

**ROYAL AIR FORCE  
BOMBER COMMAND**

~ ~ ~

**SQUADRON PROFILES**

**NUMBER 123**



**627 SQUADRON**

*At First Sight*

**RESEARCHED, COMPILED AND WRITTEN**

**BY**

**CHRIS WARD**

# **ROYAL AIR FORCE BOMBER COMMAND SQUADRON PROFILES**

~~~~~

**128 Bomber Command Squadrons covered in a series of Squadron Profiles, each available separately.**

**(See rear of order form for full list)**

**Each copy professionally printed on the best quality paper with Bomber Command crest and Squadron Motto on the cover.**

**Spiral bound to lay flat when open.**

~~~~~

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

**All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, photocopied or printed in any other publication, nor stored on any media or transmitted in any form by any means without written permission from the author.**

**This squadron profile has been researched, compiled and written by its author, who has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in it. The author will not be liable for any damages caused, or alleged to be caused, by any information contained within this book. E. &O.E.**

**© Copyright: C. Ward - 1999  
48 Woodmarket  
Lutterworth  
Leicestershire. LE17 4DB.  
England.**

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

**ROYAL AIR FORCE  
BOMBER COMMAND  
SQUADRON PROFILES**



**Number 123**



**627 SQUADRON**



**by**

*Chris Ward*

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

# 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.**

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

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



# GENERAL NOTES

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

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

## 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.

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

# SECTION 1



# BRIEF HISTORY

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

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

# 627 SQUADRON

MOTTO AT FIRST SIGHT

Code AZ

Formed at Oakington on the 12th of November 1943, 627 Squadron was born out of the expansion of 8 Group's Light Night Striking Force. Faced with an option of maintaining 139 Squadron as a three flight unit, or to form a new squadron, AVM Bennett opted for the latter. Eleven crews were duly transferred from 139 Squadron over the succeeding twelve days, along with MkIV Mosquitos to form the nucleus. Arriving on the 13th were pilots P/O Willmott, F/L Steere DFM, F/O Foxcroft and F/O Denny, to be followed on the 15th by F/O Goodman and his navigator F/O Hickox. Wing Commander R P Elliott DSO, DFC was installed as the first commanding officer on the 17th, and also arriving on that day was S/L Bell DFC, who would command B Flight. He had previously served as a flight commander on 1 Group's 12 Squadron, and led its contingent to Essen for the opening round of the Ruhr campaign in March. The A Flight commander was S/L Lockhart DSO, DFC, who joined the squadron on the 23rd, and whose time with the squadron would be brief, a command of his own beckoning in the near future. The 24th saw the arrival of the crews of F/L Ralph, P/O Devigne, F/S Marshallsay, F/S Parlato and F/S Simpson, and the squadron was declared operational on that day..

Oakington was the residence of the PFF founder unit, 7 Squadron, now operating Lancasters following a more than testing time on Stirlings, which it had introduced into operational service in 1941. As a humorous gesture, the heavy squadron dubbed 627, with its wooden Mosquitos, 627 Model Aeroplane Club, while 627 retaliated with a reference to 7 Squadron's original role at the start of the war, dubbing them as No 7 Operational Training Unit. 627 Squadron had been formed during the period of the resumption of the Battle of Berlin, and with three operations to the Capital in five nights behind it, the main force stayed on the ground on the 24/25th, and a nuisance operation by Mosquitos was planned. Three of the squadron's aircraft were detailed to join others of 139 Squadron, and two actually took off, one of them aborting the sortie and returning to base. A general recall had in fact been issued, but F/L Goodman did not receive it, and continued on to Berlin alone, only to be told on return, wrongly as it happened, that DZ615 had been the only aircraft operating over Germany that night.

On the following night, three aircraft were again detailed for Berlin, while the main force delivered an attack on Frankfurt, which achieved only moderate success. On the 29/30th, the main force stayed at home, while twenty one Mosquitos of the LNSF roamed the Ruhr, 627 Squadron sending five to Cologne without loss. The main force assault on Berlin continued with a predominately Lancaster attack on the 2/3rd of December, and 627 contributed a third of the eighteen Mosquitos to the same destination. Serious losses resulted to the heavy contingent, and 627 Squadron suffered its first missing crew, when F/S Simpson and Sgt Walker failed to return in DZ479. Having lost an engine to flak while still some distance from Berlin, they elected to press on and bomb the target, reaching France on the return journey before being forced to abandon the stricken Mosquito. Both men survived the experience, and ultimately evaded capture, to return to the squadron in 1944. On the 3/4th, the squadron

contributed four aircraft to a feint attack on Berlin, to mask the main force's approach to Leipzig. The diversion was successful in keeping enemy nightfighters away from the real target area, where only two bombers went down.

For almost the next two weeks, the heavy squadrons stayed on the ground, and it was left to the LNSF to keep the pot boiling, sending twenty five Mosquitos to Leverkusen on the 10/11th, to which the squadron contributed five, and a further three to a force of nine to upset the residents of Düsseldorf on the 12/13th. The next major assault in the campaign on Berlin was mounted on the 16/17th, and will forever be remembered for the thick fog which blanketed the 8 Group airfields on return, and which caused at least twenty nine Lancasters to crash or be abandoned by their crews, costing the lives of almost a hundred and fifty airmen. Twenty three thousand people were bombed out in Frankfurt following the raid of the 20/21st, for which the squadron put up five aircraft, and a return visit two nights later by nine Mosquitos, including three from 627 Squadron, stirred up the embers. Further sorties were launched in what remained of the year, to Berlin and Leipzig on Christmas Eve, Duisburg on the 28/29th, Leipzig again on the 29/30th, and the year was put to bed with Cologne on the 30/31st. A successful first five weeks of operations had seen sixty sorties detailed, although not all flown, and fifteen operations for the loss of just one aircraft, and a crew which would return.

## 1944

1944 dawned with Berlin still the overriding focus of attention, as the campaign ground on. On New Year's Day, S/L Guy Lockhart was given the acting rank of Wing Commander and posted to Graveley, to become the first commanding officer of the newly formed addition to the LNSF, 692 Squadron. Towards the end of March, he would replace W/C Rampling as commanding officer of 7 Squadron, after his predecessor was lost in action, and would lose his own life raiding Friedrichshafen on the 27/28th of April, one of two Path Finder squadron commanding officers missing that night, the other, W/C Eaton of 156 Squadron. Barely twenty four hours of the New Year had elapsed, before the bombers were once more over the Capital. 627 Squadron contributed six Mosquitos on that night, for a diversionary raid on Hamburg. The German controllers were not deceived by the feint, but even so, were unable to take advantage, and few bombers fell victim to the defences in the target area. On the 2/3rd, Berlin was on again, and the squadron followed up the main attack, repeating the trip two nights later while the main force was rested.

On the 5/6th, thirteen Mosquitos of 627 and 139 Squadrons created a diversion at Berlin by dropping Window and TIs, while over three hundred heavies delivered a successful attack on the distant target of Stettin, which caused the usual catalogue of industrial and residential damage, and also sank eight ships in the harbour. The diversion achieved its aim, and most of the fighters were lured away from Stettin. DZ616 suffered an engine failure shortly after take-off, and was unable to maintain height with a full load. The Mosquito crashed near Bourn two minutes later, and the crew, comprising F/O Fahey and F/O Hicks, was killed. Four aircraft were detailed for Duisburg on the following night, and in the continued absence of the main force, sent two Mosquitos each to Frankfurt and Berlin. DK293, containing B Flight



Commander S/L Bell and his aptly named navigator F/O Battle, failed to return from Frankfurt, both men surviving, to spend a period of extended leave in Stalag Luft 3. The crew of W4072 attacked an alternative target at Aachen, before ditching in the North Sea on return. The pilot, F/L Hanlon DFC, was rescued, but his navigator, F/O Evans DFM, did not survive. On the 16th, S/L MacKenzie DFC became the new B Flight commander, and on the 19th, S/L Nelles DFC assumed command of A Flight. Operations continued during the month to Berlin six times, Magdeburg, Kiel, Düsseldorf and Duisburg without further loss, giving a total of sorties detailed for the month of ninety, for the loss of three aircraft and five members of aircrew.

February began with ten crews being briefed for Berlin on the 1/2nd, which resulted in DZ551 failing to return, the crew of P/O Willmott and F/O Hughes being killed. P/O Willmott was one of the original pilots posted in from 139 Squadron on the 13th of November, and his navigator had arrived a month later from 1655 MTU. Despite a busy month of operations, no further losses occurred, ninety eight sorties being detailed, for Berlin four times, including the record-breaking raid of the 15/16th, Frankfurt, Brunswick, Stuttgart and Düsseldorf twice each, and Leipzig on the 19/20th, which brought the Command its heaviest defeat to date to the tune of seventy eight aircraft. Schweinfurt and Augsburg followed, the last named suffering the total destruction of its beautiful old town centre and many cultural buildings.

A heavy assault on Stuttgart on the 1/2nd of March, was masked by a Mosquito feint on Munich, for which 627 Squadron put up seven aircraft. The enormous value of such "spoof" operations was evident in the negligible loss from the operation, of less than 1% of the attacking force. The residents of Berlin were allowed little respite, even when the heavy squadrons were not operating, and on the consecutive nights of the 3/4th and 4/5th, 627 Squadron contributed to the force which again disturbed their sleep. Nuisance raids to Kiel and Duisburg on the 6/7th and 9/10th preceded an attack by twenty Mosquitos on the Blohm and Voss shipyards at Hamburg on the 11/12th, for which the squadron contributed seven aircraft. Following three more nights of operations, the opportunity arose for the first operational use by the squadron of the converted "Cookie" carrying Mosquito. Four of the type were taken on charge during March, DZ606, DZ632, DZ644 and DZ646, and Cologne was selected as the target on the 17/18th. The squadron provided nine of the seventeen Mosquitos which accompanied the eight hundred strong main force attack on Frankfurt on the 18/19th, and which bombed out fifty five thousand residents, and caused extensive damage to cultural, public and industrial buildings. Four nights later, over eight hundred aircraft again took off for the city, and delivered an even more devastating attack, which destroyed forever the character of a city which had developed since the Middle Ages. 627 Squadron was also present, sending ten aircraft to act as a "window" force.

Two nights later the final operation was launched in the series on Berlin, again by eight hundred aircraft. It was also the last occasion on which Bomber Command would send heavy bombers to the "Big City" in what remained of the war, although a constant harassment by the LNSF would continue to the end. 627 Squadron sent elements to Berlin and Kiel, and extensive diversionary activities were laid on to confuse the enemy controllers. In the event, it was the weather which dominated proceedings, unusually strong winds characterising the

operation, and scattering the main stream, particularly on the way home from what was at best only a moderately successful raid, and certainly not commensurate with the effort and cost. Blown over heavily defended areas, more than two thirds of the seventy two missing aircraft fell victim to the flak batteries, providing them with their most successful night of the war.

The month, and the period known as the Battle of Berlin, concluded on the night of the 30/31st of March with the debacle at Nuremberg. A combination of atmospheric conditions and a disputed straight in route, the only departure from normal practice, conspired to present the force on a plate to the waiting nightfighters. They did not waste their opportunity, and played the major role in the destruction of ninety five bombers. Eleven Mosquitos of 627 Squadron were operating that night, creating diversions to Cologne and to Kassel, where window was dropped and spoof fighter lanes laid, and they also carried a number of cookies to the main target. During the month, the squadron operated on nineteen nights, with 152 sorties detailed, all without loss.

From the 14th of April Bomber Command became subject to the requirements of SHAEF, in preparation for the forthcoming invasion of Europe. The first operations in the campaign had already taken place, with attacks on the French railway system since early March. In a sign of the increasing strength of the Mosquito force available to the PFF chief, AVM Bennett, thirty five of them raided Hanover on the 1/2nd, 627 Squadron detailing twelve, and forty one went to Cologne on the 4/5th, including another twelve from 627 Squadron. Hamburg was the recipient on the 6/7th, and the Krupps works at Essen on the 8/9th. Following further operations to Mannheim, Hanover twice and Osnabrück, the squadron conducted what turned out to be its final operation under 8 Group, by sending eight Mosquitos to Berlin on the 13/14th, including a number of "Cookie Carriers". During the first two weeks of April the squadron operated on nine nights, and detailed 104 sorties without loss.

On the 15th the squadron moved to Lincolnshire, and took up residence at Woodhall Spa, home to the celebrated 617 Squadron. Whilst officially remaining an 8 Group unit, 627 Squadron was now on permanent detachment to 5 Group, along with the Lancaster squadrons, 83 and 97, which had moved to nearby Coningsby. Although formerly 5 Group to the core, the two heavy squadrons had formed a fierce loyalty to 8 Group, and few if any of their aircrew had been with the squadrons during their association with 5 Group. A distinct air of resentment accompanied the transfer of all three squadrons, and it would be some time before a grudging loyalty was felt towards the new Group, despite the fact that 5 Group had always felt itself to be the elite of the Command, and probably felt that the new boys should see the move as a promotion. The removal of three of his finest squadrons, was a bitter blow to Bennett, made more unpalatable by the fact that they went to 5 Group. Much has been made of the alleged feud between Bennett and 5 Group's AVM Cochrane, a situation which may well have been exacerbated by the Nuremberg disaster, when the PFF planners' route was rejected by Harris, in favour of Cochrane's. Whatever the truth about their personal relationship, these were arguably the two most brilliant men to serve Bomber Command during the entire war, each having an intellect and tactical awareness beyond the ordinary, and neither would allow personal differences to interfere with their prosecution of the war, or

to be aired in public. There was a fundamental disagreement on the most effective way to mark targets, Bennett being fiercely committed to the medium to high level policy, while Cochrane favoured low level visual marking. Both systems had equal merit, and neither one was better to the total exclusion of the other, and usually it was the weather which would determine their use. The posting of 627 Squadron to 5 Group, to be the only squadron in the Command dedicated to this form of marking, was, however, an indication of the success with which 617 Squadron had employed the method.

During the latter part of 1943 and early 1944, 617 Squadron's commanding officer, W/C Cheshire, had become increasingly frustrated with the difficulties of accurately marking precision targets, against which his specialist squadron was being employed. The squadron had proved at the turn of the year, during operations to V-1 sites in the Pas-de-Calais, that it could plaster PFF laid markers, only to find that the markers had been misplaced, and the target consequently missed. Calling on the low level flying expertise of Mick Martin, one of the squadron originals, the pair of them had experimented with low level marking techniques in a Lancaster, and found them feasible and effective, although somewhat hairy. What a Lancaster could do in that regard, a Mosquito could do better, and the proposition was put to Sir Ralph Cochrane, ever open to new ideas, with the result that a number of Mosquitos were taken on charge, and the efficacy of the low level method ably demonstrated in a succession of outstanding and spectacular operations against pin-point targets in the occupied countries, where colateral damage, with the attendant risk to allied civilians, was unacceptable. Cochrane lobbied Harris to allow 5 Group to mark its own targets, and occasionally those of other Groups, and this led to a whole squadron, 627, being dedicated to the low level visual marking role, with the illumination being provided by the flare force Lancasters of 83 and 97 Squadrons.

The low level marking method required a vastly different technique from that which had been employed on the high level operations, and to which the squadron had become accustomed since its formation. Cookie carrying Mosquitos would no longer have a role to play, and three of the squadron's four examples were exchanged for standard models. Also superfluous to requirements was the high level bomb sight, aiming now being down to the judgement of the pilot, with bomb release activated by a button on the control yoke. It was all a matter of practice and experience, and the 17th, 18th and 19th were taken up with simulated attacks, diving down to release height over the Wainfleet range and dropping practice marker bombs. On the 20/21st, twelve crews were briefed for a freshmen trip, in company with the marker Mosquitos of 617 Squadron, 83 and 97 Squadrons as illuminators, and a 5 Group heavy contingent, to attack the marshalling yards at La Chappelle, just north of Paris. Conducted as a raid of two halves, with an intervening one hour gap, the operation was led by a number of 8 Group "Oboe" Mosquitos, whose job was to provide a rough indication of the target's location, with the 627 Squadron element acting as the windowing force. A successful operation ensued, with the two hundred and forty strong main force exploiting 617 Squadron's accurate marking.

As additional roles, weather and photo reconnaissance also fell within the remit of the squadron, and three aircraft were prepared for met sorties to the Brunswick area on the 22nd,

to be followed by a further eleven that night, in company with a predominately 5 Group marker and heavy force to attack the city, in what was the first use of the 5 Group marking method at a heavily defended German city. 627 Squadron again carried out a windowing role, but despite accurate marking, the operation was a failure. Two nights later the attempt was repeated at Munich, and following accurate marking by 617 Squadron Mosquito crews in the face of murderous light flak, the 5 Group Lancasters plastered the centre of the city, and it was this operation which probably sealed the popular award to Cheshire of the Victoria Cross at the conclusion of his tour. 627 Squadron had again "assisted" the operation in the form of met sorties and windowing, but its own marking debut was at hand, and on the 26/27th, S/L Nelles carried out the squadron's first attempt at marking, diving down from five thousand to four hundred feet over Schweinfurt. The marking lacked the necessary accuracy, and strong headwinds delayed the heavy markers' arrival over the target, and the operation was a failure, most of the bombing falling outside of the town. Twenty one aircraft were lost to the defences, one of them being the 106 Squadron Lancaster in which Sgt Norman Jackson won a Victoria Cross.

On the 28th, eight of the squadron's Mosquitos flew up to Lossiemouth in preparation for an operation against the Kjeller airframe factory at Oslo that night. With fifty 5 Group Lancasters for company, four of the aircraft participated in a successful attack, which was accomplished without loss. Two similar sized 5 Group forces attacked the Michelin rubber factory at Clermont Ferrand, and an explosives works at St-Medard-en-Jalles on the 29/30th, and again all returned safely from what were successful operations.

May's account opened with 627 Squadron marking for two 5 Group operations on the 1/2nd. At Toulouse, two factories were bombed, one producing explosives, and the other aircraft assemblies, and at Tours, the main buildings of an aircraft repair works were completely destroyed. On the 3/4th, 1 and 5 Groups targeted the Panzer Depot at Mailly-le-Camp, with W/C Cheshire as Marker Leader in company with three other 617 Mosquito crews, and 627 Squadron tasked with attacking flak positions. Cheshire and the Master Bomber, W/C Deane of 83 Squadron, attended separate briefings, and neither seemed fully aware of the complete picture, including the involvement of the 1 Group Special Duties Flight. The marking was accurate, but a delay in calling in the main force, partly caused by interference on the radio frequencies from a commercial broadcasting station, allowed the enemy nightfighters to get amongst the Lancasters, as they milled around in the target area awaiting instructions, and forty two were shot down. The bombing, once under way, was effective, and inflicted much damage on the camp, but recriminations abounded following the operation, and many accusations were unjustly directed at Cheshire. The pattern of operations was now set for the squadron, and a busy month continued with an arms dump at Angers on the 6/7th. On the following night, eight and four aircraft respectively were detailed for the airfield at Tours and an ammunition dump at Salbris, both of which received severe damage. DZ644, the remaining Cookie carrier, failed to return from Tours with the crew of P/O Turnor and W/O Hewson, and both men were killed. Earlier in the day, DZ422 crashed onto Woodhall Spa airfield, killing F/Ls Hogg and Woodhouse. In going round again, following an attempt to land with a dead engine, the second one seized over the airfield, and the Mosquito ploughed in close to the bomb dump.

On the 24th, DZ468 was loaned to 54 Base at Coningsby for use by the Master Bomber for an operation to Brunswick, and sadly he failed to return it. Railways, airfields, factories and gun batteries would keep the squadron active up to D-Day, and it was a gun emplacement at St Valery on the 27/28th, which brought about the next squadron casualty, DZ463 being seen to go down into the sea, and F/Os Foxcroft and Acworth, both holders of the DFC, were killed. The month ended with an operation by four crews to a heavy gun emplacement on the coast at Maisy, while a further four went to a railway junction at Saumur. On return, DZ601 was belly-landed with an engine problem, and F/Os Thomson and Harries survived the incident without injury. 117 sorties were detailed during the month, with operations on fourteen occasions, for the loss of four Mosquitos and two crews.

Only one operation involved the squadron before D-Day Eve, when four crews were briefed for a return to Saumur on the 1/2nd of June, and marked the target with great accuracy for fifty eight Lancasters of 5 Group to finish the job. On the 3rd, W/C Elliott completed his tour as commanding officer, and was succeeded by W/C Curry DSO, DFC and Bar. On the 5th, over twelve hundred aircraft were aloft in support of the invasion, and gun batteries on the Normandy coast were selected for the attention of 627 Squadron, which again marked accurately for the main force heavies. The reward for their endeavours as they returned, was a sight of the invasion fleet ploughing its way across the Channel. On D-Day itself, another thousand aircraft carried out operations against communications targets, 627 Squadron supporting attacks on railways at Argentan and Caen, to hamper the progress of enemy reinforcements heading towards the battle area. DZ353 failed to return from a successful attack on the marshalling yards at Rennes on the 8/9th, having been heard to be on fire over the target, and it was later learned that the Mosquito had crashed in France, and that F/L Steere DFM and his navigator, F/O Gale, had both lost their lives.

More railway targets and an ammunition dump saw the squadron through to Mid Summer's night, when crews were briefed for synthetic oil objectives at Scholven and Wesseling. Complete cloud cover at low level thwarted visual marking at both targets, and at Wesseling, the Lancasters bombed on H2S alone. Nightfighters exacted a heavy toll, and four 5 Group squadrons, 44, 49, 57 and 619 each lost six Lancasters out of a total loss of thirty seven. At Scholven, the main force bombed on "Oboe" aimed sky markers, and inflicted a 20% loss of production on the plant. More railway targets and V-Weapon sites followed, and the month's final operation came on the 29th, when the squadron carried out its first daylight sorties, four crews being detailed for a flying bomb store at Beavoir. DZ482 and DZ516 failed to return from this operation, crashing on the way home having both carried out their marking tasks. The former fell to flak in the target area, but both members of the crew were able to save themselves, the pilot, F/O Platts, becoming a POW, while his navigator, F/O Thompson, managed to avoid the same fate, and donated his services to the Marquis until liberation came. There was talk that a prematurely exploding V-1 had brought the second Mosquito down, but whatever the precise cause, F/O Saint-Smith DFM and F/O Heath were killed. Eighty five sorties were detailed during the month, and operations were flown on thirteen nights and one day.

July began with the squadron marking a V-1 storage site at St-Leu d'Esserent, as a follow-up to an attack by 617 Squadron a few hours earlier, and a record fifteen aircraft were detailed for a return to the same target on the 7th, when the squadron used a Mosquito XX for the first time. Railway targets at Culmont Chalindrey, Villeneuve-St-George, Nevers, Caen and Revigny appeared on the squadron's list of objectives, and one Mosquito carried out a photo-reconnaissance and marking sortie by daylight, to flying bomb sites on the 19th. On the 20/21st, the squadron aircraft helped to devastate the rail junction at Courtrai, on return from which, F/O Thomson made his second emergency landing in the space of three weeks, putting in at Woodbridge in DZ518 on one engine without incident. A 5 Group operation to the rail yards at Givors on the 26/27th was successful, but DZ636 crashed in France, and F/Os Flaherty and Christie were both killed. DZ534 came down in the sea in a controlled ditching off Cherbourg, and the crew of F/O Gribbin and F/L Griffiths were picked up safely by an American destroyer. The month concluded with sorties to marshalling yards at Joigny-la-Roche, and a photo-reconnaissance by one crew at Rilly-la-Montagne by daylight on the 31st, from which the 617 Squadron crew of F/L Bill Reid VC failed to return, he and one other surviving. Ninety four sorties were detailed in the month, and operations conducted on twelve occasions.

The first week of August saw only one sortie per day, these for photo-reconnaissance duties, and in fact this type of operation, and cine-filming of 617 Squadron at work, characterised much of the remainder of the month, with seven marking raids slotted in. It was also a loss free period, although DZ633 was damaged by flak on the 31st, but managed to get home without injury to the crew. The squadron operated on nineteen occasions during August, although in many instances launching single sorties, and only eighty four were detailed in total. DZ633 again suffered flak damage during a lone photo-reconnaissance sortie over Boulogne on the 17th of September, but a different crew, on this occasion, brought the Mosquito home to a safe one-engine landing. Earlier in the month, the squadron operated against Deelen airfield in daylight on the 3rd, gun emplacements near Brest on the 5th, a highly efficient destruction of the centre of Mönchen-Gladbach on the 9/10th, and the devastation by firestorm of Darmstadt on the 11th, in which an estimated twelve thousand people lost their lives. These successes were repeated on the 12/13th, when a two hundred strong force of 1 and 5 Group Lancasters, erased the north and west central districts of Stuttgart, supported by Mosquitos of 627 Squadron. The next major operation for the squadron was to Bremerhaven on the 18/19th, when six Mosquitos were detailed to mark for the main force. This was another serious blow on a German town, fire gutting the central and port areas, and dehousing thirty thousand residents. A substantial contribution by 100 Group's RCM squadrons kept nightfighters away, and only two aircraft failed to return, a Lancaster and DZ635 of 627 Squadron, which crashed in the target area after carrying out its assigned task. Both crew members, F/L Rutherford AFC and P/O Stanbury, were killed.

Operation Market Garden, the Allied attempt to capture the bridges over the Rhine, was running into difficulties, and this, and doubts over the weather, caused a change of target at Bomber Command HQ on the 19th. A planned attack on Bremen was scrapped, and the twin towns of Mönchen-Gladbach and Rheydt were selected as the new objective. W/C Guy Gibson was acting as BASO of 54 Base at Coningsby, and champing at the bit to return to

operations before the war ended. Gibson was a warrior, the war having brought out of him qualities which might not otherwise have emerged. He relished the challenge of operations, and was most at home in the company of the officer class of fellow operational types, amidst the bustle of an operational bomber station. The decision from higher up to tear him away from his natural environment, left him listless and without direction. It did not, however, rob him of his self belief and arrogance, and when, on the 19th, he was presented with the opportunity to fly as controller on the night's operation, a task for which he was not qualified, and in a Mosquito, with which he had only a limited familiarity, he did not hesitate. The complicated plan of operation called for three aiming points, each with a different coloured marker, sufficient to test an experienced controller. Gibson though, rejected whatever advice was offered, insisting that he would do things his way, and even rejected the 627 Squadron Mosquito which had been prepared for him at Woodhall Spa. Gibson took off from Woodhall with S/L Warwick as navigator, and despite the assertions by some commentators that KB267 was carrying target indicators, I am assured by the person who closed the hatch on Gibson for the last time, that the bomb bay was empty, and that as controller, it was not necessary for him to carry markers. The marking ran into difficulty, and a certain amount of confusion ensued, with some aircraft bombing aiming points other than those assigned to them. Despite this, the operation was generally effective, and Gibson's voice was heard throughout the raid and at the end, sending the main force home. On the return journey, KB267 crashed on the outskirts of Steenberg in Holland, and was completely destroyed by fire, the question of why the aircraft crashed remaining unanswered. Gibson and Warwick lie side-by-side in the Catholic cemetery at Steenberg, where their graves are tended by the local people.

On the 23/24th, the squadron accompanied a 5 Group force, which included Tallboy carrying Lancasters of 617 Squadron, their destination the Dortmund-Ems Canal at Ladbergen. This was a target with strong 5 Group associations, and it was a successful operation, which left the banks of the canal breached, and draining occurred over a six mile stretch. On the 26/27th, ten squadron Mosquitos were detailed for an operation to Karlsruhe in company with two hundred plus Lancasters, and another damaging raid resulted. DZ521 failed to leave England's shores, crashing near Kings Lynn less than half an hour after take-off, killing the crew of F/Os Matheson and Fitzpatrick. On the following night, nine crews were briefed for Kaiserslautern, the first and only time that this town was selected for attention during the war. Approximately 36% of the built-up area was destroyed in another demonstration of the power and accuracy of Bomber Command at this stage of the war. KB366 was seen to mark the railway workshops, but continue its dive into the ground just beyond the target, presumably the victim of flak, and F/L Brown and F/L Cowan were killed. The squadron operated on twelve occasions during the month, and detailed 97 sorties.

The raid on Bremen, which was to have taken place on the 19/20th, now opened the October account on the 6/7th, and six squadron crews were briefed. The operation, which turned out to be the last major assault on the city of the war, was another perfect example of the effectiveness of the 5 Group low level visual marking system. Severe damage was inflicted on both residential and industrial areas, and over thirty seven thousand inhabitants were bombed out of their homes. On the 7th, the squadron provided one aircraft and crew to follow up the 617 Squadron attack on the Kembs Barrage, situated near the German border with

Switzerland. The brief was to circle at altitude, to await and photograph the results of the delayed action Tallboys. This was duly done, and the operation was shown to be successful, sadly though, at a cost to 617 Squadron of two experienced crews. Other squadron aircraft accompanied a 5 Group attack on the sea walls on Walcheren, both operations being mounted in daylight. Two hours after the Walcheren raid, KB195 set off to photograph the results and failed to return, the crew of F/Ls Bray and Herbert being lost without trace.

Other operations of note during October were Brunswick on the 13/14th, which had escaped serious damage during the four previous raids of 1944, but on this occasion suffered a devastating blow under the bombs of over two hundred Lancasters of the Group, following accurate marking by 627 Squadron, and the old town centre was completely destroyed. One Mosquito was sent to the Sorpe Dam on the following day, to photograph 9 Squadron's attempt to destroy it with Tallboys, and despite a handful of direct hits, that which had withstood the efforts of 617 Squadron in May 1943, now rebuffed those of 9 Squadron, and the dam held firm. KB215 was lost to an accident during training, when a practice bomb exploded prematurely, and caused the Mosquito to break up over the Wainfleet range. The pilot, F/L Bland, successfully abandoned the stricken Mosquito, but the navigator, F/O Cornell, was killed after he became wedged in the escape hatch, and could not get out in time. The U-Boat pens at Bergen in Norway were selected as the target for the 28/29th, and 627 Squadron despatched an element to Peterhead as an advance base. Cloud prevented the operation from proceeding according to plan, and only a proportion of the heavy force bombed, before the Master Bomber ordered the crews home. The final attack of nine during the month on Walcheren, took place on the 30th, with gun emplacements as the objective. The crew of DZ640 reported that a TI had exploded in its bomb bay, and that the aircraft was being abandoned over the sea. Nothing more was heard from F/L St John and F/O Dick, who were lost without trace. On the following day, the attack by ground troops began, and Walcheren was captured after a week of fighting. Operations had been mounted on ten occasions during the month, with a total of 52 sorties detailed.

The main focus in November was on oil and water, and 627 Squadron provided the deputy controller for an operation against the Meerbeck synthetic oil plant at Homberg, which was not successful. On the 4/5th, an attack on the newly repaired Dortmund-Ems Canal was a success, and an attempt at the Mittelland Canal two nights later almost followed suit. In the event, the target proved difficult to identify, but eventually 627 Squadron's F/L Devigne was able to mark, but did so with such accuracy, that the bomb fell into the water and was extinguished. The raid was finally called off after only a small number of bomb loads had been released. The Rhenania-Ossag oil refinery at Harburg was the target for the 11/12th, but production was not effected. The success which had eluded 5 Group at the Mittelland Canal two weeks previously, was won on the 21/22nd, when a breach drained a thirty mile stretch, and stranded large numbers of barges. On the 22nd, elements of the squadron flew up to Lossiemouth, in preparation for a trip to the U-Boat pens at Trondheim in Norway. The flare force was unable to identify the target, and the operation was aborted. On return, DZ642 crashed on Shetland with empty tanks, and both crew members, F/L Reid and F/O Irwin, were killed. The final operations of the month were to Munich on the 27/28th, which was



effective, and six mining sorties to the River Weser on the 29/30, which were not. Operations were mounted on only eight occasions during November, with 56 sorties detailed.

The town of Heilbronn was decimated by 5 Group on the 4/5th of December, in its only raid of the war, and with 627 Squadron providing the marking. 82% of the built up area was destroyed, and an estimated seven thousand people were killed, in an inferno which probably reached firestorm proportions. Two nights later it was the turn of Giessen, which also suffered severe damage under the bombs of two hundred and fifty Lancasters. The squadron accompanied 617 Squadron to Oslo Fjord on the 13/14th, to attack the German cruiser Köln, but it had already departed the area, and other shipping was bombed instead. Munich followed on the 17/18th, and seven Mosquitos went mining in the River Elbe on the 29/30th, the eighth one, DZ650, crashing on take-off in the hands of F/O Olliver, without injury to the occupants. Later that day, twelve aircraft flew up to Peterhead, in preparation for a raid on the Gestapo HQ at Oslo, which was to take place on the 31st. Eight of the squadron's Mosquitos bombed the target in daylight, and hits were scored. Heavy defensive fire greeted the formation, and most of the aircraft received damage of some sort, F/L Gaunt, the navigator in DZ633, suffering a thigh wound. F/L Mallender ground looped the Mosquito on return to Peterhead, but both the navigator and DZ633 were repaired and returned to duty. 53 sorties were detailed for eight operations during the month.

## 1945

New Year's Day 1945 dawned with the promise of victory in the air. Over Holland, Belgium and France, the Luftwaffe launched its ill-fated Operation Bodenplatte, committing its entire day fighter force in a desperate bid against Allied aircraft on the ground, on, in fact, the very airfields from which they themselves had been hurled into action against Allied bombers since June 1940. The successes gained on New Year's Day did not compensate for the loss of over two hundred and fifty aircraft and pilots hacked down by the defences, and which could not be replaced. As the Luftwaffe fighter arm bled to death, the further dislocation of Germany by bombing was being planned.

Canal busting was the year's first task for 627 Squadron, undertaken on New Year's Night, and further breaches resulted in the Mittelland Canal near its junction with the Dortmund-Ems at Gravenhorst. The German occupied small French town of Royan was attacked in support of the Free French Forces on the 4/5th. The German garrison commander invited the civilian inhabitants to evacuate, but many elected to stay. 90% of the town was destroyed in the ensuing attack, and over seven hundred civilians killed, but the garrison held out for another three months. Recriminations over who had commissioned the operation abounded for many years after, but Bomber Command was exonerated. The squadron accompanied a large main force to Munich on the 7/8th, in the last major attack on this city, and produced an excellent effort at Pölitz on the 13/14th, when marking its oil plant for the two hundred strong Lancaster force to reduce to a shambles. On the following night, the squadron contributed to an equally destructive raid on the oil refinery at Leuna, and helped knock out another at Brüx in Czechoslovakia two nights later. Thereafter, the weather closed in, and kept most of the Command on the ground for two weeks. On the 22nd, W/C Hallows, a veteran of the epic

Augsburg raid of April 1942, replaced W/C Curry as squadron commander. Just six operations had taken place during the month, with 31 sorties detailed.

A rare series of failures opened proceedings for February. Most of the bombing missed the intended objective of Siegen on the 1/2nd, and DZ637 was seen to be shot down over the target, both F/L Baker and Sgt Betts being killed. The second failure occurred at Karlsruhe on the 2/3rd, with low cloud largely to blame. On the 3rd, one crew photographed the 617 Squadron raid on the submarine pens at Poortershaven, and on the 7/8th, the hat trick of failures was complete, when the Group created no new breaches in the Dortmund-Ems Canal at Ladbergen. The German synthetic oil industry suffered another crushing blow, when Pölitz was revisited, this time in two waves, the first employing the 5 Group method of marking, and the second the standard PFF method. The destruction of Dresden on the 13/14th, around which so much controversy has since raged, was a two phase attack on the lines employed on occasions since February 1944. The first phase was an all 5 Group affair, with 627 Squadron marking in the face of a degree of cloud cover, and this part of the raid was only moderately successful. When the second force arrived three hours later, conditions were clear, and the city burning like a beacon. In the ensuing firestorm, the residents, and the vast numbers of refugees which swelled the population, suffered an horrendous ordeal, in which, according to various commentators, up to two hundred and fifty thousand people died.

Operations followed to Rositz, and Bohlen on the 19th, from which the Master Bomber, W/C Benjamin DSO, DFC of 54 Base, failed to return in KB401. The Dortmund-Ems Canal featured on two more nights, and the month ended with six aircraft mining the Kiel Canal on the 28th. Twelve operations were mounted during the month, with 87 sorties detailed. On the 1st of March the squadron's H2s Trials and Development Flight came into existence, under the command of S/L Hooper DFC.

Much of March was spent in the photo-reconnaissance and cine-filming of 617 Squadron at work with Grand Slams, with other operations slotted in, mining, canal busting and marking of oil related targets in the main. The final operational loss occurred on the 27th, when eight aircraft went mining in the River Elbe, and DZ599's crew reported having to ditch off the Frisians. The pilot, F/O Barnett, survived the experience, but sadly his navigator, F/S Day, did not, and he has no known grave. W/C Hallows left the squadron on the 17th for a spell in hospital, and he was replaced by W/C Kingsford-Smith on the 10th of April. During the month the squadron operated on seventeen occasions, detailing 112 sorties.

April brought operations to Moblis, Lützkendorf and Leipzig, and Pilsen, Cham and Komotau in Czechoslovakia, before the final operation of the war for 627 Squadron, the oil refinery at Tonsberg in southern Norway on the 25/26th, which was, in fact, the last raid of all by heavy bombers. The final month had produced seven operations and 65 sorties were detailed.

627 Squadron existed for a comparatively short period of time, but was unique in being the only Mosquito squadron to be dedicated to the role of low level visual marking. In both its incarnations, as a high level raider and low level marker, it discharged its duties

professionally, determinedly and accurately, and benefiting from superb leadership and a sense of family, it made a genuine and valuable contribution to the overall bomber offensive.

I am indebted to Alan B Webb, former ground crew member of 627 Squadron, for his generous assistance in providing material for this profile. To all those interested in not only 627 Squadron, but also the magnificent Mosquito, I recommend without reservation the book *At First Sight*, a factual and anecdotal account of the life of the squadron, researched and compiled by Alan, and available from him c/o The Mosquito Aircraft Museum, PO Box 107, London Colney, St Albans, Herts. AL2 1BU. priced £19.60 inc p+p.

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

## STATIONS

<b>OAKINGTON</b>	12.11.43. to 15.04.44.
<b>WOODHALL SPA</b>	15.04.44. to 30.09.45.

## COMMANDING OFFICERS

<b>WING COMMANDER R P ELLIOTT DSO DFC*</b>	13.11.43. to 03.06.44.
<b>WING COMMANDER G W CURRY DSO DFC*</b>	03.06.44. to 22.01.45.
<b>WING COMMANDER B R HALLOWS DFC</b>	22.01.45. to 17.03.45.
<b>WING COMMANDER R KINGSFORD-SMITH DSO DFC</b>	10.04.45. to 01.06.45.

## FLIGHT COMMANDERS

### A FLIGHT

<b>SQUADRON LEADER W G LOCKHART DSO DFC</b>	23.11.43. to 01.01.44.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER E R NELLES DFC</b>	19.01.44. to 15.07.44.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER R CHURCHER DFC*</b>	15.07.44. to 14.12.44.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER P F MALLENDER</b>	14.12.44. to 25.03.45.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER W W TOPPER DFC</b>	25.03.45. to 30.09.45.

### B FLIGHT

<b>SQUADRON LEADER E I J BELL DFC</b>	13.11.43. to 08.01.44.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER N W MCKENZIE DFC</b>	16.01.44. to 21.09.44.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER R W G OAKLEY</b>	21.09.44. to 01.05.45.
<b>SQUADRON LEADER J H PENNEY DFC</b>	01.05.45. to 30.09.45.

## TRIALS AND DEVELOPMENT FLIGHT

<b>SQUADRON LEADER B J HOOPER</b>	01.03.45. to 30.09.45.
-----------------------------------	------------------------

## AIRCRAFT

<b>MOSQUITO IV</b>	11.43. to 09.45.
<b>MOSQUITO XVI</b>	03.45. to 09.45.
<b>MOSQUITO XX</b>	07.44. to 09.45.
<b>MOSQUITO XXV</b>	10.44. to 09.45.

# **SECTION 2**



# **OPERATIONAL RECORD**

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

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

## OPERATIONAL RECORD

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT FTR	% LOSSES
239	1535	19	1.2

### CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING	MARKING	MINING	WINDOW	MET/PHOTO RECCE
73	121	6	4	35

### 8 GROUP

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT FTR	% LOSSES
73	477	4	0.8

Category; all bombing.

### 5 GROUP

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT FTR	% LOSSES
166	1058	15	1.4

### CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

MARKING	MINING	WINDOW	MET/PHOTO RECCE
121	6	4	35

## **TABLE OF STATISTICS**

### **Out of 19 Mosquito squadrons in Bomber Command.**

10th highest number of overall Mosquito operations in Bomber Command.

7th highest number of Mosquito sorties in Bomber Command.

4th highest number of Mosquito operational losses in Bomber Command.

### **Out of 19 squadrons in 8 Group.**

18th highest number of overall operations in 8 Group.

Lowest number of sorties in 8 Group.

16th highest number of aircraft operational losses in 8 Group.

### **Out of 11 Mosquito squadrons in 8 Group.**

10th highest number of Mosquito overall operations in 8 Group.

Lowest number of Mosquito sorties in 8 Group.

8th highest number of Mosquito operational losses in 8 Group.

### **Out of 22 squadrons in 5 Group.**

17th highest number of overall operations in 5 Group.

18th highest number of sorties in 5 Group.

21st highest number of operational losses in 5 Group.

The only squadron in 5 Group completely equipped with Mosquitos.



# SECTION 3



# AIRCRAFT LISTING

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

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

## 627 SQUADRON.

### MOSQUITO.

From November 1943.

W4072 AZ-Q From 105Sqn via 1655MTU. Crashed in the sea off Essex coast on return from Berlin 9.1.44.

DK293 AZ-L From 109Sqn. FTR Frankfurt 8/9.1.44.

DK313 AZ-A/N From 139Sqn. To 1655MTU.

DZ344 AZ-E From 1655MTU. To 692Sqn and back. To 2Gp CS.

DZ353 AZ-T/B From 139Sqn. FTR Rennes airfield 9/10.6.44.

DZ370 From 139Sqn. Returned to 139Sqn.

DZ414 AZ-O From 139Sqn. To Marshalls.

DZ415 AZ-Q/A From 105Sqn.

DZ418 AZ-F/B From 139Sqn.

DZ421 AZ-C From 139Sqn. To 1655MTU.

DZ422 AZ-D From 139Sqn. Crashed onto Woodhall Spa airfield on return from training 7.5.44.

DZ426 AZ-C/A From 139Sqn. To NTU.

DZ441 From 140Wg. To 605Sqn.

DZ442 AZ-A/D From 139Sqn. To 1655MTU.

DZ461 AZ-U From 1655MTU. To 109Sqn.

DZ462 AZ-N From 105Sqn.

DZ468 AZ-D From 692Sqn. FTR Nantes 27/28.5.44.

DZ477 AZ-K From 139Sqn. To 1655MTU.

DZ478 AZ-R From 139Sqn. Crashed on approach to Woodhall Spa while training 7.5.44.

DZ479 AZ-B/F From 139Sqn. FTR Berlin 2/3.12.43.

DZ482 AZ-P From 139Sqn. FTR Beauvoir 29.6.44.

DZ484 AZ-G From 109Sqn. To 1655MTU.

DZ516 AZ-O From 139Sqn. FTR Beauvoir 29.6.44.

DZ518 AZ-F/A/P From 139Sqn.

DZ521 AZ-M From 139Sqn. Crashed in Norfolk on return from Karlsruhe 27.9.44.

DZ525 AZ-S/B From 692Sqn.

DZ530 AZ-N/D From 618Sqn.

DZ534 AZ-H From 618Sqn. To 692Sqn and back. Ditched near Cherbourg on return from Givors 26/27.7.44.

DZ547 AZ-O/E/D From 618Sqn. To 692Sqn and back.

DZ551 AZ-E From 109Sqn. FTR Berlin 1/2.2.44.

DZ559 From 618Sqn. Returned to 618Sqn.

DZ594 AZ-X From A&AEE.

DZ599 AZ-A/F From 692Sqn. FTR from mining sortie to the River Elbe 27/28.3.45.

DZ601 AZ-A From 139Sqn.

DZ606 AZ-M/H From 692Sqn. To 1655MTU and back. To 109Sqn.

DZ611 AZ-G From 692Sqn. To 109Sqn.

DZ615 AZ-M/H/Y From 139Sqn. To 16 OTU.

DZ616 AZ-Z/G From 139Sqn. Crashed soon after take-off from Oakington when bound for Berlin 5.1.44.  
 DZ631 AZ-L/W From 692Sqn. Damaged on the ground 12.4.45.  
 DZ632 AZ-C From 692Sqn. To 139Sqn.  
 DZ633 AZ-D From 693Sqn.  
 DZ634 AZ-P/Z/E From 692Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 DZ635 AZ-H/N From 1655MTU. FTR Bremerhaven 18/19.9.44.  
 DZ636 AZ-N From 692Sqn. FTR Givors 26/27.7.44.  
 DZ637 AZ-O/X To 692Sqn and back. FTR Siegen 1/2.2.45.  
 DZ640 AZ-N/K/U From 692Sqn. FTR Walcheren 30.10.44.  
 DZ641 AZ-U/C From 692Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 DZ642 AZ-N/J/H From 692Sqn. Crashed near Sumburgh on return from Trondheim 22.11.44.  
  
 DZ643 AZ-P/O From 692Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 DZ644 AZ-R To 139Sqn.  
 DZ645 AZ-F From 139Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 DZ646 AZ-A From 692Sqn. To 139Sqn.  
 DZ647 To 692Sqn.  
 DZ650 AZ-Q From 692Sqn. Crashed on take-off from Woodhall Spa 29.12.44.  
 KB122 AZ-T From 139Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 KB153 Damaged beyond repair 28.11.44.  
 KB195 AZ-B From 139Sqn. FTR Vlissingen 7.10.44.  
 KB197 To 608Sqn.  
 KB213 AZ-R  
 KB215 AZ-H From 139Sqn via 1655MTU. Broke up over Wainfleet range while training 19.10.44.  
  
 KB223 To 16 OTU.  
 KB240 To 1655MTU.  
 KB242 To 608Sqn.  
 KB265 From 608Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 KB267 AZ-E From 139Sqn. FTR Mönchen-Gladbach/Rheydt 19/20.9.44. W/C G P Gibson VC killed.  
  
 KB329 To 139Sqn.  
 KB345 AZ-J From 608Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 KB349 To 139Sqn.  
 KB362 AZ-K From 1655MTU. To 5 Group Film Unit.  
 KB366 AZ-O From 608Sqn. FTR Kaiserslautern 27/28.9.44.  
 KB401 AZ-E From 608Sqn. FTR Böhlen 19/20.2.45.  
 KB409 AZ-Y From 608Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
 KB413 AZ-P To 142Sqn.  
 KB416 AZ-F From 608Sqn.  
 KB419 AZ-K To 109Sqn.  
 KB433 AZ-Z From 142Sqn. To 5 Group Film Unit.  
 KB446 AZ-P From 142Sqn. Force-landed in Belgium on return from Sterkrade 18/19.1.45.

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

KB462 From 142Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
KB486 From 142Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
KB490 AZ-U/Q To 109Sqn.  
KB521 AZ-M To 13MU  
KB533 AZ-N To 109Sqn.  
KB561 AZ-V To 109Sqn.  
KB625 AZ-L Crashed on take-off from Woodhall Spa while 5.5.45.  
LR497 From 105Sqn. To 109Sqn.  
LR510 From 109Sqn. To TRE.  
LR511 From 109Sqn. To 1317Flt and back. To Little Snoring.  
ML906 AZ-C- From 1409Met Flt. Crashed on landing at Woodhall Spa after navigation exercise 17.3.45.  
  
ML914 From 105Sqn. To 1317Flt and back. To 109Sqn.  
ML934 From 1409Met Flt. To 1317Flt and back. To 109Sqn.  
ML935 AZ-A- From 1409Met Flt. To 1317Flt and back. To 109Sqn.  
MM128 To 692Sqn.  
MM133 To 692Sqn.  
MM138 To 692Sqn.  
MM140 To 692Sqn.  
MM144 To 692Sqn.  
MM204 To 128Sqn.  
MM205 To 109Sqn.  
MM219 To 139Sqn.  
MM223 To 571Sqn.  
MM229 AZ-D- From 1409Met Flt. To 1317Flt and back.  
NS536 AZ-B- Crashed on landing at Boscombe Down following navigation exercise 13.3.45.  
  
NT205 AZ-L-  
PF382 To 105Sqn.  
PF415 To 128Sqn.  
PF428 To 128Sqn.  
PF444 AZ-N- To 109Sqn.  
PF498 From TFU.  
PF499 From TFU.  
PF503 From TFU.  
RV324

# **SECTION 4**



# **KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS**

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

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



## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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



# **SECTION 5**



# **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

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

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

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Air War over France. Robert Jackson. Ian Allan.  
 Als Deutschlands Dämme Brachen. Helmut Euler. Motor Buch Verlag.  
 At First Sight. Alan B Webb.  
 Avenging in the shadows. Ron James. Abington Books.  
 Avro Lancaster. The definitive record. Harry Holmes. Airlife.  
 Avro Manchester. Robert Kirby. Midland Counties Publications.  
 Battle-Axe Blenheims. Stuart R Scott. Budding Books.  
 Battle Under the Moon. Jack Currie. Air Data.  
 Beware of the Dog at War. John Ward.  
 Black Swan. Sid Finn. Newton.  
 Bomber Command. Max Hastings. Pan.  
 Bomber Command War Diaries. Martin Middlebrook/Chris Everett. Viking.  
 Bomber Group at War. Chaz Bowyer. Book Club Associates.  
 Bomber Harris. Dudley Saward. Cassel.  
 Bomber Harris. Charles Messenger. Arms and Armour Press.  
 Bomber Intelligence. W E Jones. Midland Counties Publications.  
 Bomber Squadron at War. Andrew Brookes. Ian Allan.  
 Bomber Squadrons at War. Geoff D Copeman. Sutton Publishing.  
 Bombers over Berlin. Alan W Cooper. Patrick Stephens Ltd.  
 Bombing Colours 1937-1973. Michael J F Bowyer. Patrick Stephens Ltd.  
 Confounding the Reich. Martin W Bowman/Tom Cushing. Patrick Stephens Ltd.  
 De Havilland Mosquito Crash Log. David J Smith. Midland Counties Publications.  
 Despite the Elements. 115 Squadron History. Private.  
 Diary of RAF Pocklington. M Usherwood. Compaid Graphics.  
 Each Tenacious. A G Edgerley. Square One Publications.  
 Feuersturm über Hamburg. Hans Brunswig. Motor Buch Verlag.  
 Forever Strong. Norman Franks. Random Century.  
 From Hull, Hell and Halifax. Chris Blanchett. Midland Counties Publications.  
 Gordon's Tour with Shiney 10. J Gordon Shirt. Compaid Graphics.  
 Great Raids. Vols 1 and 2. Air Commodore John Searby DSO DFC. Nutshell Press.  
 Halifax at War. Brian J Rapier. Ian Allan.  
 Hamish. The story of a Pathfinder. Group Captain T G Mahaddie. Ian Allan.  
 In Brave Company. W R Chorley. P A Chorley.  
 Lancaster at War. Vols 1,2,3. Mike Garbett/Brian Goulding. Ian Allan.  
 Lancaster. The Story of a Famous Bomber. Bruce Robertson. Harleyford Publications Ltd.  
 Lancaster to Berlin. Walter Thompson DFC\*. Goodall Publications.  
 Low Attack. John de L Wooldridge. Crecy.  
 Massacre over the Marne. Oliver Clutton-Brock. Patrick Stephens Ltd.  
 Master Airman. Alan Bramson. Airlife.  
 Melbourne Ten. Brian J Rapier. Air Museum Publications (York) Ltd.  
 Mission Completed. Sir Basil Embry. Four Square Books.  
 Mosquito. C Martin Sharp & Michael J F Bowyer. Crecy.  
 Night Fighter. C F Rawnsley/Robert Wright. Collins.

Night Flyer. Squadron Leader Lewis Brandon DSO DFC. Goodall Publications.  
 Night Intruder. Jeremy Howard-Williams. Purnell Book Services.  
 No Moon Tonight. Don Charlwood. Goodall Publications.  
 On The Wings Of The Morning. RAF Bottesford 1941-45. Vincent Holyoak.  
 On Wings of War. A history of 166 Squadron. Jim Wright.  
 Only Owls And Bloody Fools Fly At Night. Group Captain Tom Sawyer DFC. Goodall  
 Publications.  
 Pathfinder. AVM D C T Bennett. Goodall Publications.  
 Pathfinder Force. Gordon Musgrove. MacDonald and Janes.  
 Reap the Whirlwind. Dunmore and Carter. Crecy.  
 Royal Air Force Aircraft Serial Numbers. All Volumes. Air-Britain.  
 Royal Air Force Bomber Command Losses. Vols 1,2,3,4,5. W R Chorley. Midland Counties  
 Publications.  
 Royal Air Force Bomber Command Squadron Profiles series. Chris Ward.  
 Silksheen. Geoff D Copeman. Midland Counties Publications.  
 Snaith Days. K S Ford. Compaidd Graphics.  
 Start im Morgengrauen. Werner Girbig. Motor Buch Verlag.  
 Stirling Wings. Jonathon Falconer. Alan Sutton Publications.  
 Strike Hard. A bomber airfield at war. John B Hilling. Alan Sutton Publishing.  
 Sweeping the Skies. David Gunby. Pentland Press.  
 The Avro Lancaster. Francis K Mason. Aston Publications.  
 The Berlin Raids. Martin Middlebrook. Viking Press.  
 The Dambusters Raid. John Sweetman. Arms and Armour Press.  
 The Halifax File. Air-Britain.  
 The Hampden File. Harry Moyle. Air-Britain.  
 The Handley Page Halifax. K A Merrick. Aston Press.  
 The Hornets' Nest. History of 100 Squadron RAF 1917-1994. Arthur White. Square One  
 Publications.  
 The Lancaster File. J J Halley. Air-Britain.  
 The Other Battle. Peter Hinchliffe. Airlife.  
 The Starkey Sacrifice. Michael Cumming. Sutton Publishing Ltd.  
 The Stirling Bomber. Michael J F Bowyer. Faber.  
 The Stirling File. Bryce Gomersall. Air-Britain.  
 The Wellington Bomber. Chaz Bowyer. William Kimber.  
 The Whitley File. R N Roberts. Air-Britain.  
 The Squadrons of the Royal Air Force. James J Halley. Air-Britain.  
 They Led the Way. Michael P Wadsworth. Highgate.  
 To See The Dawn Breaking. W R Chorley.  
 Valiant Wings. Norman Franks. Crecy.  
 We landed by moonlight. Hugh Verity. AirData.  
 Wellington. The Geodetic Giant. Martin Bowman. Airlife.  
 White Rose Base. Brian J Rapier. Aero Litho Company (Lincoln) Ltd.  
 Wings of Night. Alexander Hamilton. Crecy.  
 2 Group RAF. A Complete History. Michael J F Bowyer. Crecy.  
 101 Squadron. Special Operations. Richard Alexander.

207 Squadron RAF Langar 1942-43. Barry Goodwin/Raymond Glynn-Owen. Quacks Books.  
408 Squadron History. The Hangar Bookshelf. Canada.

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.

Many of the lists of squadron commanding officers have been provided by Anna McIlwaine at RAF Museum Hendon and Clive Richards at Air Historical Branch.

Author and researcher Martyn Ford-Jones has allowed me to draw extensively from his research material, particularly with regard to losses during 1945.

A special mention is due to Chris Salter of Midland Counties Publications, without whose generous assistance I would not have been able to compile a complete list of all operational aircraft on Bomber Command charge during the war, a list which comprises some 28,000 entries.

[www.bombercommandmuseumarc.co.uk](http://www.bombercommandmuseumarc.co.uk)

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



# **SECTION 6**



# **STOCK LIST**

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

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

# **SQUADRON PROFILES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE**

**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**

## **OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

**MOSQUITO SQUADRONS  
OF THE PATH FINDER FORCE  
and  
OPERATIONAL STATISTICS  
OF  
BOMBER COMMAND AND ITS  
SQUADRONS**

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

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**I am indebted to John Tanner and staff at Copy Cats Swindon for the excellence of their service.**

**I am grateful to the following for providing valuable assistance with research.**

**Martyn Ford-Jones  
Anna McIlwaine at RAF Museum Hendon  
Clive Richards at Air Historical Branch**

## Aviation Art by Keith Aspinall



Commissions for original work welcomed  
Tel/Fax 01427 787438