bomber Command

would never find an answer to that particular problem. As far as the crews were concerned, the New Year promised more of the same, and the next three months would see morale at its lowest ebb as the Berlin campaign ground on.

1944

There is little doubt that the crews of Bomber Command and the citizens of Berlin shared a common hope for the New Year, that Berlin would cease to be the focus of attention. The Berliners demonstrated the same resilience and strength of character as had their counterparts in London during the blitz of 1944, and their pride in being Berliners first and Germans second shone cheerfully through the onslaught. Banners appeared in the ruined city streets proclaiming, "You may break our walls, but not our hearts", and the most popular song of the time, "After every December comes always a May", was played endlessly over the radio, hinting at a change of fortunes for the beleaguered populace with the onset of spring. As events turned out, Berliners would be spared from the attentions of Bomber Command's heavy brigade by then, but both camps would have to wait a considerable time before their wishes were fulfilled. Before New Year's Day was over, the bomber force was already winging its way towards the Capital, arriving overhead in the early hours of the 2nd. It was an all Lancaster effort, which failed to inflict more than slight superficial damage, and a return on the following night, which included a contribution from 35 Squadron, fared little better. Three Berlin trips in five nights was asking a lot of the crews, but there would now be a gap of over two weeks before the "Big City" again appeared as "the target for tonight".

The distant port of Stettin had that honour on the 5/6th, when just ten of the squadron's Halifaxes accompanied a large Lancaster force, and Mosquitos laid on a diversion at Berlin. A successful operation ensued, which added to the usual catalogue of damage by sinking ships in the harbour. The squadron posted missing the crews in HX160 and JP123, S/L Hutton and three of his crew surviving when the former blew up over the target, but just one man escaped with his life from the crew of F/L Appleby in the latter. A harsh winter helped to keep the main force on the ground until mid month, when Brunswick was targeted by almost five hundred Lancasters, which had two 35 Squadron Halifaxes for company. The operation was a complete failure, compounded by the loss of thirty eight Lancasters, and it was followed by a further six nights of inactivity, before it was time to head once more to the Reich's Capital. In the meantime, HX169 crashed in Huntingdonshire during a training flight on the 19th, while in the hands of F/S Blakey, but no serious injuries resulted. It was a force of over seven hundred aircraft which made the return to the Capital on the 20/21st, delivering an attack which fell mainly in the less ravaged eastern districts, and into outlying communities beyond. The defences hit back and brought down thirty five bombers, although none from Graveley.

The next night took a force of six hundred aircraft to Magdeburg, while a small Lancaster/Mosquito diversionary raid went ahead at Berlin. Some nightfighters infiltrated the bomber stream before it crossed the north German coast, and remained in contact all the way to the target. A lot of earth was turned outside Magdeburg, but few bombs fell within the city, and the Command suffered its heaviest loss to date of fifty seven aircraft. The Halifaxes

suffered disproportionately high casualties, and 35 Squadron lost three of them to the defences. HX317 was shot down by a nightfighter in the target area, and five of F/S Hill's crew survived as POWs, while the pilot and one other died. HX324 also fell to a nightfighter over Germany, killing S/L Jagger and three of his crew. LV787 was lost without trace with the crew of F/O Bales, and to compound these losses, F/O Petch's LW323 was so badly damaged by a nightfighter in an engagement which resulted in a wounded rear gunner, that it was deemed to be beyond repair after landing at Woodbridge. The month concluded with an unprecedented three Berlin raids in four nights, beginning on the 27/28th, from which Halifaxes were excluded. It was a moderately successful operation, which was improved upon on the following night, when Halifaxes made up over a third of the more than six hundred aircraft involved. Despite the almost two to one numerical superiority of the Lancaster contingent, the Halifaxes suffered a higher casualty rate, and it would not be long before the less efficient versions of the type were withdrawn from operations over Germany, as the Stirlings had been in November. In contrast, only one Halifax was lost at Berlin on the 30/31st, compared with thirty two Lancasters, in return for which, much further destruction was left behind by the retreating bombers. There is no question that this most recent series had sorely wounded Berlin, but it remained a functioning city, and the seat of power, and there were no signs of its imminent collapse.

The weather again helped to keep the main force at home for the first two weeks of February, but when it next took to the air, on the 15/16th, it broke all previous records. The largest non-1,000 force to date, almost nine hundred aircraft, which included for the first time three hundred Halifaxes, set off for what would be the penultimate raid on Berlin of the war by Bomber Command heavies. Carried in the bomb bays was a record 2,600 tons of bombs, much of which was put to its intended use within the city limits, particularly in central and south-western districts. It was another night of heavy losses, however, forty three aircraft failing to return, among them the squadron's LV861, in which P/O Blundell and three of his crew lost their lives, while three of the survivors evaded capture. HR984 missed the carnage by crashing on take-off, but F/O Barnes and his crew were able to walk away. Unhappily, a disaster of unprecedented proportions was just around the corner, and it would mean more empty dispersals at Graveley.

Over eight hundred aircraft took off for Leipzig on the 19/20th, and they were met by nightfighters at the Dutch coast. The two forces remained in contact all the way to the target, where wrongly forecast winds had led to some aircraft arriving too early, and being forced to orbit awaiting the Pathfinder markers. About twenty of these were shot down by the local flak, and when the Pathfinders did arrive, they encountered thick cloud, and had to use skymarking, the least reliable method. This led to scattered bombing and indeterminate results, and the defences enjoyed their most successful night to date. When all the aircraft which were going to return home had done so, there was a massive shortfall of seventy eight, and the Halifaxes again suffered a disproportionately high percentage loss rate. As a result of this, the Mk IIs and Vs were withdrawn from further operations over Germany, and this would temporarily reduce 4 Group's contribution to the offensive. 35 Squadron posted missing four crews, among them that of the highly experienced, and in 35 Squadron circles, legendary S/L Sale in HX325. This Halifax was shot down by a nightfighter, and although six

men survived its destruction, S/L Sale was wounded in the engagement. He had undergone a similar experience in May 1943 when bound for Duisburg, following which he evaded capture and returned to the squadron. Sadly, it was not to be on this occasion, and this gallant Canadian succumbed to his wounds a month later. Also missing on this night was LV793, another nightfighter victim, and its destruction resulted in the deaths of F/L McTurk and four of his crew, while the two survivors were marched off to prison camp. Two men survived also from the crew of F/O Jones, when LV834 exploded over Germany, and finally, P/O McAlpine's LV864, was sent crashing by a nightfighter onto German soil, and he and two of his crew lost their lives.

Three more major operations took place over the succeeding week, all to southern Germany, Stuttgart on the 20/21st, which accounted for the squadron's JP121, although F/S Leslie and his crew all survived in enemy hands, Schweinfurt on the 24/25th, and Augsburg on the next night. The last two named raids employed a new tactic, that of splitting the force, and separating the phases by two hours. Although the attack on Schweinfurt was in itself a failure, the second wave of bombers lost 50% fewer aircraft than the first, in an overall loss of thirty three. In compensation, Augsburg suffered a devastating blow and massive fires, which destroyed for ever its historical old centre, and hundreds of years of cultural heritage. These three operations to southern Germany cost the Command a total of sixty three aircraft, but 35 Squadron negotiated the last two without further loss. March was about to bring a change of equipment to the squadron in the form of the Lancaster, making it the 37th operational unit to equip with the type, and the final Halifax operation took the squadron to Stuttgart on the 1/2nd. It was a successful assault, which left extensive damage in central, western and northern districts for the loss of just four aircraft, and all of the squadron's participating crews returned safely. No further operations took place until mid month, which allowed time for the crews to work up on the new aircraft. Having closed the squadron's Halifax account, Stuttgart now opened the squadron's Lancaster account on the 15/16th, and also occasioned its first loss of the type. ND708 failed to return, having been despatched by a nightfighter while homebound over Germany, and four of F/O Ganderton's crew were killed.

Two devastating attacks fell on Frankfurt on the 18/19th and 22/23rd, the former alone resulting in the destruction of or serious damage to six thousand buildings, and following the latter, half of the city was left without electricity, gas and water for a protracted period. It was this operation, though, which cost the squadron ND645 and ND649 and their crews. The former exploded over Germany, flinging S/L Rowe and one other clear, and they were the only survivors. The latter went down near the target, and there were no survivors from the crew of F/S Webb. In-between these operations, on the 20th, the squadron donated its C Flight to help form the latest addition to the Pathfinders, 635 Squadron at Downham Market. The final raid of the Berlin offensive was mounted on the 24/25th by an eight hundred strong force, including fourteen from 35 Squadron. Among the 35 Squadron crew captains winging their way to the Capital as a blind marker illuminator, was S/L E K Cresswell, who as a Pilot Officer, had been on the ill-fated operation in November 1941, which had sealed the fate of Sir Richard Peirse. Now in 1944, he found himself in a bomber stream which was being scattered by unusually strong "jetstream" winds from the north, and this led to a lack of concentration at the target. Although further destruction was inflicted on the Capital, over a

hundred outlying communities also experienced bombs falling on them, and this was something which had been a feature of the entire campaign. The winds drove many of the returning aircraft over heavily defended areas, and the flak batteries enjoyed their most successful night of the war, claiming over two-thirds of the seventy two missing bombers. ND597 was brought down over Germany, and the experienced S/L Fitzgerald was killed with four of his crew. During the campaign, which had begun in August, the squadron participated in thirteen of the nineteen main operations, despatching 196 Halifax and Lancaster sorties, for the loss of nine and one respectively. Remarkably, almost exactly 50% of the sixty seven crewmen in the missing aircraft survived the experience, and this was in marked contrast to the survival rates among the Lancaster units. (The Berlin Raids, Martin Middlebrook). From now on, Berlin would be left to the Mosquitos of 8 Group's Light Night Striking Force, which would continue to harass it in increasing numbers, until Russian troops arrived in its suburbs.

That period which became known as The Battle of Berlin, or more accurately the winter campaign, still had a week to run, and two more major operations for the crews to negotiate. Essen suffered massively at the hands of a large force on the 26/27th for the loss of only nine aircraft, thus continuing the remarkable run of successes at this target since the introduction of Oboe to main force operations a year earlier. The final operation in this phase of Bomber Command's war took place on the 30/31st, and was a standard deep penetration maximum effort raid on Nuremberg, for which almost eight hundred crews were briefed. It departed from normal practice in just one major respect, and this was to prove critical. In place of the usual feints in the route worked out by the Pathfinder planners, a 5 Group inspired alternative was selected, which took the bomber stream in a long straight leg from Belgium across Germany to a point about fifty miles north of the target, from where the final run-in to bomb would commence. This, and a combination of freak meteorological conditions, which included unusually bright moonlight, crystal clear visibility, an absence of the expected cloud at cruising altitude, but a backcloth of white cloud below the aircraft to silhouette them like flies on a tablecloth, and the formation of condensation trails, all served to hand the bomber force on a plate to the waiting nightfighters. All the way from Belgium to the target, aircraft were falling in flames, and more than eighty were shot down on the outward flight. The jetstream winds which had so adversely affected the Berlin raid a week earlier were also present, only this time from the south, and those crews who either failed to notice, or refused to believe the evidence, turned towards Nuremberg from a false position, and many of these bombed Schweinfurt in error. Ninety five aircraft failed to make it home, and 35 Squadron was one of only a handful to suffer no casualties, all of its fourteen Lancasters, led from the front by W/C Daniels, reaching the target and returning.

Now a new offensive beckoned, as preparations got underway for the forthcoming invasion, although the Stirlings and older Halifaxes, which had been withdrawn from operations over Germany, had already begun the systematic destruction of the French railway system in early March. They were now joined by the Lancasters and Mk III Halifaxes, in operations which were in marked contrast to those endured over the winter period. In place of the long slog to Germany on dark, often dirty nights, shorter range hops to France and Belgium became the order of the day in improving weather conditions. They would, however, be equally demanding in their way, and would require of the crews a greater commitment to accuracy to

avoid casualties among friendly civilians. Despite the prohibitive losses of the winter campaign, the Command was in remarkably fine fettle to face its new Challenge, and Harris was in the enviable position of being able to achieve what his predecessor had tried to do but failed, namely to attack multiple targets simultaneously, with forces large enough to make an impact. The numbers of aircraft and crews now available to Harris enabled him to assign targets to individual Groups, to Groups in tandem, or to the Command as a whole, as dictated by operational requirements, and the Pathfinders were to find themselves being shared around, and busier than ever.

A largely Lancaster force went to attack the Lille-Delivrance goods station on the 9/10th, and although inflicting heavy damage on it and rolling stock, the operation sadly caused enormous collateral damage to the town and its inhabitants. Only one aircraft was lost, ND701 of 35 Squadron, from which five of the crew of F/O Bordiss escaped with their lives, one of them evading capture. Also on that night, railway yards were bombed at Villeneuve-St-Georges, and this too resulted in heavy casualties among the nearby civilian population. Five similar targets were attacked on the following night, and this set the pattern for the remainder of the month. While Harris was at the helm, city-busting would never be entirely shelved in favour of other considerations, and Aachen reeled under a heavy blow on the 11/12th, and over fifteen hundred people were killed. Officially from the 14th, the Command became subject to the requirements of SHAEF, and would remain thus shackled until the Allied armies were sweeping towards the German frontier. It was back to railways on the 18/19th, with attacks at four locations, and then came an area attack on Cologne on the 20/21st, which inflicted damage on industrial districts and seven railway sites.

This was the night on which 5 Group tested its new low level visual marking system using Mosquitos, something which was viewed with disdain by 8 Group's elite, and further strained relations between Bennett and Cochrane, possessors of two of the most incisive brains in Bomber Command. Frustrated by the inaccuracy of pathfinder marking during a series of operations against flying bomb sites in the Pas-de-Calais in December and January, W/C Cheshire, formerly of 35 Squadron, and now the commanding officer of 617 Squadron, had developed with S/L Mickey Martin, one of the original Dambusters, a system of marking targets by diving at the aiming point, and releasing spot fires at low level by purely visual reference. The initial trials had been conducted somewhat hairily in a Lancaster, and Cheshire had taken the results to AVM Cochrane, who, ever receptive to new ideas, approved trials in a Mosquito before taking the idea to Harris. Bennett was firmly opposed to low level marking because of the dangers involved, and its efficacy depended on being able to see the ground. Never-the-less, Harris agreed, and 617 Squadron took a number of Mosquitos on charge. The body blow to Bennett came with the transfer to 5 Group of its former 83 and 97 Squadrons to act as the 5 Group illuminator force, along with 627 Squadron to operate in the low level marker role in place of 617 Squadron. The postings took place on the 15th, and it engendered much animosity among the 8 Group crews to their new masters, although those in 5 group, who had always considered themselves to be the elite, considered that they should look upon the move as a promotion.

Düsseldorf received over two thousand tons of bombs on the 22/23rd, and two thousand houses were destroyed, but only some northern districts of Karlsruhe suffered heavy damage two nights later when strong winds were encountered. Essen followed on the 26/27th, a night on which a return was also made to the railway yards at Villeneuve-St-Georges. The 27/28th saw three operations mounted, the largest being directed at Friedrichshafen, which contained important industry, including tank engine and gearbox manufacturing. S/L Cresswell, who was the Master Bomber, arrived late, but remained in the target area after the TIs had burned out, and directed the ensuing bombing. An outstandingly concentrated attack resulted, which dealt a severe blow to tank production, and hit other industrial premises, as well as the town itself, but nightfighters got amongst the bombers and brought down eighteen Lancasters. ND759 was the single 35 Squadron casualty, and this ditched in a lake in southern Germany after two of the crew baled out, one of them failing to survive, while the other fell into enemy hands. The pilot, W/O Peter, evaded capture, and the remainder of the crew were interned in Switzerland, before eventually returning home. On the 30th, S/L Cresswell was the Master Bomber for an attack on railway yards at Acheres, and while awaiting the arrival of the Oboe force, which was late, he made a visual identification of the aiming point. After they arrived and accurately dropped their target indicators, he was able to call in the 4 Group Halifax crews, who plastered the target without inflicting any casualties on nearby civilians.

While 1 and 5 Groups were being mauled by nightfighters at Maily-le-Camp on the 3/4th of May, a force of ninety Lancasters and Mosquitos attacked a Luftwaffe airfield at Montdidier. A successful outcome was marred for the squadron by the loss of ND643 to a nightfighter, and this time there were no survivors from the crew of P/O Elton. One of five small scale operations on the 7/8th was an attack on the airfield at Nantes, for which the squadron provided S/L Cresswell and S/L Chidgey as Master Bomber and Deputy. They performed their tasks efficiently, and the runways and hangars were blasted. An element from the squadron joined a raid on the railway yards at Haine-St-Pierre on the 8/9th, and again results were good. ME620 fell victim to a nightfighter over Holland while homebound, one of nine aircraft missing, and W/O Kemp died with five of his crew, while the sole survivor was successfully fed into the escape line. Railway targets dominated the month until the 21/22nd, when Duisburg was raided for the first time since the Ruhr campaign a year earlier, and on the following night, Dortmund was similarly honoured. Both operations were effective, but the latter cost the squadron ND762 and the crew of F/O Holmes, who survived with two others of the eight men on board.

June brought with it not only D-Day, but also the start of two new campaigns. The month began with an all-out assault on radar installations and coastal batteries, interspersed with the continuation of the Transportation Plan. D-Day Eve found over a thousand aircraft aloft, to bomb ten aiming points associated with coastal defences, and some returning crews were rewarded for their efforts with a sight of the armada of ships ploughing its way sedately across the Channel below. D-Day night was dedicated to communications targets, with nine specific aiming points to occupy another thousand aircraft. It was similar fare for the next two nights, and then came airfields south of the Beachheads on the 9/10th, to prevent their use by the enemy to bring up supplies and reinforcements. S/L Cresswell and F/L Lambert acted as Master Bomber and Deputy at Rennes, and the attack was concluded successfully. A return to

railways on the 10/11th brought attacks at four locations, four more on the 11/12th, and six on the 12/13th. It was on this night that a new oil campaign was opened at Gelsenkirchen by 1, 3 and 8 Groups, and the crews following on the heels of the Oboe marker force bombed initially with pin-point accuracy, and all production at the Nordstern plant was halted for a number of weeks. The first daylight raids since the departure of 2 Group twelve months earlier, took place on the evening of the 14th at Le Havre against E-Boats and other fast marine craft which posed a threat to Allied shipping serving the beachhead. 617 Squadron opened the attack by dropping Tallboys onto the concrete pens, after which 1 Group carried out the main first phase assault. At dusk, 3 Group followed up to complete a highly satisfactory evening's work, and few craft escaped destruction or damage. Later that night, 4, 5 and 8 Groups provided tactical support for the ground forces near Caen, and this would become a fairly regular feature of operations over the next few months. Enemy naval craft at Boulogne received the same treatment at the hands of 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8 Groups on the 15th as those at Le Havre twenty four hours earlier, and elements of 8 Group spent the night supporting attacks on fuel and ammunition dumps and railways.

A second new offensive, this one against flying bomb launching and storage sites in the Pas-de-Calais, began with attacks by elements of 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8 Groups on four locations. Meanwhile, other elements of 1, 4, 6 and 8 Groups continued the oil offensive at Sterkrade-Holten, but produced only a scattered attack in the face of cloud cover which swallowed up the markers, and thirty one aircraft fell victim to flak and nightfighters. 35 Squadron was enjoying a loss free time until the 23/24th, when flying bomb sites were the objective. S/L Ingram was acting as Master Bomber for the Coubronne raid, which was successfully concluded, but ND734 was shot down on the way home, and he and his rear gunner, P/O Weatherill, were killed. Flying bomb sites dominated the remainder of the month, and the first week of July, briefings taking place for two targets for the night of the 4/5th. A predominately 5 Group show at the St-Leu-d'Esserent flying bomb storage site produced accurate bombing, while elements of 1, 6 and 8 Groups went to railway yards at Orleans and Villeneuve-St George. Although both operations were successful, it became a sad night for 35 Squadron, when two of its sixteen Lancasters failed to return from the latter, both of them carrying experienced crews. S/L Alec Cranswick is considered by many to be one of the greatest bomber pilots to emerge during the war. His career began in June 1940 with 218 Squadron, with which he completed his first tour. Rather than be rested, he volunteered for a posting to the Middle East, where he undertook a second tour. Following his return to the UK, and recovery from ill health, he joined 419 Squadron at the end of 1942, before shortly thereafter being posted to 8 Group and 35 Squadron. By July 1943 he was B Flight commander, and he completed his third tour of operations at Frankfurt on the 4/5th of October, with at least ninety six operations to his credit. Following a spell as a staff officer, he returned to 35 Squadron, and flew the first sortie of his fourth tour on the 19/20th of May. Shortly after delivering his markers onto the aiming point from below cloud level, while acting as primary visual marker under S/L Cresswell's direction as Master Bomber, ND846 was hit by flak and broke up, throwing the wireless operator out of the Lancaster, and he alone survived. According to his biographer, this was Cranswick's 107th operation, although Don Bennett credits him with over 140. ND731 also failed to return, and S/L Lambert and three of his crew were killed, one of the four survivors ultimately evading capture.

A major operation was launched by daylight on the evening of the 7th, in support of the land battle raging below in the vicinity of Caen. W/C Daniels performed the Master Bomber role, and over two thousand tons of bombs rained down around the aiming point. Operations were now taking place by day and by night, and great demands were being made on the Pathfinder crews. Almost every operation during the first half of the month involved flying bomb or railway related targets, but before dawn on the 18th, over nine hundred aircraft were despatched to bomb five fortified villages in the vicinity of Caen in support of Operation Goodwood, which was about to be launched by the British Second Army. S/Ls Cresswell and Chidgey were Master Bomber and Deputy for the Manneville raid, and despite the absence of Oboe marking through the failure of a ground station, concentrated bombing was achieved by the main force crews. Oil targets at Wesseling and Scholven-Buer were attacked on the 18/19th, after which production was severely affected at both plants. German cities had enjoyed something of a respite during the previous two months, but this came to an end on the 23/24th, when Kiel was raided by six hundred aircraft, which appeared suddenly from behind an RCM screen, and achieved complete surprise. A three raid series on Stuttgart in the space of five nights began on the 24/25th, and at the end of it, this city's central districts lay in ruins. The first operation resulted in the demise of NE175, and the entire crew of F/L Morton was killed. Never-the-less, 35 Squadron's losses were consistently lower than most, and would continue to be so. On the 25th, W/C Daniels concluded his tour as commanding officer, and the squadron welcomed back W/C Dean, following his spell at the PFF Navigation Training Unit.

Only one 35 Squadron aircraft failed to return during August, a month which saw an end to the flying bomb offensive, and a gradual release from the Command's responsibilities to SHAEF, and this allowed the emphasis to shift back towards Germany. Flying bomb related targets dominated the first ten days, but thereafter the main weight of attacks fell on oil and railway objectives, with occasional further support for the ground forces. Over seven hundred aircraft were aloft on the 1st, but a mere 10% were able to bomb the flying bomb sites in the conditions which obtained. More than eleven hundred took off to attack three storage sites on the 3rd, and all were well plastered in clear visibility, although two of them were bombed again on the following day. Another thousand aircraft provided support for the ground forces on the 7/8th by attacking enemy strong points, but in the event, only 660 actually released their bombs under the tight control of the Master Bombers. A similar operation by daylight on the 14th in the Falaise area led to thirteen Canadian troops being killed by Allied bombs, and a further fifty were wounded. In preparation for his new night offensive against Germany, Harris launched a thousand aircraft against nine nightfighter airfields in Holland and Belgium on the 15th, and the gradual shift in emphasis to German urban targets began at Stettin and Kiel on the 16/17th, the former resulting in the destruction of fifteen hundred houses and numerous industrial buildings, while the latter was less successful. Bremen suffered an overwhelming catastrophe on the 18/19th, when over eight and a half thousand apartment blocks were reduced to rubble, and eighteen ships were sunk in the harbour. An attack on the Opel motor works at Rüsselsheim by 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups on the 25/26th was only partially effective, but a return to Kiel on the 26/27th brought a concentrated raid, which left it in flames, and it was this operation which accounted for the squadron's PA971, which was lost without trace with the crew of F/L Knobloch. The final operations against flying bomb sites

were undertaken on the 28th, and a few days later, the Pas-de-Calais was overrun by Allied ground forces.

September was dominated by the need to liberate the three French ports still in enemy hands, and it began with six raids on German strong points around Le Havre between the 5th and the 11th. 8 Group provided the marking on each occasion, and shortly after the final attack, the German garrison surrendered to British forces. Darmstadt was destroyed by a firestorm following a 5 Group raid on the 11/12th, and the death toll on the ground amounted to over twelve thousand people. Earlier in the day, raids had been carried out on oil plants at Castrop-Rauxel, Kamen and Gelsenkirchen, the last mentioned claiming the squadron's ND702, and just two men survived from the crew of F/O Bradburn. Three more oil targets were attacked on the following day, and this time the squadron registered two failures to return, ND691 and PB308, and sadly neither produced a survivor from the crews of F/L Granger and F/O Campbell, but these were the last losses of the month. A daylight attack on enemy strong points around Boulogne on the 17th was sufficient to return the port to Allied hands, and the first of six raids on Calais over an eight day period was mounted by daylight on the 20th. Other operations followed on the 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, and Canadian troops marched in shortly afterwards. During the course of the month, W/C Dean's promotion to Group Captain came through, but he would remain in his current post until well into the following year.

October began with the first of a number of attacks on the sea walls at Walcheren, an island in the Scheldt Estuary, where coastal batteries were barring the approaches to the port of Antwerp. It took place on the 3rd, with the intention of flooding the island, both to inundate the gun positions, and to hinder enemy resistance to a ground assault. 6 and 8 Groups went to Bergen in Norway on the 4th, to attack U-Boats and their pens under a 100 Group Mosquito escort. Sufficient damage was inflicted to claim the operation as successful, but a tragic consequence of stray bombs was the killing of sixty children who were sheltering in a school basement. Massive destruction attended a raid on Saarbrücken on the 5/6th, when almost six thousand houses were reduced to ruins, and a new Ruhr offensive opened at Dortmund on the 6/7th, when accurate Pathfinder marking led to severe damage being inflicted. The failure of Operation Market Garden at Arnhem left the Allied right flank vulnerable to a counter attack, and the frontier towns of Cleves and Emmerich were heavily bombed as a consequence on the 7th, to hamper the movement of enemy forces through them. A plan to demonstrate to the enemy the overwhelming superiority of the Allied air forces ranged against it was given the codename Operation Hurricane, and it was launched against Duisburg shortly after breakfast time on the 14th. Almost a thousand aircraft pounded the already ruined city with 4,500 tons of bombs, and they returned that night in similar numbers to press home the point about superiority. These impressive figures were achieved without the support of 5 Group, which took advantage of the activity over the Ruhr, to deliver the first really effective attack on Brunswick. Only six out of 560 Lancasters were missing from a two phase attack on Stuttgart on the 19/20th, but one of these, ND755, was from Graveley. There were no survivors from among the eight man crew, which contained three holders of the DFC, including the pilot, F/O Brown, along with F/O Linton, and P/O Clarke. Operation Hurricane continued at Essen on the 23/24th, over a thousand aircraft delivering 4,500 tons of bombs, and this was followed up

on the 25th, by a force amounting to a mere 770. Cologne's turn came on the 28th, and another eight man crew failed to return to Graveley after this devastatingly successful operation. PB612 contained three Norwegian crewmen, including the pilot, Capt Hausvik, and all were lost without trace. Two more raids totalling almost fourteen hundred aircraft fell on Cologne on the 30/31st and on the following night, by which time it had effectively ceased to function as a city.

As worthwhile targets became more difficult to find, smaller, seemingly irrelevant towns began to find themselves in the bomb sights, and this was a trend which would continue. Oil was now the overriding priority, and as November progressed, elements of the squadron operated by day and night. The Hurricane force carried out the last major raid of the war on Düsseldorf on the 2/3rd, and left over five thousand houses in ruins, and Bochum suffered similarly on the 4/5th. Gelsenkirchen, which had often proved to be an elusive target in the past, succumbed to a heavy assault on the 6th, and other oil centres occupied the Command's attention over the succeeding days and nights. An American advance towards enemy lines signalled the end for the three towns of Düren, Jülich and Heinsberg on the 16th, 8 Group marking the first two mentioned, before they were all but erased from the map. PB197 crashed in Cambridgeshire while trying to land at Graveley on return from raiding Wanne-Eickel on the 18th, and five of the crew, including the pilot, F/O Blackband, lost their lives. A daylight attack on Dortmund on the 29th, cost the squadron its only failure to return of the month, PB199, and there were no survivors among the crew, in which F/O Williams and the captain, P/O Thorpe, were holders of the DFC.

December followed a similar pattern, with the accent remaining on oil and communications, and major operations during the month involving 8 Group included Karlsruhe on the 4/5th, Soest on the 5/6th, Leuna and Osnabrück on the 6/7th, and the last heavy night raid of the war on Essen on the 12/13th. Two important I G Farben chemicals factories in the Ludwigshafen area were successfully targeted on the 15/16th, and Ulm was decimated during its one and only raid of the war on the 17/18th. What was looking like a loss free December was ruined for the squadron on the 23rd, when a small 8 Group force took off to attack the Gremberg railway yards at Cologne. PB678 and PB683 collided off North Foreland while outbound, and crashed into the sea, and although some parachutes were observed to deploy, by the time rescue services arrived on the scene, none of the fourteen men from the crews of P/O Clarke and F/O Lawson could be saved. The remainder of the force was greeted by a defence of the most hostile nature, and a further five Lancasters of 582 Squadron, and a Mosquito were lost. It was as a result of this operation, that S/L Palmer of 109 Squadron, flying a 582 Squadron Oboe equipped Lancaster, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. On Christmas Eve, a hundred strong 1 and 8 Group force targeted the Nippes railway yards, also at Cologne, and left it in ruins. Sadly, PB366 did not take part, having crashed soon after take off, killing P/O Kenyon and his all NCO crew.

It was an unhappy end to a year which had seen the Command rise phoenix-like from the traumas of the winter campaign, and pave the way for the land forces, which were now sweeping across Europe. Germany lay in ruins, and its transport system and manufacturing

base were being systematically reduced to chaos. Much remained to be done, but at least, as the year turned, the unmistakable scent of victory was in the air.

1945

There was no gentle start to the New Year, waterways, railways and oil centres all being targeted on New Year's Day and Night. This, however, was after the New Year began with a flourish at first light, when the Luftwaffe launched its ill-conceived and ultimately ill-fated Operation Bodenplatte to catch elements of the Allied Air Forces on the ground at the recently liberated airfields of France, Holland and Belgium. The modest success gained was way out of proportion to the loss incurred of around 250 front-line day fighters, and more than half of the pilots were killed, wounded or taken prisoner, a setback from which the Luftwaffe would never recover. Cities were not to be neglected in this year of victory, and Nuremberg succumbed to an accurate raid at the hands of 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups on the 2/3rd, which destroyed more of its central districts, and an 8 Group contingent was also present on the same night at Ludwigshafen, where two I G Farben chemicals factories were successfully bombed again. What became a controversial attack on the French town of Royan was mounted in the early hours of the 5th, in response to requests from Free French forces which were laying siege. The German garrison commander had offered the local population the opportunity to evacuate the town, but most declined, and many of them suffered the consequences in the subsequent bombing by 1, 5 and 8 Groups. In the event, the French failed to take the town, and it was mid April before the garrison surrendered. Hanover was also the victim of a heavy attack by 1, 4, 6 and 8 Groups on the 5/6th, and it was during this operation that the squadron lost its first crew of the year, when PB343 was shot down by flak over Germany, and F/O Potts DFC and his crew were all killed. Hanau followed on the 6/7th, and 40% of its built-up area was destroyed. 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 Groups raided Munich on the 7/8th, as the hectic start to the year continued, and S/L Everett's sortie tally was into the nineties when he went to bomb a synthetic oil plant at Leuna near Merseburg on the 14/15th. While over the target, a bomb sliced off the rear turret of his Lancaster, and it fell to earth, carrying with it to his death F/O Salvoni, but Everett, in a masterly display of airmanship, nursed the aircraft back to a landing at Exeter. A predominately Halifax heavy force took on Magdeburg on the 16/17th with Pathfinders in attendance, while another 8 Group element accompanied 1 and 6 Groups to the Braunkohle-Benzin synthetic oil refinery at Zeitz near Leipzig. Both operations were highly successful, and 35 Squadron continued to operate without loss. A benzol plant at Duisburg provided the target for 1, 3 and 8 Groups on the 22/23rd, where severe damage to the nearby Thyssen steel works was an added bonus. The final large RAF raid on Stuttgart was conducted in two phases against railway yards and an aero-engine factory on the 28/29th, and although the use of skymarkers led to scattered bombing, some important damage was inflicted on the railway installations and on a number of important war industry factories.

Residential property was the principal victim of February's opening raid involving 8 Group, which was against Ludwigshafen on the 1/2nd. 1 and 6 Groups conducted the bombing, and nine hundred houses were destroyed or seriously damaged. Mainz was also marked by the Pathfinders on this night, but the use of skymarkers prevented the predominately Halifax force from finding the mark. The Group was called on to mark two targets again on the

following night with similar results, extensive damage in the first and only attack of the war on Wiesbaden, but a failure at the oil refinery at Wanne-Eickel. The single target on the 3/4th was the Prosper benzol plant at Bottrop, and this was well plastered by the 1 Group main force. The 4/5th brought a series of failures at Bonn, Osterfeld and Gelsenkirchen, all marked by 8 Group aircraft, and 35 Squadron's ME334 failed to return from the first mentioned, after crashing in the target area with no survivors from the crew of F/L Johnson. The frontier towns of Goch and Cleves were raided on the 7/8th ahead of a planned British XXX Corps advance across the German border. The Master Bomber brought the crews down to below the 5,000 foot cloud base at the former, but had to call off the attack after only a third of the 450 strong force had bombed, when smoke obscured the aiming point. Never-the-less, the town suffered extensive damage, as did the latter under the bombs of almost three hundred aircraft. The oil refinery at Pölitz produced no more oil after an attack by 1, 5 and 8 Groups on the 8/9th, but a similar target at Wanne-Eickel escaped serious damage on the same night.

The Churchill inspired series of major raids on Germany's eastern cities under Operation Thunderclap began at Dresden on the 13/14th. The two phase assault was opened by 5 Group, employing its low level visual marking method, and although it was only partially successful, the fires started by the eight hundred tons of bombs acted as a beacon for the 1, 3, 6 and 8 Group Lancasters following three hours behind. A further eighteen hundred tons rained down onto the beautiful and historic city, and set in motion the same chain of events which had produced the firestorm at Hamburg in July 1943. The city's resident population had been swelled by many thousands of refugees fleeing from the eastern front, and estimates of the final death toll ranged from 50,000 to 135,000, although the lower figure is believed to be nearer the mark. Chemnitz escaped similar punishment on the following night, when bombing was scattered, and much of it was wasted in open country. An attack on the southern half of Dortmund on the 20/21st was the penultimate raid of the war on this city, and it was concluded successfully, although at a cost of fourteen Lancasters. Two Rhenania-Ossag oil refineries were put out of business on this night also, those at Düsseldorf and Monheim, each by Halifaxes with Pathfinder Lancasters and Mosquitos as the marker force. Duisburg was raided for the last time on the 21/22nd, after which little remained standing, and a simultaneous attack on Worms represented this town's only large scale visit from the Command during the war. The squadron's ME335 and ME367 were among seven aircraft to fall to the defences during the former, F/O Osmond and five of his crew surviving to fall into enemy hands, and they were joined by six of the crew of F/L Tropman, who was killed in the crash. The use of skymarkers at Essen on the 23rd did not prevent many of the bombs falling directly onto the Krupps works, and this was the penultimate raid of the war on this city. Pforzheim was bombed for the first and last time on the 23/24th, and over seventeen thousand people died in a twenty two minute orgy of destruction, the third highest death toll at a German target. This was the operation which led to the war's final award of a Victoria Cross, and it went posthumously to the Master Bomber and Pathfinder from 582 Squadron, Captain Ed Swales of the South African Air Force, who continued to control the attack in a Lancaster severely damaged by a nightfighter, and then sacrificed his life to allow his crew to abandon the stricken aircraft. On the 25th, G/C Dean completed his second spell as commanding officer, and he was posted to Wyton as the station commander. He handed over command of 35 Squadron to its last wartime commander, W/C Le Good, an Australian, who took up his

appointment on the 1st of March. He had acted as deputy Master Bomber during the second phase of the devastating blow on Dresden two weeks earlier while serving with 635 Squadron. Before his arrival, however, the Group marked Mainz for 4 and 6 Groups on the 27th, and the massively destructive attack left more than 5,600 buildings in ruins.

The final raid of the war on Mannheim was delivered on the city by 1, 6 and 8 Groups on the 1st of March and Cologne received its final visit on the following day, in what was planned as a two phase attack. In the event, the 3 Group effort was abandoned after the G-H station failed, but it was of no consequence, and the city fell to American forces four days later. Operation Thunderclap returned to Chemnitz on the 5/6th of March, and this time a telling blow was delivered, which left central and southern districts in flames. ME333 failed to return to Graveley following this operation, and no trace was ever found of S/L Watson DFC and his crew. S/L Everett, now with a DFC and two Bars to his credit, was supposedly screened from operations, according to some commentators, after completing ninety eight. He was one of those men who were the backbone of the Command, and difficult to keep away from the operational scene. He was given the role of Master Bomber for a raid on Hemmingstedt on the 7/8th, where the Deutsche Erdöl refinery was situated. The operation failed at a cost of four Halifaxes and Lancaster ME361, which tragically, was carrying S/L Everett and a very experienced crew. It crashed in the target area, and all eight men on board were killed. The main operation that night was by five hundred aircraft on the virgin target of Dessau in the east of the country, and returning crews claimed a successful attack. Hamburg and Kassel were the objectives on the 8/9th, and then an all time record was set on the 11th, when 1079 aircraft took off for the final raid of the war on Essen. The record stood only until the following day, when 1,108 aircraft were sent to Dortmund for the last time, and this would stand to the end of the war as the Command's largest ever single raid. Oil provided the main fare for the Group over the next few nights, and then came the last trip to Nuremberg on the 16/17th. Forty six Lancasters and sixteen Mosquitos from 8 Group accompanied over two hundred 1 Group Lancasters, and in an echo of twelve months earlier, the enemy nightfighter force picked them up during the outward flight. Twenty four Lancasters were shot down, all of them from 1 Group, but at least on this occasion, the target suffered extensive damage. There was no slackening in the pace of operations, and as mentioned above, the defences were still able on occasions to inflict grievous losses, although not on the former scale. Very accurate raids fell on Witten and Hanau on the 18/19th, the former sustaining 60% destruction of its built-up area, and over 2,200 houses and fifty industrial buildings were reduced to rubble at the latter. Other notable successes involving 8 Group during the month were at Hildesheim on the 22nd, where 70% destruction occurred, and at Wesel on the 23/24th, when 97% of the buildings in the main town area were destroyed. The Group continued to operate by day and night for the remainder of the month, and 35 Squadron registered no further losses.

In fact, just two more 35 Squadron aircraft would be lost before the end came, and the first of these came on the 8/9th of April, during the last major raid of the war on Hamburg. NG440 was hit by flak and broke up over Germany, one of six aircraft which failed to return, and S/L Muller was killed along with five of his crew. Two men did survive to fall into enemy hands, but one of them succumbed to his injuries on the 10th. The final area attack of the war was

directed at Potsdam on the 14/15th, and this was the first time that the Command's heavy brigade had penetrated the Berlin defence zone since the 1943/44 winter campaign. PB377 was abandoned by all but the pilot following an engine fire in the target area, and one of these failed to survive, while four fell into enemy hands, and one evaded capture. F/O Bowen-Morris regained control of the Lancaster, and reached Holland before also being forced to take to his parachute, and he landed safely in Allied territory. The British XXX Corps assault on Bremen was aided by the bombing of the cities south-eastern suburbs on the 22nd, but the majority of crews brought their bombs back when cloud and smoke obscured the aiming point. The final operations for most of the main force and Pathfinder squadrons took place during the day of the 25th, with raids on the SS barracks at Hitler's Eaglesnest retreat at Berchtesgaden in the morning, and gun emplacements on the north Frisian island of Wangerooge later in the day. During the final days of hostilities, the squadron participated in the humanitarian Operations Manna and Exodus, and then it was all over.

Many of the great names of Bomber Command were associated with 35 Squadron at some time or other during the war. Its first commanding officer, W/C Collings, went on to command 156 Squadron at Warboys, where he combined the job for a time with that of station commander. Basil Robinson, "Charles" Whitworth, Jimmy Marks, "Dixie" Dean and Pat Daniels were all an inspiration to the crews in their charge, as were the likes of Cranswick, Cresswell, Everett, Sale and Craig, the last named also commanding 156 Squadron during the final weeks of the war. Leonard Cheshire and James Tait spent time with the squadron in the early days, before going on to fame with 617 Squadron, and the influence of all those mentioned above contributed enormously to the spirit of a unit, which was unquestionably one of the finest in Bomber Command.

STATIONS

BOSCOMBE DOWN	05.11.40. to 20.11.40.
LEEMING	20.11.40. to 05.12.40.
LINTON-ON-OUSE	05.12.40. to 15.08.42.
GRAVELEY	15.08.42. to 10.09.46.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

WING COMMANDER R W P COLLINGS AFC	05.11.40. to 03.07.41.
WING COMMANDER B V ROBINSON DFC AFC	03.07.41. to 26.01.42.
WING COMMANDER J N H WHITWORTH DSO DFC	26.01.42. to 12.03.42.
WING COMMANDER J H MARKS DSO DFC	12.03.42. to 20.09.42.
WING COMMANDER*B V ROBINSON DSO DFC AFC	20.09.42. to 01.05.43.
WING COMMANDER D F E C DEAN DFC	01.05.43. to 17.11.43.
WING COMMANDER S P DANIELS DSO DFC	17.11.43. to 25.07.44.
WING COMMANDER** D F E C DEAN DSO DFC	25.07.44. to 25.02.45.
WING COMMANDER H J LE GOOD AFC	25.02.45. to 11.09.45.

* Group Captain from 03.02.43.

** Group Captain from 09.43.

AIRCRAFT

HALIFAX I	12.40. to 02.42.
HALIFAX II	01.42. to 03.44.
HALIFAX III	12.43. to 03.44.
LANCASTER I/III	03.44. to 10.49.

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SECTION 2



OPERATIONAL RECORD

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OPERATIONAL RECORD

OPERATIONS 468	SORTIES 4709	AIRCRAFT LOSSES 127	% LOSSES 2.7
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CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING 457	MINING 5	OTHER 6
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HALIFAXES

OPERATIONS 266	SORTIES 2493	AIRCRAFT LOSSES 100	% LOSSES 4.0
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CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING 255	MINING 5	OTHER 6
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4 GROUP HALIFAXES

OPERATIONS 115	SORTIES 717	AIRCRAFT LOSSES 35	% LOSSES 4.9
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CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING 109	LEAFLET 6
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8 GROUP HALIFAXES

OPERATIONS 151	SORTIES 1776	AIRCRAFT LOSSES 65	% LOSSES 3.7
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CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING 146	MINING 5
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8 GROUP LANCASTERS

OPERATIONS 202	SORTIES 2216	AIRCRAFT LOSSES 27	% LOSSES 1.2
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TABLE OF STATISTICS

(Heavy squadrons).

25th highest number of overall operations in Bomber Command.
27th highest number of sorties in Bomber Command.
31st highest number of aircraft operational losses in Bomber Command.
20th highest number of bombing operations in Bomber Command.

Out of 30 Halifax squadrons in Bomber Command.

(Excluding SD squadrons).

6th highest number of Halifax overall operations in Bomber Command.
11th highest number of Halifax sorties in Bomber Command.
7th highest number of Halifax operational losses in Bomber Command.

Out of 59 Lancaster squadrons in Bomber Command.

28th equal (with 630Sqn) highest number of Lancaster overall operations in Bomber Command.
35th highest number of Lancaster sorties in Bomber Command.
40th highest number of Lancaster operational losses in Bomber Command.

Out of 24 squadrons in 4 Group.

14th highest number of overall operations in 4 Group.
15th highest number of sorties in 4 Group.
13th highest number of aircraft operational losses in 4 Group.

Out of 16 Halifax squadrons in 4 Group.

12th highest number of Halifax overall operations in 4 Group.
13th highest number of Halifax sorties in 4 Group.
11th highest number of Halifax operational losses in 4 Group.

Out of 19 squadrons overall in 8 Group.

5th highest number of overall operations in 8 Group.
6th highest number of sorties in 8 Group.
3rd highest number of aircraft operational losses in 8 Group.

Out of 8 heavy squadrons in 8 Group.

2nd highest numbers of overall operations in 8 Group.
3rd highest number of sorties in 8 Group.
3rd highest number of aircraft operational losses in 8 Group.

Out of 2 Halifax squadrons in 8 Group.

Highest number of Halifax overall operations, sorties and losses in 8 Group.

Out of 8 Lancaster squadrons in 8 Group.

4th highest number of Lancaster overall operations in 8 Group.

5th highest number of Lancaster sorties in 8 Group.

Lowest number of Lancaster operational losses in 8 Group.

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SECTION 3



AIRCRAFT LISTING

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35 SQUADRON.

HALIFAX.

To March 1944.

L7244	From A&AEE. To AFEE.
L9486 TL-M/B	From A&AEE. To 28CF.
L9487	Crashed near Dishforth during air test 13.1.41.
L9488 TL-M	To 76Sqn.
L9489 TL-F	Shot down by RAF fighter near Aldershot on return from Le Havre 10.3.41.
L9490 TL-L	Damaged beyond repair in ground accident 17.7.41.
L9491 TL-J	To 28CF.
L9492 TL-K	To 76Sqn.
L9493 TL-G	Crash-landed on approach to Linton-on-Ouse on return from Kiel 15/16.4.41.
L9494	To 76Sqn.
L9495 TL-B	Belly-landed at Linton-on-Ouse while training 17.7.41.
L9496 TL-N	To 76Sqn.
L9497 TL-K	Force-landed in Norfolk on return from Berlin 13.8.41.
L9498 TL-T	Crashed on landing at Linton-on-Ouse on return from Hüls 13.6.41.
L9499 TL-Q	FTR Kiel 30.6.41.
L9500 TL-H	FTR Magdeburg 14/15.8.41.
L9501 TL-Y	FTR Duisburg 28/29.8.41.
L9502 TL-R	FTR Frankfurt 7/8.7.41.
L9503 TL-P	FTR Hamburg 15/16.9.41.
L9504	To 102CF.
L9506 TL-X	Crash-landed at Bircham Newton on return from Hanover 16.6.41.
L9507 TL-W	FTR Berlin 25/26.7.41.
L9508 TL-F/X	FTR Berlin 2/3.9.41.
L9509 TL-C	To 28CF and back. To 28CF.
L9510	To 76Sqn.
L9511 TL-D/P	To 1652CU.
L9512 TL-U	FTR La Pallice 24.7.41.
L9513	To 76Sqn.
L9514	To 76Sqn.
L9516	To 76Sqn.
L9517	To 76Sqn.
L9518	To 76Sqn.
L9519	To 76Sqn.
L9521 TL-Z	FTR Merseburg 8/9.7.41.
L9523	To 76Sqn.
L9524 TL-V	To 10Sqn.
L9525	To 28CF.
L9526 TL-O	Force-landed in Norfolk on return from Turin 11.9.41.

L9527 TL-M	FTR La Pallice 24.7.41.
L9528	To 76Sqn.
L9529	To 76Sqn.
L9530	To 76Sqn.
L9560 TL-F	FTR Berlin 2/3.9.41.
L9566 TL-R	FTR Turin 10/11.9.41.
L9568	Conversion Flt only. Struck by W1051 on ground at Linton-on-Ouse 7.5.42.
L9569	To 10Sqn.
L9571	To 1652CU.
L9572 TL-G	FTR Düsseldorf 24/25.8.41.
L9575	To 1652CU.
L9579 TL-P	Crash-landed near Linton-on-Ouse on return from Nuremburg 13.10.41.
L9580	To 28CF.
L9582 TL-T	FTR Hamburg 30.11/1.12.41.
L9584 TL-L	To 102CF.
L9600 TL-U	FTR Cologne 11/12.12.41.
L9603 TL-P	FTR Essen 7/8.11.41.
L9605	To 1652CU.
L9606	To 1652CU.
L9607	To 1652CU.
L9608	To 1652CU.
L9610	To 1652CU.
R9364 TL-M/N	To 76Sqn.
R9367 TL-G	From HCF. To 1652CU.
R9370	From 10Sqn. Conversion Flt only. To 1658CU.
R9372 TL-O	To 1652CU.
R9377 TL-B	To 1652CU.
R9381	From 1652CU. Returned to 1652CU.
R9386 TL-A	To 76Sqn.
R9392	To 10Sqn.
R9422	To 1652CU and back. To 103Sqn.
R9425	To 35CF. Crashed in Yorkshire 16.4.42.
R9428	To 10Sqn.
R9438 TL-H	FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 30/31.3.42.
R9439 TL-A	FTR Emden 6/7.6.42.
R9440	Crashed during landing at Linton-on-Ouse while training 13.3.42.
R9441 TL-S	To 102Sqn.
R9442	To 102Sqn.
R9444 TL-D	FTR Essen 2/3.6.42.
R9445 TL-T	Crash-landed at Oakington on return from Billancourt 3/4.3.42.
R9446	To 102Sqn.
R9448	To 405CF.
R9449	To 102CF.

R9450 TL-K FTR Essen 9/10.3.42.
R9483 To 405CF.
R9488 To 102Sqn.
R9489 TL-T Crashed in Yorkshire during air test 21.7.42.
R9493 From 10Sqn. Conversion Flt only. To 1651CU.
R9494 To 102Sqn.
R9496 TL-H/L FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 30/31.3.42.
V9978 TL-A Ditched in the Channel on return from Brest 18.12.41.
V9979 TL-E FTR Brest 30.12.41.
V9982 To 102CF.
V9983 To 103Sqn.
V9993 To 1652CU.
V9994 To 1652CU.
W1006 From 78Sqn. Conversion Flt only. To 1635CU.
W1015 TL-P FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 30/31.3.42.
W1019 To 405Sqn.
W1020 TL-K FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 27/28.4.42.
W1021 TL-J FTR Essen 8/9.6.42.
W1046 TL-N To 161Sqn.
W1047 TL-B From 102Sqn. FTR Aachen 5/6.10.42.
W1048 TL-S From 102Sqn. FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 27/28.4.42. Recovered 1973.
 On display at RAF Museum Hendon
W1049 TL-V From 102Sqn. Ditched off Yarmouth on return from Essen 9.6.42.
W1050 TL-F From 102Sqn. FTR Stuttgart 6/7.5.42.
W1051 TL-C From 102Sqn. Crashed after landing at Linton-on-Ouse on return from
 Stuttgart 7.5.42.
W1053 TL-G From 102Sqn. FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 28/29.4.42.
W1100 TL-G FTR Düsseldorf 31.7/1.8.42.
W1101 TL-S FTR Mannheim 19/20.5.42.
W1102 To BDU.
W1105 TL-N FTR Bremen 25/26.6.42.
W1117 TL-S FTR Essen 16/17.6.42.
W1141 To 77Sqn.
W1146 From 10Sqn. Returned to 10Sqn.
W1147 TL-J FTR Duisburg 25/26.7.42.
W1154 TL-A Abandoned over Kent on return from Duisburg 14.7.42.
W1159 Crashed on landing at Linton-on-Ouse during training 22.6.42.
W1160 TL-M To 10Sqn.
W1165 From 158CF. To 1666CU.
W1173 To 405Sqn.
W1226 TL-J FTR Flensburg 18/19.8.42. First Pathfinder loss.
W1231 From BDU. To NTU.
W1234 From 460Sqn. To 1654CU.
W1242 TL-G FTR Le Havre 11/12.8.42.
W7656 TL-P FTR Aasenford (Tirpitz) 28/29.4.42.

W7657 TL-L FTR Saarbrücken 19/20.9.42.
W7658 TL-H FTR Mannheim 19/20.5.42.
W7675 Crashed on landing at Linton-on-Ouse during air-test 8.5.42.
W7676 TL-P FTR Nuremburg 28/29.8.42.
W7699 TL-F FTR Essen 8/9.6.42.
W7700 TL-C FTR Nuremburg 28/29.8.42.
W7701 TL-U FTR Essen 8/9.6.42.
W7711 From BTU. To 1661CU.
W7749 To 1659CU.
W7760 TL-B FTR Hamburg 26/27.7.42.
W7761 TL-N Abandoned over Yorkshire on return from Duisburg 14.7.42.
W7765 TL-T FTR Frankfurt 24/25.8.42.
W7778 To 1656CU.
W7779 TL-R To 1666CU.
W7782 To 78Sqn.
W7804 To 1666CU.
W7806 Conversion Flt only. To 1652CU.
W7808 From TFU. To NTU.
W7811 From BDU. To 1662CU.
W7821 To 1658CU.
W7823 TL-L From TRE. To NTU.
W7825 TL-P From BDU. FTR Düsseldorf 25/26.5.43.
W7851 TL-Y From TFU. FTR Nuremburg 8/9.3.43.
W7866 To 1662CU.
W7872 From TFU. To NTU.
W7873 TL-E/M From TFU. FTR Pilsen 16/17.4.43.
W7874 From TFU. To NTU.
W7875 From TFU. To NTU.
W7876 TL-K From TFU. FTR Wuppertal 29/30.5.43.
W7877 TL-O From BDU. FTR Berlin 1/2.3.43.
W7878 TL-J From TFU. FTR Krefeld 21/22.6.43.
W7881 TL-P From 10Sqn. To 78Sqn.
W7885 TL-B To 405Sqn and back. FTR Lorient 13/14.2.43.
W7886 TL-C FTR Berlin 17/18.1.43.
W7887 TL-E Abandoned over Northamptonshire on return from Dortmund 5.5.43.
W7906 TL-Q Crashed on landing at Harrowbeer on return from St-Nazaire 28.2.43.
W7907 TL-M FTR Berlin 27/28.3.43.
W7923 TL-D Belly-landed at Graveley on return from Hamburg 4.2.43.
BB203 To 158CF.
BB320 To 102CF.
BB359 To 10Sqn.
BB361 TL-V FTR Krefeld 21/22.6.43.
BB366 To 1658CU.
BB368 TL-H Ditched off Norfolk coast on return from Krefeld 21/22.6.43.
BB370 To 102Sqn.

BB372 From 405Sqn. To 102Sqn.
DG226 To 10CF.
DG227 To 158Sqn.
DT488 TL-S/Q Crash-landed at Colerne on return from Turin 19.11.42. Following repair, FTR Dortmund 23/24.5.43.
DT489 TL-Y Crashed in Huntingdonshire on return from Dortmund 5.5.43.
DT500 To 10Sqn.
DT519 To 78Sqn.
DT801 TL-A FTR Duisburg 12/13.5.43.
DT803 To NTU.
DT804 TL-C FTR Wuppertal 29/30.5.43.
DT805 TL-Y FTR Münster 11/12.6.43.
DT806 TL-Z FTR Frankfurt 10/11.4.43.
HR673 TL-B From 502Sqn. FTR Cologne 3/4.7.43.
HR676 TL-V FTR Mannheim 18/19.11.43.
HR678 TL-N FTR Stuttgart 14/15.4.43.
HR685 TL-X FTR Krefeld 21/22.6.43.
HR723 From 405Sqn. To 77Sqn.
HR736 TL-M Destroyed by fire on the ground at Graveley 13.5.43.
HR777 TL-Y Crash-landed in Norfolk on return from Bremen 9.10.43.
HR793 TL-J FTR Wuppertal 29/30.5.43.
HR795 TL-M FTR Essen 27/28.5.43.
HR798 TL-R FTR Cannes 11/12.11.43.
HR799 TL-R FTR Krefeld 21/22.6.43.
HR801 To 1659CU.
HR802 To 428Sqn.
HR803 TL-P Crashed in Huntingdonshire soon after take-off for Hamburg 24.7.43.
HR804 From 405Sqn. To 102Sqn.
HR811 From 405Sqn. To 102Sqn.
HR812 TL-F FTR Cologne 28/29.6.43.
HR819 TL-K FTR Aachen 13/14.7.43.
HR833 TL-F From 405Sqn. FTR Wuppertal 29/30.5.43.
HR841 From 405Sqn. To 77Sqn.
HR846 TL-H FTR Berlin 23/24.8.43.
HR847 TL-L From 405Sqn. To 1652CU.
HR848 TL-Q FTR Krefeld 21/22.6.43.
HR850 TL-A FTR Cologne 28/29.6.43.
HR851 TL-T FTR Hamburg 29/30.7.43.
HR855 To 428Sqn.
HR857 From 405Sqn. To 428Sqn.
HR861 TL-T FTR Nuremburg 10/11.8.43.
HR862 TL-X FTR Peenemünde 17/18.8.43.
HR863 TL-V FTR Hamburg 2/3.8.43.
HR865 TL-A FTR Berlin 23/24.8.43.
HR866 TL-C Crash-landed at Graveley on return from Düsseldorf 3.11.43.

HR873 To 10Sqn.
HR876 TL-S From 405Sqn. FTR Berlin 2/3.12.43.
HR877 To NTU.
HR878 TL-J FTR Berlin 31.8/1.9.43.
HR879 To 10Sqn.
HR880 TL-K FTR Turin 16/17.8.43.
HR906 TL-L FTR Hamburg 29/30.7.43.
HR907 TL-P FTR Hanover 27/28.9.43.
HR908 TL-Z FTR Mannheim 9/10.8.43.
HR912 To 419Sqn.
HR913 To 1656CU.
HR914 TL-O/R Crash-landed at Graveley following early return from Nuremburg 28.8.43.

HR916 From 405Sqn. To 428Sqn.
HR925 To 419Sqn.
HR926 TL-Z/L FTR Kassel 22/23.10.43.
HR928 TL-R FTR Berlin 23/24.8.43.
HR929 TL-E From 405Sqn. Ditched off Sardinia following an operation to Cannes 11/12.11.43.

HR984 TL-K From 405Sqn. Crashed on take-off from Graveley when bound for Berlin 15.2.44.

HR985 TL-A FTR Cannes 11/12.11.43.
HR986 TL-G FTR Berlin 29/30.12.43.
HR987 To 158Sqn and back. To 1652CU.
HX147 From 405Sqn. To 428Sqn.
HX148 TL-G Crashed in Kent on return from Frankfurt 4.10.43.
HX157 TL-H Crashed on take-off from Graveley during training 13.10.43.
HX160 TL-O FTR Stettin 5/6.1.44.
HX167 TL-C FTR Berlin 2/3.12.43.
HX168 To 419Sqn.
HX169 TL-A Crashed on landing at Graveley while training 19.1.44.
HX232 To 10Sqn.
HX270 TL-M FTR Frankfurt 20/21.12.43.
HX286 To 10Sqn.
HX295 To 10Sqn.
HX317 TL-M FTR Magdeburg 21/22.1.44.
HX321 To 51Sqn.
HX323 To 10Sqn.
HX324 TL-B FTR Magdeburg 21/22.1.44.
HX325 TL-J FTR Leipzig 19/20.2.44.
HX326 To 10Sqn.
HX327 To 10Sqn.
HX328 TL-J Burnt out at Graveley on return from Frankfurt 20.12.43.
HX332 To 10Sqn.
HX347 To 10Sqn.

HX357	To 10Sqn.
JB785 TL-Q	FTR Münster 11/12.6.43.
JB786 TL-G	FTR Berlin 23/24.8.43.
JB787 TL-G/Z	FTR Essen 25/26.7.43.
JN954	To 428Sqn.
JN955	From 419Sqn. To 428Sqn.
JP121 TL-U	FTR Stuttgart 20/21.2.44.
JP122	To 428Sqn.
JP123 TL-F	FTR Stettin 5/6.1.44.
JP124	To 428Sqn.
LV782	To 51Sqn.
LV785	To 10Sqn.
LV787 TL-K	FTR Magdeburg 21/22.1.44.
LV793 TL-B	FTR Leipzig 19/20.2.44.
LV818	From 51Sqn. To 10Sqn.
LV822	To 10Sqn.
LV825	To 10Sqn.
LV832	To 10Sqn.
LV834 TL-N	FTR Leipzig 19/20.2.44.
LV857	To 10Sqn.
LV858	To 10Sqn.
LV859	To 10Sqn.
LV860	To 10Sqn.
LV861 TL-O	FTR Berlin 15/16.2.44.
LV862	To 10Sqn.
LV863	To 10Sqn.
LV864 TL-O	FTR Leipzig 19/20.2.44.
LV865	To 10Sqn.
LV866	To 10Sqn.
LV867	To 10Sqn.
LV870	To 10Sqn.
LV878	To 10Sqn.
LV880	To 10Sqn.
LV881	To 10Sqn.
LV882	To 10Sqn.
LV906	To 10Sqn.
LV908	To 10Sqn.
LV909	To 10Sqn.
LV912	To 10Sqn.
LW323 TL-N	From 428Sqn. Damaged beyond repair during operation to Magdeburg 21/22.1.44.
LW326 TL-H	From 428Sqn. FTR Frankfurt 25/26.11.43.
LW343 TL-U	FTR Leipzig 3/4.12.43.
LW371	To 10Sqn.

LANCASTER.**From March 1944.**

JA857 From 97Sqn. To 635Sqn.
JB239 TL-O From 156Sqn. To 635Sqn.
LM233 From 635Sqn.
LM346 TL-Q From 97Sqn. To 635Sqn.
LM646 TL-S From 156Sqn.
ME331
ME333 TL-S FTR Chemnitz 5/6.3.45.
ME334 TL-Q FTR Bonn 4/5.2.45.
ME335 TL-O FTR Duisburg 21/22.2.45.
ME337 TL-A
ME356 To 7Sqn.
ME361 TL-H FTR Hemmingstedt 7/8.3.45.
ME362
ME367 TL-R FTR Duisburg 21/22.2.45.
ME369 TL-J
ME520
ME620 TL-C From 83Sqn. FTR Haine St Pierre 8/9.5.44.
ME621 From 83Sqn. To 635Sqn.
ND453 From 156Sqn. To 635Sqn.
ND597 TL-A FTR Berlin 24/25.3.44.
ND643 TL-S From 156Sqn. FTR Montdidier Airfield 3/4.5.44.
ND645 TL-O From 405Sqn. FTR Frankfurt 22/23.3.44.
ND646 From 83Sqn. To NTU.
ND648 To Flight Refuelling Ltd.
ND649 TL-C From 156Sqn. FTR Frankfurt 22/23.3.44.
ND653 TL-N From 405Sqn. To 635Sqn.
ND690 TL-O To 106Sqn via NTU.
ND691 TL-M FTR Wanne-Eickel 12.9.44.
ND692 TL-P To 9Sqn.
ND693 To 7Sqn.
ND694 TL-J/H To 635Sqn.
ND696 TL-E To 83Sqn.
ND697 TL-T Written off in ground accident at Graveley 29.4.44.
ND701 TL-F FTR Lille 9/10.4.44.
ND702 TL-G FTR Gelsenkirchen 10/11.9.44.
ND703 To 635Sqn.
ND704 To 635Sqn.
ND708 TL-L FTR Stuttgart 15/16.3.44.
ND709 To 635Sqn.
ND711 To 635Sqn.
ND714 To 156Sqn.
ND731 TL-A FTR Villeneuve St Georges 4/5.7.44.
ND734 TL-H FTR Coubronne 23/24.6.44.

ND735 To 635Sqn.
ND736 To 7Sqn.
ND740/G To 97Sqn.
ND746 To 97Sqn.
ND755 TL-B/J FTR Stuttgart 19/20.10.44.
ND759 TL-R FTR Friedrichshaven 27/28.4.44.
ND762 TL-E FTR Dortmund 22/23.5.44.
ND818 TL-A To 83Sqn.
ND846 TL-J FTR Villeneuve St Georges 4/5.7.44.
ND863 To 460Sqn.
ND877 To 635Sqn.
ND907 TL-T From 7Sqn. To 106Sqn via NTU.
ND916 TL-F From 7Sqn. To 405Sqn 1.45.
ND928 TL-Q To NTU.
ND929 TL-J To 156Sqn.
ND933 TL-S To 106Sqn via NTU.
ND934 To 1660CU.
ND936 TL-C To NTU.
NE175 TL-R FTR Stuttgart 24/25.7.44.
NG434 TL-T
NG436
NG438
NG440 TL-C FTR Hamburg 8/9.4.45.
NG443
NG482
PA966 To 156Sqn.
PA971 TL-J FTR Kiel 26/27.8.44.
PA976 To 7Sqn.
PA988 From 582Sqn. To 405Sqn.
PB123 From 7Sqn. To 582Sqn.
PB134 To 83Sqn.
PB149 To 582Sqn.
PB179 To 582Sqn.
PB183 To 405Sqn.
PB197 TL-P Crashed in Cambridgeshire on return from Wanne-Eickel 18.11.44.
PB199 TL-N FTR Dortmund 29.11.44.
PB200 TL-A To 97Sqn.
PB257 To 1667CU.
PB288 To 405Sqn.
PB305 To 7Sqn.
PB307 TL-A
PB308 TL-O FTR Wanne-Eickel 12.9.44.
PB343 TL-M FTR Hanover 5/6.1.45.
PB349 From 49Sqn.
PB357 To 7Sqn.

PB361 To 49Sqn.
PB362 To 83Sqn.
PB364 To 12Sqn via 1656CU.
PB366 TL-S Crashed soon after take-off when bound for Cologne 24.12.44.
PB367 TL-Z From 7Sqn. To 83Sqn.
PB368 To 83Sqn.
PB372 TL-X From 582Sqn. To 97Sqn.
PB377 TL-K From 582Sqn. Abandoned over Allied territory on return from Potsdam 14/15.4.45.

PB420 To 7Sqn.
PB523 From 156Sqn. To 582Sqn.
PB529 From 156Sqn. To NTU.
PB555 TL-J To 635Sqn.
PB566 To 635Sqn and back. To 1667CU.
PB583 TL-A From 582Sqn. To 635Sqn.
PB589 To 635Sqn.
PB593 To 156Sqn.
PB612 TL-P FTR Cologne 28.10.44.
PB613 TL-O To 156Sqn.
PB614 TL-G To 405Sqn.
PB615 To 7Sqn.
PB675 To 156Sqn.
PB676 To 106Sqn.
PB677 To 7Sqn.
PB678 TL-F Collided with PB683 (35Sqn) en-route to Cologne 23.12.44.
PB683 TL-H Collided with PB678 (35Sqn) en-route to Cologne 23.12.44.
PB684 TL-B
PB685 TL-J
PB698 From 635Sqn via NTU.
PB726 From 635Sqn.
PB754 TL-D From 467Sqn.
PB762 From 467Sqn.
PB951
PB966 To 582Sqn.
PB971
PB973/PB980
PB981/PB982
PB985/PB987
PB988/PB989
PB990/PB991
RF183 TL-H
SW255 To 405Sqn.
SW266 TL-A From 156Sqn.

HEAVIEST SINGLE LOSS. 21/22.06.43. Krefeld. 6 Halifaxes FTR.

SECTION 4



KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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



SECTION 5



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Most of the figures used in the statistics section of this work, have been drawn from The Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt, and I am indebted to Martin Middlebrook for allowing me to use them.

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SECTION 6



STOCK LIST

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**7 9 10 12 XV 35 40 44 49 50 51 57 61
75(NZ) 77 78 83 90 97 100 101 102 103
105 106 115 139 144 149 150 153 156 189
207 214 218 405 408 419 460 467 550 578
617 619 622 625 626 627 630**

AVAILABLE SOON

138

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OF THE PATH FINDER FORCE
and
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BOMBER COMMAND AND ITS
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