

**ROYAL AIR FORCE
BOMBER COMMAND**

~ ~ ~

**SQUADRON PROFILES
NUMBER 2**



9 SQUADRON

Per Noctem Volamus

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

ROYAL AIR FORCE BOMBER COMMAND SQUADRON PROFILES



Bomber Command squadrons covered in a series of Squadron Profiles, each available separately.

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

Spiral bound to lay flat when open.



www.bombercommandmuseum.com/marfiles.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

**ROYAL AIR FORCE
BOMBER COMMAND
SQUADRON PROFILES**



Number 2



9 SQUADRON



by

Chris Ward

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.co.uk

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

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

GENERAL NOTES

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

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 However, where there is a blank space following the serial number of a type which has been withdrawn from service with Bomber Command, it signifies that I don't know its ultimate fate.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

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

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

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

SECTION 1



BRIEF HISTORY

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

9 SQUADRON

MOTTO PER NOCTEM VOLAMUS (Through the night we fly)

Code **WS**

9 Squadron has one of the longest histories in British military aviation, dating back to its original formation on the 8th of December 1914, when it became the first radio equipped unit, operating in the role of artillery spotting. A decision to equip all artillery spotting squadrons with a radio flight, resulted in the dispersal of 9 Squadron, which eventually lost its identity and was disbanded in March 1915. Resurrected in April 1915 as a radio training unit, the squadron also undertook coastal defence duties, until moving to France in November. The squadron operated as a bomber and reconnaissance unit until the end of 1916, when it reverted to its former role of artillery spotting, but carried out some bombing operations from June 1918. On the last day of 1919 the squadron was again disbanded, only to reappear as a night bomber unit in April 1924. In February 1939, the squadron began conversion onto Wellingtons, the type with which it would enter the impending conflict, and in July, took up residence at Honington, as one of 3 Group's six Wellington equipped front line squadrons.

When war came on the 3rd of September 1939, the squadron was under the command of Wing Commander H P Lloyd, and it had a unique opportunity to help test the theory, expounded after the Great War, concerning the inviolability of the self-defending bomber in daylight over enemy territory. On the 4th of September, Bomber Command launched two operations against enemy shipping off the north-west German coast. The first, a 2 Group effort, resulted in half of the attacking force of ten being shot down by flak. The second, a 3 Group show, included six Wellingtons from 9 Squadron. L4268 and L4275 were both shot down into the sea, one of them being claimed by a German fighter pilot, thus becoming the first Allied aircraft to fall victim in this way during the war. There were no survivors from either of the crews, captained by F/S Borley and F/S Turner. A further crew was lost to the squadron four days later, when P/O Rosofsky's L4320 crashed near the Suffolk/Norfolk border during training. On the 27th, W/C Lloyd departed the squadron, and in 1941, having risen to the rank of AVM, he would become AOC Malta. He was replaced at 9 Squadron by W/C Cole, at a time when a period of relative inactivity had descended upon the Command, and this gave ample opportunity for further training.

On the 30th of October, such training resulted in a tragic mid-air collision between L4288 and L4363 over Honington, in which the crews of flight commander S/L Lamb and F/O Chandler were killed. In November the squadron mounted a number of armed reconnaissance sorties over the North Sea, but it was December before bombing was again on the agenda. On the 18th, nine squadron aircraft joined others of 37 and 149 Squadrons, and headed for Wilhelmshaven to attack elements of the German fleet. Three of the squadron's Wellingtons were shot down by fighters in the target area, N2872 of flight commander S/L Guthrie, N2939 of F/O Challes, and P/O Lines' N2940. F/O Allison headed out to sea with N2941 on fire, in a vain attempt to escape the inevitable, and none of these aircraft produced a survivor. More fortunate, however, was Sgt Hewitt in N2983, who despite severe damage to his aircraft and a dead crewman, managed to make it back to a ditching off the Norfolk coast, from where the survivors were rescued. Following this debacle, which also caused the loss of five crews from

37 Squadron and two from 149 Squadron, and in the light of excessive losses involving 99 Squadron Wellingtons four days earlier, the theory of the self-defending bomber was reappraised, and daylight operations restricted. At the end of December, S/L McKee, who bore the nickname "Square" McKee, in reference to his squat and broad build, was posted in from 99 Squadron, and following promotion to Wing Commander, he would assume command of the squadron early in the coming year.

1940

The winter of 1939/40 was extremely harsh, and seemed to deepen as the new year progressed. This would severely restrict operational activity until the big freeze loosened its grip towards the end of February, although the "Phoney War" would also play its part in preventing any escalation of the bombing war, as each camp was reluctant to risk reprisals. W/C McKee was appointed as the new squadron commander on the 17th of January, but it would be some time yet before he presided over anything of a war-like nature, other than fruitless shipping searches over the North Sea and occasional leaflet sorties. Despite this lack of hostility, death was an ever present possibility, and when N3017 crashed while being ferried from Weybridge on the 8th of March after undergoing modification work, there were no survivors, and the squadron lost a decorated pilot in F/O Macrae DFC. The first bombing of enemy territory resulted from the inadvertant slaying of a civilian on the island of Hoy, during a Luftwaffe attack on elements of the Royal Navy at Scapa Flow on the 17/18th. The government ordered a reprisal, and two nights later, Whitleys and Hampdens attacked the seaplane base at Hörnum on the island of Sylt. Returning crews made enthusiastic claims of the destruction wrought, and made newspaper headlines, but photographic reconnaissance carried out on the 6th of April failed to detect any signs of damage, and over optimistic post raid reports in the future would come back to haunt the Command with the publishing of the Butt report in August 1941.

The German invasion of Denmark and Norway on the 9th of April brought an end to the "Phoney War", at which juncture the squadron moved to Lossiemouth on detachment to Coastal Command. From there it mounted single reconnaissance sorties to the Stavanger and Bergen areas, suffering its only loss of this short and ill-fated campaign, when P2520 was lost in the sea off southern Norway on the 12th, with no survivors from the crew of Sgt Bowen. The squadron returned to Honington on the 14th of the month, and continued to send small numbers of aircraft to Norway, but within four weeks, events elsewhere diverted attention from what was already a lost cause, and pitched the squadrons of the AASF and 2 Group into an unequal fight, which would see them hacked to pieces in the skies over France and the Low Countries, as the enemy pushed forward its advance.

The gloves came off for good on the 10th of May, when German forces crossed into Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium. The Battle and Blenheim squadrons of the AASF operating from airfields in France, and the Blenheims of 2 Group stationed in East Anglia, would be the ones to face the onslaught as they attempted to slow the advance. Time after time they would fly into the face of murderous ground fire, and become embroiled in one-sided combats with marauding fighters, and within days some squadrons would have lost

most of their aircraft and many of their finest pre-war crews. Following the bombing of Rotterdam on the 15th, Bomber Command was finally authorized to begin an assault on targets in mainland Germany, and fulfil the strategic role for which it had been prepared. On the previous night, elements of 3, 4 and 5 groups had carried out attacks on road and rail communications around Aachen and Mönchengladbach in tactical support of the land battle, and on the 15/16th, ninety nine aircraft were sent to sixteen industrial and railway targets in the Ruhr in the first truly strategic operation. On the following night, six Wellingtons and an equal number of Hampdens attacked oil targets in the Ruhr, and having been briefed for one at Gelsenkirchen, F/O Smalley and crew successfully ditched N3015 off the French coast, from where they were rescued. Similar targets in the soon to be occupied countries also continued to receive attention, and returning from Namur on the 22/23rd, F/O Day crash-landed L7777 at Abingdon without injury. Events on the ground forced the use of the night-flying Groups for further tactical operations during the remainder of the month, but once the moon phase was past, the emphasis returned to Germany's oil industry, which it was believed could suffer a reduction in production of half a million tons over the next few months through bombing.

The squadron lost a flight commander in June, when S/L Peacock DFC and crew were brought down in Holland in P9232 on the 5/6th when bound for Duisburg. The pilot and one other were killed, but the four who survived represented the first to do so from a shot down 9 Squadron aircraft, and they all fell into enemy hands. Operations continued in support of the battle raging in France, 163 aircraft attacking docks and communications targets on the 13/14th, for the loss of one Wellington from 9 Squadron. It was piloted by Sgt Hewitt, who died with his crew when L7787 crashed in France. Sixty nine aircraft were abroad on the 18/19th, F/O Butler failing to return from Leverkusen in N2897, which went into the sea with the loss of all on board. After F/O Nicholson's L7807 suffered flak damage during an operation to Bremen on the 21/22nd, he skillfully ditched the Wellington within sight of a convoy, and all were rescued. The policy of despatching small numbers of aircraft to multiple targets continued in July, and produced largely ineffective results, as well as a steady attrition of experienced crews. The squadron lost another flight commander, when S/L Monypenny and his crew failed to make it back from Wismar in L7795 on the 19/20th, and again there were no survivors. Two nights later, P/O Wanklyn, and the only other occupant of P9205, were killed in a crash close to the airfield while conducting night circuit and landing training. On the 24th, W/C Healy, who had formerly commanded 107 Squadron from August 1936 to October 1937, became the latest commanding officer, replacing W/C McKee, who was posted away.

As the Battle of Britain raged overhead in August and September, Bomber Command contributed to the defence of the nation by attacking enemy airfields and industrial targets in the Ruhr, before turning much of its attention towards the build up of barge and other marine transport in Dutch, Belgian and French ports, which were being prepared for the planned invasion. On the 28/29th of September, crews were again briefed for numerous targets, Cologne and Hanau being among those assigned to elements of 9 Squadron. T2505 failed to return from the former, only the pilot, Sgt Oliver, surviving as a POW, and T2472 crashed on return from the latter, fortunately without injury to the crew of F/O Cox. October began with

almost one hundred aircraft roaming far and wide over Germany and the Channel coast on the night of the 1/2nd. R3282, with F/L Fox at the controls, just failed to make it back from Berlin, coming down in the sea off Lowestoft after more than eight hours in the air, and there were no survivors. On another night of multiple distant objectives, including Berlin and Stettin on the 14/15th, S/L Hinks took T2464 to Magdeburg, and died with his crew when it crashed well north of the target. Scattered minor damage was the result of a raid on Kiel on the 16/17th, on return from which many crews were diverted because of fog. P9278 came down in Bedfordshire, but Sgt Bevan and crew survived with injuries. Essen and Cologne were among targets for which crews were briefed on the 7/8th of November, the former being home to the giant Krupps armaments works, which was the intended aiming point for sixty aircraft, including an element from 9 Squadron. It is doubtful that any bombs found their mark, or even Essen for that matter, and P/O Berry crashed at Honington on return in T2462, the crew walking away from the resultant fire with cuts and bruises. The squadron posted missing another flight commander as a result of operations to Berlin and Hamburg on the 14/15th, and this time it was S/L Pritchard and crew, who successfully abandoned the stricken L7852 after it was hit by flak, and parachuted into captivity, while the Wellington plunged into the IJsselmeer.

Düsseldorf provided the main focus for operations on the 7/8th of December, during which, R3220 crashed near Ostend, killing F/L Stanley and crew. The distant city of Venice was one of many destinations for a force of seventy aircraft on the 21/22nd, and it brought about the demise of L7799, which crashed near Eastbourne, killing Sgt Harrison and his crew. This was the squadron's final casualty in a year of trial and error for the Command, and one which had been characterized by a backs-to-the-wall struggle in an effort to present a defiant face to an as yet all-conquering enemy. The New Year offered little prospect of a change in fortunes, and another dark year of failure lay ahead for the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Richard Peirse, who had been appointed to the position in October, when his predecessor, Sir Charles Portal had been made Chief of the Air Staff. Peirse would do his utmost to fulfil the Air Ministry directives which arrived on his desk, but the equipment available to him and his crews, and the demands placed upon them, would render most of his efforts ineffective, and ultimately lead to calls for bomber aircraft to be diverted to more worthy causes.

1941

A second successive harsh winter did little to ease the C-in-C's path at the start of the year, which opened with attacks on German and Channel ports, and while Wilhelmshaven was being targeted by a small force on the 11/12th, eleven Wellingtons went to Turin. On return, Sgt Parkes force-landed R1244 in Vichy France, and destroyed the Wellington by fire, before he and his crew were interned for a few months. An Air Ministry directive issued on the 15th reconfirmed the oil policy, and a list of nine plants was drawn up for particular attention. On the 16th, the squadron welcomed a new commanding officer in the shape of W/C Arnold, who was posted in from 40 Squadron, where he had been a flight commander. That night he presided over his first operation, when Wilhelmshaven was again the target for a disappointing raid, and small scale attacks on Düsseldorf, Hanover and Wilhelmshaven saw out the remainder of the month. February began in similar fashion, but on the 10/11th, ACM

Peirse despatched the largest force to date to a single target, 222 aircraft, to attack various specific objectives at Hanover, and 183 returning crews claimed to have bombed as briefed. R1096 fell victim to the doubtful aircraft recognition skills of an Allied convoy while on the way home, and crashed while trying to land at Martlesham Heath, fortunately without injury to Sgt McKay and his crew. A secondary operation on this night to the docks at Rotterdam included the first sorties by the new Stirling bomber, and 3 Group became the first to despatch more than one hundred aircraft in one night. A mini campaign against Cologne began on the 26/27th, the second of which involved 130 aircraft on the 1/2nd of March, when returning crews encountered thick fog, which caused fourteen aircraft to crash or be abandoned. F/O Lawson and crew were heard requesting a bearing, but R1288 disappeared into the sea off the Yorkshire coast without survivors.

A new Air Ministry directive issued on the 9th ordered the C-in-C to change the emphasis of operations from oil to maritime targets, in an attempt to stem the huge losses to U-Boats in the Atlantic. These vessels, and their comrade-in-arms, the long range reconnaissance bomber, the Focke-Wulf Kondor, were to be attacked where-ever they could be found, at sea, in their bases, on the slipways and in the assembly and component factories, and a new list of targets was drawn up accordingly. Other industrial objectives in Germany were still to be attacked as opportunity allowed, but the strategic bombing of Germany would take second place for the next five months. Hamburg, Bremen and Berlin were selected for attention on the 12/13th, with ship yards and aircraft factories the main focus. N2744 was one of over eighty aircraft sent to Bremen, and crashed in Germany on the way home, with just two survivors from the crew of Sgt Hall. A small scale raid to Cologne on the 27/28th resulted in the demise of R1335, which was shot down by a nightfighter over Belgium. The entire crew survived and were taken into captivity, but the pilot, F/L Shore, managed to escape and return home, rising by war's end to the rank of Wing Commander. Sadly he was killed after the war. Another of the crew, P/O Long, was one of those involved in the Great Escape from Sagan POW camp in 1944, and he was executed by the SS on recapture. (W R Chorley, Bomber Command Losses Vol 2). 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. Thus began a long running saga which would be played out monotonously over the next ten months, and be a constant thorn in the flesh of Bomber Command. Over that period, dozens of operations would be mounted against these ships, most of them ineffective in the face of smoke screens and a spirited flak and fighter defence, and numerous crews would be sacrificed in the process.

Most operations at this time were small scale, and of little more than nuisance value, and yet they were costing the Command dearly in trained crews. Eighty aircraft went to Berlin on the 9/10th of April, while single figures visited Vegesack and Emden. The night's operations cost six Wellingtons, a Stirling and a Whitley for indeterminate results. 12 Squadron lost its commanding officer, and 9 Squadron T2473 from the Berlin raid, with the crew of P/O Sharp, who were all killed. Similarly on the 17/18th, over a hundred aircraft took off for Berlin, while small numbers of others raided Rotterdam, Cologne and Mannheim. Sgt Heaysman failed to return from Cologne in N2745, and was killed with one of his crew, and Sgt Stark and crew all perished, when T2900 came down in the sea off the Suffolk coast on return from

Berlin. This was the first occasion since the disaster of December 1939, that the squadron had lost more than one aircraft from a single night's operations. Four Wellingtons went to Emden on the 26/27th, while the main thrust was being directed at Hamburg, and Sgt Damman and crew appeared to become disoriented on return, eventually force-landing R1281 in Holland, whereupon they joined the ever increasing roll-call of guests of the Third Reich.

The start of May brought operations to Hamburg on the 2/3rd and Cologne on the following night, and it was on this occasion that Sgt Fairfax dropped the squadron's first 4,000lb "cookie" using one of two Merlin powered Mk II Wellingtons which had been taken on charge during March. While a hundred aircraft were busy at this target, a very minor raid took place on Rotterdam, during which T2964 was damaged beyond repair, although without injury to Sgt Anderson and crew. Also on this night, a small predominately Wellington force attacked Brest, and this was followed up twenty four hours later by over ninety aircraft, and hits were claimed although not confirmed on the two ships. Wellingtons made up half of the force of 140 aircraft sent to Mannheim on the 5/6th, but typically for the period, damage was slight and superficial. It was a similar story on the following night at Hamburg, but on the credit side, both operations were concluded without loss. The 8/9th was a record night for the Command for the total number of sorties launched, an impressive 364, the majority of them bound for Hamburg and Bremen. Over 180 of these crews were briefed for the former, and they started eighty three fires, over a third of which were classed as large. The busy month continued with raids on the twin towns of Mannheim and Ludwigshafen on the 9/10th and 12/13th, and in between, two more effective attacks on Hamburg on the 10/11th and 11/12th, which again left many fires burning. Returning from Boulogne in the early hours of the 17th, R1267 crashed on the station, and the pilot, Sgt Mitchell, was killed. The station commander and medical officer entered the blazing wreck to rescue two trapped crew members, and this act of courage was later recognised by the award of the George Medal.

The remainder of the month was devoted to minor operations, and after a raid by a hundred aircraft on Düsseldorf on the 2/3rd, June proceeded in similar vein. A daylight reconnaissance operation cost the squadron two crews on the 9th, including that of the commanding officer, W/C Arnold. Four Wellingtons, all from 9 Squadron with the crews of W/C Arnold, S/L Pickard, F/O Lamb and P/O Robinson, and twelve Blenheims were sent to patrol the French and Belgian coasts in search of shipping. When BF109s arrived on the scene, R1758 and T2620 were shot down into the sea, while the other two Wellingtons fought them off and escaped into cloud. W/C Arnold's crew baled out from the former at low altitude to survive as POWs, but he had insufficient time to do so and was killed, and only one survived from the crew of F/O Lamb DFC, and this man also fell into enemy hands. This was the first 9 Squadron commanding officer to lose his life on operations, but sadly, he would not be the last. On the 20th, W/C Wasse was installed as the new commanding officer, having previously served it in the capacity of flight commander. On the 10th of August, the above mentioned S/L "Pick" Pickard, who is often credited with the famous phrase, "there's always bloody something", was posted to 3 Group at the conclusion of his tour, with over sixty operations to his credit. He had already made a name for himself as one of the stars of the 1941 propaganda film, Target for tonight, in which he was the pilot of Wellington F for Freddie. In November he would be appointed to the Command of 4 Group's 51 Squadron, and

at the end of February 1942, he would lead the audacious Bruneval raid, in which airborne troops parachuted from Whitleys to capture a Würzburg radar installation. Later in 1942, W/C Pickard was to assume command of the clandestine 161 Squadron at Tempsford, and carry out numerous daring single-handed flights in Lysanders to drop and pick up agents in France on behalf of the SOE and SIS organisations. Sadly, he and his long time navigator, Bill Broadly, were to lose their lives in a 464 Squadron Mosquito during the epic raid on the walls of Amiens prison in February 1944. In the meantime, however, the principal targets throughout the remainder of June were Cologne and Düsseldorf, with eight and nine raids respectively of varying sizes directed against them, and in keeping with the times, none of them achieved more than superficial damage.

One of the most effective operations to date, however, took place against Cologne on the 7/8th of July by over one hundred Wellingtons. Central and eastern districts suffered extensive damage, around 140 buildings were destroyed, railway lines were cut, and the emergency services dealt with over 170 fires. Only three Wellingtons failed to return, one of which was R1040, which was caught by a nightfighter over Holland, and P/O Jamieson and his crew were killed. Briefings took place for four targets on the following night, fifty Wellington crews being assigned to an attack on Münster, where some success was reported. Only one aircraft was missing as a result, 9 Squadron's T2973, in which Sgt Pitt and crew lost their lives. Yet another new Air Ministry directive was received at Bomber Command HQ on the 9th, this one highlighting the morale of the enemy civilian population as a weak point. Future operations should aim to exploit this, particularly among the working classes, and the enemy transport system was also earmarked for attention. An ineffective attack on Cologne on the 10/11th was attended by the loss of W5729, which crashed in the Pas-de-Calais on the way home, killing Sgt Retter and two of his crew, a third succumbing to his injuries soon afterwards. Other Wellington targets during the month included Bremen on the 14/15th, Duisburg on the 15/16th, Hamburg on the 16/17th, Cologne on the 17/18th and 20/21st, and Frankfurt and Mannheim on three occasions thereafter. A major daylight operation against the German raiders at Brest on the 24th was conducted by Wellingtons of 1 and 3 Groups, while Fortresses of 90 Squadron and 5 Group Hampdens tried to draw off the fighters under a Spitfire escort. Themselves unescorted, the Wellingtons pressed home their attack in the face of fierce opposition, and lost ten of their number, and although hits on the ships were again claimed, they were not confirmed.

The policy of diluting the available forces by despatching small numbers to multiple targets, continued into August, the night of the 12/13th being typical, with Hanover, Berlin, Magdeburg and Essen the main objectives. Sgt Lewin and crew were killed when R1341 was shot down over Germany from the Hanover force, and R1513 failed to return from a minor operation to the Kiel area, and F/L Ball and crew died. Kiel figured again on the 19/20th, although it escaped damage when poor weather intervened to curtail the operation, and Sgt Everitt and crew were killed, when R1455 crashed in the sea off the Danish coast. A raid on Cologne on the 26/27th resulted in an eventful time for S/L Hal Bufton. The operation was ineffective, and W5703 crash-landed in France, Bufton and two of his crew evading capture. This was fortuitous for Bomber Command, as Bufton went on to command 109 Squadron during the "Oboe" trials programme with Wellingtons, and later Mosquitos, in 1942, a

programme which bore fruit during the major campaigns of 1943/44, when the device was carried into battle by Mosquitos of 8 Group's 105 and 109 Squadrons. It was during this month, that the damning Butt Report was published, which highlighted the glaring failure of the Command to land bombs within miles of its targets, despite the enthusiastic claims of the crews. It was a bodyblow to the morale of the Command, and it led to calls to review the existence of an independent bomber force, when its aircraft might be more profitably employed elsewhere against the U-Boat, and to redress reversals in the Middle east.

Berlin suffered a degree of damage in a raid by 190 aircraft on the 7/8th of September, and nearly three thousand people were bombed out. The cost to the Command was fifteen aircraft, 9 Squadron posting missing the crew of Sgt Saich, who were killed when Z8845 was shot down by a nightfighter over Holland. More fortunate, however, was the crew of Sgt Wilmot, which survived intact, when R1499 crashed at base on return. Four targets, including the Italian city of Genoa, were planned for the night of the 26/27th, but fog caused a recall which most obeyed. X3222, which had been bound for Emden, crashed in Norfolk, killing two crewmen outright and injuring the pilot, Sgt Gingles, and two others, one of whom died within hours. This was the first Mk III Wellington to be written off in Bomber Command service. A small scale raid on Genoa on the 28/29th was reported as successful, but F/S Kitson, who had recently embarked on his second tour with the squadron, was lost in the target area, and died with his crew when R1279 crashed, possibly as the result of engine trouble. September closed with raids on Hamburg on the last two nights, the latter resulting in a crash at base on return involving X3347 and the crew of Sgt Humble-Smith, all of whom sustained injuries. October brought a prolonged period of poor weather conditions, which frustrated the C-in-C's efforts to strike effectively at the enemy, and perhaps silence the critics. A new record number of sorties was established on the 12/13th, with operations against Nuremberg, Bremen and Hül. A total of 373 were despatched to these and some minor targets, but bombing was scattered, and the results were not commensurate with the huge effort expended, and the loss of thirteen more aircraft and crews. It was the same story at Düsseldorf on the 13/14th, Nuremberg again on the 14/15th, Duisburg on the 16/17th, Bremen on the 20/21st and 21/22nd, Mannheim on the 22/23rd and Frankfurt on the 24/25th. On the credit side, some useful damage occurred at Kiel on the 23/24th, and an attack on Hamburg on the 26/27th caused damage and casualties well above the average for the period. At least as far as 9 Squadron was concerned, it was a successful month, in which no crews were posted missing. This was partly the result of a reduction in sorties while the crews were trained in the use of the Gee navigation device, and it would be mid February before the trials and training were completed.

Determined to score a victory, Sir Richard Peirse prepared a major operation for the night of the 7/8th of November, for which Berlin was selected as the objective. Doubts about the weather conditions brought objections from AVM Slessor of 5 Group, and he was allowed to withdraw his contribution and send it instead to Cologne, while a third element made up almost entirely of Wellingtons was to go to Mannheim. In the event, 169 aircraft took off for the Capital, and seventy three crews reported bombing in its general area. These managed to destroy fourteen houses, and damage a few dozen other buildings, while losing over 12% of their number to the defences. The Cologne operation was equally disappointing, although it

was concluded without loss, and no bombs fell within miles of Mannheim. This was the final straw for the Ministry, which issued another new directive on the 13th, informing the C-in-C that he was to restrict further operations while the future of the Command was reviewed. Another 9 Squadron crew to come through alive but injured was that of Sgt Pendleton, who returned from Hamburg in X3352 on one engine on the 10/11th of November, and crashed on approach to East Wretham. This crew was more fortunate than their colleagues, however, X3280 crashing off the Dutch Frisians on the way home, killing P/O Wilgar-Robinson and crew, and this was the only loss from the force of over a hundred aircraft, and the first 9 Squadron failure to return since the end of September. Düsseldorf provided the main target for operations on the 27/28th, and X3287 suffered an engine fire over the Dutch coast on the way home, which eventually required the crew to abandon the Wellington over the Kent coast. Sadly, two of Sgt Ramey's crew landed in the sea and were drowned. S/L Inness, who would shortly assume command of the squadron, had a lucky escape during a training flight on the 6th of December, when an engine caught fire and fell from X3289, which was subsequently force-landed safely. No further losses or incidents occurred during the remainder of a year which had seen the Command fail to achieve the results of its propaganda, even to the point where its very existence as an independent force was being questioned in high places, but 1942 would bring a change in leadership and the emergence of a "Shining Sword" for the new commander to wield.

1942

The year began with an almost paranoid obsession with the German cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, which continued to shelter at Brest, and whose departure in February would cause major embarrassment to Britain. The Gneisenau had been severely damaged by a torpedo the previous year, which had necessitated a six month long repair programme, but she was now ready for sea again, and the two ships, or occasionally three when the Prinz Eugen came to visit, continued to represent a major distraction for Bomber Command. No less than eight operations were mounted against the port in the first two weeks of January, with these ships as the principal targets. In the early morning of the 6th, X3388 lost an engine in the target area, and returned on one, colliding with trees on approach and crashing. P/O Hodges and one of his crew sustained injuries, and a further man was killed, while the remainder walked away. On the 10th, W/C Inness was appointed to command the squadron on the posting out of W/C Wasse, who would return to the operational scene in September, when taking command of 149 Squadron. Major operations during the middle part of the month were against Wilhelmshaven on the 10/11th, Hamburg on the 14/15th and 15/16th and Bremen on the 17/18th, none of which resulted in serious damage. Sgt Telling and crew were killed in a training accident on the 19th, when structural failure caused X3370 to crash from 250 feet over Norfolk and burst into flames.

Brest continued to be the focus of attention at the start of February, until the Kriegsmarine took matters into its own hands and resolved the situation once and for all in the infamous Channel Dash episode. Shortly after an attack by a small force of Wellingtons on the evening of the 11th, and in foul weather conditions, the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen, with destroyer escort, slipped anchor and headed into the Channel in an audacious bid for freedom.

Operation Fuller had been prepared for precisely this eventuality, but sadly, it was such a secret operation, that few seemed to know what it represented. The low cloud and squally conditions concealed the German fleet until the late morning of the 12th, but only 5 Group was standing by at four hours readiness. It was early afternoon before the first aircraft took off, and ultimately, a new record number of 242 daylight sorties would be launched in an attempt to halt the ships, and Coastal and Fighter Commands also played their part. The weather prevented all but a few crews from carrying out attacks, and although the ships were straddled by bombs, no hits were scored before they passed through the Straits of Dover and made good their escape. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau struck mines recently laid by 5 Group, and their progress was slowed to an extent, but by the following morning, they and the others were safely in home ports, completing an ignominious twenty four hours for the British government. Fifteen Bomber Command aircraft were missing from this operation, adding to all those which had failed to return from Brest over the past ten months, but at least this annoying itch had been scratched for the last time, and the Command could concentrate its resources on more worthwhile targets. Ironically, having survived the countless attacks directed against it at Brest over the past ten months, Gneisenau was damaged beyond repair during a Bomber Command raid on Kiel on the 26/27th, just two weeks after arriving at a supposedly safe haven. 9 Squadron had not been called into action for Operation Fuller, and apart from some leafleting sorties, it spent the month training. It was, in fact, a training accident which cost the squadron Sgt Dalglish and crew, who were killed when X3398 went into the sea off Clacton on the 15th.

On the 22nd, ACM Sir Arthur Harris arrived at the helm of Bomber Command, and immediately set about the task of transforming it into a war winning weapon. It would not be an overnight transformation, however, and it would be a further twelve months before all the hard work and the advances in tactics and technology began to come together in an orgy of destruction at the Ruhr. Harris recognized that success hinged on overwhelming the emergency services and defences by condensing large forces through a target area in the shortest possible time, and he also knew that urban centres are destroyed by fire and not blast. On the 14th, a new Air Ministry directive had reconfirmed the Command's assault on the morale of the enemy's civilian population, and opened the door for a blatant and sustained area bombing campaign, and in the light of the Command's poor performance against precision targets, this was the only way forward, particularly in view of the fact that Germany's industrial base lay in the towns and cities where the factories were situated and the workers lived. Thus far, the year had produced no 9 Squadron failures to return from operations, largely because very few operational sorties had been despatched, but this would all change when the squadron returned to a full operational programme.

The new era began in earnest on the night of the 3/4th of March, when Harris despatched the largest ever force to a single target, which ironically was of a precision rather than area nature. The Renault factory at Billancourt in Paris was producing thousands of lorries for the Wehrmacht, and 235 aircraft set out to destroy it in a carefully orchestrated operation in three waves, led by experienced crews, and with extensive use of flares. The bombing, carried out from low level to aid accuracy and avoid French civilian casualties, caused severe damage to the factory, and only one aircraft was lost, but many French people lost their lives. A series of

three operations on consecutive nights against Essen began on the 8/9th, and this was the first Gee led operation. Industrial haze prevented accurate bombing by the two hundred strong force, and X3641 was one of eight aircraft missing, lost without trace with the crew of Sgt Doughty. X3411 also failed to make it back, and ditched in the North Sea, from where only one of Sgt Lovell's crew was subsequently rescued. A similarly unsuccessful raid on the following night accounted for X3643, which returned early with engine problems and crashed near Norwich, killing the crew of Sgt Cartwright. Three nights later, Sgt Webb and crew walked away from the wreckage of X3603, after it suffered flak damage during an operation to Kiel, and crashed while trying to land at Bodney. The first successful Gee led raid fell on Cologne on the 13/14th, during which, some important industrial concerns were severely damaged, and fifteen hundred houses were hit. Following two more disappointing attacks on Essen on the 25/26th and 26/27th, Harris despatched a force of 234 aircraft to Lübeck on the 28/29th. Selected for its coastal location to aid navigation, the paucity of its defences, and its half timbered buildings and narrow streets, it was ideal for a fire-raising attack, and the predominately incendiary bomb loads reflected Harris's intentions. Conducted on similar lines to the successful Billancourt operation at the start of the month, this was another highly effective attack, and the first genuine success for the area bombing policy.

April saw the largest force to date despatched to a single target, when 263 aircraft set off for Cologne. Despite the size of the effort, the results were discouraging, and the squadron posted missing the crew of P/O Brooke, who were all killed when X3415 crashed near Bonn. A further 250 aircraft went to Essen on the 10/11th, from where F/O Mactaggart and crew failed to return in X3702, again without survivors. Essen featured again two nights later, concluding a disappointing series of raids on the city, and once more the squadron lost a crew, when X3722 crashed in the general area of the target, killing Sgt Davidson and all but one of the others on board. An experimental operation to Cologne on the 22/23rd failed to achieve the intended results, despite all sixty nine aircraft being equipped with Gee as a blind bombing aid. Both the Wellingtons which failed to return were from 9 Squadron, X3358 crashing in Germany with P/O Hale and four of his crew surviving as POWs, and X3638 came down in Holland, and this resulted in the deaths of Sgt Barnes and one of his crew, a third succumbing later to his injuries. A third aircraft, X3759, crashed in Suffolk on return, and the deaths of Sgt Ramey and four of his crew completed a bad night for the squadron. A series of four raids on consecutive nights on Rostock commenced on the 23/24th, in an attempt to repeat the success at Lübeck at the end of March. S/L Holmes and crew were lost without trace in X3226 during the raid of the 25/26th, but the campaign against the port was a success, with major industrial and residential damage resulting in what amounted to a 60% destruction of the main town area. The squadron suffered its final loss of the month when Kiel was the target on the 28/29th, X3716 crashing in Denmark with no survivors from the crew of Sgt Samson.

An elaborate operation to bomb the docks at Warnemünde on the 8/9th of May, employing a mixed force with medium and low level elements, became an expensive failure costing nineteen aircraft, including four Lancasters of 44 Squadron. 9 Squadron's X3369 fell victim to flak near the target, and crashed on the coast, killing F/L Elliott and his crew. Light flak was a constant danger to aircraft engaged in mining operations, and Z1615 was brought down off

Denmark before reaching the briefed drop zone on the 15/16th, although Sgt Richards and three of his crew were rescued by a local boat, and ended up in captivity. A minor operation to Boulogne on the 17/18th cost just one aircraft, and that was X3276, which was lost without trace with the crew of Sgt Wanostrocht. On the 27th, and during a time of relative inactivity, W/C James became the new commanding officer, arriving in time for the Harris masterstroke, the first one thousand bomber raid, Operation Millennium. During the final week of May, an assortment of aircraft from the training units began to arrive on bomber stations, giving rise to much speculation but no answers. Harris wanted four thousand bombers with which to win the war, and while there was never a chance of his getting them, there was always a danger that those earmarked for Bomber Command might be diverted to another Command or theatre of operations. In order to demonstrate to the government, the Air Ministry and the Ministry of Aircraft production that his Command was the only worthwhile destination for the fruits of the country's massive commitment to the manufacture of bomber aircraft, he needed a spectacular victory, and a dose of symbolism. It was out of this that the Thousand Plan was born, with the intention of launching a thousand aircraft in one night to a single major German city, to erase it from the map. Bomber Command could not on its own raise a thousand aircraft from frontline strength, and would require the cooperation of other Commands, principally Coastal and Flying Training. This was forthcoming in letters to Harris on the 22nd and 23rd, but following objections from the Admiralty, Coastal Command underwent a change of heart, and withdrew its contribution, but did send along a handful of navigators to help out. Undaunted, Harris, or probably his deputy, AM Sir Robert Saundby, scraped together every airframe capable of something resembling controlled flight, and pulled in the screened crews from their instructional duties, and come the night, the figure of one thousand aircraft would not only be reached, but comfortably surpassed.

As the days ticked by towards the end of May, the only question mark concerned the weather, and this was not playing ball. A real danger arose that the giant armada may draw attention to itself, and the point was fast being reached when the operation would have to either take place, or be postponed for the time being. Finally, at "morning prayers" on the 30th, Harris's chief meteorological adviser, Magnus Spence, gave a qualified nod in the direction of the Rheinland as the region most likely to see a break in the cloud, while northern Germany and Hamburg, Harris's original choice as target, would be completely covered. Thus did the fickle finger of fate decree that Cologne would host the first one thousand bomber raid in history, and that night, 1047 aircraft set off, some of the older and more abused ones from the training units somewhat reluctantly. Honington despatched fourteen Wellingtons of 9 Squadron, including two old Mk Ics, and six from 1429 Flight. One of the former returned early, and twelve reached and bombed Cologne, while one other bombed an alternative target. X3469 ran short of fuel, and was force-landed in Belgium on the return flight, and one man, Sgt Pexman, was fatally injured. Sgt Langton and the remainder of his crew survived as POWs, but their squadron colleagues, F/L Hodges and crew in BJ674, were less fortunate, and all died when a nightfighter brought them down over Holland. The operation was an outstanding success which destroyed over 3,300 buildings, and damaged to some extent many thousands more. The overall figure of forty one missing aircraft was a new record high, but some of these had been the training aircraft which had been unable to climb to a respectable height, and in the context of the operation, it represented a sustainable 3.9%.

Harris was anxious to exploit the massed assembly of aircraft for a second time as soon as possible, and consequently the second Thousand Plan operation followed on the 1/2nd of June, with Essen as the target. In contrast to Cologne, this was a dismal failure by the 956 available aircraft, which scattered bombs all over the Ruhr, and left the Essen authorities reporting only superficial damage, but at least the squadron negotiated this one without loss. A follow-up raid twenty four hours later by less than two hundred aircraft was equally ineffective, but some small compensation was gained at Bremen on the 3/4th, when a modest amount of housing was damaged, and some bombs fell into the harbour area. Taking off for Emden on the 6/7th, Z1575 crashed immediately and burned out, injuring the pilot, P/O Cowan, but he was the only crew casualty. Another failure took place at Essen on the 8/9th, and then X3695 disappeared into the sea on the 11/12th with the crew of P/O Saul, who had requested a bearing while returning home from a mining sortie. Emden was again the destination on the 20/21st, and it was the first operation with the squadron for W/C James, and his twenty eighth in all. Intercepted by a nightfighter, X3713 was shot down, and W/C James and his crew were killed. A small scale raid on St Nazaire on the 23/24th failed when only three of the fourteen aircraft located it. X3423 crashed in Berkshire on return, and Sgt Kingdon and three of his crew were killed. On the 27th, W/C Southwell arrived to assume command, having relinquished that position at 57 Squadron on the 16th, and he presided over a loss free period, which included the final Thousand Plan operation to Bremen on the 25/26th. On this occasion, higher authority ordered Coastal Command to participate, although its contribution is classed as a separate raid, and the total number of aircraft despatched on this night exceeded that sent to Cologne. The outstanding success of the original Millennium operation eluded the force again this time, but almost six hundred buildings were destroyed, most of them houses, and some useful damage was inflicted on a number of important war industry factories. The losses, however, amounted to forty eight aircraft, a new record high, but 9 Squadron was not represented among them.

June ended, and July began, with follow up raids on Bremen, which did not significantly add to the city's woes, and little major activity was mounted until a mini campaign against Duisburg began on the 13/14th. The first raid failed to inflict more than superficial material damage, but the second, on the 21/22nd, was more encouraging, with some industrial damage in addition to the usual residential destruction. The third raid, on the 23/24th, enjoyed only slight success, and the squadron posted missing F/O Brown and crew in Z1577. The Wellington crashed in Germany, and the pilot was killed, a second man dying of his injuries, and the remainder falling into enemy hands. This first loss for nearly a month was followed five nights later by the deaths of Sgt Hannaford and crew in X3456, which crashed in the sea during what seemed to be the traditional late July trip to Hamburg. This was a bad night for the squadron, during the second of two raids on Germany's Second City in three nights. P/O Mullins and crew were killed when X3475 fell victim to flak, and X3606 crashed at Bremen during the same operation, killing S/L Ledger and three of his crew. The month ended on a sour note for the squadron, when it contributed aircraft to a 630 strong force bound for Düsseldorf on the last night. Despite some bomb loads falling in open country, substantial damage resulted to residential areas, and twelve thousand people were bombed out. The defences hit back by claiming twenty nine of the attackers, including BJ878, which crashed in

the target area with no survivors from the crew of P/O Pink, and BJ876 was despatched by a nightfighter over Belgium, with only one man prevailing from the crew of Sgt Hall.

Those six missing crews in eight days were the final squadron casualties on Wellingtons, and the squadron would undergo a metamorphosis in August, which would take it from the Fenlands of East Anglia, to within a stone's throw of Lincoln. 5 Group was about to lose one of its finest squadrons, 83, to the Pathfinders, where it would become a founder member. Of equal pedigree, 9 Squadron was drafted in on the 7th, and installed at Waddington in preparation for the arrival of its first Lancasters. The conversion and working up process got underway on the 9th, and nine examples of the now non-operational Manchester supplemented the Lancasters for training purposes only. On the 12th, R5196 became the first of the new type to be taken on charge, making the squadron the 9th operational unit to be so equipped. A misplaced feeling of confidence in the Lancaster probably attended its arrival, and certainly, in a mixed force, it generally fared better than the poorer performing Halifaxes and Stirlings. The first few weeks of operations, however, would banish any thoughts of invincibility on the part of the crews. A new era began with the formation of the Path Finder Force on the 15th, something to which Harris had been opposed on principle, and this was a view shared by all but one of his Group commanders. Typically of the man, however, and to his eternal credit, once overruled by higher authority, he gave the PFF his unstinting support, and with his inspired choice of the then G/C Don Bennett to head it, he had laid the foundations of a professional and highly skilled organisation. Evidence of this was conspicuously lacking at the start of its operational career, when leading its first raid on the northern port of Flensburg on the 18/19th. No bombs fell within miles of the intended target on this occasion, and there was little if any improvement at Frankfurt on its second outing on the 24/25th. The first success came at Kassel on the 27/28th, when good illumination was exploited by the main force, and a moderate amount of damage resulted.

Having disposed of its last Wellington on the 22nd of August, 9 Squadron went to war in Lancasters for the first time on the 10/11th of September, when Düsseldorf was the target for a force of over 450 aircraft, including some from the training units. The squadron was now up to full strength with seventeen Lancasters on charge, of which four were detailed with the crews of W/C Southwell, S/L Clyde-Smith, F/L Stubbs and F/O Cowan to take part, and although one aircraft became unserviceable just before take-off, the remaining three got away and returned safely from an operation in which the main force took advantage of the excellent Path Finder marking, and inflicted heavy industrial and residential damage on the city. Losses were heavy, however, 7% of the force failing to return, and worse was to follow on the 16/17th, when a smaller force went to Essen, and lost thirty nine of its number, over 10%. Among the victims were the first two 9 Squadron Lancasters to fail to return, W4186, which was lost without trace with the crew of P/O Musselwhite, and W4765, in which Sgt Hobbs and his crew were killed. Three nights later, W4184 crashed near the target while attacking Munich, and only one man survived from the crew of P/O Haward. Wismar, on the Baltic coast, was selected for an attack by 5 Group on the 23/24th, with the Dornier factory as one of the aiming points. Bombing was carried out by some crews from below 2,000 feet, and numerous fires indicated a successful operation. Four of the more than eighty Lancasters failed to return, and half of them belonged to 9 Squadron. R5907 fell to flak in the target area,

and P/O McKeen and crew were killed, as were F/S White and his crew when W4230 went down into the Baltic. The month ended with W4237 failing to return from a mining sortie to the Baltic on the 29/30th, and once again there were no survivors, this time from among the crew of Sgt Goalen. The above apart, September had been an excellent month for the Command, with a string of successful operations, both before 9 Squadron returned to the fray and after. Karlsruhe on the 2/3rd, Bremen on the 4/5th, Duisburg on the 6/7th, the above mentioned attack on Düsseldorf, Bremen on the 13/14th and Wilhelmshaven on the 14/15th, all suffered what was probably their heaviest and most destructive raids to date, and it can surely be no coincidence that this period coincided with the emergence of the Path Finder Force from its shaky beginnings. If any period in the wartime career of Bomber Command could be identified as the turning point in the long and arduous road to effectiveness, then September 1942 was it. It would not be an overnight transformation even now, and failures would continue to outnumber successes for some time to come, but the elements were coming together, and even as these events were taking place, the Mosquito crews of the PFF's 109 Squadron were carrying out brilliant pioneering work with the Oboe blind bombing device under the command of former 9 Squadron stalwart, W/C Bufton, and their hard work, as already mentioned, would bear fruit magnificently in the coming year.

In just nineteen days of Lancaster operations, 9 Squadron had lost six aircraft and crews, and only one man had survived as a POW from the forty two crewmen involved. In contrast, October was negotiated without loss, and had as its high point Operation Robinson, the 5 Group daylight attack on the Schneider armaments complex at le Creusot, and the nearby Montchanin transformer station. Ninety four Lancasters set out, including a contingent of eight from 9 Squadron led by W/C Southwell, with W/C Slee of 49 Squadron in overall command. The operation was not entirely successful, but only one aircraft was lost, a 61 Squadron Lancaster, which bombed from too low a height, and crashed into the target. Italy was the main focus of attention for the remainder of the month and through November into December, in support of Operation Torch, the Allied activity in North Africa, which would ultimately lead to Montgomery's victory over Rommel at El Alamein. Thirteen raids were mounted in all, and the squadron's next three losses were as a result of these. Tragedy struck the crews of R5916 and W4265, as they arrived home from Genoa in the early hours of the 8th of November. The Lancasters collided and crashed in the circuit, killing the crews of F/O Mackenzie DFC and F/S McDonald, both pilots Canadian. No further losses occurred during the month, and it was not until the 9/10th of December that the Reaper returned to the squadron, this time claiming F/S Jordan and crew, whose W4764 was shot down by a nightfighter over France during an operation to Turin, the penultimate raid in the current Italian campaign.

An ill-fated 5 Group operation against eight small German towns on the 17/18th ended in disaster, with nine of the twenty seven Lancasters despatched failing to return. W4155 went to Diepholz, and crashed in Germany killing Sgt Allen and four of his crew, and ED349 suffered a similar fate in the hands of Sgt Wilson and crew who were briefed for Cloppenburg, and only one man survived. The year hadn't quite finished with the squadron yet, and another tragic incident lay in store three nights later. Shortly after take-off for Duisburg on the 20/21st, the heavily laden W4182 collided with W4259 of 44 Squadron over Lincoln, and

both aircraft plunged into the outskirts of the city, Sgt Hazell and crew and those in the 44 Squadron aircraft being killed. This loss was compounded by the failure to return from the operation of ED347, which fell victim to a nightfighter over Holland, and crashed with no survivors from the crew of Sgt Tyreman. On the following night 137 aircraft of 1, 5 and 8 Groups went to Munich, and wasted most of the bombs on open country. W4185 was brought down near the target, and F/S Fenwicke-Clennell died with five of his crew, the other man falling into enemy hands. This was the last major operation of a year which had brought change to the squadron, but no reduction in the attrition rate of its crews.

1943

This was to be a year of major campaigns, which would bring spectacular successes punctuated by bitter failures. After an ineffective and hesitant start to the bomber war, Harris, once at the helm, had begun to sow the seeds of a force in 1942, which would grow into a weapon of unbelievable power and destructive capability in 1943. What he could have no control over, however, was the enemy response, which countered every innovation employed to improve techniques with a defensive measure, and the balance of power would continue to fluctuate, first one way then the other throughout the year, although as the year ended there was a notable shift of advantage away from the Command. A new Air Ministry directive issued on the 14th of January came in response to continued heavy losses to U-Boats in the Atlantic, and it gave the Command authority to area bomb four French ports which contained U-Boat bases and other support facilities.

The year began, however, with a series of seven small scale raids on Essen and one on Duisburg in the first two weeks, as part of the Oboe trials programme, and these involved Mosquitos of 8 Group and predominately 5 Group Lancasters, although 1 Group joined in on some of the operations. The operation of the 3/4th employed just nineteen Lancasters, three of which failed to return, and the squadron registered its first loss of the year, when W4840 was caught by a nightfighter over Holland, and F/L Lonsdale DFC and crew were killed in the ensuing crash. On the 8/9th, Duisburg was substituted for Essen, and Sgt Foote and crew met a similar end at the hands of a nightfighter, also over Holland. The final Oboe trials raid came at Essen on the 13/14th, this time with sixty six Lancasters, four of which failed to return, and the squadron posted missing the crew of Sgt Lyons, who were lost without trace in W4843.

Berlin was selected for two attacks by medium sized predominately Lancaster forces on consecutive nights, beginning on the 16/17th. This was not a successful raid and bombing was scattered, with most damage occurring in the southern districts. One building of note was destroyed, however, the 10,000 seat Deutschlandhalle, the largest covered hall in Europe. On the credit side, only one Lancaster was lost, but on the following night, the defenders claimed twenty two aircraft in return for an even less effective raid, and it was a disaster for 9 Squadron, which posted missing four crews. W4157 and ED436 were lost without trace with the crews of F/S Gibson and Sgt Chilvers, and W4379 and W4761 both fell in Germany, the latter the victim of a nightfighter on the outward flight, with no survivors from F/S Storey's crew. The former at least did not result in total loss of life, Sgt Carswell and four of his crew parachuting into captivity. A bad month for the squadron became worse on the 29th, when

ED503 crashed near Boston in the course of a fighter affiliation exercise, and F/L Lind and his crew died. Only moderate success attended a raid on Hamburg on the 30/31st, in return for which the squadron again paid dearly in crews' lives. ED477 failed to return with the crew of F/S Thomas, who were all killed, and ED481 crashed in Yorkshire on return, having been diverted to Leeming, and again there was total loss of life, in this case among the crew of F/S Nelson. Ten Lancasters and crews had thus been lost during the first month of 1943, and this did not auger well, in view of the demands shortly to be placed upon the hard-pressed crews.

When ED496 crashed near Sleaford during an air test on the 4th, it must have seemed that the misfortunes of January were about to be repeated. Only five crewmen were aboard the Lancaster at the time, but Sgt Land and the others all died. February would, in fact, see a reduction in losses, possibly because much of the effort was directed at Lorient and Wilhelmshaven for the greater proportion of the month. The former received its ninth and final raid under the recent Air Ministry directive on the 16/17th, by which time it was a deserted ruin, and the latter claimed the lives of Sgt Davis and three of his crew on the 18/19th, when ED492 was brought down, and the three survivors became guests of the Reich. Nuremburg claimed two more on the 25/26th, and as frequently happened at this target, much of the bombing failed to find the mark. ED520 was lost without trace with the crew of F/S Hunter, and ED495 was hit by flak in the target area and crashed, killing F/O Mitchell and one other, the remainder swelling the ranks of 9 Squadron personnel on extended leave in German POW camps.

The Ruhr campaign was earmarked for a start in the first week of March, but first Harris sent three hundred aircraft to Berlin on the 1/2nd, and despite spraying bombs over an area of a hundred square miles, some significant damage resulted. Returning to Waddington in the early hours, ED490 crashed within sight of the airfield, and three men were killed, while F/L Verran and the three others of his crew survived with injuries. The final raid before the start of the Ruhr offensive was mounted against Hamburg on the 3/4th, and although a hundred fires were started, much of the bombing fell onto the small town of Wedel thirteen miles downstream after the H2s marking went astray. The night of the 5/6th of March produced the first round in the Ruhr campaign, and the much visited town of Essen, with its giant Krupps armaments complex, was selected to open proceedings. This would be the first time that a large force was sent against Essen with Oboe marking to guide the Path Finder heavies, and this would render impotent the blanket of industrial haze which had always concealed this city in the past, and saved it from the worst ravages of a Bomber Command assault. 442 aircraft and crews were prepared for the night's operation, which would be conducted in three waves behind the Path Finders, and be led by the Halifax element. These began their take-offs before 19.00, and were followed by the Stirling and Wellington contingent, with the Lancaster squadrons bringing up the rear.

9 Squadron contributed ten Lancasters and crews, led by S/L Jarrett in ED479. The other crews were those of F/L Cowan in ED502, F/Os Meyer and Van Note in ED480 and ED493 respectively, W/O White in ED566, F/Ss Lewis and Walsh in ED487 and ED589, and Sgts Boczar, Brown and Hobbs in ED489, ED558 and ED494. Despite an unusually high number of early returns, and the bombing of alternative targets, 362 crews bombed as briefed, and

dealt the first decisive blow of the war on Essen. Over three thousand houses were destroyed, and many hits were scored on Krupps buildings for the modest loss of fourteen aircraft. All of the 9 Squadron contingent reached and bombed the target, and all returned safely. Before the following month was over, no less than six of the above mentioned crews would have been posted missing, and not one of the Lancasters would survive to retirement. Before the next Ruhr operation, Harris switched his force to targets in southern Germany, Nuremberg on the 8/9th, Munich on the 9/10th, both of which were moderately successful, and Stuttgart on the 11/12th, which was not. 9 Squadron negotiated these without loss and also the second Ruhr raid on the 12/13th, which was again directed at Essen, and was even more concentrated around the Krupps works than the one of a week earlier, and with this, the mood at Waddington was beginning to brighten. A temporary setback on the 13/14th accounted for F/S Lewis and crew in ED494, who were lost without trace while mining in Polish waters, but the remainder of the month passed without further casualties. On the 15th, W/C Smith became the new commanding officer, having previously commanded 4 Group's 58 Squadron between November 1940 and June 1941, but sadly his time with the squadron would be brief. W/C Southwell would eventually continue his operational career, when taking command of 150 Squadron in the Middle East in August.

April would prove to be the least rewarding month of the Ruhr campaign, largely because more operations were mounted against targets outside the region. It began promisingly for the Command, however, with another highly successful tilt at Essen on the 3/4th, but it was a bad start for the squadron, and it got worse as it progressed through the second week. ED479 was missing from the Essen raid, and this contained the crew of S/L Jarrett, who died in its wreckage on German soil, and ED694 was despatched by a nightfighter over Holland during the same operation, with no survivors from the crew of Sgt Swire. On the following night, another nightfighter shot down F/S Walsh's ED696 over Germany when Kiel was the target, again none surviving, and the operation itself was a failure. A training crash near Mildenhall killed Sgt Ingram and all seven others on board ED662 on the 6/7th, and then three more crews were posted missing from the second of two disappointing raids on Duisburg on consecutive nights on the 9/10. ED502 fell victim to a nightfighter over Holland on the way home, and W/O White and his crew were killed, ED806 suffered an identical fate involving the crew of P/O Paramore, and ED566 was lost without trace with the crew of Sgt Hobbs. On the 10/11th, five hundred aircraft set out for Frankfurt, and almost entirely missed the city, only a few bombs managing to inflict superficial damage, and the squadron paid for this failure with the life of its commanding officer, W/C Smith, who died with his crew in the wreckage of ED501 on only his fourth sortie since taking over. The new commanding officer was W/C Burnett, who was posted in from 44 squadron on the 12th.

On the 14th, the squadron moved station for the last time during the war, when it took up residence at Bardney. Harris divided his strength on the 16/17th, when sending the Lancaster and Halifax squadrons to distant Pilsen in Czechoslovakia to target the Skoda armaments works, while a predominately Wellington and Stirling force attacked Mannheim. The former operation was a complete failure, no bombs falling within miles of the planned aiming point, and the thirty six missing aircraft were split evenly between the two types. The secondary force lost a further eighteen aircraft in return for a moderately effective attack, and this

brought the night's casualty figures to a new record high. A raid on Stettin on the 20/21st proved to be the most successful non-Ruhr raid of the campaign period, destroying almost four hundred houses and damaging some important war industry factories. Another crew was lost from Waddington after the date of the move to Bardney, Sgt Brown's ED799 disappearing without trace during a mining operation on the 22/23rd. The first operational loss from Bardney was reserved for the very last night of the month, P/O Nunez and crew missing without trace from a moderately successful trip to Essen in ED838, and this followed another ineffective attack on Duisburg on the 26/27th.

May brought a return to winning ways with some spectacular successes, and it was kinder to the squadron in terms of losses, despite a heavy round of operations as the Ruhr campaign ground on. Dortmund received the largest non-1,000 raid to date on the 4/5th, when 596 bombers were despatched to cause significant damage to industrial and residential areas, amounting to over twelve hundred buildings destroyed. Thirty one aircraft failed to return, and from this point, losses on Ruhr targets would assume worrying proportions. After so many failures in the past, Duisburg finally succumbed to an outstandingly accurate and concentrated attack on the 12/13th, which left almost sixteen hundred buildings in ruins, and sank or seriously damaged sixty thousand tons of shipping in the port. On the following night, a large force went to Bochum, while a predominately 5 Group element tried unsuccessfully to rectify the recent debacle at Pilsen. Most of the bombs fell in open country, and among the nine missing Lancasters was ED589, which had been shot down by a nightfighter over Holland during the outward flight, and Sgt Saxton and his crew were killed.

The main force stayed on the ground for the next nine days, and girded its loins for what would be another record breaking operation. It was during this period, that 617 Squadron booked its place in bomber folklore with its epic attack on the dams on the 16/17th. Dortmund, having hosted a record raid at the start of the month, was the destination for a new record non-1,000 force of 826 aircraft on the night of the 23/24th. Accurate Pathfinder marking was exploited by the huge main force, and enormous damage resulted to residential and industrial districts, with almost two thousand buildings reduced to ruins. It was not a one-sided contest, however, and the defences claimed the high figure of thirty eight of the attackers, although 9 Squadron was not represented among them. In contrast, Düsseldorf escaped serious damage two nights later, and the squadron's ED834 was brought down into the Scheldt Estuary with no survivors from the crew of F/O Woodhouse. At the end of the month, the Squadron contributed to one of the most devastatingly successful operations of the entire campaign, when the Barmen half of the twin towns known jointly as Wuppertal, was targeted by seven hundred aircraft on the 29/30th. Around 80% of the town's built up area was consumed by fire, and over three thousand people were killed, but the Command again paid heavily for this success, and registered the loss of thirty three aircraft.

The moon period kept the crews at home for eleven days at the start of June, but when they next ventured out, on the night of the 11/12th, they delivered a punishing blow on Düsseldorf which was the most effective against the city to date. On the following night it was Bochum's turn to reel under the weight of bombs from almost three hundred aircraft, but a relatively high number, twenty four, were lost, including the squadron's ED588, which fell to a

nightfighter over Holland, killing Sgt Wood and one other, while the remainder became POWs. This was the first of a spate of losses to afflict the squadron over the next two weeks. Oberhausen was effectively attacked on the 14/15th, but the defences again exacted a heavy toll, with over 8% of the force failing to return. The squadron was represented among the missing by LM329, which fell to a nightfighter over Holland without survivors from the eight man crew of Sgt Evans. A degree of success was gained at Cologne on the 16/17th, but bombing was scattered, and the result less satisfactory than hoped for, and again the squadron was forced to post missing a crew, when ED847 was caught by a nightfighter over Belgium and crashed, killing four of the crew of Sgt Aldersley, he and two others falling into captivity.

On the 20/21st, the squadron joined other Squadrons of 5 Group for Operation Bellicose, an attack on the old Zeppelin factory at Friedrichshafen near the German border with Switzerland, which was now being used for the manufacture of radar equipment. The operation was led by W/C Slee, formerly of 49 Squadron, who was to act as Master of Ceremonies in the manner of Gibson at the dams. Flak over Germany on the outward flight caused his Lancaster to lose an engine, and he dropped back into the stream, handing over control to W/C Gomm, the highly regarded commanding officer of 467 Squadron. At the target, some of the initial marking was slightly inaccurate, but sufficient bombs fell close enough to cause substantial damage. As planned, the crews continued on across the Mediterranean, to land at bases in North Africa in what became known as "shuttle" raids. No aircraft were lost from this operation, but a hectic round of four major raids in five nights began on the 21/22nd, and this would bring a return to normality. Krefeld suffered the destruction of over 5,500 houses on this night, and more than a thousand people were killed, but the defenders claimed a massive forty four aircraft, the highest losses of the campaign to date. More than twelve hundred buildings were wrecked in Mülheim on the 22/23rd for the loss of thirty five aircraft, which included 9 Squadron's ED699, in which Sgt Denness and his crew all died. After a night's rest, six hundred aircraft laid waste to around 94% of the built-up area of Elberfeld, the eastern half of Wuppertal, and this time there were no 9 Squadron aircraft among the thirty four failures to return. This run of outstanding successes came to an end on the 25/26th, when almost all the bombs intended for the oil town of Gelsenkirchen were scattered liberally around the Ruhr, and this operation brought about the demise of 9 Squadron's ED831, which was shot down into the Ijsselmeer by a nightfighter, killing flight commander S/L Hobbs and his crew.

Cologne underwent a mini campaign spanning the turn of the month, beginning with a remarkable success by almost six hundred aircraft on the 28/29th. 6,400 buildings were destroyed on this one night alone, and over four thousand people were killed, and when a slightly larger force returned on the 3/4th of July, 2,200 more houses were reduced to rubble. This was the night on which the Luftwaffe employed the "Wild Boar" night fighting technique over a target for the first time, using single seater day fighters under the command of Major Hajo Herrmann. Some of the thirty missing bombers probably fell victim to this innovation, perhaps ED689, which crashed into a suburb of the city, killing F/L Wakeford and his crew of seven. By the conclusion of the third raid on Cologne by an all Lancaster heavy force on the 8/9th, a total of eleven thousand buildings had been destroyed, five and a half thousand people lay dead, and a further 350,000 had been rendered homeless. An unsuccessful assault

on Gelsenkirchen on the 9/10th brought about the end of ED480, although with a less tragic outcome than most of those previously cited. Hit by flak in the target area, the Lancaster was successfully abandoned by its crew over France, and Sgt Duncan and four others ultimately evaded capture, while the two remaining members of his crew trudged off to prison camp. Another crew which almost entirely cheated the Reaper was that of F/O Head in JA679. Briefed to attack the transformer station at Reggio Emilia in Italy on the 15/16th, the Lancaster crashed following a collision with another aircraft, believed to be DV167 of 50 Squadron, which also failed to return. The 9 Squadron pilot and five of his crew survived as POWs, and one man was killed. Subsequently, F/O Head and one other escaped from Italian hands to return home.

The Ruhr campaign was now effectively over, although a number of further operations would be conducted at the end of the month. Harris could look back with some genuine satisfaction at a high number of successfully prosecuted operations over the past five months, which had left much of Germany's industrial heartland in ruins. Losses had been high, but generally speaking for a good return, and the factories and the Empire Training Schools were more than able to keep pace, and, in fact, facilitate an expansion. Harris now sought an opportunity to demonstrate the power at his disposal, by erasing from the map in a short series of maximum effort operations, a major industrial city. In each of the preceding years of the war, the Command had gone to Hamburg during the last week of July, and as Germany's second city, it suited perfectly Harris's criteria. Its political status was without question, and as the centre of U-Boat construction and the home to numerous other important war sustaining factories, it had always been high on the list of priority targets. There were, however, other considerations of an operational nature which made it the ideal choice to host Operation Gomorrah, not least of which was its proximity to a coastline to aid navigation. It was also close enough to the bomber stations to allow a force to approach and retreat in the scant hours of darkness afforded by mid summer, and perhaps most significantly of all, beyond the range of Oboe which had proved so decisive at the Ruhr, it boasted the wide River Elbe to provide strong H2s returns for the Path Finder navigators high above.

The first raid in the series was launched on the 24/25th, involving 790 aircraft, 9 Squadron contributing sixteen Lancasters. It was attended by the first operational use of "Window", to blind nightfighter, searchlight and gun-laying radar, and the efficacy of the device was immediately apparent during the outward flight, when few combats took place, and in the target area, where the normally efficient co-ordination between flak and searchlights was absent, the beams wandering randomly around the sky, and failing to lock on to their quarry. Despite some misplaced markers and a pronounced creep-back, the force cut a swathe of destruction extending from the city centre across the north-western districts, and out into outlying communities. This successful operation was concluded for the loss of only twelve aircraft, a proportion of which were caught off course, and outside the protection of the Window screen. All of the squadron's aircraft returned safely, and did so from Essen on the following night, when Harris took advantage of the setback dealt to the enemy defensive system by Window, and delivered another crushing blow against the city in general and Krupps in particular. A night's rest preceded the next trip to Hamburg on the 27/28th, and what followed the arrival of the seven hundred and thirty aircraft over the city was both

unplanned and unprecedented. A period of unusually hot and dry weather had left the city a tinderbox, and when the Path Finders released their markers two miles east of the planned aiming point, they did so with great concentration over the densely populated working class residential districts of Hamm, Hammerbrook and Borgfeld. The main force followed up with pinpoint accuracy and almost no creep-back, and over 2,300 tons of bombs rained down, much of it condensed into the area mentioned. The individual fires joined up to form one gigantic conflagration, which sucked in oxygen from surrounding areas at hurricane velocity to feed its voracious appetite. Such was the force of these winds, that trees were uprooted and flung bodily into the inferno, at the heart of which, temperatures reached a thousand degrees Celsius. This meteorological phenomenon only subsided when all the combustible material had been consumed, and by the time that the emergency services had penetrated into the firestorm area, parts of which remained out of bounds for weeks, there was no one to rescue. An estimated 40,000 people died on this one night alone, on top of the fifteen hundred who had perished three nights earlier, and a mass evacuation began later in the day. The third Hamburg raid took place on the 29/30th, and although much of the bombing fell into the already devastated firestorm area, another crushing blow was visited upon this magnificent city. The defences were beginning to recover from the catastrophe of Window, and on this night brought down twenty eight of the attackers, among them 9 Squadron's JA692, which fell to flak over the target, and produced no survivors from the crew of F/L Fox.

A relatively small force devastated Remscheid on the 30/31st, and this brought down the final curtain on the Ruhr offensive. The final raid of Operation Gomorrah took place on the 2/3rd of August, and was rendered ineffective by violent electrical storms en-route, which forced many crews to jettison their loads over Germany or the sea. ED493 failed to reach Germany, having been shot down by a nightfighter off the Dutch coast outbound, and Sgt Mackenzie and his crew were killed. A night training exercise on the 6/7th caused the demise of W4133, which crashed in the circuit and burned out, with no survivors from among the crew of Sgt Davis. Following a mini campaign against Italy, which was now teetering on the brink of capitulation, the crews were briefed for a target of immense importance, about which intelligence had been filtering through since the start of hostilities. German research into rocketry was the subject of such reports, which were being received from various sources. It gradually became clear that this activity was centred on Peenemünde on the Baltic coast, and PRU Mosquitos were sent to monitor the site on a regular basis. Churchill's chief scientific adviser, Professor Lindemann, or Lord Cherwell as he became, steadfastly refused to accept the feasibility of such weapons, and even when confronted with a photograph of a V-2 taken by a PRU Mosquito in June 1943, he remained unmoved. It took the combined urgings of Duncan Sandys and the brilliant scientist, Dr R V Jones, to persuade Churchill to act, and an operation was planned for the first available opportunity. This arose on the night of the 17/18th of August, and a complex three phase plan was drawn up to ensure the destruction of all the important areas, namely the housing estate, the factory and the experimental site, each of which was assigned to a specific wave of aircraft, with the Path Finders charged with the responsibility of shifting the point of aim accordingly. The whole operation was to be controlled by G/C Searby of 83 Squadron as Master of Ceremonies, while G/C Slee, formerly commanding officer of 49 Squadron, led a force of eight 139 Squadron Mosquitos in a spoof raid on Berlin to draw off the nightfighters.

9 Squadron put up twelve Lancasters headed by S/L Bunker in ED700 as part of the 5 and 6 Group force briefed to attack the experimental site in the final phase, and the other crews were those of F/L Brain in ED499, F/O Wells in ED836, P/Os Billing, Newton and Stout in R5744, W4964 and DV198 respectively, F/Ss Hall, Livingstone, Lyon and Robinson in ED551, W5011, EE136 and ED656, and Sgts Black and Gill in EE188 and ED666. 596 aircraft took off, mostly between 21.00 and 22.00 hours, the numbers somewhat depleted by the late return from Italy that morning of a large number of Stirlings, which could not be made ready in time. The initial marking of the housing estate went awry, and markers fell around a forced workers camp at Trassenheide two miles beyond, where heavy casualties were sustained by the inmates who were trapped in their wooden barracks. Once rectified, however, the operation proceeded reasonably well, and extensive damage was inflicted upon the accommodation site by 3 and 4 Groups, and 1 Group hit the factory. It was when predominately 5 and 6 Group aircraft were in the target area that the nightfighters arrived from Berlin, and they proceeded to take a heavy toll, both in the target area and out to sea, as the fighters pursued the retreating bombers towards Denmark. The operation was not completely successful, but caused sufficient disruption to the site to delay development of the V-2 by a number of weeks. Forty aircraft failed to return, and 5 Group suffered particularly badly to the tune of seventeen Lancasters. 9 Squadron, paradoxically, came through unscathed, and it was a feature of its wartime career, that when the Command lost heavily, the squadron often went against the trend.

With the recent successes of the Ruhr, Hamburg and Peenemünde behind him, Harris now felt the time was right, to turn the attention of his force onto the target which he deemed to be the key to victory. He believed that he could "wreck Berlin from end to end", particularly if the American 8th Air Force would join in, and that this would bring about the collapse of German morale, and an end to the war without the need for the kind of bloody and protracted land campaigns that he had personally witnessed twenty five years earlier. For political reasons he would never secure the assistance of the Americans for a Berlin campaign, but was confident that he could go it alone. The campaign, which, with an autumn recess, would drag on until the spring of next year, began on the night of the 23/24th of August, with a maximum effort raid of over seven hundred aircraft, controlled by a Master Bomber, W/C Fauquier of 405 Squadron, later to command 617 Squadron. Only a moderate degree of success was achieved, with much of the bombing falling outside Berlin. The defences inflicted the Command's heaviest losses to date, a massive fifty six aircraft, but again 9 Squadron bucked the trend and came through unscathed. It was a similar story for the squadron during the two further Berlin operations of the current period, on the last night of the month, and the 3/4th of September, when again heavy losses were incurred. In between, however, ED551 went missing without trace with the eight man crew of F/S Hall during a raid on the twin towns of Mönchengladbach and Rheydt on the 30/31st.

The heavy losses at Berlin probably contributed to the autumn break in the campaign, which would be resumed with the long, dark nights of winter. In the meantime, the Command went to another twin town target, Mannheim and Ludwigshafen, on the 5/6th. An outstandingly accurate attack left a catalogue of industrial and residential destruction in both towns, but the defences again countered with a haul of thirty four aircraft, a figure which included veteran

Lancaster R5744, and ED666 of 9 Squadron, both of which crashed in Germany without survivors from the crews of Sgt Knight and P/O Gill. Munich followed twenty four hours later, and cloud caused the bombing to be scattered, and although the squadron was not represented among the sixteen aircraft missing, ED975 crashed in Lincolnshire on return, injuring P/O Siddle and five of his crew. A series of four raids on Hanover began on the 22/23rd, and it was an inauspicious start, with little damage inflicted for a loss of twenty six aircraft. The squadron registered another failure to return, and once more it was a veteran Lancaster, R5700, which crashed near the target killing F/S Crabtree and crew. On the following night, the Command returned in strength to Mannheim, and delivered another punishing blow, from which Sgt Ord and crew were posted missing in JA852, which crashed in Germany with total loss of life. The second Hanover raid came and went on the 27/28th, and most of the bombs fell in open country, but at least it was a loss free night for the squadron. Not so at Bochum two nights later though, when in return for a concentrated and destructive operation for the loss of only nine aircraft, ED648 was lost in the sea off Mablethorpe, taking with it two of F/L Hadland's crew, although he and the others were rescued.

October began with a series of highly successful operations against city targets, which formerly had escaped the worst ravages of a Bomber Command visit. Despite misplaced Pathfinder marking, parts of Kassel were devastated on the 3/4th, with a catalogue of important industrial premises damaged, and Frankfurt reeled under its most destructive assault to date on the following night. Stuttgart, always difficult to hit, also felt the weight of an accurate attack on the 7/8th, for the loss of only four aircraft, and in keeping with the squadron's propensity to buck the trend, two of them came from Bardney. ED836 and JA869 crashed in Germany, the latter within sight of the target, and without survivors from the crew of P/O Mair. The former was captained by Lt Roberts USAAF, who died with five of his crew, while one man became a POW. The third Hanover raid followed on the 8/9th, and the bombing was concentrated around the centre creating enormous damage, and was the most effective attack of the war on this city. The final Hanover operation on the 18/19th failed, when much of the bombing was wasted in open country, and ED499 crashed near the target, killing the crew of P/O Gould. It had been an expensive campaign against this north-central German city, 110 aircraft in all being lost, although only two were from 9 Squadron. It was during one of these trips to Hanover, that W/C Burnett and his highly experienced crew brought ED700 home on one engine, the other three having been knocked out by a JU88, and it was the only recorded example of a one engined return by a Lancaster.

It would be a full month before the squadron again had the sad task of posting missing one of its crews, and that would come with the resumption of the Berlin campaign. In the meantime W/C Burnett's tour as commanding officer came to an end on the 14th of November, and he was succeeded by W/C Porter. The Road to Berlin was rejoined on the night of the 18/19th of November, when an all Lancaster heavy force delivered a scattered attack of moderate success, for the loss of nine of their number, assisted by a diversionary raid by predominately Halifaxes and Stirlings on Mannheim and Ludwigshafen. Two 9 Squadron Lancasters went down from the Berlin force, DV284, in which the eight man crew of P/O Graham was killed, and ED871, which crashed in the target area following a mid air collision, and from which

P/O Lees and all but one of his crew parachuted into captivity. The most successful raid of the war on the Capital came on the 22/23rd, when a maximum effort force destroyed three thousand houses and two dozen industrial premises for the loss of twenty six aircraft, and this operation proved to be the swansong for Stirling participation over Germany. A predominately Lancaster force delivered another accurate and punishing blow twenty four hours later, in which a further two thousand houses were destroyed and around fifteen hundred people lost their lives. All of 9 Squadron's contingent came home, but two crashed on return with different fortunes. DV327 crash-landed near Bardney while trying to land, but P/O Ward and crew walked away, a temporary reprieve as it turned out, and ED656 crashed near Louth, killing P/O Robinson and five of his crew, two others sustaining injury. December opened with a further trip to the "Big City" on the 2/3rd, and despite a scattered attack, some useful industrial damage resulted, although at a cost of forty aircraft. This figure included DV332, in which F/L Wells and crew died, and a further squadron aircraft, DV334, was lost in a crash on approach to Gamston airfield in Nottinghamshire, and P/O Warwick and five of his eight man crew were killed in this incident. Following a highly satisfying outcome at Leipzig on the 3/4th, the main force stayed at home until the 16/17th, when the Capital was again the objective for an all Lancaster heavy force. A reasonably effective operation ensued for the loss of twenty five aircraft to the defences, but the real problems awaited the crews on their return to fog bound airfields. Twenty nine Lancasters crashed or were abandoned by their tired crews as they searched for somewhere to land, and the death toll among crewman totalled around 150. The two 9 Squadron casualties, DV293 and EE188, both fell in Germany, without survivors from the crews of P/O Bayldon and P/O Black.

Frankfurt was the destination for over six hundred aircraft on the 20/21st, when decoy fires and dummy target indicators lured away many of the bombs, but thanks to an extensive creep-back, some useful damage resulted to the city and outlying communities. ED700, mentioned earlier for its feat of returning on one engine, and incidentally being returned to service within four days, was again molested by a nightfighter, and one of its crew killed. On return P/O Argent successfully ditched the Lancaster off Yarmouth, and he and his crew were rescued. Despite two further operations to Berlin before the year was out, on the 23/24th and 29/30th, the latter the first in a series of three Berlin trips in five nights spanning the turn of the year, the squadron suffered no more losses in 1943. It had been a good, if expensive year for the Command, with many notable victories to its credit, but the Luftwaffe had not been standing still, and shaken out of its complacent reliance on the "Himmelbett" nightfighter system by Window, it had gradually evolved into a leaner more efficient and deadlier force than pre-Hamburg, and in the first quarter of the coming year, it would come close to breaking the Command's spirit.

1944

What was fast becoming a "winter of discontent" was being felt on both sides of the divide as the New Year dawned. The Lancaster crews in particular, as the ones called into action most often to carry the battle to Berlin, were feeling tired and hard-pressed, with little prospect of surviving to finish their tours. They would, of course, press on in the finest traditions of the service to which they belonged, until their Commander-in-Chief told them otherwise. Priding

themselves on being Berliners first and Germans second, the beleaguered citizens of the Capital were also a hardy people, and bore their trials cheerfully and resolutely, precisely as had their counterparts in London during the blitz of 1940. There would be no collapse of morale, and the persistent bombing would serve only to engender in the populace a spirit of defiance and a sense of community, captured in the sentiments of the banners paraded through the streets which proclaimed, "you may break our walls, but not our hearts". The most popular song of the day, the tuneful *Nach jedem Dezember kommt immer ein Mai*, After every December comes always a May, was played endlessly over the radio, hinting at a change of fortunes with the onset of spring. That was, in fact, how long the Berliners were to wait before their city ceased to be the principal objective for Bomber Command's heavy bombers, but in the meantime, they were allowed only two nights of rest from the onslaught to enjoy the New Year. The first day of January was not yet over before the Lancaster crews were winging their way eastwards again, arriving over the Capital in the early hours of the 2nd. Their efforts were largely wasted, as bombs were scattered over the southern districts and out into wooded country. It was another good night for the defences, which brought down twenty eight Lancasters, including JA711, P/O Ward and crew enjoying only a fleeting glimpse into the new year before their lives were extinguished. Berlin was "on again" on the following night, the crews incredulous at the prospect of back to back long range operations, and the "Big City" three times in five nights. Once more concentration failed to materialize, and the defences over the city claimed many of the twenty seven Lancasters which failed to return. 9 Squadron came through unscathed, and remained loss free until the 14/15th, when Brunswick was targeted by a force of almost five hundred aircraft. German fighters picked up the stream early on, and remained with it until the Dutch coast was crossed inbound. P/O Argent and crew, who had successfully ditched ED700 off Yarmouth on return from Frankfurt five days before Christmas, had used up their ration of luck, and on this occasion failed to make it home in ED721, and just two men survived.

A six day break from main force operations prepared the crews for the next trip to the Capital on the 20/21st, a maximum effort employing over seven hundred aircraft, which left extensive damage in the up to now relatively unmolested eastern districts. A further thirty five bombers fell to the defences, and this was compounded on the following night by the massive total of fifty seven aircraft failing to return from an attack on Magdeburg, which almost entirely missed the city. The squadron was also represented in a small force of twenty two Lancasters of 5 Group, which raided Berlin as a diversion for the main operation on this night. Neither raid cost the squadron a crew, but another intense round of activity aimed at Berlin lay ahead at the end of the month, which would bring three attacks in four nights beginning on the 27/28th. This was a raid which scattered bombs over a wide area of the city, and into numerous outlying communities, and despite nightfighters being lured away by mining activity in the Heligoland area, thirty three Lancasters failed to return, among them LL745, in which F/L James and three of his crew died, and three others became POWs. This, remarkably, was the last squadron crew to be lost raiding Berlin, even though further operations took place on the 28/29th and 30/31st, both of which inflicted grievous hurt on Germany's Capital for a combined loss to the Command of seventy nine aircraft. The concerted effort to bring Berlin to its knees was now over, and although two more operations were to be mounted against it over the next seven weeks, they would be in isolation.

The first two weeks of February were characterized by inhospitable weather conditions, which helped to keep most of the Command on the ground. When it next took to the air in numbers, it was for a record breaking effort on the 15/16th, which proved to be the penultimate raid of the war by RAF heavy bombers on Berlin. The largest non-1,000 force to date of 891 aircraft included for the first time over five hundred Lancasters and three hundred Halifaxes operating together, and those which reached the target area delivered a new record 2,600 tons of bombs, much of it to good effect in central and south-western districts, although many outlying communities were again afflicted. Forty three aircraft failed to return home, but this high figure almost paled into insignificance in the light of what was about to befall the Command just four nights hence.

A force of over eight hundred aircraft took off for Leipzig around midnight on the 19/20th, and they were met by nightfighters at the Dutch coast, which accompanied the bomber stream all the way to eastern Germany. Wrongly forecast winds led to some aircraft arriving too early in the target area, where the crews were forced to orbit to await the Path Finders, and a number of these fell to the local flak batteries. When all those aircraft which were going to return home had done so, there was an unbelievable shortfall of seventy eight, the heaviest loss to date by a clear twenty one aircraft, and this was in return for indeterminate results at the target. Veteran Lancaster W5010 was missing from its Bardney dispersal in the morning, and the crew of F/S Froud was posted missing, news eventually filtering through that all had died. Stuttgart was the recipient of an effective raid on the following night, and in contrast, only nine bombers failed to return. 9 Squadron, true to form, having avoided heavy losses when the Command was hard-hit, lost two crews on this night when the Command escaped lightly, and the missing ED654 and LM447 represented over 20% of the force's failures to return. They contained the crews of P/O Chambers and P/O Nice respectively, the former going down in Germany with no survivors, and the latter lost without trace. A new tactic was employed for the next two operations in an attempt to reduce the unsustainable losses. An attack on Schweinfurt on the 24/25th was conducted in two phases, two hours apart, and although the operation itself was not successful, the second wave lost 50% fewer aircraft than the first in an overall casualty figure of thirty three. Participating in the first wave, 9 Squadron's LM433 crashed in Germany, and there were no survivors from the newly arrived crew of P/O Denson. Similar tactics employed on the following night against Augsburg resulted in the more modest loss of twenty one aircraft, but this was an outstandingly accurate and concentrated raid, which ripped the heart out of this beautiful and historic city, and destroyed for ever centuries of cultural history. Almost three thousand houses were reduced to rubble, and some damage was inflicted on buildings belonging to the M.A.N. diesel engine producer, which had been the objective for the epic daylight attack by 44 and 97 Squadron Lancasters two years earlier.

March began with a return to Stuttgart on the 1/2nd, where some useful damage resulted for the loss of only four aircraft, and then the main force stayed at home until the 15/16th. When over eight hundred aircraft went yet again to Stuttgart on this night, they deposited many of the bombs in open country, and this time the defences made up for the earlier raid by claiming thirty seven bombers. This figure included 9 Squadron's HK540, which crashed in southern Germany with the crew of S/L Blackwell-Smith, who was one of only two survivors.

Two heavy and highly destructive raids fell on Frankfurt on the 18/19th and 22/23rd, each employing over eight hundred aircraft. The former alone resulted in the destruction of six thousand buildings, and following the latter, half of the city was left without essential services for an extended period. The operations were concluded at a combined cost to the Command of fifty five bombers, two of them from 9 Squadron, and both of these failed to return from the second raid. There were no survivors from the crew of P/O Jubb in LM422, and just one man escaped with his life from F/O Manning's LM430, this Lancaster containing the station commander, G/C Pleasance. To compound these losses, LM432 flew into the ground near Bardney while being ferried in from Manston on the 28/29th, and P/O Porter was killed with one of his crew. The final Berlin operation of the campaign and, as far as the heavy squadrons were concerned, the war, took place on the 24/25th, and it was attended by unusually strong winds from the north which scattered the bomber stream. This also affected the marking and bombing, which was concentrated around the south-western districts, and over a hundred outlying communities reported bombs falling. Housing represented the bulk of the destruction, but a number of important war industry factories were hit, along with military establishments. The Jetstream winds continued to cause problems on the return flight, and many aircraft were blown over heavily defended areas and fell victim to flak batteries, these claiming over two-thirds of the seventy two shot down aircraft. As already mentioned, 9 Squadron was not represented among these huge losses. 9 Squadron's record during the Berlin offensive was impressive. Participating in all twenty of the operations launched against the Capital, it despatched 254 sorties, only seven of which failed to return, equalling the lowest losses in the Group and the Command among those squadrons which operated throughout, and it also enjoyed the second lowest percentage loss rate in the Group. Fifty three of the squadron's crewmen were killed, and a further nine survived as POWs. (The Berlin Raids, Martin Middlebrook).

The winter campaign still had a week to run, and two more major operations to negotiate, and the first of these fell on Essen on the 26/27th. It was another highly effective and destructive raid in a continuation of the successes against this important target since Oboe had been introduced into main force operations a year earlier, and it was concluded for the very acceptable loss of just nine aircraft. Ahead, however, lay the Command's blackest night of the war, and with it, the end of the winter campaign. Nuremberg, on the night of the 30/31st, was to be a standard maximum effort raid, and departed from normal routine in just one respect. It fell to the planners of the PFF to arrange routes, feints, spoofs and diversions, to throw the enemy nightfighter controllers off the scent until the last possible moment. On this fateful night, however, they were overruled, despite the strongest possible protests from AVM Bennett, and a 5 Group inspired direct route was selected instead, which took the bomber stream from Belgium to fifty miles north of the target in a long straight leg, without deviations. This, and some freak meteorological conditions, which included unusually bright moonlight, crystal clear visibility, a backcloth of white cloud to silhouette the bombers like flies on a table cloth, the formation of condensation trails, and the presence again of the Jetstream winds which had so adversely affected the Berlin raid a few nights earlier, conspired to hand the 795 bombers on a plate to the waiting nightfighters, which picked up the stream over Belgium, and remained with it all the way to the birthplace of Nazism. The route from Charleroi in Belgium was littered with the burning wreckage of RAF aircraft, and

many of those crews which failed to appreciate the strength of the wind driving them up to fifty miles north of their intended track, turned towards Nuremberg from a false position, and bombed Schweinfurt in error. Nuremberg escaped serious damage, partly because of the numbers bombing elsewhere, but also because at least eighty of the missing aircraft fell before reaching the target area, thus reducing the available bomb loads still further, and this applied to 9 Squadron's veteran Lancaster W5006, the squadron's only loss from the sixteen Lancasters despatched. F/O Ling was killed along with five of his crew, and one man survived as a POW. DV395 was also the victim of a nightfighter, which attacked from below, killing the mid-upper gunner and severely damaging the aircraft, but through skillful airmanship, F/O Forrest and his crew were able to nurse it home. Ninety five empty dispersals on bomber stations next morning was testimony to the carnage which had taken place, and another twenty or so aircraft were written-off with battle damage. It had been a long and bloody campaign, and one which had come close to breaking the Command, and it speaks volumes for the character of the crews, that although morale showed signs of cracking, it was never in danger of breaking down completely.

Although Bomber Command officially became subject to the requirements of SHAEF from the 14th of April, operations in support of the forthcoming invasion had begun in early March, with attacks on the French railway system at Trappes and le Mans, carried out mostly by the older marks of Halifaxes which had been withdrawn from operations over Germany after the Leipzig disaster. Operations from now on would be in stark contrast to what had gone before, the long slog to Germany on dark, dirty nights, replaced by shorter range hops over to France and Belgium. As events turned out, these operations were to prove equally demanding in their way, and not the "piece of cake" suggested by voices from on high, who had decreed that most such operations were worthy of counting as just one third of a sortie towards the completion of a tour. Five railway yards were listed for the 10/11th, and the squadron suffered the only loss from 5 Group's attack on Tours, DV198 falling to flak with no survivors from the crew of W/O Peak. It also registered the single loss, in the form of LM361, from a similar target for 5 Group at Juvisy on the 18/19th, and the crew of F/O Smith was posted missing, he and one other evading capture, while the only other survivor became a POW. P/O Maule's LL883 crashed on take-off and was burnt out when bound for Brunswick on the 22nd, and this prevented the remainder of the squadron from getting away. This operation by 5 Group was the first attempt at the low level visual marking method by Mosquitos at a heavily defended city target, a system pioneered by W/C Cheshire and S/L Martin at 617 Squadron. The raid was not successful, and ME724 failed to return with the crew of F/S Lauder, he and three others surviving as POWs. When the Group tried again at Munich on the 24/25th, the predominately 5 Group main force exploited the accurate marking, which had been carried out by W/C Cheshire and his 617 Squadron Mosquito crews in the face of murderous flak defence, and severe damage was inflicted on the central districts of the city. This operation probably sealed the award to W/C Cheshire of the Victoria Cross at the conclusion of his tour. LM445 was the 9 Squadron representative among the nine missing Lancasters, and S/L Gilmour's crew became the latest to be lost, this time without survivors.

May began for the Group with attacks on two factories at Toulouse on the 1/2nd. On the 3/4th, 1 and 5 Groups were assigned to attack a Panzer training camp and transport depot at

Mailly-le-Camp, an operation which was expected to be a straight-forward affair, and subject to the despised and, happily, short-lived one third of a sortie policy. In overall command of the operation was W/C Deane of 83 Squadron, with W/C Cheshire as marker leader, and the fact that each attended a separate briefing, may have had some bearing on later events. The marking proceeded according to plan, but interference from a commercial broadcasting station caused a break-down in communications, which led to a delay in calling the main force crews to bomb. Nightfighters got amongst them as they milled around in the target area awaiting instructions, and forty two aircraft were shot down. A number of crews succumbed to frustration and anxiety as they watched other Lancasters being shot down around them, and some questionable comments were broadcast over the air waves. Once underway, however, the bombing was accurate, and much damage was inflicted on the camp, and this probably reduced the availability of enemy forces to face the Normandy landings. Recriminations abound to this day concerning who was to blame, and many accusations were unjustly directed at Cheshire. LL787 was the sole 9 Squadron casualty, and F/O Ineson and four of his crew were killed, while one man evaded capture, and the other became a POW.

Five more railway yards were selected for attention on the 10/11th, 5 Group assigned to those at Lille. A successful operation ensued, but at a cost of twelve Lancasters, and this time the squadron posted missing the crews of P/O Stafford and P/O Campbell in LM520 and LM528 respectively, and there were no survivors. The Bourg Leopold military camp in Belgium followed on the next night, but only half the force had bombed when haze forced the Master Bomber to call a halt. Even so, five Lancasters were missing, and the steady attrition continued for 9 Squadron with the loss of ND951 and the crew of P/O Bunnagar, who were all killed. Duisburg saw its first major raid for a year on the 21/22nd, 1, 3, 5 and 8 Groups joining forces to deliver an effective attack for the loss of twenty nine aircraft. DV395 failed to return from this one, lost without trace with the crew of F/S Cornelius, and twenty four hours later, LM519 was shot down by a nightfighter during another disappointing 1 and 5 Group raid on Brunswick, and the crew of P/O Baker was added to the ever growing list of those lost in action, and it was later learned that only one man had got out alive.

The Command was up in force with over a thousand aircraft on D-Day Eve in support of the landings, targeting ten coastal batteries in positions along the Normandy coast. On the 6/7th, a slightly larger force attacked communications targets, to prevent reinforcements from reaching the beachheads. 5 Group bombed a railway at Argentan, on return from which, ME579 crashed on the estate at Belvoir Castle in Rutland while descending through cloud, and only the rear gunner in F/S King's crew escaped with his life. The month produced a hectic round of operations against communications, airfields, fuel and ammunition dumps, and troop positions, and also saw the start of two new campaigns against flying bomb launching and storage sites and oil, the latter beginning with an attack on the Nordstern synthetic oil plant at Gelsenkirchen on the 12/13th. This highly successful raid did not involve 5 Group, but its turn came on the 21/22nd, when two predominately 5 Group forces raided Wesseling and Scholven-Buer simultaneously. Complete cloud cover thwarted attempts to use the 5 Group low level visual marking method, and bombing went ahead on H2s alone at Wesseling, and by Oboe skymarking at Scholven. The Wesseling force suffered heavily at the hands of nightfighters, and over 27% of the aircraft involved were shot down, four 5 Group

squadrons, 44, 49, 57 and 619, each losing six Lancasters. 9 Squadron, in contrast, posted missing the crew of F/O McMurchy in ME704 from the Scholven raid, four of them surviving and falling into enemy hands. This force lost a more modest eight aircraft, but at least there was a reasonably successful outcome, something which was denied as a consolation at Wesseling. Earlier in the month, on the 15th, W/C Porter was posted out to be replaced by W/C Bazin, who would see the squadron through to the end of hostilities. He had served a tour with Fighter Command, during which he was awarded the DFC, and had later volunteered for a posting to bombers, and the citation for his DSO in 1945 would make mention of his leadership from the front, and his commitment to the training of his crews. W/C Porter, sadly, would not survive to the end, after taking up duties at 54 Base Coningsby, home to the 5 Group Master Bombers. He was destined to lose his life while performing that role in a 97 Squadron Lancaster, during an operation to mine the Schwinemünde Canal on the 16/17th of August. The final losses of the month came on the 24/25th, during a Command effort against seven flying bomb sites in France. Briefed for Prouville, the squadron suffered its heaviest loss for some time, and posted missing the crews of F/S Halshaw, P/O Rae and P/O Craig in LL853, LL970 and ND948 respectively, and only five men got out by parachute from the combined complement of twenty two.

July was another month of steady attrition, with railway and V-weapon related targets still the main focus. A series of operations against an underground flying bomb store at St Leu d'Esserent caused heavy losses among 5 Group squadrons. An accurate attack on the 4/5th cost thirteen Lancasters, among which was 9 Squadron's LL785, in which the eight man crew of P/O Ryan was killed, but worse was to follow on the 7/8th, when twenty nine Lancasters and two Mosquitos failed to return, a hefty 14%. This time the squadron posted missing the crews of P/O Gradwell, F/O Blackham and P/O Langford in JA690, JA957 and JB116, but even so, fared better than 106 Squadron, which lost five aircraft and crews. One man died in the first mentioned, while the pilot and seven others ultimately evaded capture, the sole survivor from F/O Blackham's crew did likewise, while the pilot and two others survived as POWs from JB116. 1, 5, and 8 Groups sent over three hundred and fifty aircraft to three railway targets on the 12/13th, two of which, Culmont Chalindrey and Tours, were accurately attacked. Two Lancasters from the Culmont force were shot down, and one of these was LM221 with the crew of F/O Hallett, who all died. The third target was Revigny, which had been assigned to 1 Group, and cloud prevented more than half the force from bombing. Heavy losses were incurred, and it was necessary to launch two more raids to the target, the final one by 5 Group on the 18/19th. This operation was successful in cutting the lines to the Normandy battle area, but again a heavy loss of twenty four Lancasters was incurred, this amounting to 22%. 9 Squadron was represented among them by ME833, and only the navigator survived from the crew of F/O Wood. The 20/21st saw railways, oil and V-weapons targeted, the squadron joining a 1 and 5 Group attack on railway yards and a junction at Courtrai. Both targets were effectively dealt with, and F/O Garlick's PD205 was the sole squadron casualty, and sadly there were no survivors. The month ended with a smallish daylight raid by the Group on a flying bomb store at Rilly-la-Montagne. The target was destroyed, principally by 617 Squadron Tallboys, but at a cost to the famous unit of F/L Reid VC, whose Lancaster was struck by bombs from above and broke up, throwing him clear to survive as a POW. 9

Squadron also lost a crew from this operation, that of P/O Worner in LM453, and again there were no survivors.

In contrast to the preceding month's successive losses, August brought just one, that of F/L Relton and crew in ME757, the pilot and at least five of his crew failing to survive the Lancaster's crash in France. This was the only aircraft missing from a small 5 Group force on the 13th, which again included elements from 617 Squadron, and targeted two ships which might have been used by the enemy to block the harbour at Brest. Hits were claimed, but the operation was repeated on the following day, and both vessels were left sinking in safe positions. Also on the 14th, support for the ground forces came in an attack by eight hundred aircraft on German positions in the Falaise area. This was the occasion on which some bombs fell among Canadian troops, and thirteen of them were killed. In preparation for his new night offensive against Germany, Harris launched a thousand aircraft by daylight on the 15th to attack nine nightfighter airfields in Holland and Belgium, and the gradual return to targets in industrial Germany got underway on the following night, and this was assisted by the final operations against flying bomb sites in the Pas-de-Calais on the 28th, which thus released his force from non-strategic responsibilities. In September, the squadron embarked on the first of a series of three operations in concert with 617 Squadron directed at the Tirpitz, which was anchored at Kaa Fjord in Norway. Eighteen 9 Squadron Lancasters departed Bardney for the forward base at Lossiemouth, some carrying Tallboys and others Johnny Walker mines, thus making the squadron the only unit, other than the illustrious 617 Squadron, to employ the Barnes Wallis designed weapon. F/O Lake had to abort when his bomb shifted position, but the others arrived safely, refuelled, and set off on the gruelling slog to the Archangel area of Russia, from where the actual operation would be launched.

An incredible feat of navigation brought the force to the general vicinity of the planned landing ground at Yagodnik, but poor weather conditions and misleading information concerning the local radio beacon, confounded the best efforts of some crews to pinpoint the exact spot, and with fuel running low, they had to look for alternative options. Six Lancasters, four of them from 9 Squadron, were crash-landed, LL884 of F/L Morrison, PD211 of F/L Camsell, P/O Keeley's NF938 and F/O Law's NF985, all without injury to the crews. Twenty seven Lancasters were made ready for the operation on the 15th, twenty carrying Tallboys and the remainder Johnny Walker mines. Before the protective smoke screen enveloped the ship, one Tallboy struck home, and although not appreciated at the time, its sea-going career was ended. In the event, two further joint operations would be mounted, until the Tirpitz's sinking could be confirmed. It was during this momentous operation that W4964 notched up its 100th sortie. Having begun its career in April 1943, the Lancaster flew against the Tirpitz in the hands of F/L Doug Melrose, and returned safely, to eventually clock up 106 operations before becoming a ground instruction airframe.

In the meantime the squadron went to the Dortmund-Ems Canal near Münster on the 23/24th, again in the company of 617 Squadron, whose Tallboys created a breach which helped to drain an extensive stretch of the vital waterway. Heavy losses were incurred during this operation, the importance of the canal to the German war effort guaranteeing a spirited defence. A diversionary operation was carried out simultaneously at the nearby Münster-

Handorf airfield, and it was from here that two of the squadron's Lancasters failed to return, LL901 and LL914, and the crews of F/O Scott and F/O Begg were duly posted missing, with just one survivor from the former. From this point until the end of the year, the squadron enjoyed a rare period of minimal losses. For the rest of the Command, September was devoted largely to the liberation of the three French ports still in enemy hands. Six raids were mounted against enemy positions around Le Havre between the 6th and the 11th, after which the German garrison surrendered to British forces. Boulogne required just one attack, by daylight on the 17th, before it too returned to Allied control, and Calais was the last to fall, this after six heavy attacks culminating on the 28th.

A new Ruhr offensive began at Dortmund on the 6/7th, and this led on to Operation Hurricane, a demonstration to the enemy of the overwhelming superiority of the Allied Air Forces ranged against it. At first light on the 14th, a thousand aircraft took off for Duisburg, and unloaded 4,500 tons of bombs into its built-up area, before returning in similar numbers that night to press home the point about superiority. 5 Group took advantage of the night activity over Duisburg to finally nail Brunswick with a devastating attack, after so many failures there in the past. 9 Squadron's association with 617 Squadron continued indirectly on the 15th, when eighteen Lancasters took off from Bardney to attack the Sorpe Dam with Tallboys and other bombs. As the Dambusters had found during their epic raid in May 1943, the construction of the Sorpe made it impervious to even direct hits from "earthquake" bombs, and no breach occurred. A return to city busting targets took the squadron to Nuremberg on the 19/20th, as part of a 5 Group raid employing the low level visual marking method. Only moderate success was gained for the loss of two aircraft, one of which was the squadron's LM715, with the crew of F/O Davis, and although one man survived the crash, he succumbed to his injuries shortly afterwards. Essen received its visits from the Hurricane force on the 23/24th and again by daylight on the 25th, after which it ceased to be a major centre of production for the war effort. Cologne's turn came on the 28th, and again on the 30/31st and the last night of the month, and massive damage was inflicted on this already much bombed city. On the 29th, the squadron had contributed eighteen Lancasters to the second Tirpitz operation with 617 Squadron, again led by W/C Bazin. Having been moved to a new mooring near Tromsø, two hundred miles closer to Lossiemouth, the ship was in range for a direct attack and return, but cloud thwarted the bomb aimers, who released their weapons on estimated positions, and they were unable to assess results.

The end came for the mighty Tirpitz on the 12th of November in clear weather conditions, when thirty Lancasters of 617 and 9 Squadrons scored two direct hits and a number of near misses, resulting in the ship rolling over at its mooring. On this occasion, W/C Bazin did not lead the squadron contingent, handing over instead to S/L Williams. The squadron aircraft involved were as follows: LM448, ND937, NF929, NG220, NG242, NG249, NG252, NN722, PA172, PB696, PD198 and PD368. LM448 was badly damaged by flak, and made a forced landing in Sweden without injury to the crew of F/O Coster, and this was the only casualty of the operation. After enjoying the famed hospitality of the Swedes for a month, the crew returned home to resume and ultimately complete their tour. Earlier in the month, Düsseldorf, Bochum and Gelsenkirchen had all succumbed to massive attacks by the Hurricane force, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to find worthwhile targets to attack in a country so

effectively reduced to rubble by constant bombing. As a result, many less significant towns found themselves in the bomb sights, for example Heilbronn, which suffered over 80% destruction of its built up area during a 5 Group raid on the 4/5th of December, and seven thousand of its inhabitants died. Giessen followed on the 6/7th, and then a number of attempts were made to breach the Urft dam, on the 8th and 11th, although without success. The Group went to Munich on the 17/18th, Gdynia on the 18/19th, and Pölitz on the 21/22nd, the last named to target an oil refinery. Only three Lancasters failed to return, and a further five crashed in England, one of them, PD213, on landing, killing two members of F/O Read's crew, and this represented the squadron's single casualty of the month, and the last of the year. Having risen phoenix-like from the ashes of the winter campaign, the Command had ended the year as the mighty and irresistible force that Harris had always envisaged and intended. However, despite the unmistakable scent of victory wafting in from the Continent, much remained to be done before the proud and tenacious enemy laid down his arms, and many more crews would be lost in the few remaining months of hostilities.

1945

The year dawned with an expectation of victory, but despite being stretched beyond their capacity to defend every corner of the Reich, the enemy defences were by no means spent. The 1st of January, however, did much to seal its decline, bringing as it did the ill-conceived and ultimately ill-fated Operation Bodenplatte, an attempt by the Luftwaffe day fighter units to destroy elements of the Allied Air Forces on the ground at the recently liberated airfields in France, Holland and Belgium. Although some limited success was gained, any losses suffered by the Allies could be made good in a matter of hours, while the Luftwaffe would never completely recover from the loss of around 250 fighters, many of whose pilots were killed, wounded or fell into Allied hands. New Year's Day was also not a good one for 9 Squadron as events were to prove. Briefed to attack the Dortmund-Ems Canal at a point near Ladbergen, a target with which the Group had a particularly strong association, two of its Lancasters crashed almost immediately after take-off. Six crewmen walked away from the wreckage of F/O Buckley's PD368, and one man sustained injuries, but P/O Flynn, the bomb aimer in NG252, was the only man to survive from F/O Newton's crew, after the Lancaster succumbed to engine failure. The squadron also lost F/O Reaks and his crew in NG223 during the operation itself, and the pilot was killed with three others, while the three survivors fell into enemy hands. Meanwhile, a drama was unfolding in PD377, which resulted in the only supreme award of the war to a 9 Squadron crewman. Flying as wireless operator with the crew of F/O Denton, F/S George Thompson was preparing for the return flight, when the Lancaster was hit by flak, and a fire developed in the fuselage. Thompson fought his way through the flames twice to rescue the gunners, one of whom subsequently died, and in so disregarding his own safety, sustained serious burns himself, to which he succumbed three weeks later. The Lancaster was crash-landed at Brussels with no further injury to the crew, and the surviving gunner undoubtedly owed his life to the heroic efforts of his crewmate. In recognition of his gallantry, Thompson was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

In the early hours of the 5th, a controversial raid took place on the small French town of Royan, in response to requests from Free French forces which were laying siege. A force of

over three hundred aircraft drawn from 1, 5 and 8 Groups pounded the town, and many of its inhabitants, having declined an invitation from the German garrison commander to evacuate the area, were killed or injured. In the event, the town was not captured, and the garrison did not surrender until mid April. The first raid on Hanover since the series in the autumn of 1943 was mounted on the 5/6th without 5 Group, which sent 140 Lancasters and Mosquitos to successfully attack a supply line at Houffalize in the Ardennes. The Group was present at Munich on the 7/8th, however, in company with 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups for the final large raid of the war on this city. On the 12th, the squadron once more joined 617 Squadron, to attack U-Boat pens at Bergen in Norway in daylight. A highly accurate example of precision bombing saw Tallboys penetrate the concrete roofs of the pens, and cause massive destruction, and colateral damage to the town was avoided. Of the four Lancasters lost, NG257 was the 9 Squadron representative, and was shot down over the target with no survivors from the crew of F/O Redfern. This loss was added to two nights later, when the Group joined forces with 1, 6 and 8 Groups to attack the synthetic oil plant at Leuna near Merseburg. The operation caused extensive damage, and seriously affected production for the loss of ten Lancasters. NN722 was from 9 Squadron, and this contained the crew of F/O Cook, just one of whom survived to be taken prisoner, and he was later reported to have died in captivity. On the previous night, the Group had attacked with great accuracy the oil plant at Pölitz, and the third oil target in a row for the Group took over two hundred of its aircraft to Brüx in Czechoslovakia on the 16/17th, where another major blow was delivered against this vital industry.

The Group opened its February account at Siegen on the 1/2nd, but this was one of a number of failures during the first week, which were brought about largely by unfavourable weather conditions in the target areas. It was a similar story at Karlsruhe on the 2/3rd, in what was this town's last major raid of the war, and most of the bombing fell wide of the mark. 9 and 617 Squadrons joined forces again on the 3rd, to bomb midget submarine pens at IJmuiden and Poortershaven with Tallboys. The 9 Squadron crews were assigned to the former, and they carried out an accurate attack without loss. The month would bring only one 9 Squadron failure to return, and this was during another joint operation with 617 Squadron, against railway viaducts at Bielefeld and Altenbeken on the 6th. In the event, cloud prevented bombing, and the force was recalled, but NF937 crashed in Germany, and F/L Dunne and his crew were all killed. The Group continued its almost personal war with the Dortmund-Ems Canal on the 7/8th, but on this occasion the waterway remained intact. Following a return by the Group to Pölitz on the 8/9th in company with elements of 1 and 8 Groups, the refinery produced no more oil for the German war effort.

The Churchill inspired series of attacks on Germany's eastern cities under Operation Thunderclap began in all its fury at Dresden on the 13/14th. 5 Group opened the proceedings, employing its low level visual marking technique, and delivered over eight hundred tons of bombs in a partially successful first phase. The fires left burning on the ground acted as a beacon to the 1, 3, 6 and 8 Group Lancasters following three hours behind, and they poured another eighteen hundred tons of bombs into the beautiful and historic city, unleashing the same chain of events which had devastated parts of Hamburg in July 1943. The resident population had been swelled by a massive influx of refugees from the eastern front, and many

of these were among the fifty thousand people who died in the ensuing firestorm, although some commentators believe a more accurate figure to be 135,000. Later on the 14th, 9 and 617 Squadrons made a return to the railway viaducts which had been saved by cloud on the 6th, but it was again to no avail, and F/L Dunne's NG233 crashed in Germany as the operations single casualty, and there were no survivors. Operation Thunderclap visited Chemnitz on the 14/15th, without a 5 Group presence, but a scattered raid spared the city from serious damage. In the meantime, over two hundred aircraft from 5 Group were delivering an attack on the oil refinery at Rositz, and some damage was inflicted on the southern half. Damage to Böhlen's oil refinery was superficial when attacked by the Group on the 19/20th, possibly as a result of the loss of the Master Bomber, W/C Benjamin from 54 Base, whose 627 Squadron Mosquito was shot down by flak. The penultimate heavy raid of the war on Dortmund was delivered by 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups on the 20/21st, while 5 Group was being thwarted by cloud at the Mittelland Canal at Gravenhorst, and the raid was abandoned by the Master Bomber. Duisburg received its last major raid of the war on the 21/22nd, the night on which 5 Group returned to the Mittelland Canal to rectify the previous night's failure, and rendered it completely unnavigable.

March was a loss free month for the squadron, as the Bomber Command juggernaut continued to pound what remained standing. Cologne was bombed for the last time on the 2nd by seven hundred aircraft, and it fell to American forces four days later. 5 Group attacked the Ladbergen aquaduct section of the Dortmund-Ems Canal on the 3/4th, and breached it in two places to put it completely out of action, and this concluded the Group's association with the target. Chemnitz, having escaped serious damage on the night after Dresden, suffered severe fire damage to its central and southern districts on the 5/6th, while 5 Group attacked with only modest success the oil refinery at Böhlen. The small port of Sassnitz on the island of Rügen near Peenemünde was extensively damaged by the Group on the 6/7th, and three ships were sunk in the harbour. On the following night it was an oil refinery at Harburg, where a rubber factory was also heavily damaged. A new all-time record was set when Essen was raided for the last time by over a thousand aircraft on the 11th, for which 1,079 aircraft had taken off in the late morning. The record lasted until a little over twenty four hours later, when 1,108 aircraft took off in the early afternoon for the final raid of the war on Dortmund, and this would stand to the end of hostilities as the largest single Bomber Command force of the entire war. On the 14th, 9 Squadron took Tallboys to the Arnsberg Viaduct, and failed to damage it, while 617 Squadron went for a similar target at Bielefeld, and with the help of the first Grand Slam to be dropped in anger, caused the collapse of a hundred yard section. Moderate damage was inflicted by the Group on the Wintershall oil refinery at Lützkendorf on the 14/15th, and later in the day, 9 and 617 Squadrons failed again at Arnsberg. The last heavy raid of the war on Nuremberg was conducted by a predominately 1 Group force on the 16/17th, while 5 Group was laying waste to the cathedral city of Würzburg in a seventeen minute orgy of destruction, in which over four thousand people lost their lives. 617 Squadron finally severed the Arnsberg viaduct on the 19th, but 9 Squadron's attack on a bridge at Vlotho was unsuccessful. Production of oil at Böhlen was at last halted by a 5 Group raid on the 20/21st, and it was still out of action at the close of hostilities, and the same could be said of the Deutsche Erdölwerke at Hamburg following a 5 Group effort on the 21/22nd. Railway bridges at Bremen and Nienburg were the targets for the Group on the 22nd, 617 Squadron destroying

the latter, while results at the former could not be assessed. It was similar fare for the Group on the 23rd, when a bridge at Bremen and another near Minden were attacked and hit.

April would prove to be the last month in which the heavy squadrons carried out offensive operations, and it began for 5 Group with an attack on the town and what was believed to be a military barracks at Nordhausen. It was, in fact, providing accommodation for forced workers at the underground secret weapons factory, and had been bombed on the previous day by 1 Group. The squadron's final casualties came on consecutive nights, firstly on the 7/8th, when F/O Jeff's HK788 caught fire while outbound to a benzol plant at Molbis near Leipzig, and crashed in Berkshire without survivors, and NG235 failed to return from Lützkendorf on the following night, having crashed in Germany during an operation which shut down production at the oil refinery. As a result, F/O Woolstencroft and his crew bore the sad honour of being the last of many from 9 Squadron to fail to return from operations, and only one man survived to be taken prisoner. Thereafter, the Group was involved in small scale attacks on oil storage tanks at Hamburg on the 9th, and the Wahren railway yards at Leipzig on the 10/11th, before launching over two hundred aircraft against railway installations at Pilsen on the 16/17th. Another long range railway target was at Cham on the German border with Czechoslovakia on the 17/18th, and on the following day, a massive attack on the island of Heligoland left it with the appearance of a cratered moonscape. It was back to Czechoslovakia on the 18/19th to bomb the railway yards at Komotau, and this was the final raid against communications targets. 9 and 617 Squadrons returned to Heligoland on the 19th to deal with coastal batteries, and then came the final day of heavy bomber operations on the 25th. 9 Squadron went to the SS barracks at Hitler's Eagles Nest retreat at Berchtesgaden in the morning, in company with other elements of 1, 5 and 8 Groups, and that night, the Group raided an oil refinery at Tonsberg in Norway.

9 Squadron served Bomber Command with distinction, from the first day of the war to the last. Always at the forefront of operations, it helped bear the brunt of early daylight forays while flying Wellingtons with 3 Group, and through its heavy losses, demonstrated the flaws in the theory that the self defending bomber would always get through in sufficient numbers to destroy a target, the theory with which the Command had gone to war. Its battle honours include every major campaign, and it was the only squadron to operate in concert with 617 Squadron on a regular basis, and use the Tallboy weapon. It could not be described as a lucky squadron, and generally suffered higher casualties than most, finishing the war with the 7th highest operational losses in the Command. Paradoxically, however, it seemed to escape serious casualties on those occasions when the Command or Group losses were high. No squadron aircraft were lost at Peenemünde, when 5 Group was hard-hit, only seven were missing from the series of raids on Berlin, only one failed to return from Nuremberg, when the Command lost ninety five, and only one was missing from Mailly-le-Camp, when 5 Group again suffered badly. What is not in doubt, is the enormous contribution made by 9 Squadron to Bomber Command's offensive, and its record of service stands as a fitting tribute to all who played their part.

I am indebted to my friend Terry Lintin of Bardney, an acknowledged expert on 9 Squadron, for generously providing additional information for the completion of this profile.

STATIONS

HONINGTON	15.07.39. to 07.08.42.
LOSSIEMOUTH (Detachment)	09.04.40. to 14.04.40.
WADDINGTON	07.08.42. to 14.04.43.
BARDNEY	14.04.43. to 06.07.45.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

WING COMMANDER H P LLOYD	to 27.09.39.
WING COMMANDER R A A COLE	27.09.39. to 17.01.40.
WING COMMANDER A McKEE	17.01.40. to 24.07.40.
WING COMMANDER A E HEALY	24.07.40. to 16.01.41.
WING COMMANDER R G C ARNOLD	16.01.41. to 20.06.41.
WING COMMANDER K M M WASSE	20.06.41. to 10.01.42.
WING COMMANDER W I C INNESS	10.01.42. to 27.05.42.
WING COMMANDER L V JAMES	27.05.42. to 27.06.42.
WING COMMANDER J M SOUTHWELL	27.06.42. to 15.03.43.
WING COMMANDER K B F SMITH	15.03.43. to 12.04.43.
WING COMMANDER P BURNETT	12.04.43. to 14.11.43.
WING COMMANDER E L PORTER	14.11.43. to 15.06.44.
WING COMMANDER J M BAZIN	15.06.44. to 18.05.45.

AIRCRAFT

WELLINGTON I	02.39. to 09.39.
WELLINGTON IA	09.39. to 03.40.
WELLINGTON IC	03.40. to 09.41.
WELLINGTON II	03.41. to 08.42.
WELLINGTON III	09.41. to 08.42.
LANCASTER I/III	08.42. to 11.45.

SECTION 2



OPERATIONAL RECORD

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

OPERATIONAL RECORD

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
588	5828	177	3.0

CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING	MINING	OTHER
561	19	8

WELLINGTON

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
287	2333	66	2.8

CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING	MINING	OTHER
272	7	8

LANCASTER

OPERATIONS	SORTIES	AIRCRAFT LOSSES	% LOSSES
301	3495	111	3.2

CATEGORY OF OPERATIONS

BOMBING	MINING
289	12

22 further Lancasters were destroyed in crashes.

TABLE OF STATISTICS

(Heavy squadrons)

14th highest number of overall operations in Bomber Command.
15th highest number of sorties in Bomber Command.
7th highest number of aircraft operational losses in Bomber Command.
7th highest number of bombing operations in Bomber Command.
27th highest number of mining operations in Bomber Command.

Out of 42 Wellington squadrons.

4th highest number of overall Wellington operations in Bomber Command.
4th highest number of Wellington sorties in Bomber Command.
3rd highest number of Wellington operational losses in Bomber Command.

Out of 59 Lancaster Squadrons.

14th highest number of overall Lancaster operations in Bomber Command.
21st highest number of Lancaster sorties in Bomber Command.
9th highest number of Lancaster operational losses in Bomber Command.

Out of 28 squadrons in 3 Group.

8th highest number of overall operations in 3 Group.
10th highest number of sorties in 3 Group.
8th equal (with 514Sqn) highest number of aircraft operational losses in 3 Group.

Out of 18 Wellington squadrons in 3 Group.

3rd highest number of Wellington overall operations in 3 Group.
3rd highest number of Wellington sorties in 3 Group.
3rd highest number of Wellington operational losses in 3 Group.

Out of 22 squadrons in 5 Group.

12th highest number of overall operations in 5 Group.
10th highest number of sorties in 5 Group.
7th highest number of aircraft operational losses in 5 Group.
Highest equal (with 207Sqn) percentage loss rate of long serving 5 Group squadrons.

Out of 17 Lancaster squadrons in 5 Group.

8th highest number of Lancaster overall operations in 5 Group.
9th highest number of Lancaster sorties in 5 Group.
5th highest number of Lancaster operational losses in 5 Group.

SECTION 3



AIRCRAFT LISTING

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

9 SQUADRON.

WELLINGTON. To August 1942.

L4260 KA-H To 11 OTU.
L4261 KA-B To 214Sqn.
L4262 KA-P To 11 OTU.
L4268 FTR Brunsbüttel 4.9.39.
L4269 To 214Sqn.
L4273 To 11 OTU.
L4274 KA-K To CGS.
L4275 KA-H FTR Brunsbüttel 4.9.39.
L4276 KA-M To 11 OTU.
L4277 To CGS.
L4278 KA-Z/A To CGS.
L4279 KA-D To 75Sqn.
L4286 To 11 OTU.
L4287 Became ground instruction machine in April 1942.
L4288 KA-A Crashed near Honington after collision with L4363 (9Sqn) during training 30.10.39.

L4298 From 99Sqn via SD Flt. To 11 OTU.
L4320 KA-Z/B Crashed in Suffolk while training 8.9.39.
L4358 From 214Sqn. To 1GRU.
L4363 From 214Sqn. Crashed near Honington after mid-air collision with L4288 (9Sqn) 30.10.39.

L4364 From 214Sqn. Returned to 214Sqn.
L7777 Crashed on landing at Abingdon on return from Namur 23.5.40.
L7778 KA-U To 311Sqn.
L7785 To 311Sqn.
L7786 WS-X To 311Sqn.
L7787 WS-J FTR Pont-de-l'Arche 13/14.6.40.
L7788 WS-N To 311Sqn.
L7789 WS-Y To 300Sqn.
L7795 WS-G FTR Wismar 19/20.7.40.
L7796 WS-C Posted out 29.8.40. after 21 operations.
L7799 WS-D From 148Sqn. Crashed in Sussex during operation to Venice 21/22.12.40.

L7807 WS-J Ditched in North Sea on return from Bremen 22.6.40.
L7814 WS-W To 12 OTU.
L7817 From 149Sqn. To 1505 BAT Flt.
L7852 WS-P From 311Sqn. FTR Berlin 14/15.11.40.
L7867 WS-U To 18 OTU.
L7868 To 99Sqn.
L7871 WS-B Destroyed by fire at Honington while preparing for operations 16.6.41.

N2744 WS-U FTR Bremen 12/13.3.41.
N2745 WS-O FTR Cologne 17/18.4.41.
N2871 WS-B From 214Sqn. To 15Sqn.
N2872 FTR from shipping search off Wilhelmshaven 18.12.39.
N2873 WS-C To 20 OTU.
N2883 WS-O To 20 OTU.
N2895 WS-R To 75Sqn.
N2896 To 20 OTU.
N2897 WS-P FTR Leverkusen 18/19.6.40.
N2898 WS-O To 3 BAT Flt.
N2939 WS-H FTR from shipping search off Wilhelmshaven 18.12.39.
N2940 FTR from shipping search off Wilhelmshaven 18.12.39.
N2941 FTR from shipping search off Wilhelmshaven 18.12.39.
N2942 WS-R Crashed on landing at Honington while training 10.10.40.
N2964 WS-D To 15 OTU.
N2981 WS-F To 15 OTU.
N2982 To 75Sqn.
N2983 Ditched on return from Wilhelmshaven 18.12.39.
N2984 To 99Sqn.
N2985 To 99Sqn.
N2986 To 99Sqn.
N3000 WS-L From 99Sqn. To 40Sqn.
N3014 To 75Sqn.
N3015 FTR Gelsenkirchen 16/17.5.40. Crew rescued.
N3016 WS-C To 15 OTU.
N3017 Crashed on take-off from Weybridge during ferry flight 8.3.40.
N3018 To 15 OTU.
P2520 WS-U FTR from reconnaissance sortie to Norway 12.4.40.
P2521 No operations. Posted out 11.1.40.
P2523 WS-W To 15 OTU.
P9205 Crashed near Honington during training 22.7.40.
P9228 To 300Sqn via RAE.
P9231 WS-A To 1 AAS.
P9232 WS-M FTR Duisburg 5/6.6.40.
P9239 WS-H To 214Sqn.
P9278 WS-B Crashed in Bedfordshire on return from Kiel 16/17.10.40.
P9283 To 115Sqn.
R1023 WS-K To 12 OTU.
R1040 From 57Sqn. FTR Cologne 7/8.7.41.
R1096 Force-landed near Martlesham Heath on return from Hanover 11.2.41.
R1175 WS-A To 15 OTU.
R1225 WS-P From 311Sqn. To 1505BAT Flt.
R1244 FTR Turin 11/12.1.41.
R1267 WS-Y Crashed on landing at Honington on return from Boulogne 17.5.41.
R1279 WS-L From 15Sqn. FTR Genoa 28/29.9.41.

R1281 From 57Sqn. FTR Emden 26/27.4.41.
R1284 WS-W From 12 OTU. To 23 OTU.
R1286 To 15 OTU.
R1287 To 18 OTU.
R1288 WS-D Crashed in the sea off Spurn Head on return from Cologne 2.3.41.
R1335 WS-K From 12 OTU. FTR Cologne 27/28.3.41.
R1341 WS-Z FTR Hanover 12/13.8.41.
R1455 WS-D FTR Kiel 19/20.8.41.
R1499 Crash-landed at Honington on return from Berlin 8.9.41.
R1513 FTR Kiel 12/13.8.41.
R1591 WS-M To 3Gp TF.
R1707 From 11 OTU. To 57Sqn.
R1722 From 11 OTU. To 57Sqn.
R1757 WS-Y To 57Sqn.
R1758 FTR from reconnaissance sortie to French and Belgian coastal area 9.6.41.

R1763 WS-N To 57Sqn,
R1764 WS-K To 15 OTU.
R3161 To 149Sqn.
R3173 WS-A From 148Sqn, To 18 OTU.
R3204 WS-J Became ground instruction machine in July 1942.
R3216 WS-K From 75Sqn. To 18 OTU.
R3220 WS-L FTR Düsseldorf Airfield 7/8.12.40.
R3230 WS-M From 311Sqn. To 22 OTU.
R3282 WS-G Crashed off Suffolk coast on return from Berlin 2.10.40.
R3283 Became ground instruction machine in July 1942.
R3286 WS-V To Czech TU.
R3296 WS-P To 12 OTU.
T2458 WS-M To 149Sqn.
T2462 WS-A Crashed on approach to Honington on return from Essen 7/8.11.40.
T2464 WS-K From 75Sqn. FTR Magdeburg 14/15.10.40.
T2468 WS-Y From 75Sqn. To 40Sqn.
T2472 WS-G Crashed on approach to Honington on return from Hanau 29.9.40.
T2473 WS-M FTR Berlin 9/10.4.41.
T2477 WS-C To 99Sqn.
T2505 WS-W FTR Cologne 28/29.9.40.
T2546 To 99Sqn.
T2564 WS-X From 311Sqn. To 11 OTU.
T2578 WS-Z From 311Sqn. To 21 OTU.
T2579 WS-J To 3 Gp TF.
T2619 WS-T To 26 OTU.
T2620 WS-G FTR from reconnaissance sortie to French and Belgian coastal area 9.6.41.

T2744 FTR Bremen 12/13.3.41.
T2900 WS-L FTR Berlin 17/18.4.41.

T2964 WS-N Damaged beyond repair during operation to Rotterdam 3/4.5.41. SOC and SOC 14.5.41.
T2973 WS-G FTR Münster 8/9.7.41.
W5445 From 218Sqn. To 57Sqn.
W5703 FTR Cologne 26/27.8.41.
W5729 WS-J FTR Cologne 10/11.7.41.
X3222 Crashed in Norfolk following recall from operation to Emden 26.9.41.
X3226 WS-B To 101Sqn and back. FTR Rostock 25/26.4.42.
X3275 To 22 OTU via Manufacturers.
X3276 FTR Boulogne 17/18.5.42.
X3277 To 419Sqn.
X3280 FTR Hamburg 9/10.11.41.
X3281 WS-X To 311Sqn and back. To 17 OTU.
X3283 To 150Sqn.
X3285 To 101Sqn.
X3287 Abandoned off Kent coast on return from Düsseldorf 27/28.11.41.
X3288 WS-N To 150Sqn.
X3289 Force-landed in Suffolk during training 6.12.41.
X3305 WS-G To 57Sqn.
X3332 WS-O To 57Sqn.
X3339 From 75Sqn. To 156Sqn.
X3342 From 156Sqn. To 115Sqn.
X3346 To 57Sqn.
X3347 Crashed on approach to Honington on return from Hamburg 1.10.41.
X3348 From 115Sqn. To 466Sqn.
X3351 To 115Sqn.
X3352 WS-M Crashed on approach to East Wretham on return from Hamburg 9.11.41.
X3353 WS-K To 57Sqn.
X3354 WS-L To 115Sqn.
X3358 FTR Cologne 22/23.4.42.
X3367 From 75Sqn. To 166Sqn.
X3369 FTR Warnemünde 8/9.5.42.
X3370 WS-D Crashed in Norfolk during training 19.1.42.
X3372 WS-R To 1483Flt.
X3388 Crashed on approach to Honington on return from Brest 6.1.42.
X3389 WS-Y From 57Sqn. To 75Sqn.
X3390 To 75Sqn.
X3395 To 27 OTU.
X3397 To 75Sqn.
X3398 Crashed in the sea off Essex coast while training 15.2.42.
X3407 WS-Y To 101Sqn.
X3411 FTR Essen 8/9.3.42.
X3415 WS-P FTR Cologne 5/6.4.42.
X3416 WS-X To 75Sqn.

X3422 WS-G To 156Sqn.
X3423 WS-X From 115Sqn. Crashed in Berkshire on return from St Nazaire 24.6.42.
X3424 WS-O From 114Sqn. To 101Sqn.
X3449 To MAEE.
X3451 To 75Sqn.
X3452 To 75Sqn.
X3456 FTR Hamburg 28/29.7.42.
X3457 To 101Sqn.
X3463 WS-X To 150Sqn.
X3469 FTR Cologne 30/31.5.42.
X3470 WS-D To 419Sqn.
X3474 WS-B From 57Sqn. To 1 ECU.
X3475 WS-P From 101Sqn. FTR Hamburg 28/29.7.42.
X3594 WS-G To 26 OTU.
X3603 Crashed on landing at Bodney on return from Kiel 12/13.3.42.
X3605 To 3FPP.
X3606 WS-M FTR Hamburg 28/29.7.42.
X3638 FTR Cologne 22/23.4.42.
X3641 FTR Essen 8/9.3.42.
X3643 Crashed in Norfolk following early return from Essen 9.3.42.
X3649 WS-D To 101Sqn.
X3666 WS-N To 115Sqn.
X3695 WS-V From 101Sqn. FTR from mining sortie 11/12.6.42.
X3702 FTR Essen 10/11.4.42.
X3713 WS-J FTR Emden 20/21.6.42.
X3716 FTR Kiel 28/29.4.42.
X3718 WS-B To 115Sqn.
X3722 FTR Essen 12/13.4.42.
X3759 Crashed in Norfolk during operation to Cologne 22/23.4.42.
X3794 To 75Sqn.
X9660 To 214Sqn.
X9750 From 214Sqn. FTR Mannheim 5/6.8.41.
X9762 To 214Sqn.
X9785 WS-K To 214Sqn.
X9786 To 57Sqn.
X9923 To 57Sqn.
X9924 To 57Sqn.
Z1575 WS-V Crashed soon after take-off from Honington bound for Emden 6/7.6.42.
Z1577 WS-T FTR Duisburg 23/24.7.42.
Z1615 WS-H FTR from mining sortie 15/16.5.42.
Z1658 To 101Sqn.
Z1663 To 57Sqn.
Z8373 From 214Sqn. FTR Emden 26/27.11.41.
Z8845 From 311Sqn. FTR Berlin 7/8.9.41.
Z8853 From 311Sqn. To 115Sqn.

Z8854 To 101Sqn.
Z8856 To 12 OTU.
Z8858 To 75Sqn.
Z8900 WS-C To 214Sqn and back. Crash-landed at Coltishall on return from Emden 15.11.41.
Z8943 From 214Sqn. Returned to 214Sqn.
Z8953 From 214Sqn. FTR Emden 26/27.11.41.
BJ606 WS-R To 101Sqn.
BJ674 FTR Cologne 30/31.5.42.
BJ688 To 115Sqn.
BJ725 WS-D To 75Sqn.
BJ876 FTR Düsseldorf 31.7/1.8.42.
BJ878 FTR Düsseldorf 31.7/1.8.42.

LANCASTER. From August 1942.

L7580 From 207Sqn. To 5LFS.
R5700 WS-N From 106Sqn via 5MU. FTR Hanover 22/23.9.43.
R5744 WS-E From 44Sqn. FTR Mannheim 5/6.9.43.
R5894 WS-U From 49Sqn. To 57Sqn.
R5904 To 15Sqn via 1661CU.
R5907 WS-M From 83CF. FTR Wismar 23/24.9.42.
R5915 WS-X To 97Sqn.
R5916 WS-R From 49Sqn twice. Collided in Waddington circuit with W4265 (9Sqn) on return from Genoa 8.11.42.
R5917 WS-N To 97 Sqn.
W4122 WS-W To 1661CU via 9CF.
W4132 From 57Sqn. To 103 Sqn via 1661 & 1667CUs.
W4133 WS-S/Z Crashed at Bardney during air-test 7.8.43.
W4155 WS-A/D From 50Sqn twice. FTR Diepholz 17/18.12.42.
W4157 WS-V/U FTR Berlin 17/18.1.43.
W4158 WS-O/S To 622Sqn.
W4159 WS-Y FTR Duisburg 8/9.1.43.
W4164 From 207Sqn. CF only. To 1661CU.
W4182 WS-B Collided in circuit with W4259 (44Sqn) on return from Duisburg 20/21.12.42.
W4184 WS-A FTR Munich 19/20.9.42.
W4185 WS-G FTR Munich 21/22.12.42.
W4186 WS-S FTR Essen 16/17.9.42.
W4197 WS-J To 97Sqn after 18 operations.
W4200 WS-U To 97Sqn after 20 operations.
W4230 WS-P FTR Wismar 23/24.9.42.
W4235 WS-C From 156Sqn via NTU.
W4237 WS-W FTR from mining sortie 29/30.9.42.
W4239 WS-T To 97Sqn.

W4248 WS-A To 460Sqn after 12 operations.
W4249 WS-M To 97Sqn after 15 operations.
W4253 WS-W To 106Sqn after 14 operations.
W4254 WS-P To 57Sqn after 9 operations.
W4265 WS-L Collided in Waddington circuit with R5916 (9Sqn) on return from Genoa 8.11.42.
W4271 9CF only. To 1661CU.
W4358 WS-P From 57Sqn. To 1661CU.
W4379 WS-A FTR Berlin 17/18.1.43.
W4380 WS-S From 12Sqn. Became ground instruction machine.
W4761 WS-P From 49Sqn. FTR Berlin 17/18.1.43.
W4764 WS-K FTR Turin 9/10.12.42.
W4765 WS-T FTR Essen 16/17.9.42.
W4819 WS-O To 44Sqn.
W4821 From 103Sqn. No operations. Returned to 103Sqn.
W4829 WS-T To 44Sqn.
W4830 WS-D To 61Sqn.
W4831 WS-K To 44Sqn.
W4840 WS-B FTR Essen 3/4.1.43.
W4843 WS-K FTR Essen 13/14.1.43.
W4964 WS-J Completed 106 operations. Became ground instruction machine.
W5006 WS-X From 207Sqn. FTR Nuremburg 30/31.3.44.
W5010 WS-L From 49Sqn. FTR Leipzig 19/20.2.44.
W5011 WS-Z To 5MU.
DV161 WS-N From 57Sqn. To 50Sqn.
DV198 WS-U FTR Tours 10/11.4.44.
DV284 WS-G FTR Berlin 18/19.11.43.
DV293 WS-Y FTR Berlin 16/17.12.43.
DV327 WS-N Crashed in Lincolnshire on return from Berlin 23.11.43.
DV332 WS-D FTR Berlin 2/3.12.43.
DV334 WS-C Crashed in Nottinghamshire on return from Berlin 3.12.43.
DV340 WS-Q From 460Sqn. To 1651CU.
DV393 WS-K From 617Sqn. To 38MU.
DV395 WS-V FTR Duisburg 21/22.5.44.
DV396 WS-G To 467Sqn.
ED307 No operations. To 44Sqn.
ED308 WS-R To 57Sqn.
ED347 WS-N FTR Duisburg 20/21.12.42.
ED349 WS-S FTR Cloppenburg 17/18.12.42.
ED395 WS-T From 156Sqn. To 15Sqn.
ED420 From 83Sqn. To 106Sqn.
ED436 WS-G FTR Berlin 17/18.1.43.
ED476 WS-M To 12Sqn and back. FTR Duisburg 12/13.5.43.
ED477 WS-O FTR Hamburg 30/31.1.43.
ED479 WS-Z FTR Essen 3/4.4.43.

ED480 WS-U FTR Gelsenkirchen 9/10.7.43.
ED481 WS-N Crashed near Topcliffe on return from Hamburg 30/31.1.43.
ED487 WS-D FTR Cologne 16/17.6.43.
ED489 WS-B Crashed on landing at Sibson while training 21.5.43.
ED490 WS-B Crashed near Waddington on return from Berlin 1/2.3.43.
ED492 WS-W FTR Wilhelmshaven 18/19.2.43.
ED493 WS-A FTR Hamburg (Operation Gomorrah) 2/3.8.43.
ED494 WS-G FTR from mining sortie 13/14.3.43.
ED495 WS-V/Y FTR Nuremburg 25/26.2.43.
ED496 Crashed in Lincolnshire during air test 4.2.43.
ED499 WS-X FTR Hanover 18/19.10.43.
ED501 WS-R FTR Frankfurt 10/11.4.43.
ED502 WS-V/Y FTR Duisburg 9/10.4.43.
ED503 Crashed in Lincolnshire during fighter affiliation 29.1.43.
ED520 WS-T FTR Nuremburg 25/26.2.43.
ED551 WS-M/N FTR Mönchengladbach 30/31.8.43.
ED556 From 100Sqn. Returned to 100Sqn.
ED558 WS-N FTR Bochum 12/13.6.43.
ED566 WS-J/P FTR Duisburg 9/10.4.43.
ED589 WS-O/P FTR Pilsen 13/14.6.43.
ED648 WS-D Crashed in sea off Mablethorpe during operation to Bochum 29/30.9.43.
ED654 WS-W FTR Stuttgart 20/21.2.44.
ED656 WS-V Crashed in Lincolnshire on return from Berlin 23.11.43
ED662 Crashed near Mildenhall while training 7.4.43.
ED666 WS-S/G FTR Mannheim 5/6.9.43.
ED689 WS-K FTR Cologne 3/4.7.43.
ED694 WS-G FTR Essen 3/4.4.43.
ED696 WS-T FTR Kiel 4/5.4.43.
ED699 WS-L FTR Mulheim 22/23.6.43.
ED700 WS-O Ditched off Norfolk coast on return from Frankfurt 20.12.43.
ED721 WS-S From 49Sqn. Completed 10 operations to Berlin. FTR Brunswick 14/15.1.44.
ED799 WS-G FTR from mining sortie 22/23.4.43.
ED806 WS-K FTR Duisburg 9/10.4.43.
ED831 WS-H/Y To 1656CU and back. FTR Gelsenkirchen 25/26.6.43.
ED834 WS-Z FTR Dusseldorf 25/26.5.43.
ED836 WS-C/T FTR Stuttgart 7/8.10.43.
ED838 WS-R From 156Sqn. FTR Essen 30.4/1.5.43.
ED871 WS-Z From 467Sqn. FTR Berlin 18/19.11.43.
ED975 WS-Y Crashed in Lincolnshire on return from Munich 7.9.43.
EE122 WS-F To 156Sqn.
EE136 WS-R To 189Sqn.
EE188 WS-B FTR Berlin 16/17.12.43.
HK540 WS-H FTR Stuttgart 15/16.3.44.

HK788 WS-E Caught fire in the air and crashed in Berkshire during an operation to Molbis 7/8.4.45.
HK791 WS-M
HK803 WS-Q To 619Sqn.
JA679 WS-P FTR Reggio Emilia 15/16.7.43.
JA690 WS-M From 49Sqn. FTR St Leu d'Esserent 7/8.7.44.
JA692 WS-D FTR Hamburg (Operation Gomorrah) 29/30.7.43.
JA711 WS-A From 97Sqn. FTR Berlin 1/2.1.44.
JA852 WS-L FTR Mannheim 23/24.9.43.
JA869 WS-H FTR Stuttgart 7/8.10.43.
JA957 WS-D From 576Sqn. FTR St Leu d'Esserent 7/8.7.44.
JB116 WS-T From 61Sqn. FTR St Leu d'Esserent 7/8.7.44.
LL742 WS-D To 463Sqn via 5LFS.
LL745 WS-M FTR Berlin 27/28.1.44.
LL785 WS-F FTR Creil 4/5.7.44.
LL787 WS-Y FTR Maily-le-Camp 3/4.5.44.
LL845 WS-L Completed 97 operations.
LL853 WS-W FTR Prouville 24/25.6.44.
LL883 WS-C Crashed on take-off from Bardney when bound for Brunswick 22.4.44.
LL884 WS-Q Crash-landed in Russia during transit to Yagodnik for Tirpitz operation 12.9.44.

LL901 WS-V FTR Munster 23/24.9.44.
LL914 WS-V FTR Munster 23/24.9.44.
LL970 WS-Y FTR Prouville 24/25.6.44.
LM217 WS-O From 463Sqn.

LM220 WS-Y
LM221 WS-K FTR Culmont-Chalindrey 12/13.7.44.
LM309 To 617Sqn.
LM329 FTR Oberhausen 14/15.6.43.
LM361 WS-T FTR Juvisy 18/19.4.44.
LM422 WS-N FTR Frankfurt 22/23.3.44.
LM430 WS-B FTR Frankfurt 22/23.3.44.
LM432 WS-O Crashed near Bardney while training 28/29.3.44.
LM433 WS-H FTR Schweinfurt 24/25.2.44.
LM436 To 207Sqn.
LM445 WS-Z FTR Munich 24/25.4.44.
LM447 WS-K FTR Stuttgart 20/21.2.44.
LM448 WS-M From 467Sqn. Force-landed in Sweden following final Tirpitz raid (with 617Sqn) 12.11.44.

LM453 WS-E FTR Rilly la Montagne 31.7.44.
LM519 WS-N FTR Brunswick 22/23.5.44.
LM520 WS-X FTR Lille 10/11.5.44.
LM528 WS-D FTR Lille 10/11.5.44.
LM548 WS-C To 463Sqn.
LM713 To 189Sqn.

LM715 WS-O FTR Nuremburg 19/20.10.44.
LM736 To 189Sqn.
LM745 To 189Sqn.
ME555 WS-Z From 617Sqn.
ME579 WS-A Crashed in Rutland on return from Argentan 7.6.44.
ME704 WS-B FTR Scholven/Buer 21/22.6.44.
ME724 WS-O FTR Brunswick 22/23.4.44.
ME757 WS-O FTR Brest 13.8.44.
ME759 WS-P To 227Sqn via 1661CU.
ME809 WS-X
ME833 WS-Z FTR Revigny 18/19.7.44.
ND692 From 35Sqn.
ND733 From 550Sqn. To 463Sqn.
ND948 WS-H FTR Prouville 24/25.6.44.
ND951 WS-Z FTR Bourg Leopold 11/12.5.44.
NF929 WS-P To 619Sqn.
NF937 WS-E FTR Altenbeken 14.2.45.
NF938 WS-H Crash-landed in Russia during transit to Yagodnik for Tirpitz operation 12.9.44.
NF985 WS-D Crash-landed in Russia during transit to Yagodnik for Tirpitz operation 12.9.44.
NG206 WS-J
NG220 WS-B From 61Sqn. To 619Sqn.
NG223 WS-D To 106Sqn and back. FTR Dortmund-Ems Canal at Ladbergen 1.1.45.
NG233 WS-E FTR Altenbeken 14.2.45.
NG235 WS-H FTR Lützkendorf 8/9.4.45.
NG242 WS-C
NG249 WS-S
NG252 WS-R Crashed on take-off at Bardney when bound for the Dortmund-Ems Canal at Ladbergen 1.1.45.
NG257 WS-N FTR Bergen 12.1.45.
NG278 WS-N
NG341
NG384 WS-T
NG419 WS-U
NG442 WS-F
NG486 WS-A
NG487 WS-D
NG495 WS-R
NG499 WS-W
NN722 WS-Z FTR Leuna 14/15.1.45.
PA172 WS-G
PB146 WS-A To 189Sqn.
PB211 To 630Sqn.
PB289 WS-B To 189Sqn.

PB371 From 7Sqn. To 582Sqn.
PB470 From 83Sqn.
PB594 WS-D To 189Sqn.
PB596 WS-H To 61Sqn.
PB696 WS-V To 619Sqn.
PB905 From 97Sqn.
PD198 WS-W To 103Sqn.
PD205 WS-H FTR Courtrai 20/21.7.44.
PD211 WS-M Crash-landed in Russia during transit to Yagodnik for Tirpitz operation
12.9.44.
PD213 WS-F Crashed while landing at Bardney on return from Politz 21/22.12.44.
PD368 WS-A From 50Sqn. Crashed on take-off at Bardney when bound for the
Dortmund-Ems Canal at Ladbergen 1.1.45.
PD377 WS-U FTR Dortmund-Ems Canal at Ladbergen 1.1.45. F/S Thompson
awarded VC.
SW277 To 61Sqn.

HEAVIEST SINGLE LOSS.

18.12.39. Heligoland Bight (Wilhelmshaven). 5 Wellingtons.

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

SECTION 4



KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

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



SOURCES OF INFORMATION

www.bombardiercommandmuseumarchives.ca

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.
 Beam Bombers. Michael Cumming. Sutton Publishing.
 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.
 Heavenly Days. Group Captain James Pelly-Fry DSO. Crecy Books.
 In Brave Company. W R Chorley. P A Chorley.
 Joe. The autobiography of a Trenchard Brat. Wing Commander J Northrop DSO DFC AFC. Square One Publications.
 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 1,2,3,4,5,6. W R Chorley. Midland Counties
 Publications.
 Silksheen. Geoff D Copeman. Midland Counties Publications.
 Snaith Days. K S Ford. Compaid 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 Pedulum and the Scythe. Ken Marshall. Air Research Publications.
 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.
 Wellington. The Geodetic Giant. Martin Bowman. Airlife.
 White Rose Base. Brian J Rapier. Aero Litho Company (Lincoln) Ltd.

Wings of Night.

2 Group RAF. A Complete History.

101 Squadron. Special Operations.

207 Squadron RAF Langar 1942-43. Barry Goodwin/Raymond Glynne-Owen. Quacks Books.

408 Squadron History.

Alexander Hamilton. Crecy.

Michael J F Bowyer. Crecy.

Richard Alexander.

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.

Generous assistance in the compiling of lists of commanding officers has been provided by Anna McIlwaine at the RAF Museum at Hendon, until her retirement in 1998. Also of considerable help in this regard, and with details of awards, is Clive Richards at the Air Historical Branch of the Air Ministry, to whom I am greatly indebted.

My good friend, author Martyn Ford-Jones, had allowed me to draw extensively from his research material, particularly in respect of losses during 1945. I am also extremely grateful to my friend Steve Smith, an historian of 3 Group in general, and 218 and 623 Squadrons in particular, for conducting research on my behalf whenever he is at the PRO.

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

www.bombercommandmuseum.co.uk

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

SECTION 6



STOCK LIST

www.bombercommandmuseumarchives.ca

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

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