

# Empire Air Training Scheme & Bomber Command's Strategic Bombing Campaign

The battles for Antwerp and the Battle of the Bulge

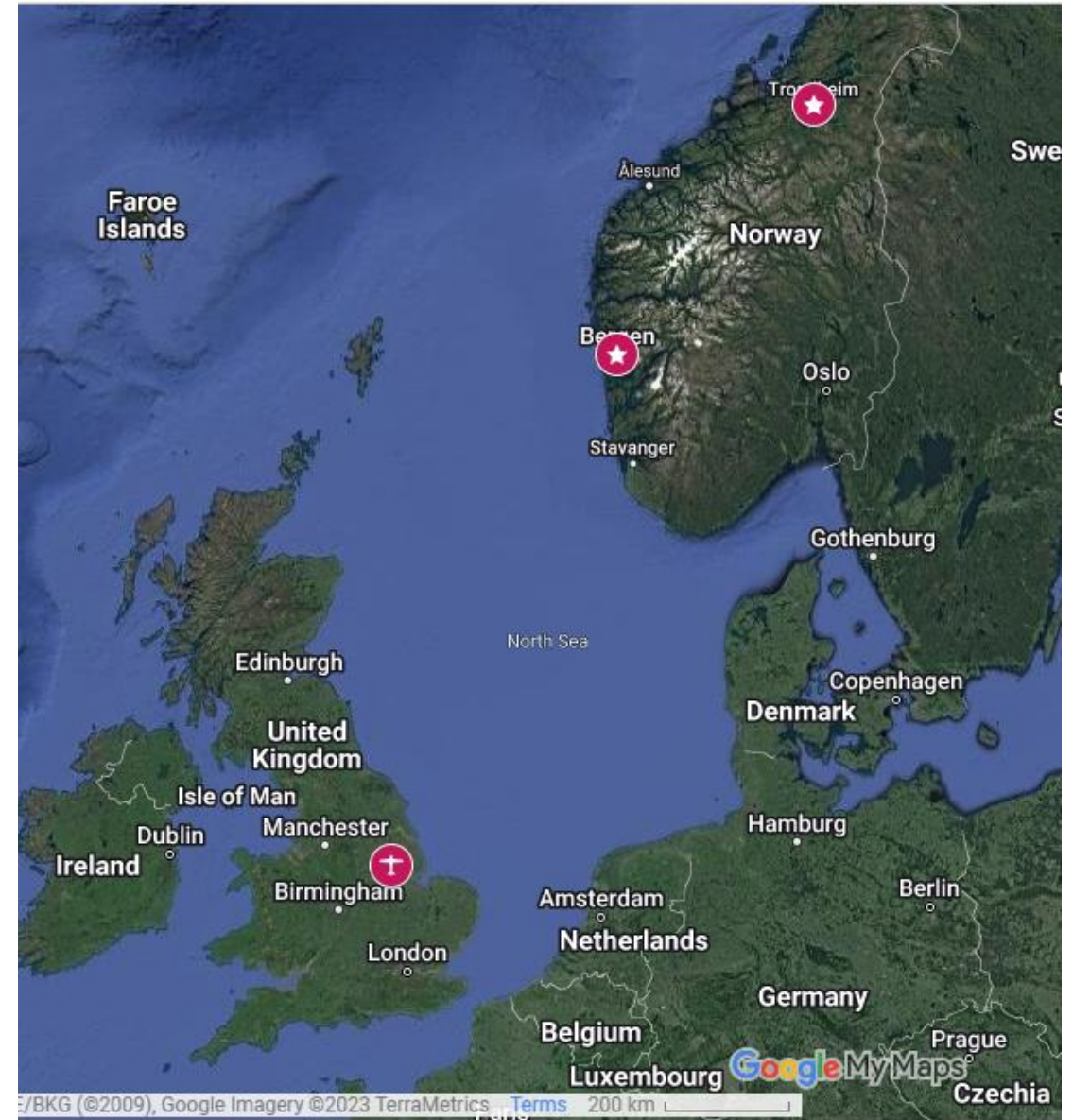


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

044167

# 4th October

- The increasing threat from Schnorkel and closed-cycle U-boats also demanded attack on Norwegian bases which now supported the enemy submarine offensive.
- No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group made an attack on U-boat pens at Bergen on 4th October which caused considerable damage to workshops and shipyard facilities and sank four U-boats. Only three R.A.A.F. pilots flew in this brilliant raid.
- A heavier repeat raid made by 244 Lancasters of No. 5 Group on 28th-29th October was a failure due to cloud cover
- Even more disappointing was a raid against submarine pens at Trondheim on 22nd-23rd November when crews were airborne for 12 hours only to find the target hidden beneath a very efficient smoke-screen which caused the master bomber to cancel the operation.



# 6th October 1944

- The two Driffield squadrons, Nos. 462 and 466 attacked Sterkrade-Holten in daylight on 6th October 1944.
- This Fischer-Tropsch plant had escaped any crippling damage in two daylight attacks on 27th and 30th September and was correspondingly high on Bomber Command's priority list when temporarily good weather on 6th October provided an opportunity to attempt to put Sterkrade-Holten out of action.
- The bombing force of 126 Halifaxes (33 from Driffield) was backed up by no fewer than 23 Lancasters and 10 Mosquitos of No. 8 P.F.F. Group.
- Heavy fighter protection mainly by Spitfire squadrons was provided to prevent the enemy from dispersing the force in time and space during the outward journey and thus preventing them from reaching or identifying the small target in time to attack.
- The bombers were not molested by fighters but appeared compactly and on time over Sterkrade to see a good pattern of markers.

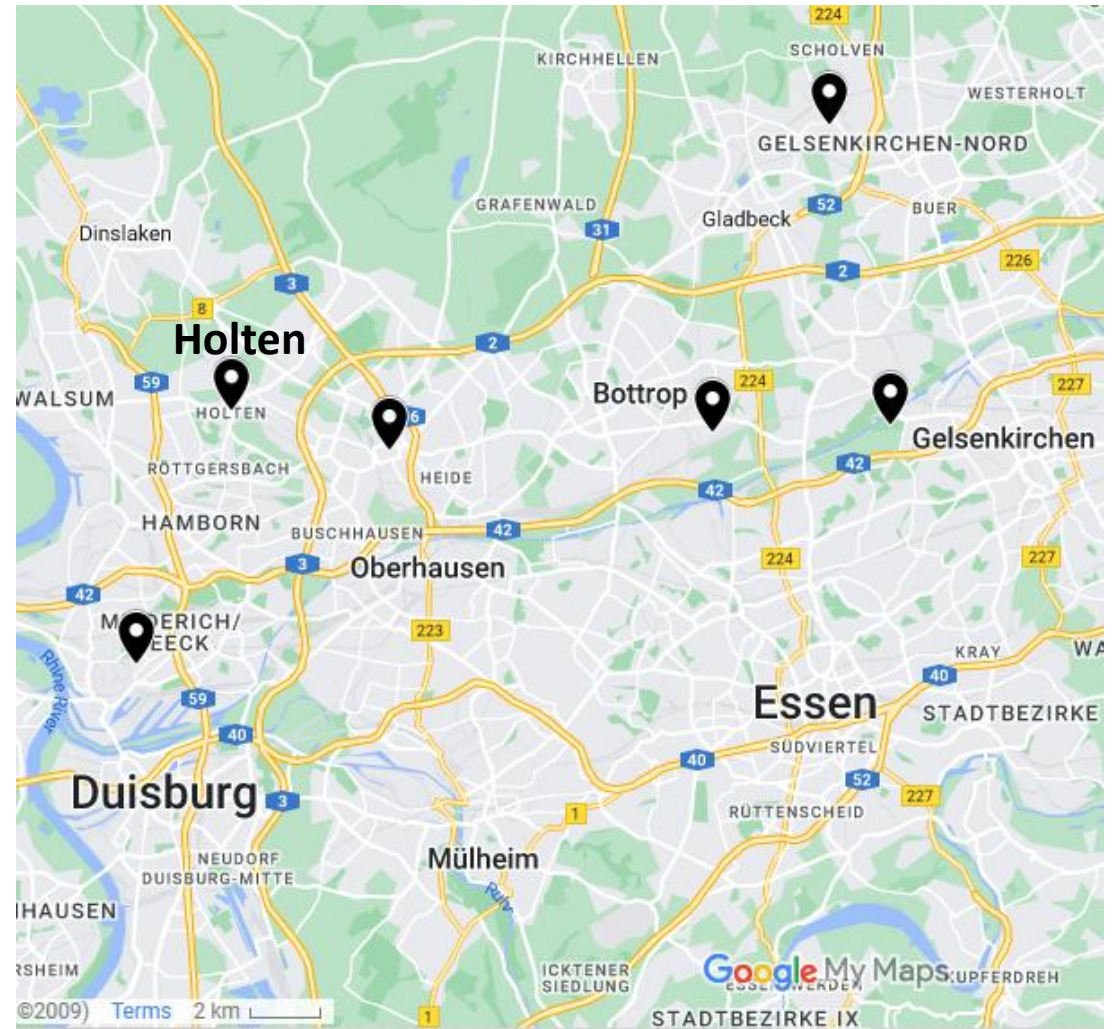


Spitfires can now go to the Ruhr?



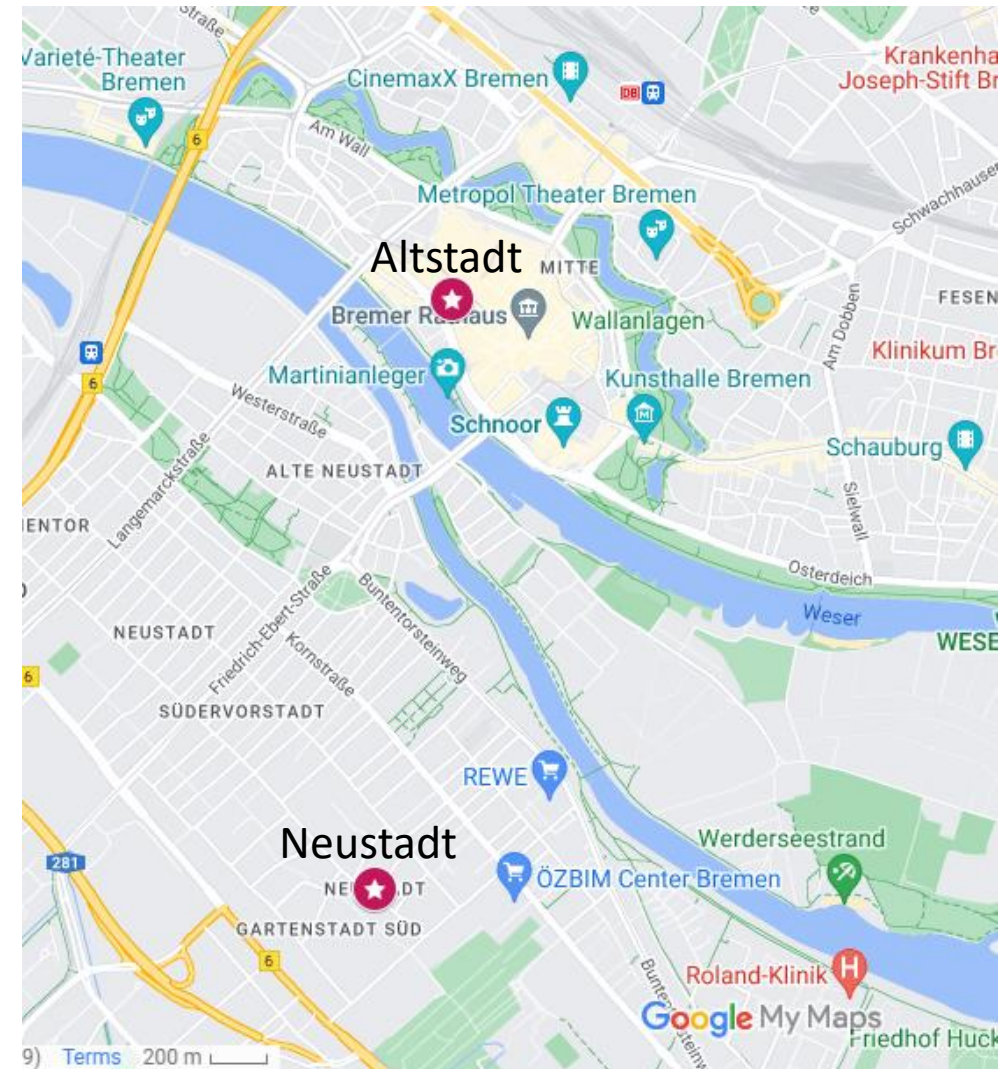
# 6th October 1944

- A notably high proportion of crews obtained target photographs at the moment of bomb release, 13 crews of No. 462 and 11 of No. 466 returning with this evidence to confirm their efforts.
- More detailed later reconnaissance showed a heavy concentration of damage in the north-west area of the plant where the compressor house, ammonia-synthesis building, catalyst and research sections were all hit heavily.
- This raid was marked by increased German ground gun defences, a sure sign of enemy appreciation of the importance of the target.
- Over 70 per cent of the Halifaxes were hit by gunfire, and although only three bombers were actually shot down, others struggled home with great difficulty. There were many acts of creditable airmanship which reflected the long, thorough training arrangements of Bomber Command as well as the buoyant determination and enthusiasm which was the basis of crew spirit at this time.



# 6th-7th October 1944

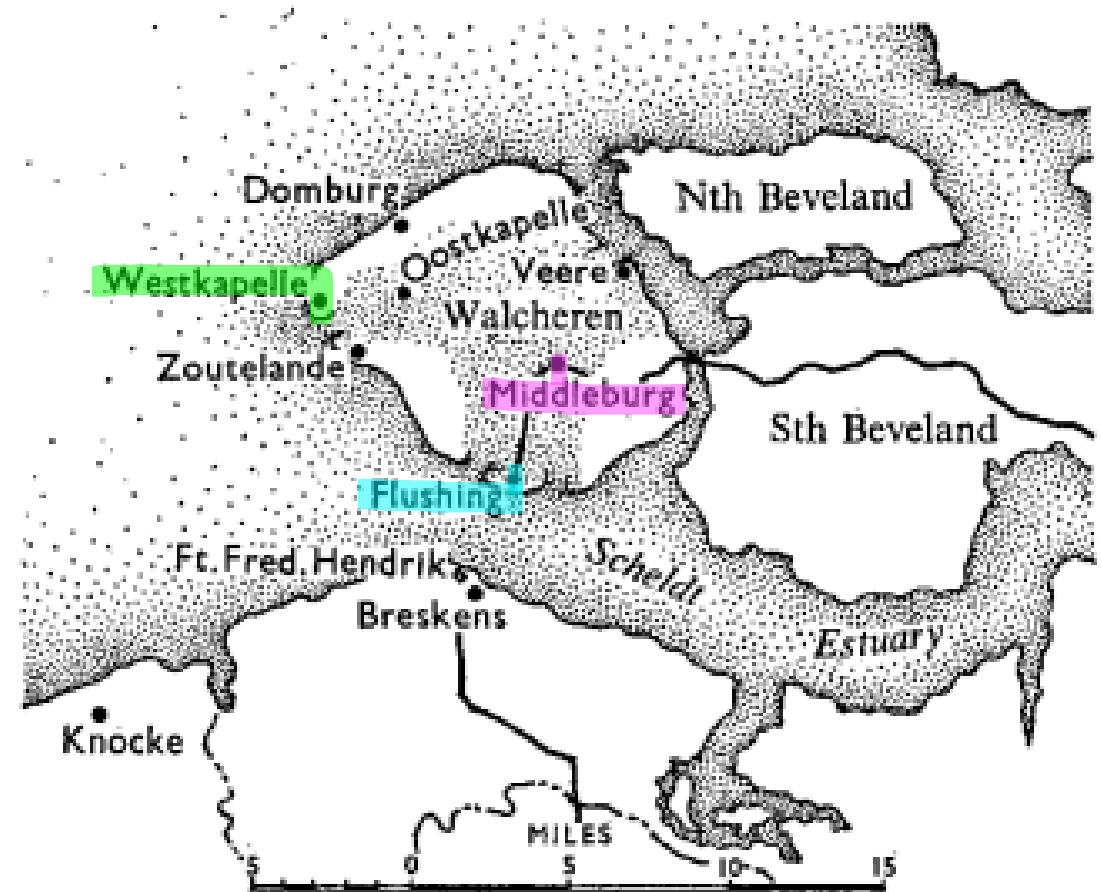
- Bremen, already heavily attacked in August, was subjected to a fierce incendiary raid on 6th-7th October.
- The load was 152 tons of HE and 847 tons of incendiaries.
- No. 5 Group gutted large sections of the Neustadt district and caused further damage in the already ruined Altstadt section.
- There was some industrial damage but the main result of this raid was to raise the estimated total of housing accommodation destroyed in Bremen to 70 per cent.
- 263 dispatched, 256 attacked, 999 tonnes, 5 failed to return.





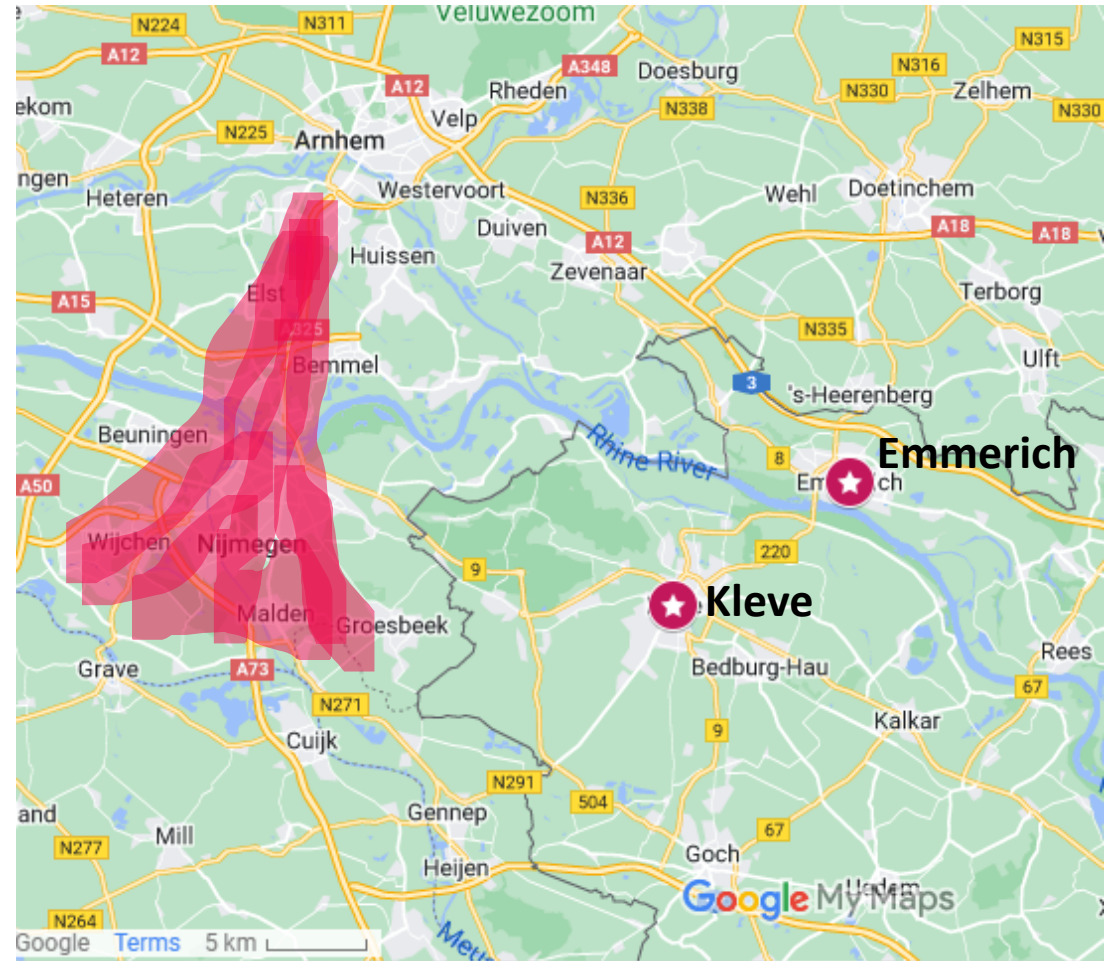
# 7th October 1944

- The success on the 3<sup>rd</sup> led to a reduction in the size of forces employed on this type of attack.
- On 7th October Nos. 463 and 467 provided 23 out of 49 Lancasters which attacked the sea wall west of **Flushing** while other units of No. 5 Group attacked dikes east of the town. Wing Commander Forbes led the westerly raid which secured many direct hits on the wall, some with delayed-action bombs.
- Seven Lancasters of No. 467 were hit by flak and one piloted by Flying Officer Stewart was badly damaged as they pressed home their attacks, but all returned to base.
- Later that day it was seen that flooding from the **Westkapelle** breach had extended beyond **Middleburg** and that both east and west of Flushing some two square miles of flooding had occurred.



# 7th October

- To hamper the effectiveness of possible enemy counter-attacks against the flank of the Twenty-first Army Group, Bomber Command in daylight on 7th October attacked Emmerich and Kleve.
- Thirty-one Lancasters of No. 460 (9 per cent of the attacking force) bombed Emmerich in good weather marred only by a slight haze and reported many fires and pillars of smoke.
- The centre of the town was devastated and damage was wide - spread in all suburbs; storage sidings and harbour facilities were particularly affected.
- Equally good results were obtained by Nos. 462 and 466 in a well-concentrated attack on Kleve which practically wiped out the central and north-east parts of the town.
- **Market garden Salient.**



# 7 October 1944

- Helmut Lent (photo) was a Luftwaffe night-fighter ace.
- He shot down 110 aircraft, 102 of them at night.
- Lent was killed in a flying accident on 7 October 1944.





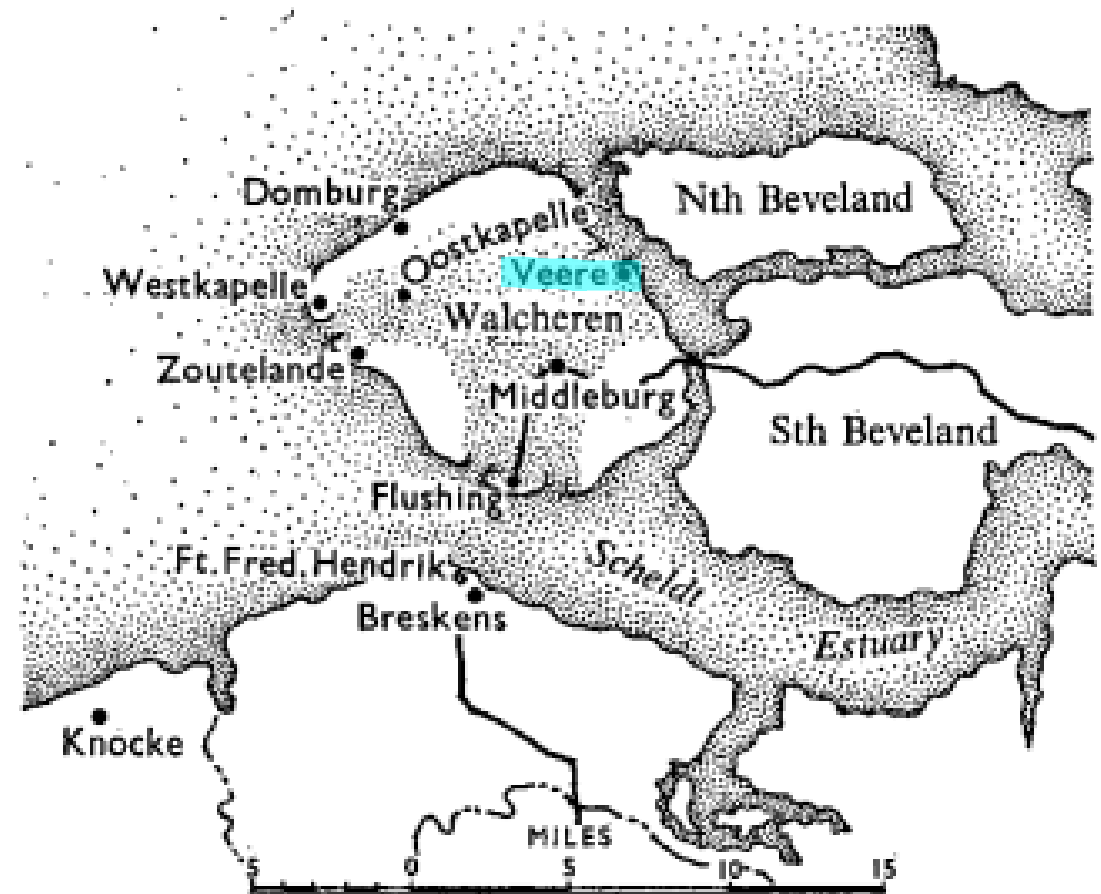
# 9th-10th October

- No. 462 and 466 sent 21 aircraft when Bochum was raided on 9th-10th October.
- The attack laid waste large areas of the city and caused heavy damage to steelworks, smaller engineering factories and railway facilities.
- 435 dispatched, 404 attacked, 6 failed to return including 2 from No. 462.



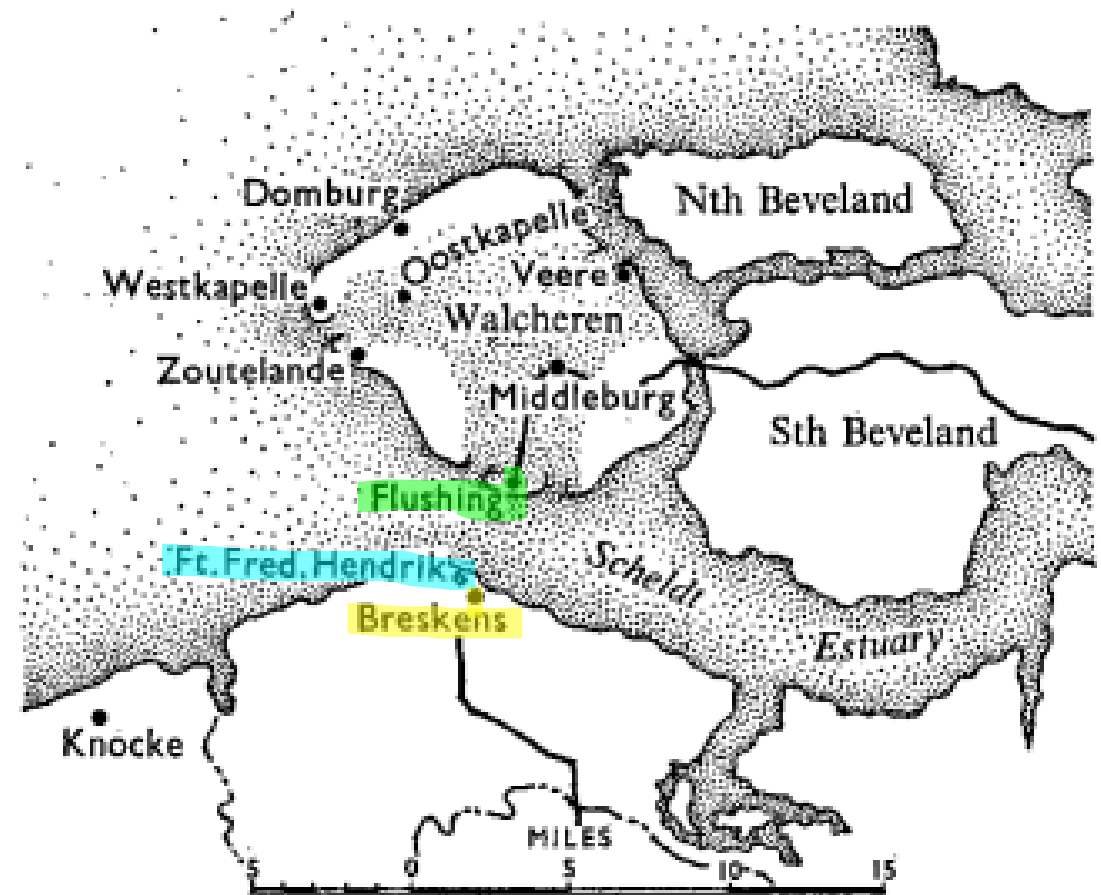
# 11 October 1944

- Walcheren was by this time almost cut in two but a further attack near **Veere** in the north-east on 11th October virtually completed the flooding of low-lying parts of the island.



# 11 October 1944

- The next stage was the attack against the heavy coastal batteries at Breskens and on Walcheren which had been part of the Atlantic Wall defences and which completely dominated the Scheldt sea approaches. Only batteries on the higher ground were bombed as it was hoped that flooding would eliminate the others.
- The attack began on 11th October when Nos. 463 and 467 dispatched 36 out of 115 Lancasters which plastered batteries near Flushing with 612 tons of bombs, achieving hits and near misses at all four aiming points.
- On the same day No. 1 Group attacked two groups of batteries at Fort Frederik Hendrik on the mainland near Breskens. One attack was very successful but low cloud enveloped the other aiming point and No. 460 was ordered to return to base without bombing.





# 12 October 1944

- Next (12 October) day 15  
Lancasters of No. 460 returned  
in a force of 96 aircraft which  
destroyed two and damaged a  
further two of the five gun  
positions at **Fort Frederik  
Hendrik.**



# Flight Sergeant Clarence William LAWTON

Service No: 424771

Born: Gunning NSW, 17 July 1921

Enlisted in the RAAF: 9 October 1942

Unit: No. 31 Squadron (SAAF), Celone, Italy

Died: Air Operations: (No. 31 Squadron Liberator aircraft KH239), Italy, 12 October 1944, Aged 23 Years

Buried: Milan War Cemetery, Italy

CWGC Additional Information: Son of William and Ethel Margaret May Lawton

Roll of Honour: Unknown

Remembered: Panel 134, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: Harden-Murrumburrah War Memorial Wall, Harden NSW

Remembered: NSW Department of Education Teachers and Trainees WW2 Honour Roll, Sydney NSW

On 12 October 1944, Liberator KH239 went mission on a mission to drop supplies to Italian Partisans at Vigone located at the western end of the Po Valley in the foothills of the Alps. There was nine tenths cloud and poor weather on the outward journey to the target area which was in mountainous terrain and nothing was heard from the aircraft after taking off at 1631 hours.

The crew members of KH239 were:

Sergeant David Wilfred Bishop (1391762) (RAFVR) (Air Bomber)

Sergeant John Bucks (772720) (RAFVR) (Air Gunner)

Sergeant Eric Henry Albert Clift (1602670) (RAFVR) (Navigator)

Pilot Officer Thomas Duffas Fotheringham (56930) (RAFVR) (Flight Engineer)

Flight Sergeant Clarence William Lawton (424771) (Pilot)

Sergeant Stanley Edward Lockton (1881847) (RAFVR) (Air Gunner)

Sergeant Geoffrey Tennison (1750387) (RAFVR) (Wireless Operator)

Sergeant Dennis Raymond Wellon (1485008) (RAFVR) (Air Gunner)

The RAF crew members are shown on the CWGC record with dates of death of 13 October 1944.

References:

Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour On-Line Records

Commonwealth War Graves Commission On-Line Records

Department of Veterans' Affairs On-Line WWII Nominal Roll

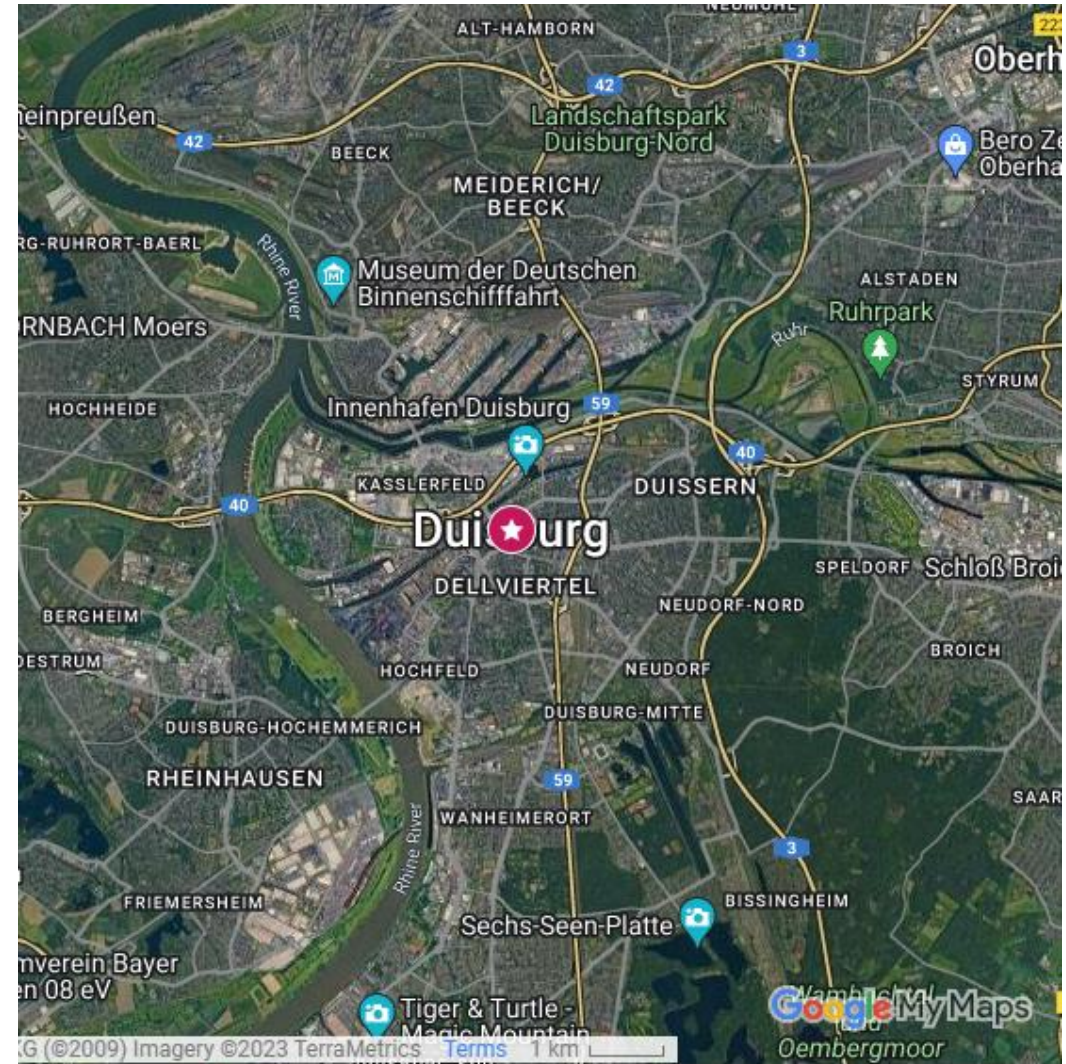
National Archives of Australia On-Line Record A705, 166/24/561

Register of War Memorials in New South Wales On-Line

Liberators are now appearing in RAF squadrons in the Mediterranean, requiring crews of 8.

# 14th October

- Bomber Command launched a terrible onslaught on Duisburg when two separate 1,000 - bomber raids were launched against that city within 24 hours.
- In each attack a greater weight of bombs was dropped than in any previous raid against a German industrial city, the combined bomb-load aggregating over 9,000 tons, not much short of the total enemy bomb-load dropped against all British targets during the worst month (September 1940) of the Luftwaffe blitz.
- This agony for Duisburg began in the late forenoon of 14th October when, despite layers of drifting cloud over the city, fifty two aircraft of Nos. 460, 462 and 466 had no real difficulty in bombing heavily built-up areas and in starting many fires in the dock area of the river port.
- 1,063 dispatched, 1,007 attacked, 15 failed to return.





# 14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> October

- The same three squadrons (and many of the same crews) returned to Duisburg during the second wave of the night attack and were helped by clear skies and raging ground fires which assisted their aim.
- When the Australians left, the whole city appeared to be ablaze.
- Enemy gun and fighter defences, which had destroyed 15 of the daylight raiders, became progressively less effective during the night attack.
- 1,065 dispatched, 998 attacked, 6 failed to return including 1 from No.462.
- No. 462 would have lost another but for the courage and determination of Flight Sergeant Cockerill. As he approached the target Cockerill was severely wounded in his left eye by flak. He lost consciousness and the Halifax began to dive steeply but he recovered in time to level out the aircraft and complete his bombing run. Although in great pain and weak from loss of blood he refused morphia. Throughout a hazardous return flight, which included a fire in one engine and sudden illumination by enemy fighter flares, he stuck at the controls although he could not see his instruments, whose readings had to be given to him by another crew member. He collapsed just after making a successful emergency landing at Manston.

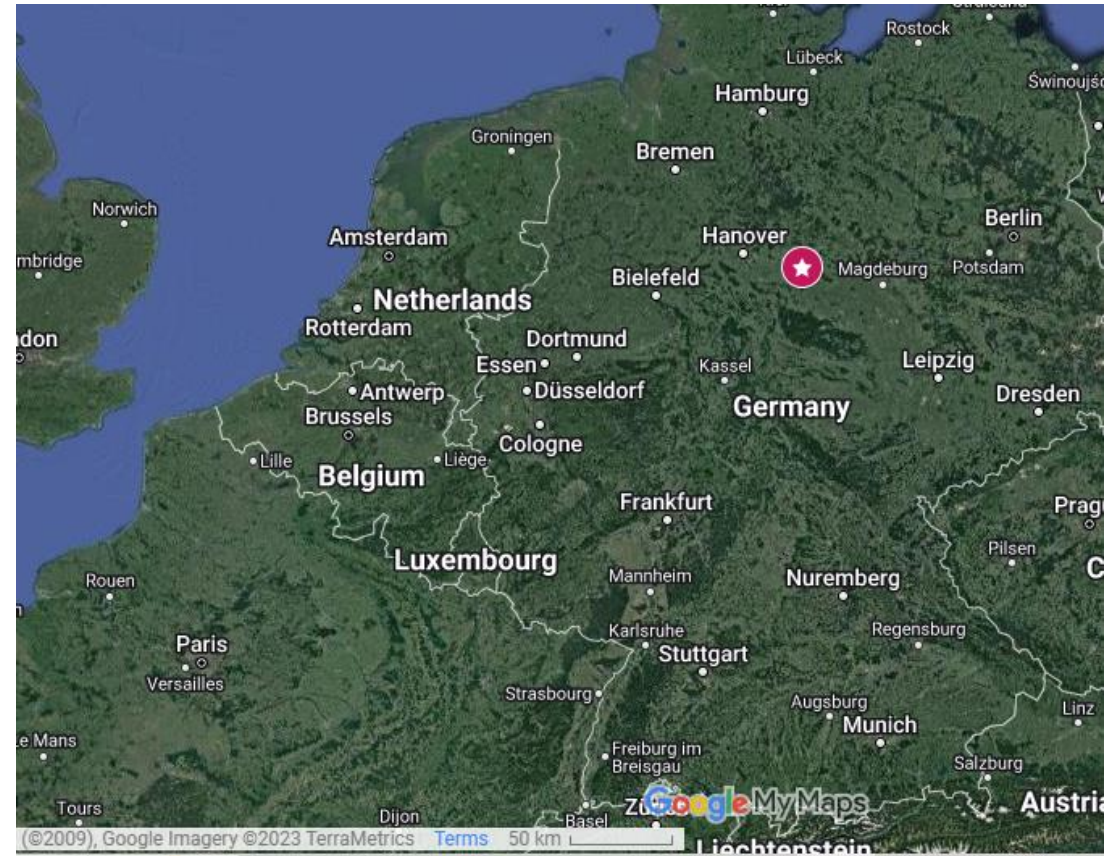


# 14<sup>th</sup> 15th October

- These raids on Duisburg created widespread new damage in civilian and industrial suburbs alike but it was also apparent that the law of diminishing returns applied to the bombing of cities that had already been heavily attacked, as areas already devastated inevitably absorbed a fair proportion of the weight of attack.
- This led Bomber Command to increase the proportion of high explosive to incendiary bombs in attacks of this kind, because fires would not spread rapidly across areas covered in ruins or cleared of gutted buildings.

# 14th 15th October 1944

- On 14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> October Nos. 463 and 467 again carried a predominantly incendiary load to Brunswick.
- Elaborate electronic and tactical countermeasures were used that night to confuse enemy fighter defences and the bombers also found the target clear of cloud.
- In these favourable conditions the master bomber quickly corrected a tendency for early arrivals to undershoot with their bombs and fires were soon raging throughout the old town, which was left in ruins.
- Only one aircraft was shot down but crews complained of the indiscriminate jettisoning of unused incendiary clusters during the return journey.
- 240 dispatched, 233 attacked, 847 tons, 1 failed to return.



As the nights get longer Bomber Command can reach deeper into Germany.



**Date of Death:** 15 October 1944.

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427) (1/432)                      AWM 237 (64)

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	NG 196
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO -
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster NG 196 took off from RAF Waddington at 2237 hours on the night of 14/15<sup>th</sup> October 1944 to bomb Brunswick, Germany. Bomb load 1 x 1000lb bomb, 16 x 150 x 4lb incendiaries. Nineteen aircraft from the Squadron took part in the mission and all returned safely to base.

The Pilot's report is as follows " Sortie completed. No cloud good visibility. Big concentration of fire believed oil fire visible for 150 miles. Aircraft showered by incendiaries. Tailplane, fuselage, port wing, 2 starboard engines, bomb door, rear turret damaged by incendiaries. One penetrated Perspex and fuselage over Navigators table damaging Z and Gee.No effect on aircraft handling. None of incendiaries burnt. Navigator suffered serious head injury. Landed at Woodbridge. Navigator died of injuries in the afternoon.

**Crew:**

RAAF     421582 FO Edwards, W A Captain (Pilot)  
 RAAF     411968 FO J C Turner (Navigator)  
 RAAF     22406 FO Watkins, B C (Bomb Aimer)  
 RAAF     410553 FO Lilley, D (Wireless Operator Air Gunner)  
 RAF       Sgt A Blenkinsop, (Flight Engineer)  
 RAAF     418916 WO D S Brockman, (Air Gunner)  
 RAAF     418618 WO F R Armstrong, (Air Gunner)

FO Turner is buried in the RAF Cemetery, Cambridge, UK.

# Flying Officer Lewis Henry WILLIAMS

Service No: 410404

Born: Dandenong VIC, 5 September 1922

Enlisted in the RAAF: 6 December 1941

Unit: No. 5 Service Flying Training School, Uranquinty NSW

Died: Aircraft Accident (No. 5 Service Flying Training School Wirraway aircraft A20-230), near The Rock, 15 October 1944, Aged 22 Years

Buried: Wagga Wagga War Cemetery, NSW

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Henry James Williams and Margaret Williams, of Albury

Roll of Honour: Albury NSW

Remembered: Panel 117, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

On 15 October 1944, Wirraway A20-230 crashed four miles north west of The Rock and the crew was killed. The aircraft was on a night non-operational ferry flight from Belfrayden satellite to the main aerodrome at Uranquinty and crashed in a dust storm.

The crew members of A20-230 were:

Leading Aircraftman Leonard Darrell Leysley (443782) (Trainee Pilot)

Flying Officer Lewis Henry Williams (410404) (Instructor Pilot)

References:

Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour On-Line Records (RAAF Casualty Information compiled by Alan Storr (409804))

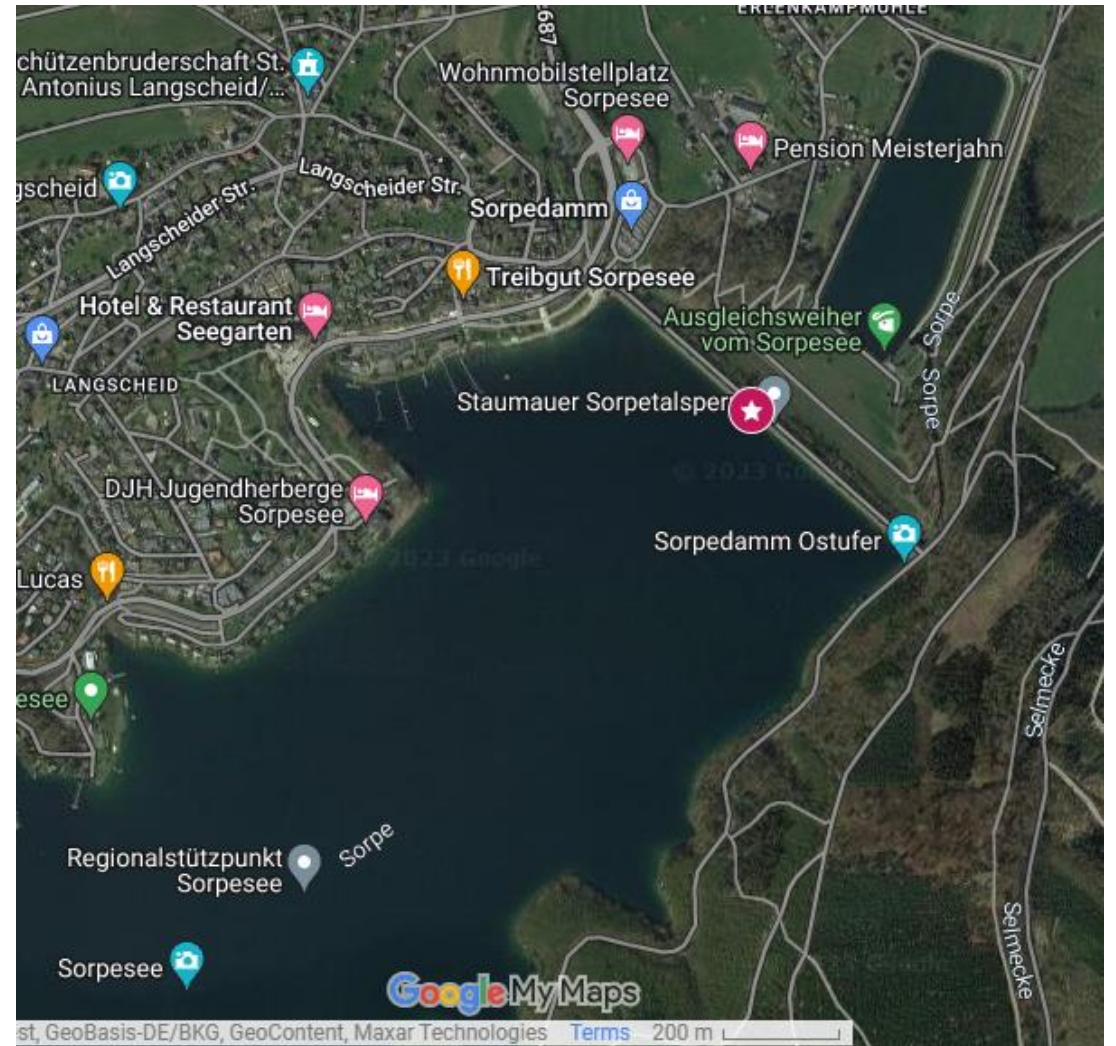
Commonwealth War Graves Commission On-Line Records

Department of Veterans' Affairs On-Line WWII Nominal Roll

National Archives of Australia On-Line Record A705, 166/43/908; A9845, 109

# 15th October

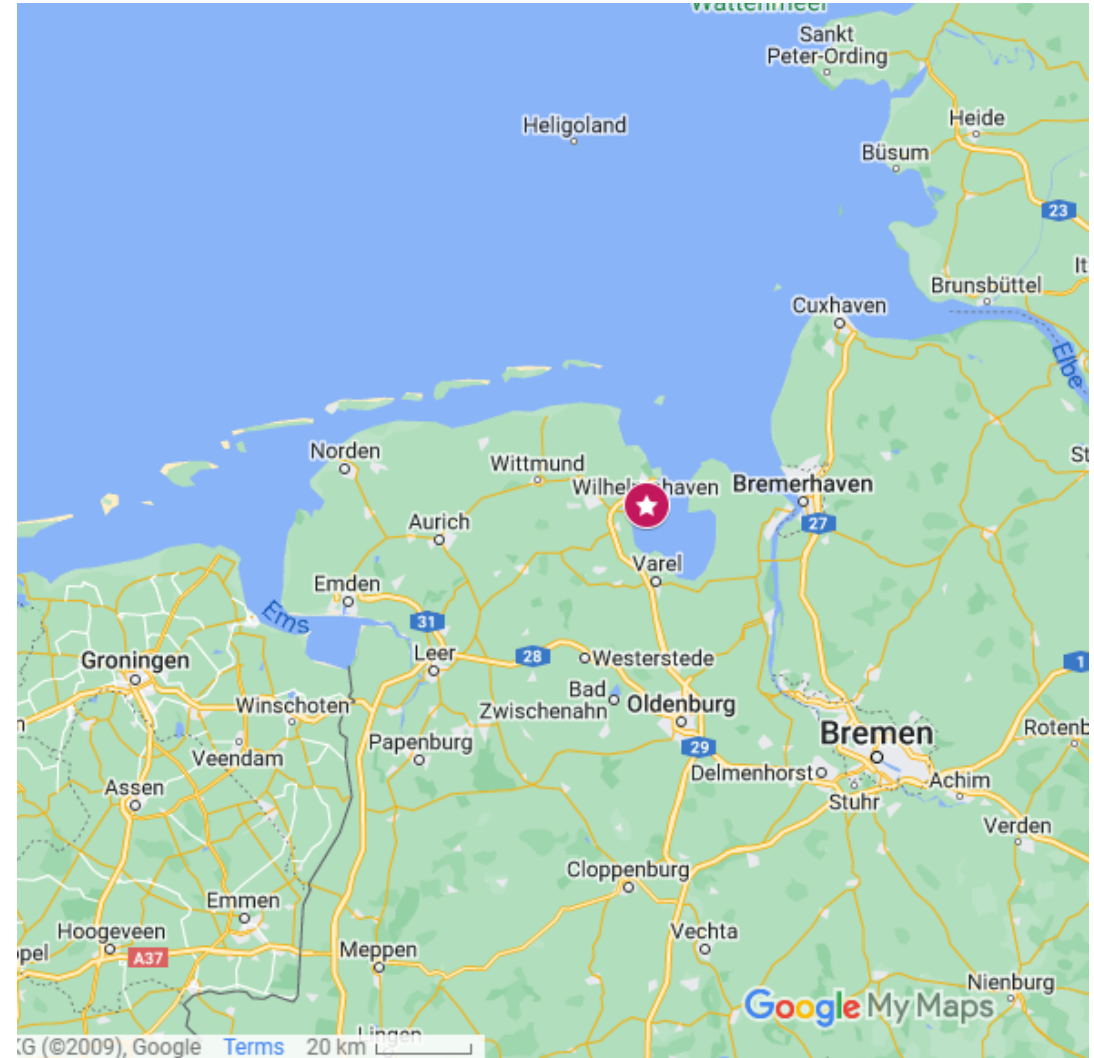
- Already on 7th October, as a corollary to the attacks on Kleve and Emmerich, No. 617 Squadron had attacked the Kembs dam with "Tallboy" (12,000-lb) bombs and had effectively breached the western part of the dam.
- No. 9 Squadron R.A.F. had then made a Tallboy attack on 15th October against the Sorpe dam but, although Flying Officers Dunne, Arndell, Williams and Jones all reported hits on the face or crown of the dam, its structure absorbed these great blows and stood firm.





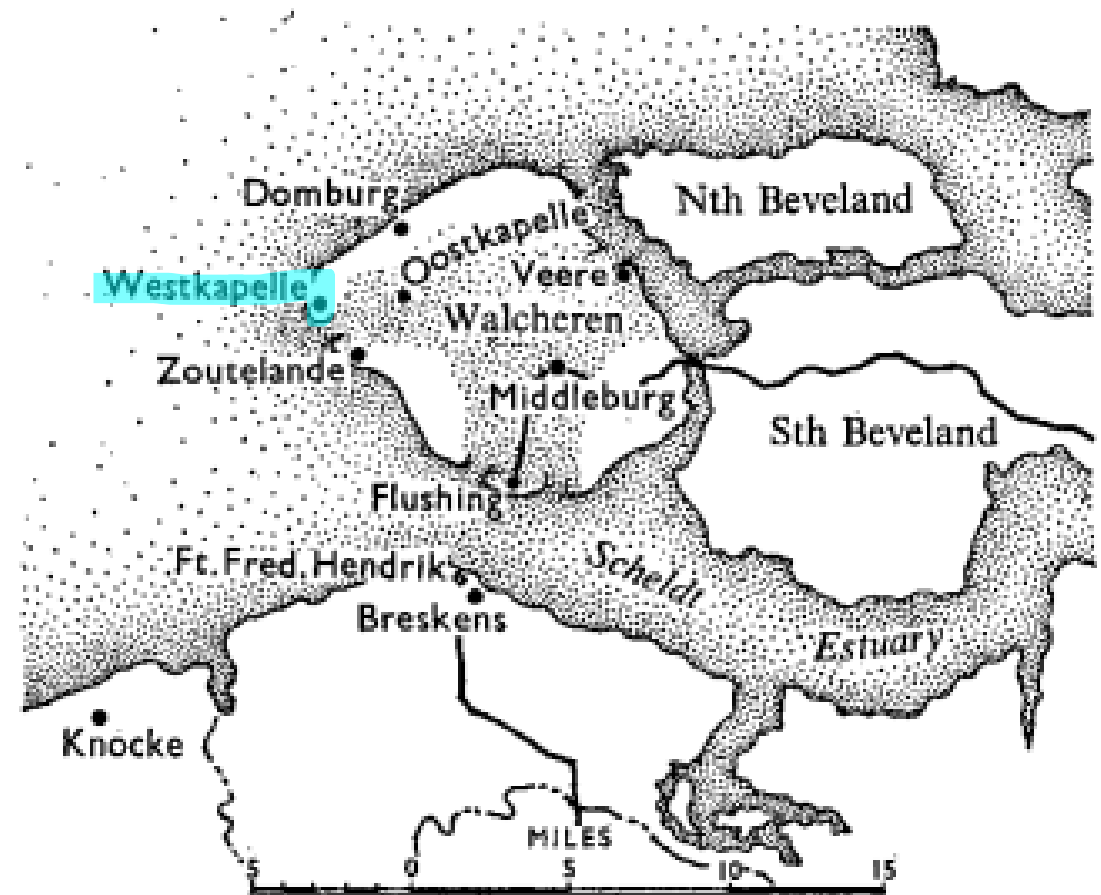
# 15th-16th October 1944

- A force of 506 aircraft made a night raid on Wilhelmshaven on 15th-16th October when R.A.A.F. crews from Nos. 460, 462 and 466 made only cautious claims of bombing accuracy.
- In fact heavy damage had been achieved, evenly distributed through the built-up areas but mainly affecting civilian dwellings, public buildings and public utilities.
- 506 dispatched, 492 attacked, 2,136 tons, 7 failed to return.



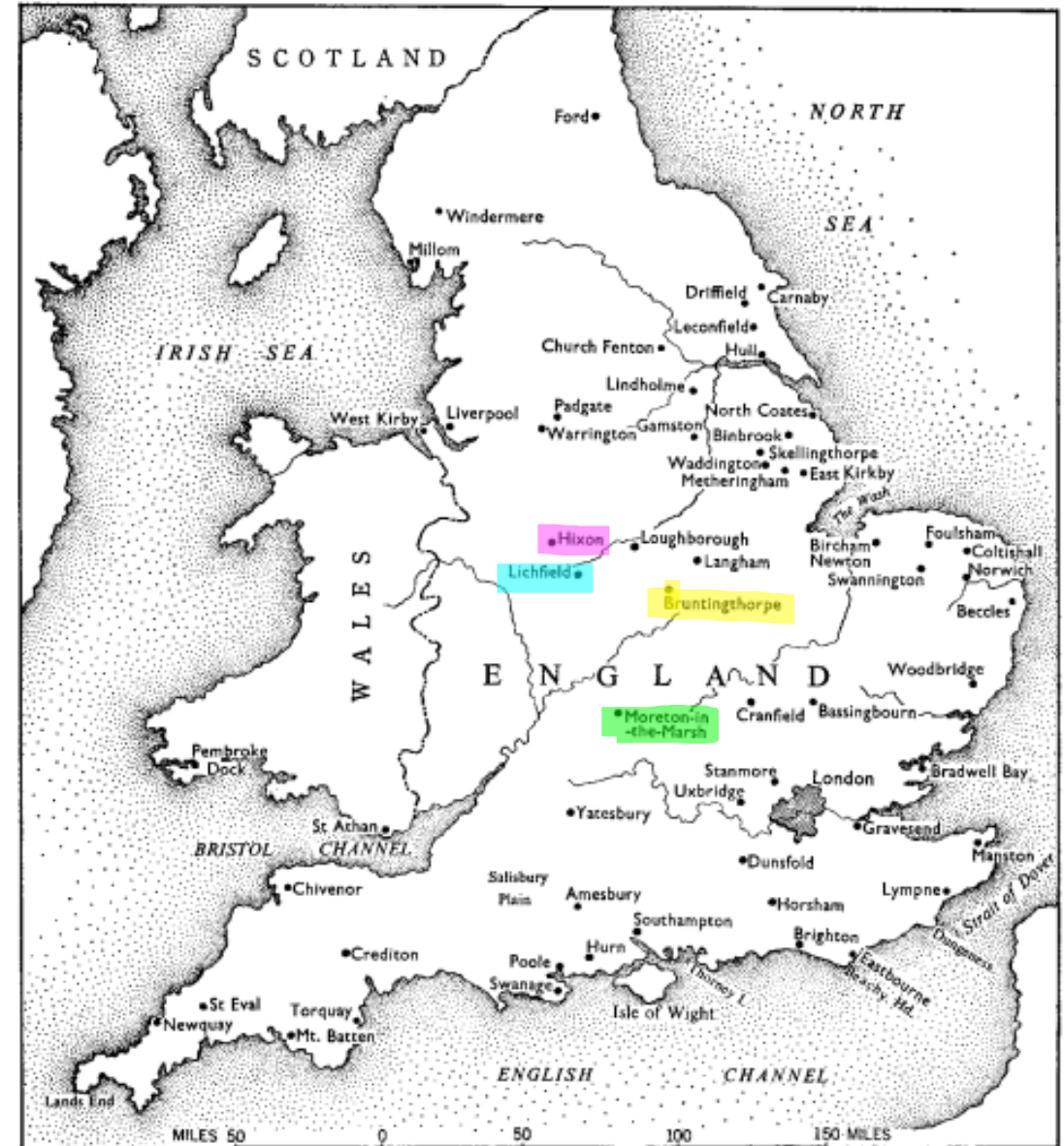
# 17 October 1944

- Finally on 17th October a repeat attack was made on the **Westkapelle** breach in an attempt to widen it so that assault-craft could pass through.
- The flooding of Walcheren was achieved by fewer than 500 sorties.



# October 1944

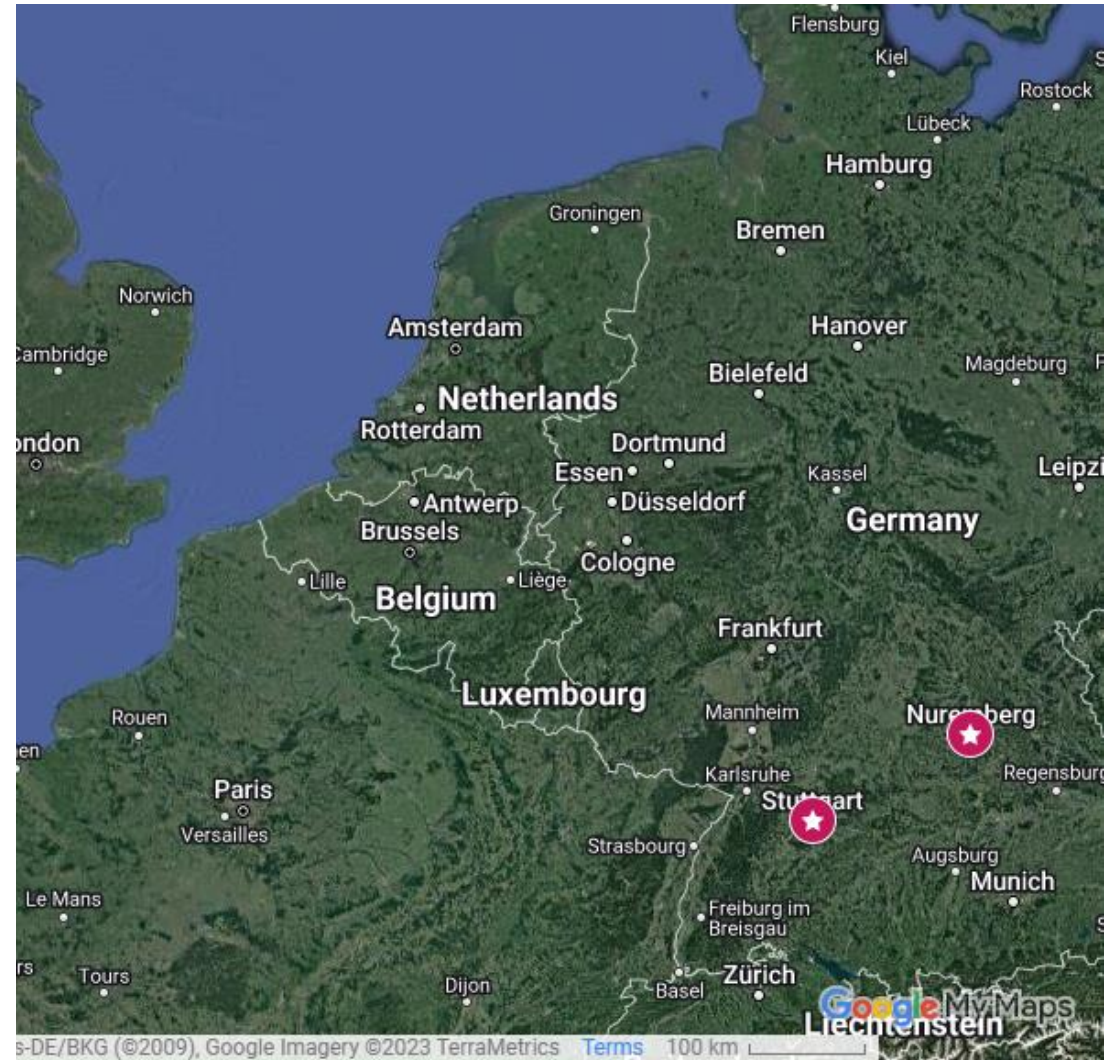
- By October 1944 1,687 Australians were still training in no fewer than 20 Bomber Command O.T.U's.
- Of those trainees, 722 were at No. 27 O.T.U. Lichfield, 207 at No. 21, Moreton-in-the-Marsh, 204 at No. 29, Bruntingthorpe, and 286 at No. 30, Hixon.
- There was also a concentration of Australian instructors within Bomber Command, men resting between operational tours, going in the main to these same four training units.





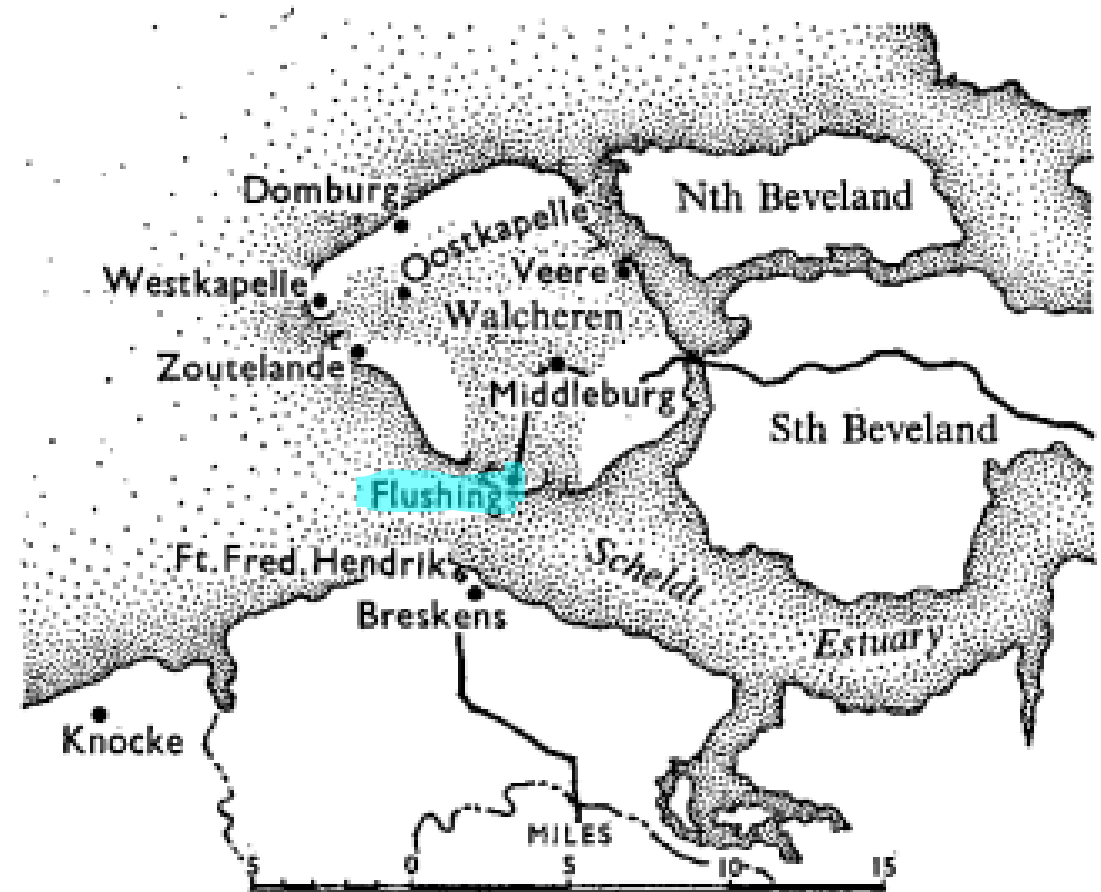
# 19th-20th October 1944

- No. 460 went to Stuttgart on 19th-20th October and, although crews were cautious in their reports because the target had been obscured by cloud, later evidence showed that electrical, chemical and aircraft factories had been badly damaged.
- 583 dispatched, 564 attacked, 2,446 tons, 6 failed to return.
- The same night a smaller force including Nos. 463 and 467 struck at Nuremberg and added to the confusion already created by U.S.A.A.F. daylight raids.
- 270 dispatched, 258 attacked, 675 tons, 2 failed to return.



# 21 - 23 October 1944

- The **Flushing** batteries were attacked again on 21st October by No. 3 Group, and by No. 5 Group on the 23rd, when in the face of bad weather and apparently reinforced anti-aircraft defences, the R.A.A.F. squadrons lost three aircraft, had five more badly damaged, and considered that many of their bombs had overshot the target.

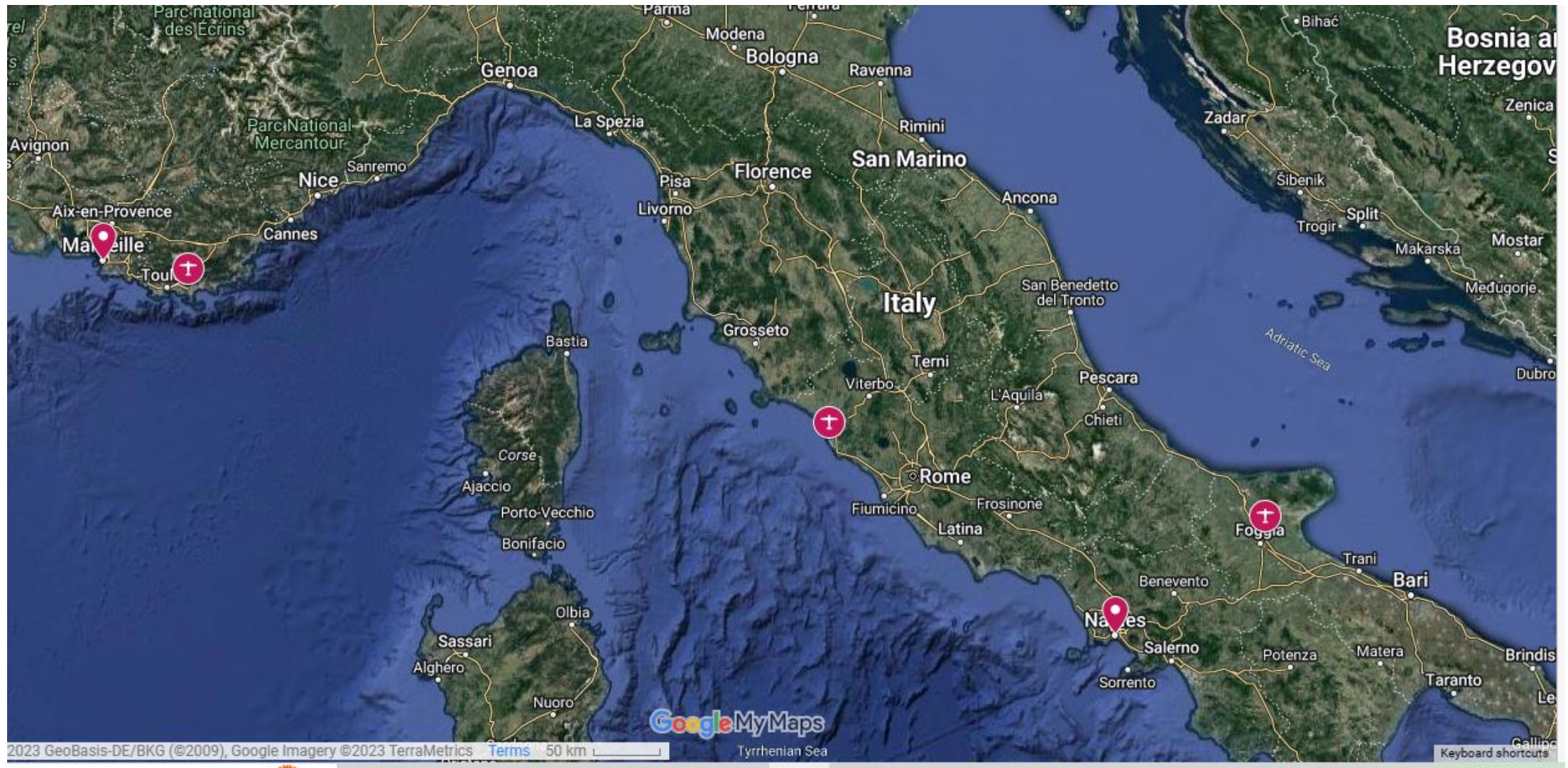


# 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1944

- September saw only 208 operational flights for No. 451 (the RAAF fighter squadron landed in France with Operation Dragoon), and the first fortnight of October (admittedly a bad weather period) only 34.
- Then suddenly orders were received to move to Foggia; there were rumours that No. 251 Wing would be transferred to Coastal Air Force.
- The Spitfires left Cuers on 16th October and, staging through Tarquinia, reached Foggia on the 18th. The ground party left Marseilles on the 17th and disembarked at Naples on the 23rd only to be met by news of another change of plan.
- When Squadron Leader Small reported to M.A.A.F. H.Q. he was informed that official notice had already been given to R.A.A.F. Overseas H.Q. "that owing to the existing position of the war it was unable to further employ 451 in this theatre and recommended that the unit be returned to Australia".
- Map.



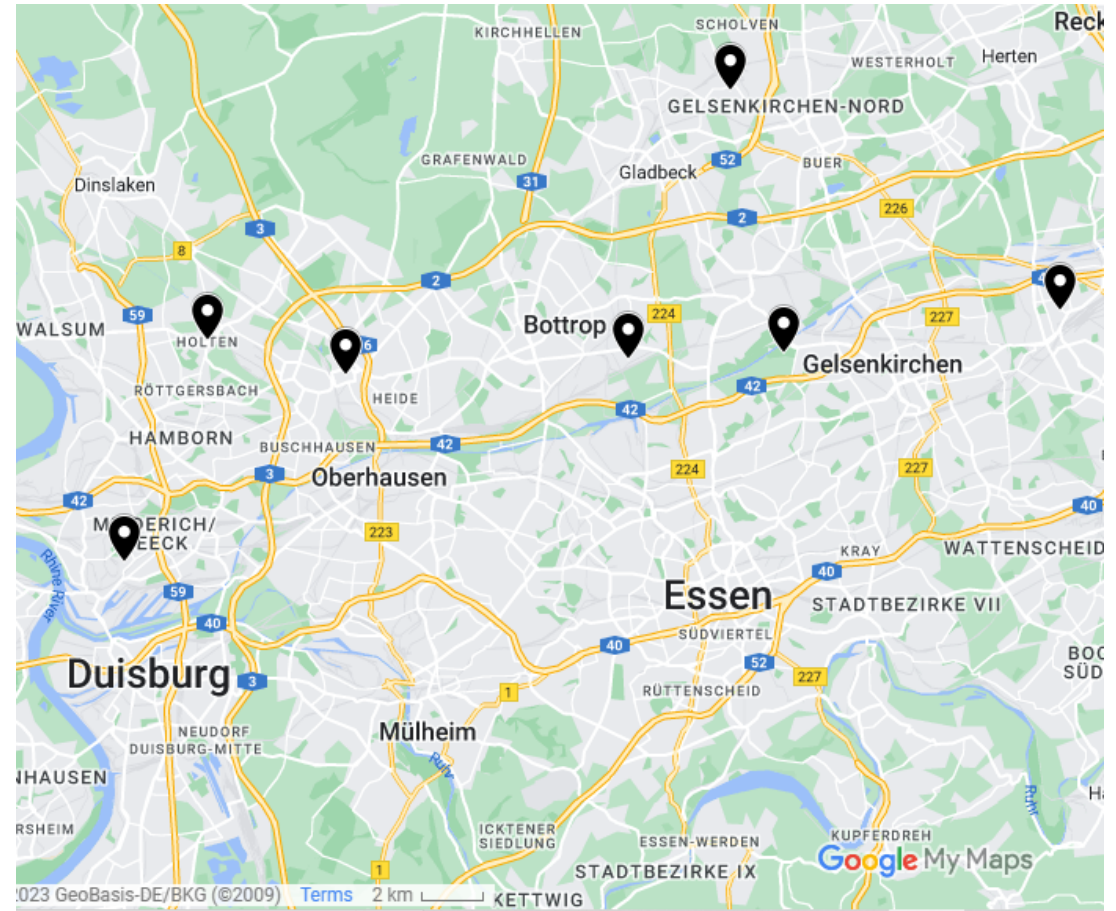
# 23rd October 1944





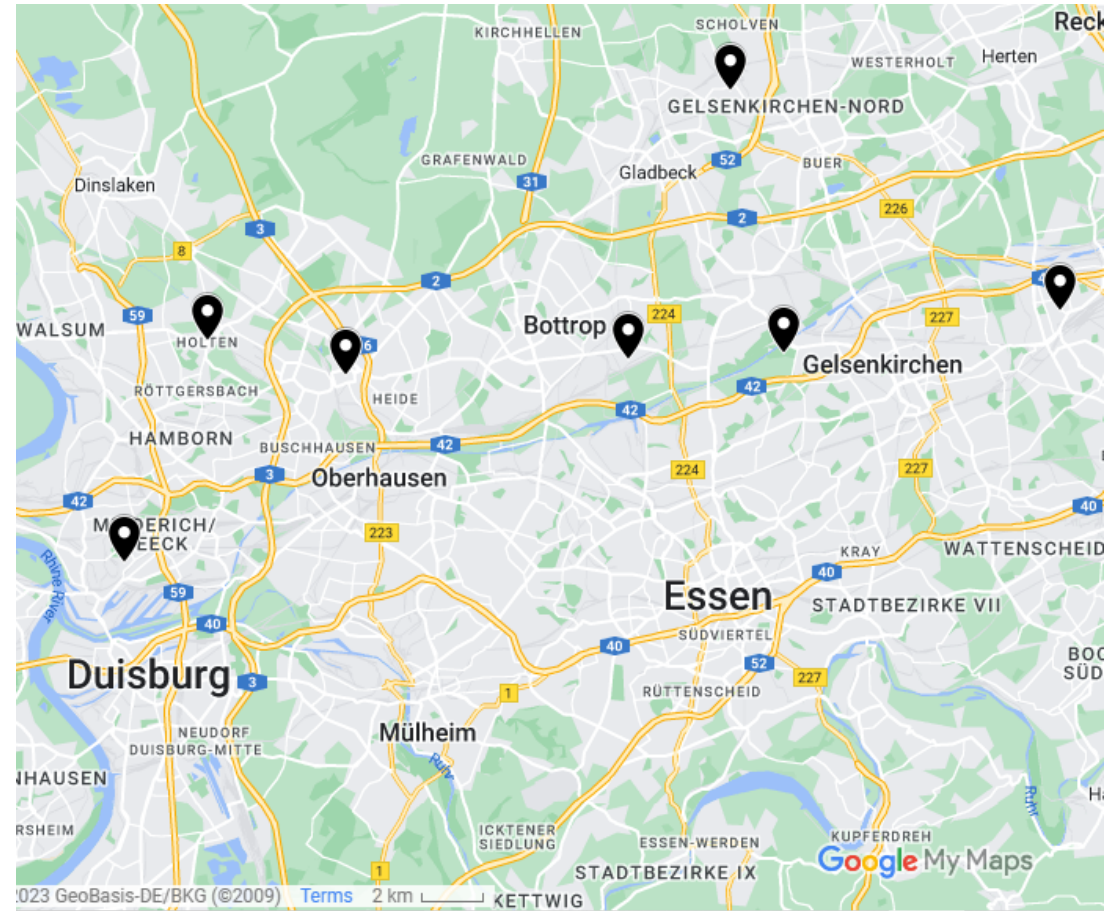
# 23rd-24th October

- After Duisburg came Essen, the home of Krupps, which had a symbolic significance to aircrew as the prime heavy industrial target.
- The raid on 23rd-24th October was again in great strength, Nos. 460, 462 and 466 providing 58 bombers in a force of 1,055.
- Essen was covered in heavy cloud and, although "Wanganui" sky flares were well laid and maintained by the pathfinders, approximately 10 per cent of crews failed to attack.
- Those who bombed could give no precise assessment of their accuracy although they reported a strong glow from fires which increased as the attack progressed.
- Only eight bombers were lost against this notoriously difficult target but Flying Officer Hagstrom of No. 466 and Flying Officer Bennett of No. 78 did well to coax their badly-damaged Halifaxes back to base.
- Flight Sergeant Cannon, a mid-upper gunner of No. 460, was knocked unconscious when his Lancaster was hit by flak during the run up to Essen, and when the aircraft crashed on return to England he was thrown clear and although seriously injured was the sole survivor.
- Flight Sergeant Grace, a bomb aimer of No. 462, lost consciousness when his Halifax collided with a Lancaster near Aachen. He recovered as he fell through space and managed to pull his rip-cord; the remainder of his crew perished.



# 25th October

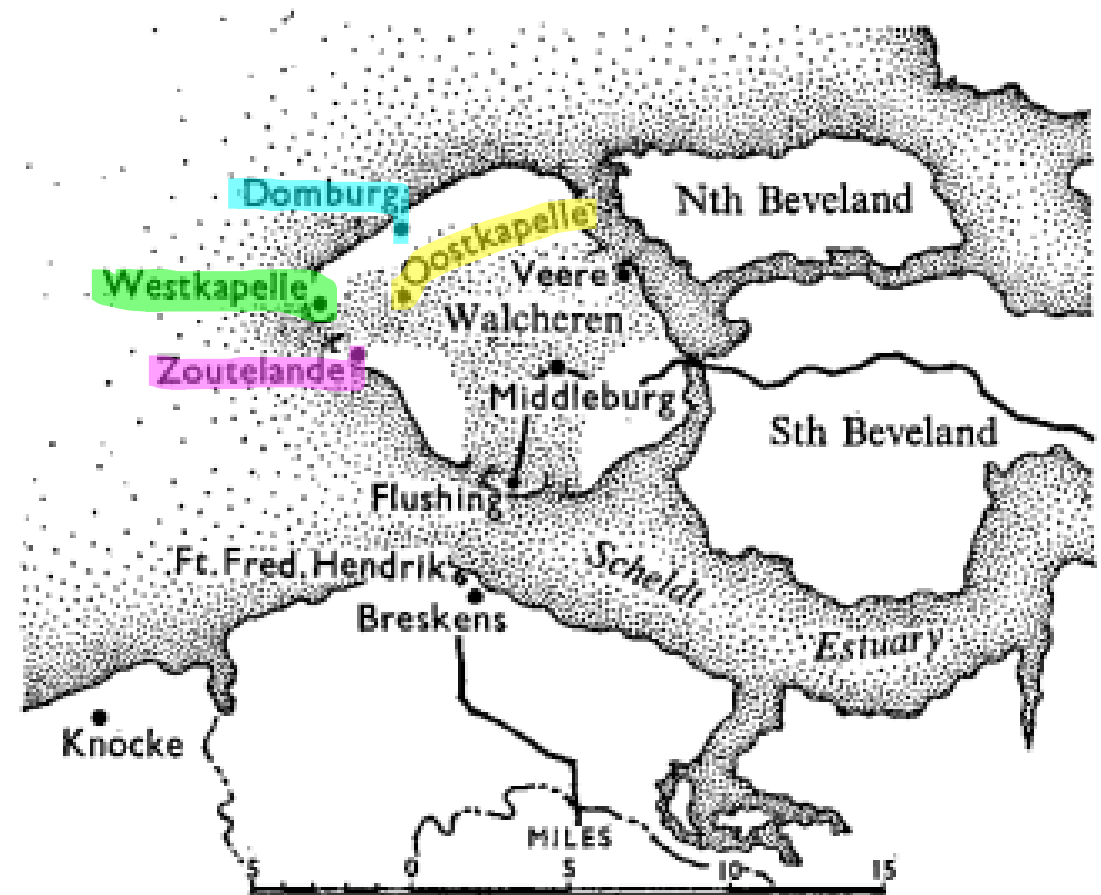
- A follow-up raid against Essen was quickly mounted in daylight by 771 bombers on 25th October, and again Nos. 460, 462 and 466 operated.
- Cloud was less thick on this occasion and, although skymarking techniques were again used, some crews checked their position during brief glimpses of ground features through patches in the cloud and were confident that their bombs fell on built-up areas.
- 771 dispatched, 740 attacked, 4 failed to return.
- Photographs obtained after these two attacks showed that many buildings at Krupps already once repaired were again in ruins and business and residential areas had again suffered badly.





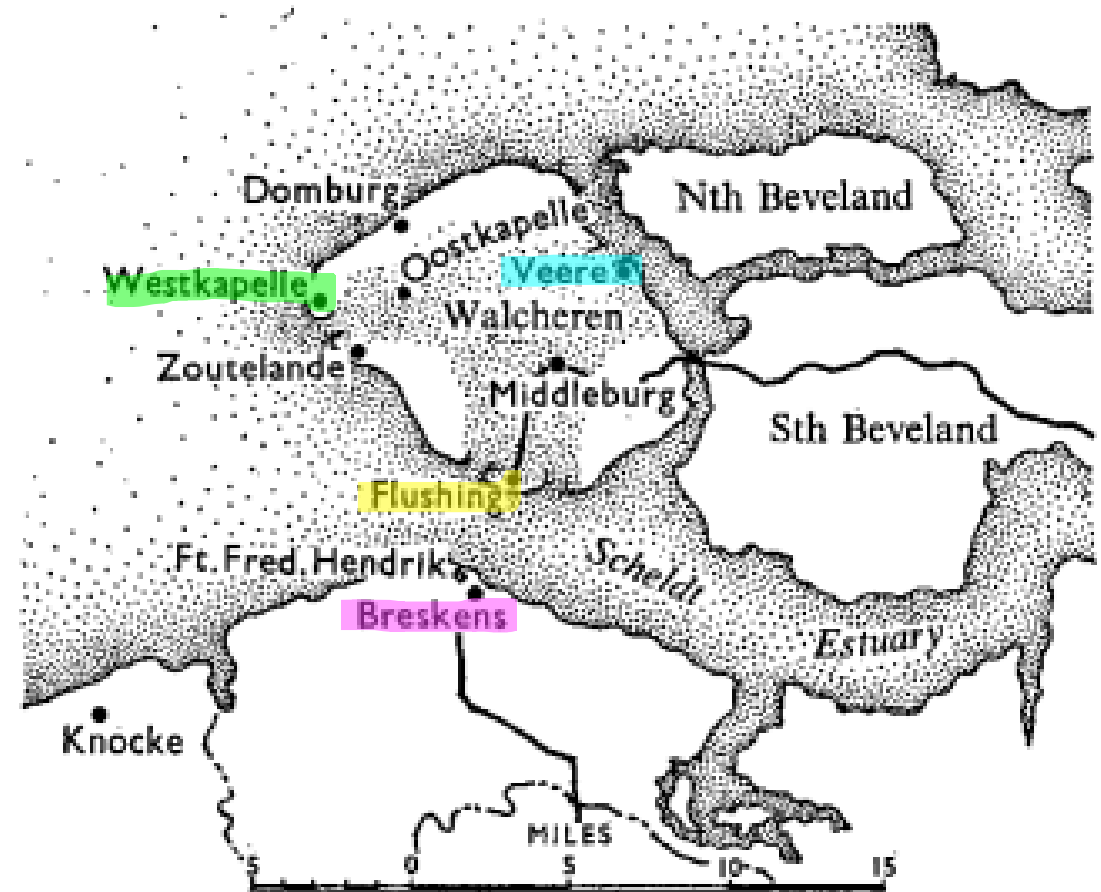
# 28 – 30 October 1944

- In preparation for the final assault on Walcheren timed for 1st November Bomber Command sent out five forces on 28th October, when No. 462 attacked gun positions at Oostkapelle and No. 466 others at Domburg.
- Next day a total of 358 bombers attacked 11 gun targets, No. 460 bombing Domburg, No. 462 Westkapelle, and No. 466 Domburg and Zoutelande batteries.
- Finally on 30th October No. 5 Group sent out forces against Westkapelle and Flushing, and in the latter attack crews of No. 463 saw bombs bursting across their target while No. 467 delivered a load of bombs with delayed-action fuses intended to embarrass the enemy during the critical assault period.



# 28 – 30 October 1944

- When Allied commandos attacked **Flushing** and **Westkapelle** on 1st November they found that Bomber Command had reduced but by no means silenced enemy gun defences.
- The Westkapelle breach served its purpose and let in amphibious vehicles and troops to take the heavy batteries from the rear.
- On 4th November other troops crossed from South Beveland to take the **Veere** positions and two days later all Walcheren was in Allied hands.
- The last remnants of the **Breskens** garrison had surrendered at Knocke on 3rd November and the last battery capable of barring the Scheldt estuary had fallen.
- The approaches to Antwerp, however, were still blocked by minefields and, despite feverish activity to clear them, the first supply convoy did not reach Antwerp until 28th November.
- Bomber Command made 17 raids in support of the final assault on Walcheren.
- 1,817 heavy bombers dropped 8,687 tons of bombs against sea dikes and gun batteries.
- R.A.A.F. squadrons joined in only 11 raids, contributing 245 aircraft and dropping 1,295 tons.



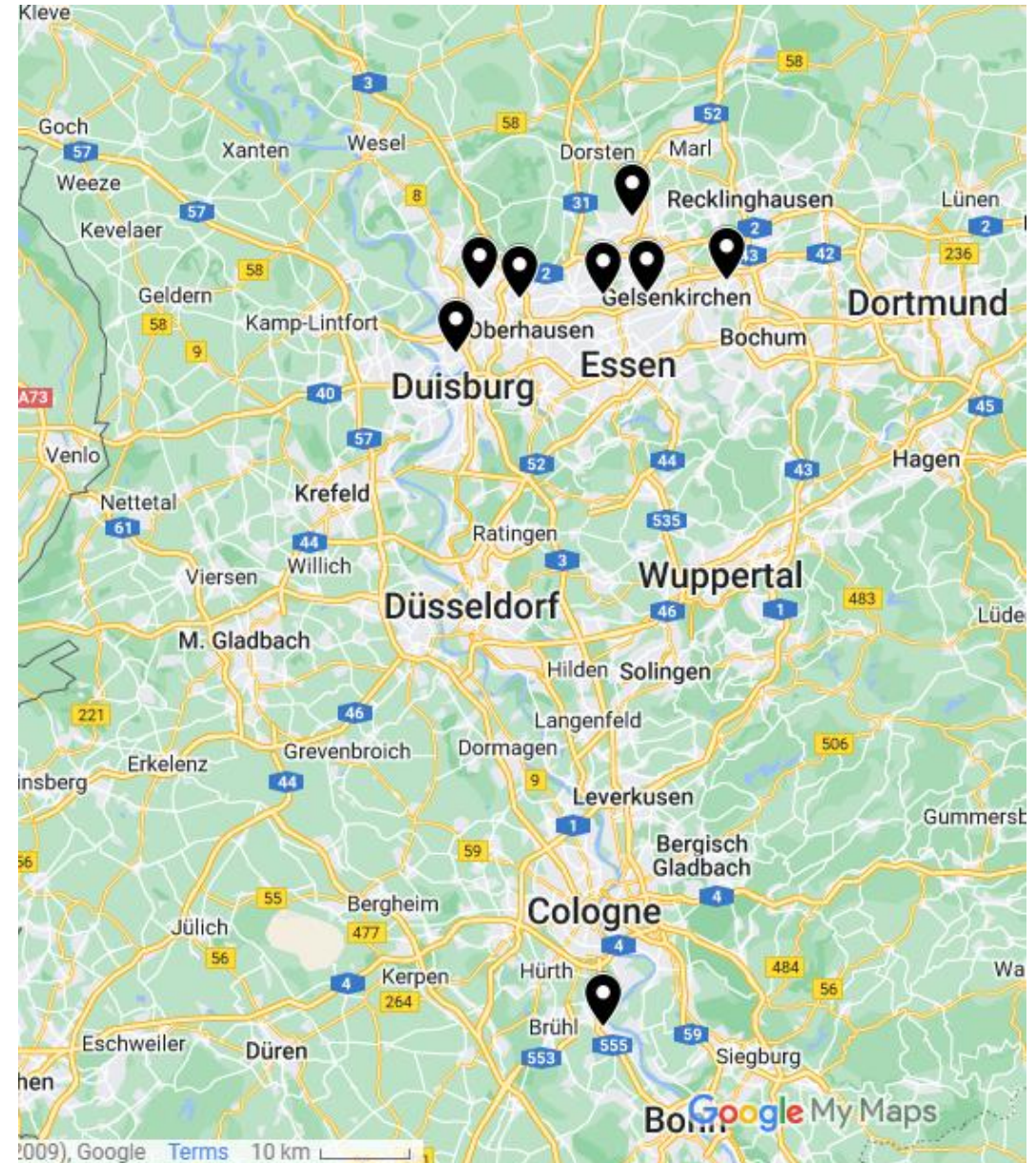
# 30th October

- On 30th October news was received from Ottawa that all 1,700 Australian aircrew in the Canadian training system would be returned to Australia.



# October

- Bomber Command began the battle against the oil sites in October well. striking at the Ruhr with raids against both Scholven-Buer and Sterkrade on 6th October but managed only four more attacks in the rest of the month due to the weather.
- It was not only the raids which were impeded but photographic reconnaissance also and this led to some indecision as to the true need for repetitive attack.
- In turn this indecision bred a policy of attack and re-attack whenever possible despite the risk of some wasted effort.



# 28th October to 1 November

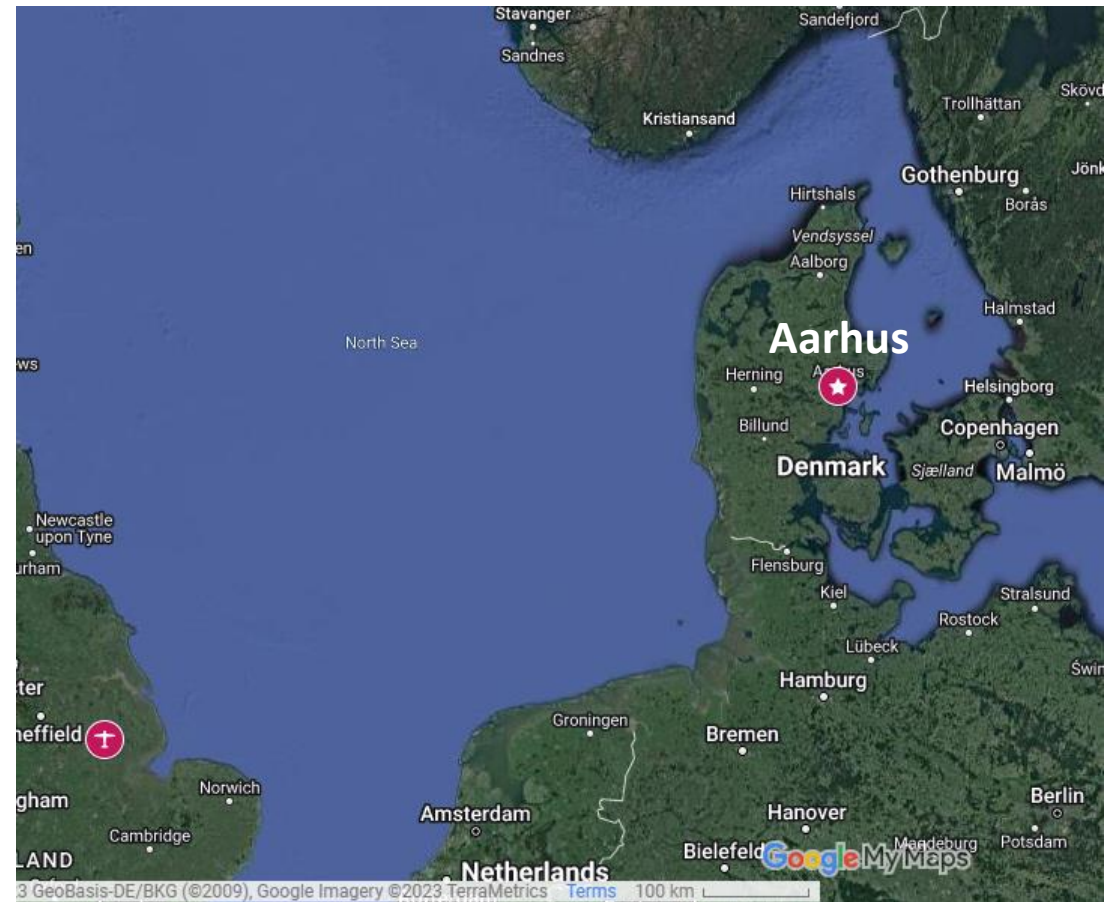
- Bomber Command made three attacks against Cologne within four days from 28th October. No. 460 flew in the opening daylight raid and was joined in each of the night raids on 30/31 October and 31 October/1 November by Nos. 462 and 466.
- Cologne had suffered only one major raid in 15 months but this new series rained 9,406 tons of bombs throughout the city and caused widespread destruction and temporary dislocation of power and transport facilities.
- 733 dispatched, 697 attacked, 5 failed to return.
- 905 dispatched, 870 attacked, all returned.
- 508 dispatched, 491 attacked, 1 failed to return.





# 31st October

- The increased activity of the Danish underground army during 1944 had evoked energetic reprisals from the Gestapo. When asked to help, A.E.A.F. considered that the most fruitful method might be to destroy the dossiers and documents collected at the Gestapo records centre, housed in two buildings at Aarhus University to be used by the Gestapo in hunting down and prosecuting the Danish patriots.
- 24 Mosquitos of Nos. 21 (R.A.F.), 464 (R.A.A.F.) and 487 (R.N.Z.A.F.) Squadrons 2<sup>nd</sup> TAF, escorted by 12 long range Mustangs, set off early on 31st October for a round trip of over 1,200 miles. Navigation and timing were good and the formation arrived unheralded over Aarhus just before noon and pressed home a coordinated four-wave attack at almost roof-top height.
- The last crews to bomb reported that only the south-east and north-west corners of the buildings were left standing .



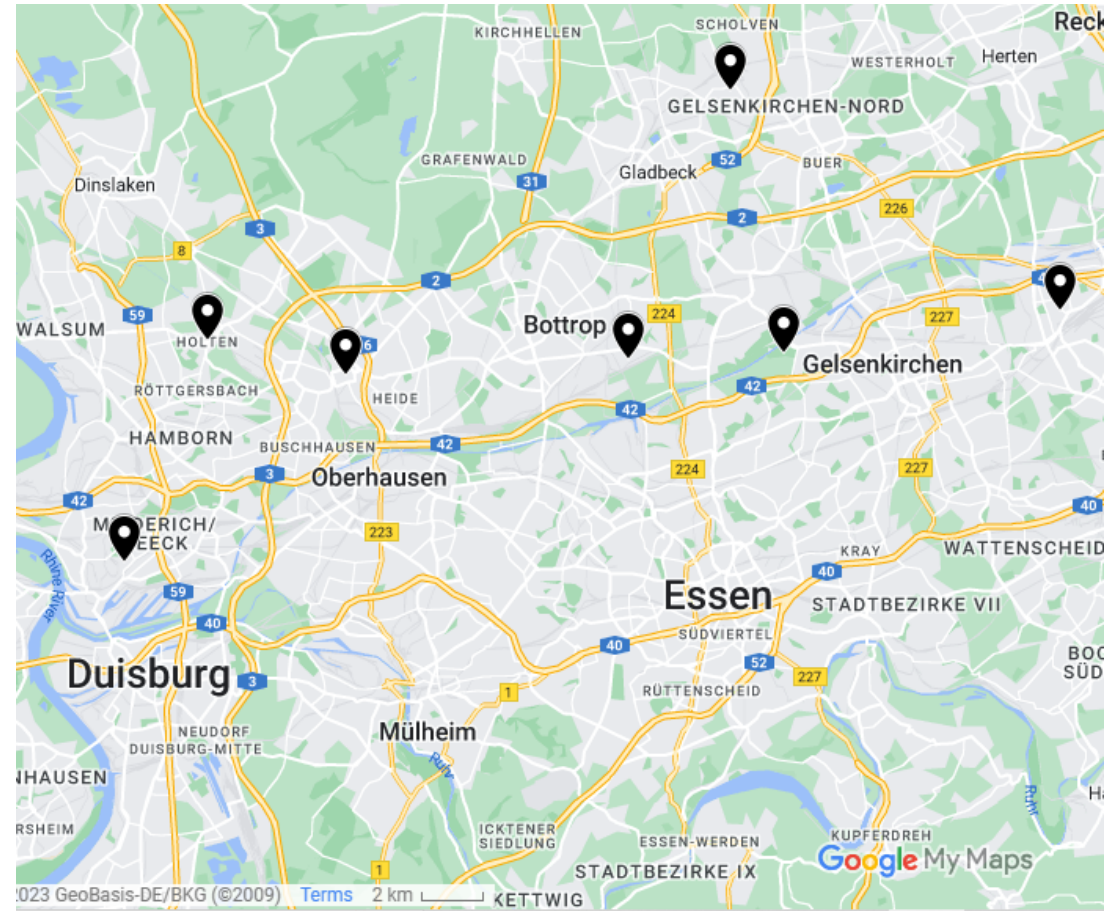


# 1st November 1944

- The only other major directive issued in 1944 came on 1st November when primary objectives were listed as the petroleum industry and German lines of communication.
- The object of strategic bomber policy was defined as a "maximum effort against the petroleum industry, oil supplies and storage".
- Important industrial areas could be attacked as alternatives only when weather or tactical conditions were unsuitable for primary targets.

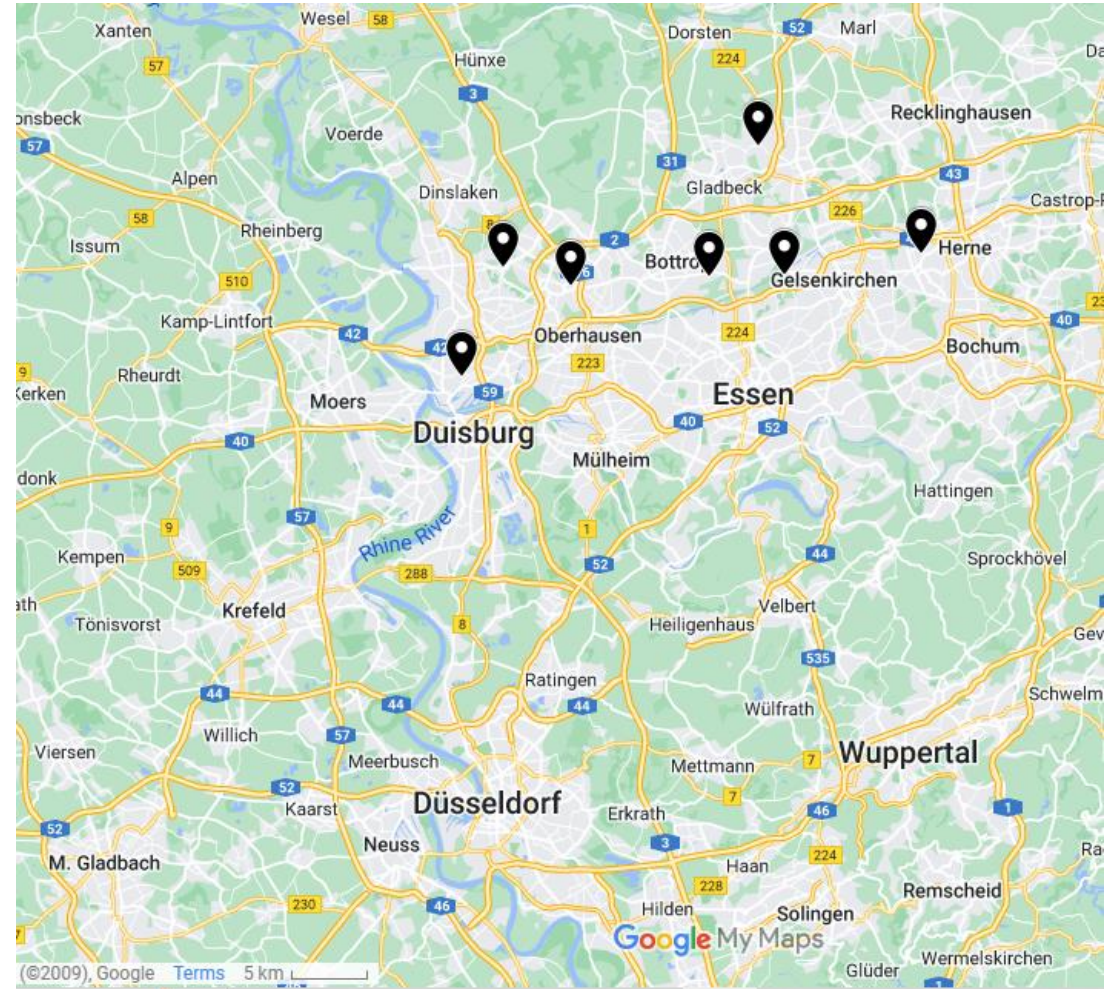
# 1st November

- The two R.A.A.F. squadrons at Waddington in No. 5 Group, Nos. 463 & 467, set out in daylight on 1st November to bomb the Meerbeck plant at Homberg but only one of the 36 Australian Lancasters claimed any attack.
- There was a discrepancy with regard to timing, and cloud conditions were more unfavourable than had been expected.
- Early arrivals, most of whom brought their bombs back, either failed to see the P.F.F. markers because of the clouds or had overshot the target before marking began.
- Because of inability to identify the precise target, the Australians had to run the gauntlet of very active and widespread gun defences and six Lancasters of No. 463 and 11 of 467 received some damage. Later waves of No. 5 Group aircraft did drop their bombs, but crews were far from optimistic that any real damage would result.



# 2nd-3rd November

- Dusseldorf was the next target, and on 2nd-3rd November 992 Lancasters and Halifaxes dropped 4,484 tons of bombs from a cloudless sky on this administrative centre of the steel industry which had practically recovered from the 1943 raids.
- All five R.A.A.F. squadrons joined in this attack and the 82 crews were unanimous in their reports of accurate ground marking, good concentration of bombing and the incidence of extensive fires and major explosions while they were over the target.
- They met much more spirited opposition, especially from fighters, than on recent raids. Aircraft piloted by Flying Officer Maxton and Flying Officer Gray of No. 460 each sustained several attacks while Flying Officer Waxman and Warrant Officer Willington of No. 466 had inconclusive combats with enemy jet aircraft.
- Four R.A.A.F. bombers failed to return but almost all the crews survived. Some became prisoners of war but one crew baled out near the American front line and were quickly rescued.
- Pilot Officer Jubb made a hazardous journey on foot (sometimes posing as an idiot) from near Dusseldorf to American positions close to Aachen; and Warrant Officer Scott, although arrested and detained in a house 20 miles south of Cologne, escaped and, after five days of hunger and exhaustion, found refuge with a civilian family near Duren and remained in hiding until rescued by American troops on 26th November.





# Early November.

- The main weight of Bomber Command attack during October and early November 1944 was primarily directed against industrial cities; the majority of these were also key points in the enemy rail network and much incidental damage to enemy communications resulted.
- A pretence of theoretic priority given to the "transportation plan" was thus maintained, and particularly simulated in the raid against Saarbrücken when, alone among the raids in the period, marshalling yards were given as one of the prime aiming points.
- Throughout this period, however, the major effort in any specific offensive against German communications was made by the 8th Air Force.
- Early in November Bomber Command was exhorted by the Combined Strategic Targets Committee to make a more positive contribution in view of the discouragingly slow progress of the Allied land forces. This plea resulted in attacks against six railway centres in west Germany and against two important waterways.

Jerry McBrien 2023



The bomb load used for industrial demolition (codeword 'Abnormal') in a Lancaster of No. 9 Squadron RAF, 1944. The "Usual" load consisted mainly of incendiaries.

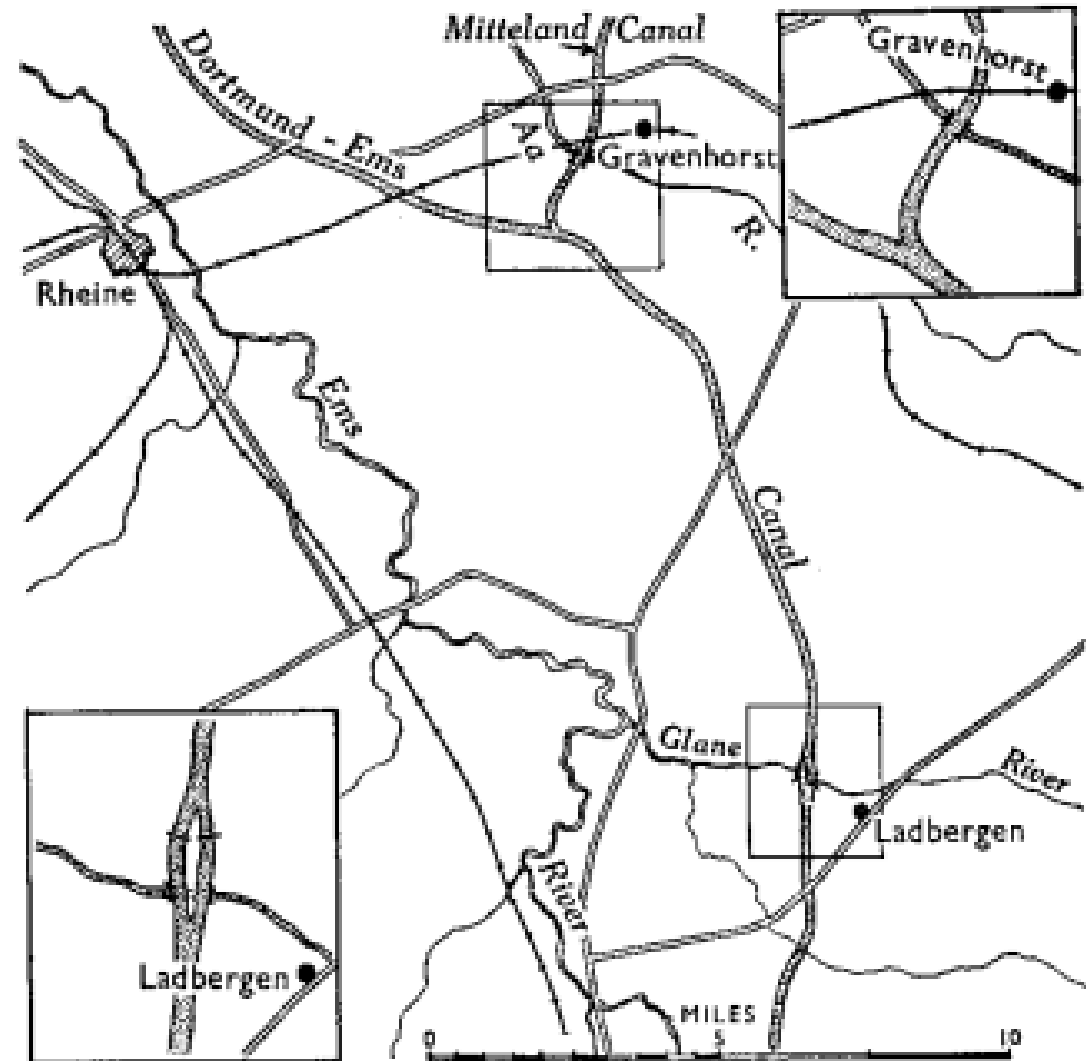


# 4th-5th November

- Bochum was raided on 4th-5th November with satisfactory results.
- 44 bombers from No. 460, 462 & 466 took part.
- 749 dispatched, 706 attacked, 25 failed to return.
- Map

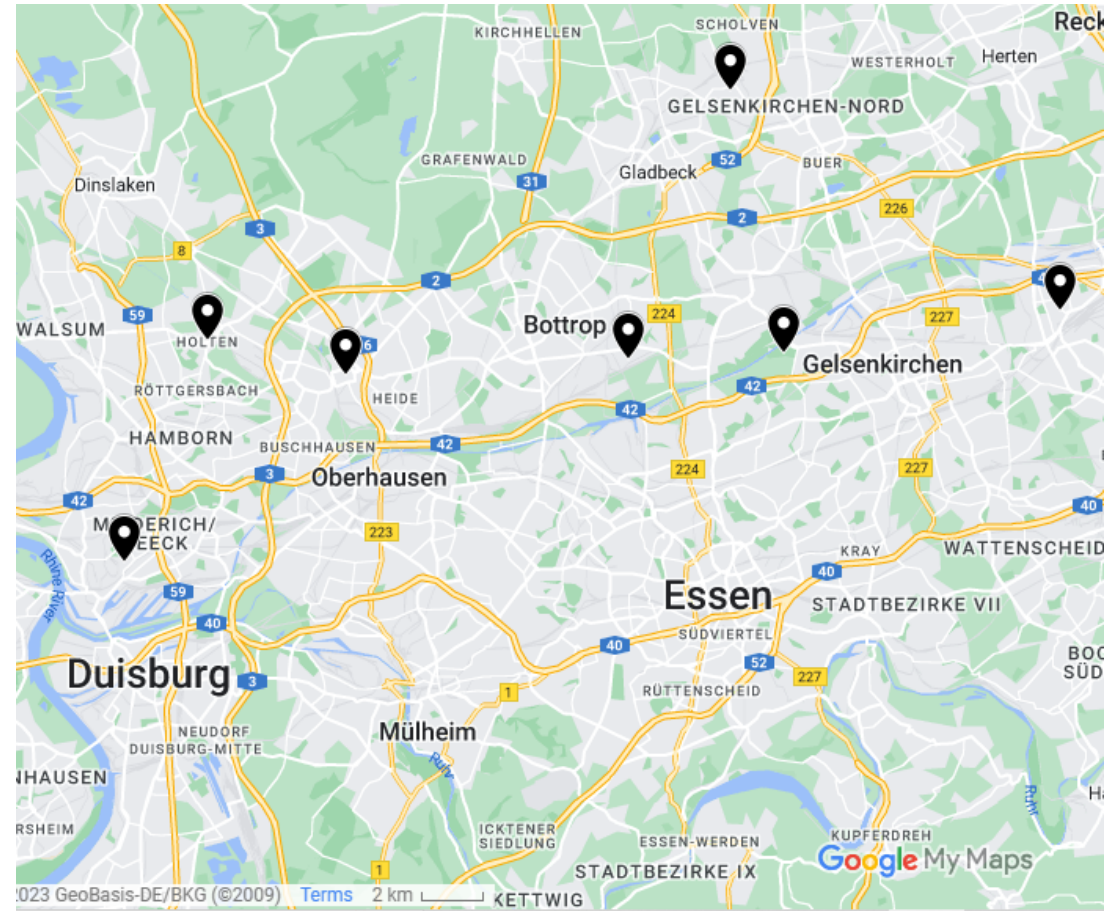
# 4th-5th November 1944

- Bomber Command showed more interest in the proposal to attack the heavily used internal waterway system of Germany than in the rail targets, especially the Dortmund-Ems canal which linked with the Mittelland canal to provide a direct passage from the Ruhr to central and eastern Germany.
- The Dortmund-Ems canal had already been breached on 23rd-24th September but had been repaired when, on 4th-5th November, Nos. 463 and 467 each dispatched 12 Lancasters in a force of 168 to bomb the canal near Ladbergen.
- Photographic reconnaissance proved that a large breach had been made in the western (main) arm of the canal and that a large section of embankment of the eastern (by-pass) arm had also been destroyed. This attack rendered both arms impassable to traffic and thus created a complete blockage between the Ruhr and the North Sea and between the Ruhr and the Mittelland Canal.
- As these waterways traditionally carried most of the coal, coke, iron ore, oil and heavy goods required by industry over a wide area it was a significant blow.



# 6th November

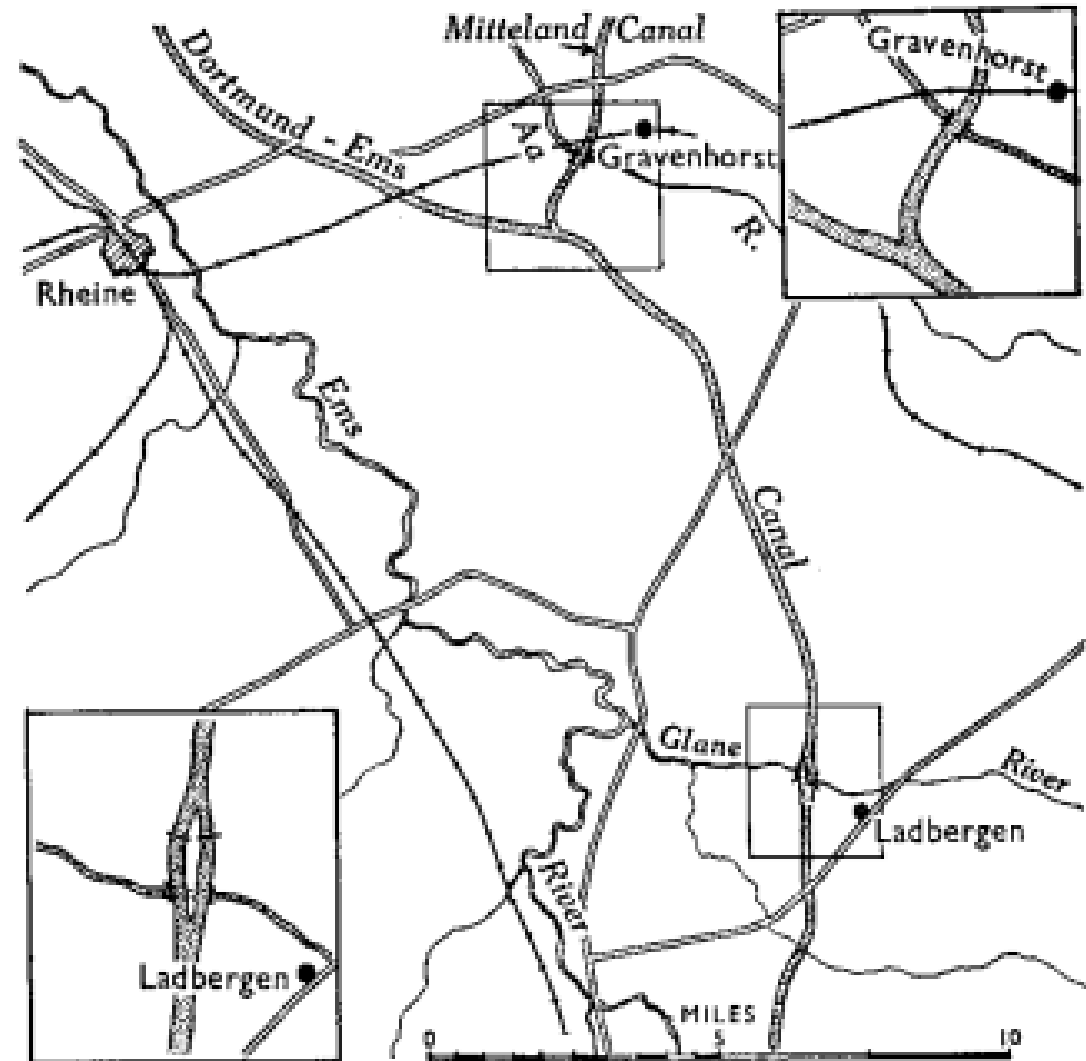
- Nos. 460, 462 and 466 were out again in daylight on 6th November to strike at the sprawling industrial and mining centre of Gelsenkirchen.
- A very strong fighter escort deterred the German Air Force but flak was heavy and many aircraft were holed.
- As happened too often at this target natural and simulated ground haze was made worse by the smoke of early bombing and the attack was rather scattered, although some built-up areas were heavily damaged.
- 738 dispatched, 693 attacked, 5 failed to return.





# 6th-7th November 1944

- The Waddington squadrons, Nos 463 & 467 set out on 6th-7th November to bomb an embanked stretch of the Mittelland canal at Gravenhorst but this attack was abandoned because of thick cloud.
- Ten aircraft were shot down including three from No. 463, while two crews of No. 467 had to beat off determined fighter attacks during this disappointing and abortive raid.



# 11th-12th November

- The Australians in No. 5 Group made a night raid on 11th-12th November against two refineries at Harburg, south of Hamburg.
- No. 463 provided 14 and No. 467 19 Lancasters on this occasion, while more than 20 of the other aircraft in a total force of 245 were piloted by Australians.
- To pilots of No. 463 this was an uneventful routine duty, conducted in fair weather. There was fierce ground gunfire in the vicinity of the target but the raid was one of minimum penetration of enemy territory and pilots who arrived in the first wave of bombers found the target well marked and were able to bomb and turn for home without delay.
- Crews of the other Waddington squadron, No. 467, had a less fortunate night; they lost two Lancasters and a third piloted by Flying Officer Kynoch was first damaged by flak during the run up to the target and then subjected to two attacks by fighters as it turned for home.



**Date of Death:** 11 November 1944.

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427) (1/432)      AWM 237 (63) (64)      W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War : Page 484, Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	NN 714
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO – W
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster NN714 took off from RAF Waddington at 1618 hours on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1944 to bomb Harburg, Germany. Bomb load 1 x 1000lb bomb, 14 x 4lb clusters. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and the aircraft did not return to base. Nineteen aircraft from the Squadron took part in the raid and two of these including NN714 failed to return.

**Crew:**

RAAF    419989 FO Feddersen, M J Captain (Pilot)  
 RAAF    418833 WO I H Gray, (Navigator)  
 RAAF    434038 Flt Sgt M R Stedman, (Bomb Aimer)  
 RAAF    423535 Flt Sgt W L Houston, (Wireless Operator Air)  
 RAF      Sgt E F Vevers, (Flight Engineer)  
 RAF      Sgt G E Carrington, (Air Gunner)  
 RAF      Sgt R W C Heath, (Air Gunner)

Post war it was established that the aircraft crashed on fire at Bremerhaven, Germany, and that all the crew were killed. They are buried in the Becklingen War Cemetery, which is located 13kms south east of Soltau on the west side of the road from Hamburg to Hanover.

On 5 October 1944 the above crew survived and were rescued after ditching during a raid on Wilhelmshaven.



# 12th November

- The Tirpitz had moved south to Tromsø Fjord and lay heavily protected by surface and underwater nets in a location where meteorological idiosyncrasies gave clear skies perhaps one day a week.
- But Tirpitz was now within reach of the specialist units of No. 5 Group, which had been fitted with more powerful engines to carry Tallboy bombs (photo).
- Nos. 9 and 617 Squadrons took off from Scotland on 29th October but cloud intervened when the Lancasters were on their bombing runs and all the Tallboys fell harmlessly into the water.



Tirpitz centre left at her last mooring, off the island of Håkøya in November 1944.

# 12th November

- A fortnight later the same squadrons took off before dawn to find the Tirpitz lying in a local patch of clear visibility. Careful routeing had caught the enemy unawares and the usual smoke defences were not in operation.
- Of the four R.A.A.F. pilots of No. 617 Flying Officer Kell saw his bomb fall in the centre of smoke hastily generated on the superstructure of the battleship and he claimed a hit or a very near miss; Flying Officer Ross reported that his Tallboy fell on or very close to the bows, while both Flight Lieutenant Sayers and Flying Officer Lee saw their bombs disappear into smoke raised from previous explosions. 29 12,000-lb bombs were dropped and the battleship caught fire amidships and was engulfed in a large explosion.
- The Lancasters were at first met with gunfire from both heavy and light guns on the ship but this had ceased when the attack closed.



# 12th November

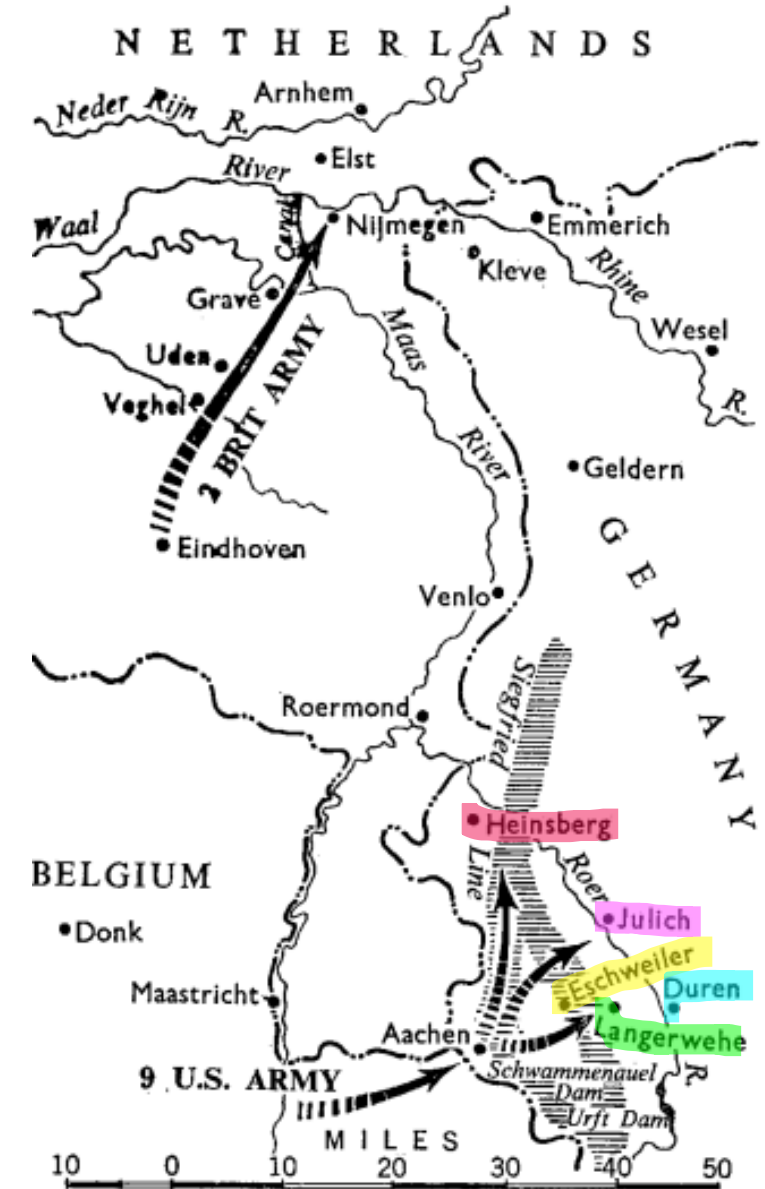
- Flight Lieutenant Buckham, who had completed a tour of main-force operations before volunteering to remain with No. 463 as pilot of a special film-unit Lancaster, accompanied this force and circled the target throughout the attack.
- He was about to follow the departing bombers when his crew reported that the Tirpitz had begun to heel over, so he quickly turned round to obtain further film records of the battleship, which was then listing at 70 to 80 degrees to port.
- Two hours later a reconnaissance aircraft reported that only the bottom of the ship was showing (photo).





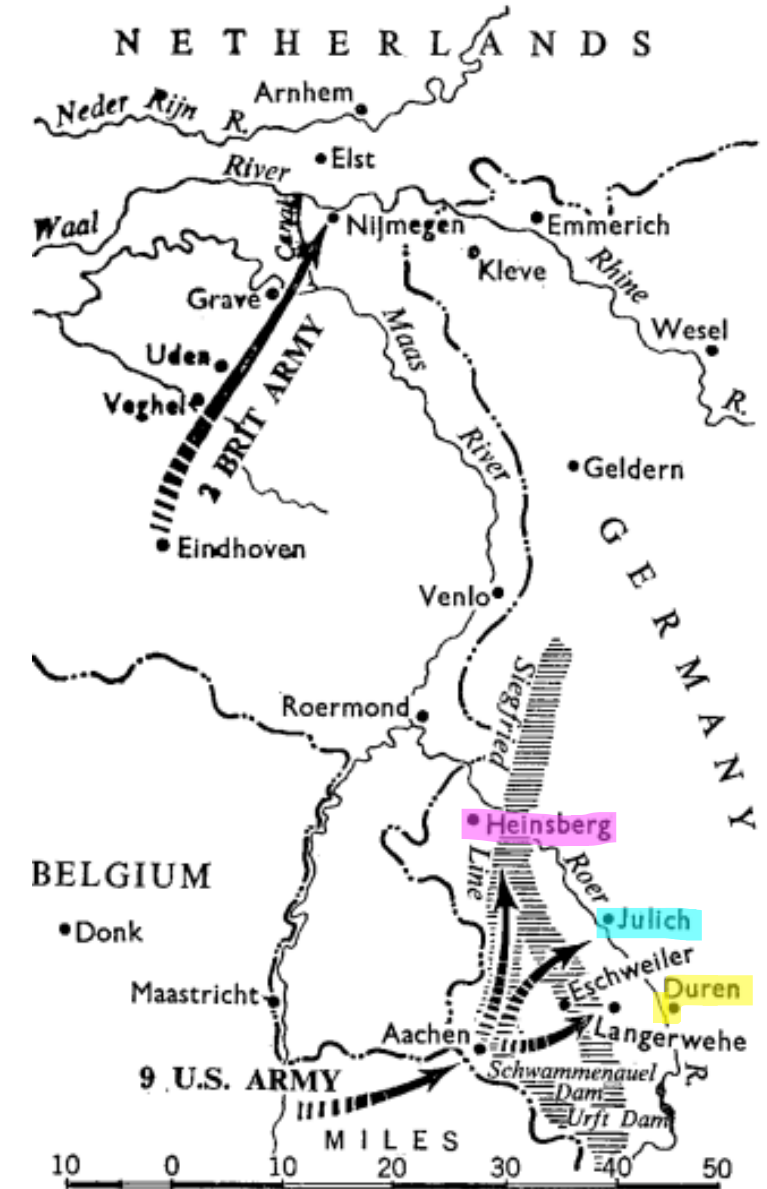
# 16th November 1944

- Immediately after the fall of Walcheren, all groups of Bomber Command and the Eighth Air Force were warned to be ready to make attacks in full strength to knock out enemy front-line defences along the River Roer half an hour before the ground troops were to advance towards the Rhine at Cologne timed for 16th November.
- On 16th November between 11.10 a.m. and 12.40 p.m. 1,191 American heavy bombers dropped 4,120 tons of fragmentation bombs on Eschweiler, Langerwehe, and other positions with the object of obtaining maximum effect on enemy front-line troops and equipment without causing such cratering of the battlefield as would impede attacking troops.
- At the same time 1,188 Lancasters and Halifaxes with heavy bombs were sent against the fortified base towns of Duren, Julich and Heinsberg with the aims of completely destroying buildings and strongpoints and blocking all roads and intersections.



# 16th November 1944

- The attack on **Duren** was made by 498 Lancasters, against negligible opposition and in good weather. Bombing was accurate and intense, 2,713 tons falling in a very concentrated attack which destroyed almost the entire built-up area and blocked all roads with rubble and debris.
- A similar force of Halifaxes dropped 1,946 tons of bombs on **Julich** where crews of Nos. 462 and 466 reported huge pillars of smoke rising to 8,000 feet soon after the attack began. Julich, with its smaller town area, was even more devastated than Duren; the road bridge across the Roer was destroyed and a cratered area extended beyond the town on all sides.
- Meanwhile No. 3 Group with a smaller force of 182 Lancasters laid waste **Heinsberg**.
- All three raids were brilliantly successful at a total cost of only four Lancasters. It had been agreed during the planning phase that repeat attacks would be made on Julich and Duren if necessary, but these hammer blows had been so complete that the American army cancelled the requirement.



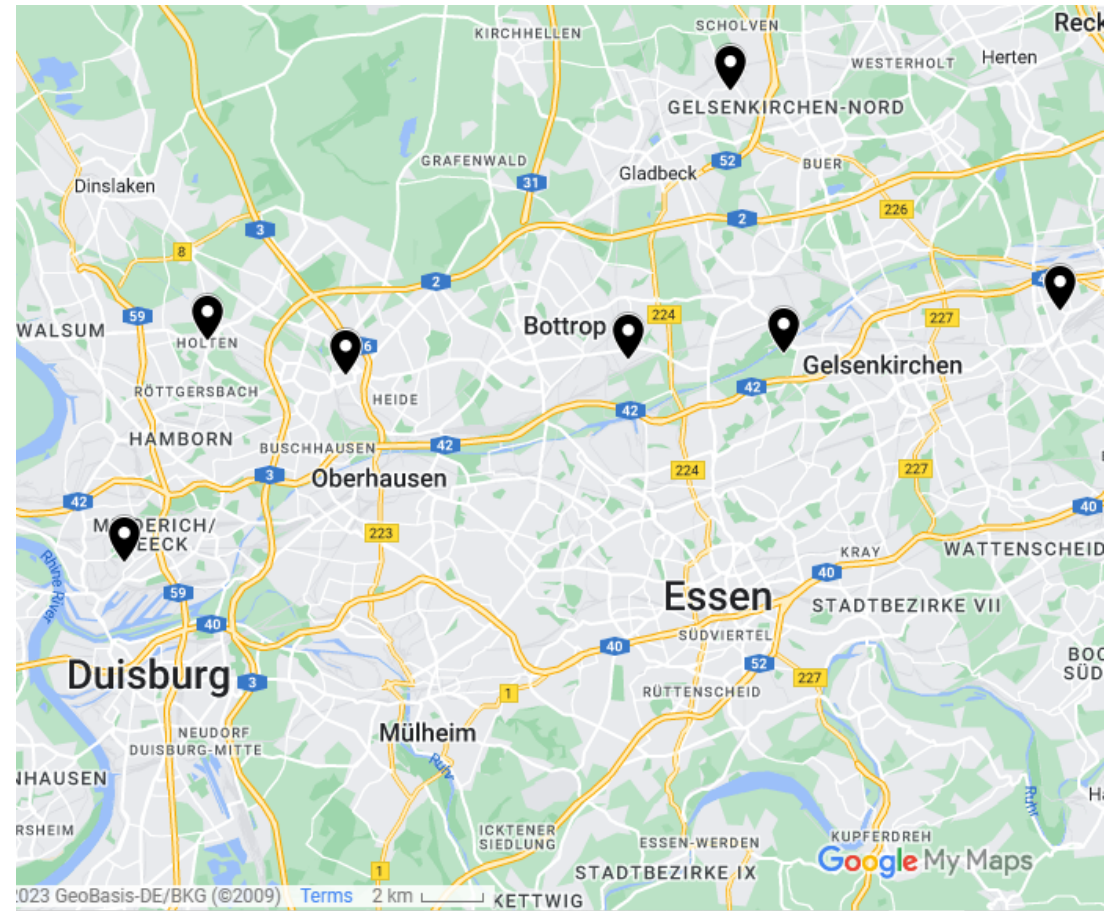
# 17th November 1944

- Politically it was unacceptable to return No. 451 to Australia where existing fighter squadrons were already complaining of under-employment.
- The unit was not equipped or suitably trained to join the R.A.A.F. fighter-bomber squadrons in Desert Air Force.
- Finally in November it was decided that No. 451 would be transferred to the United Kingdom. The Spitfires were handed over to No. 251 Wing.
- There was a flurry of postings, some R.A.A.F. ground staff already earmarked for repatriation being held in Italy to await a ship for Australia; some R.A.F. airmen were released to other Spitfire squadrons while a number of R.A.F. airmen due for return to the United Kingdom were attached to No. 451.
- On 17th November the squadron embarked at Naples in H.M.T. Alcantara, sailed for Liverpool and then proceeded to R.A.F. Station Hawkinge on 2nd December.



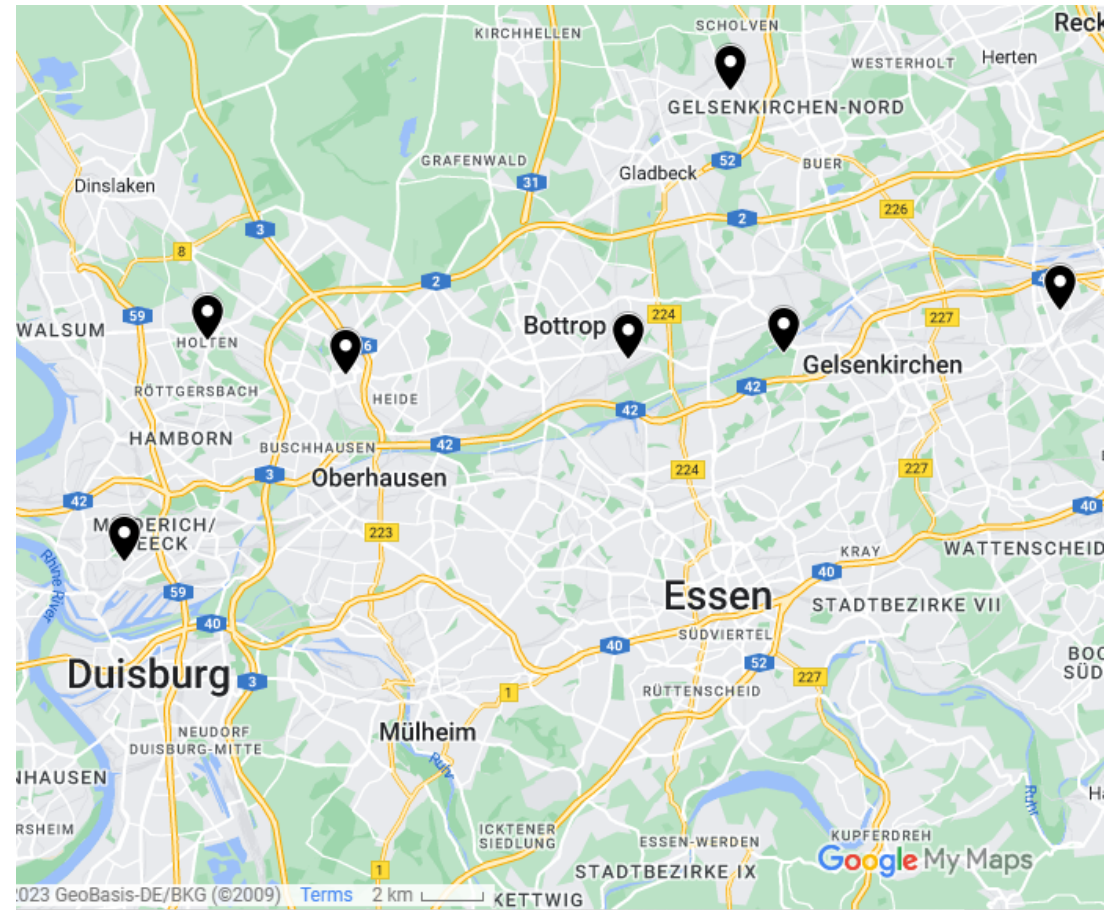
# 18th-19th November

- No. 460 Squadron made its first contribution to the oil campaign by a daylight raid on 9th November against the Fischer-Tropsch plant at Wanne-Eickel.
- Cloud was up to 21,000 feet and the target markers were completely hidden in the overcast and, although nearly 1,300 tons of bombs were dropped, the lack of G-H inevitably meant that bombing was scattered.
- No. 1 Group returned to Wanne-Eickel on 18th-19th November. 253 Lancasters were accompanied by no fewer than 56 pathfinder aircraft.
- Weather at base was poor, but conditions improved as forecast over the Continent and crews found the target area without difficulty. Target indicators were plentiful and well placed so that a concentrated attack was well under way when No. 460 arrived. Numerous explosions were noted and crews of all squadrons reported that the glow of fires could be seen up to 70 miles away.



# 21st November

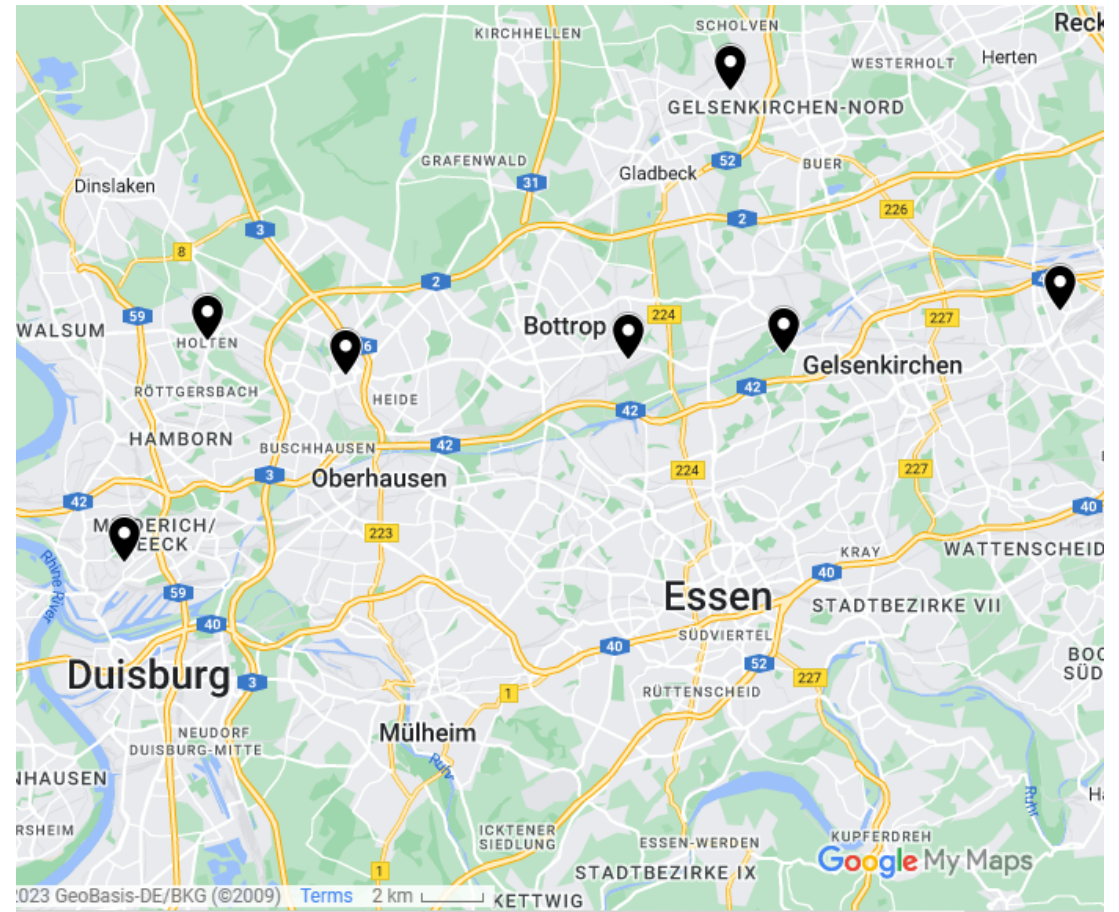
- The failure by No. 5 Group against Meerbeck on 1 November followed a not very successful raid by No. 6 Group on 25th October.
- The target was then allocated as the responsibility of No. 3 Group since it lay within G-H range and precision radar-bombing offered some hopes of success whereas visual daylight bombing had twice failed against this oil key-point.
- Attacks were made on 2nd November, 8th November, 20th November and 21st November, by which time the cumulative results of bombing justified removing Meerbeck from the active priority list.
- Altogether in the six raids within less than a month 1,148 bombers had been dispatched by Bomber Command and 5,286 tons of bombs expended; 15 bombers were shot down during this series. This relatively large expenditure of effort was justified by the importance of the Meerbeck plant.





# 21st-22nd November

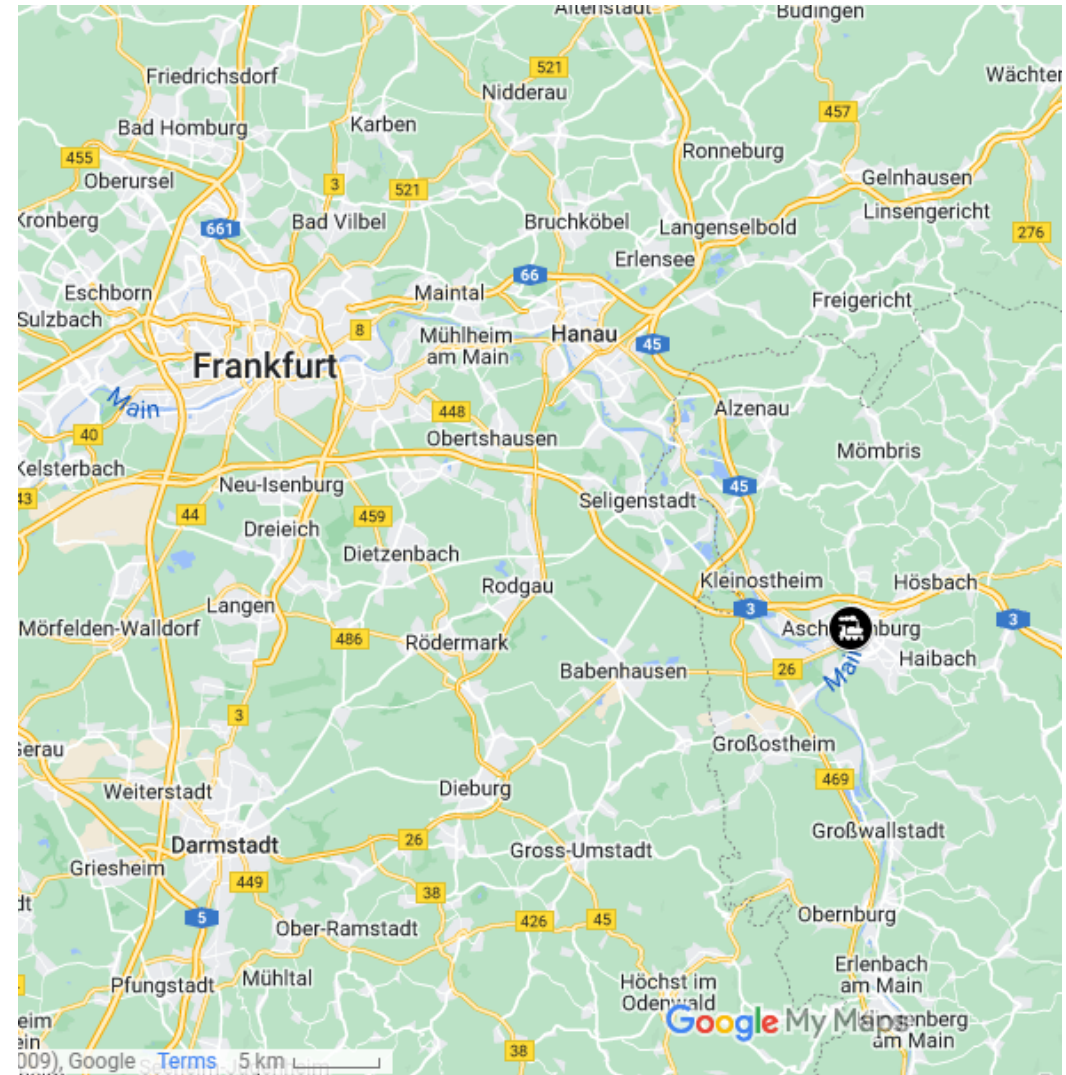
- The night raid against Sterkrade on 21st-22nd November was described by returning crews as uneventful.
- There were few fighters and only moderate flak to harass the larger force of 270 bombers.
- Nos. 462 and 466 each dispatched 15 aircraft, and although one from each squadron returned to base without bombing because of engine trouble the rest delivered a load of 106 tons of bombs (out of 870) in a raid which spread damage fairly evenly throughout the plant.





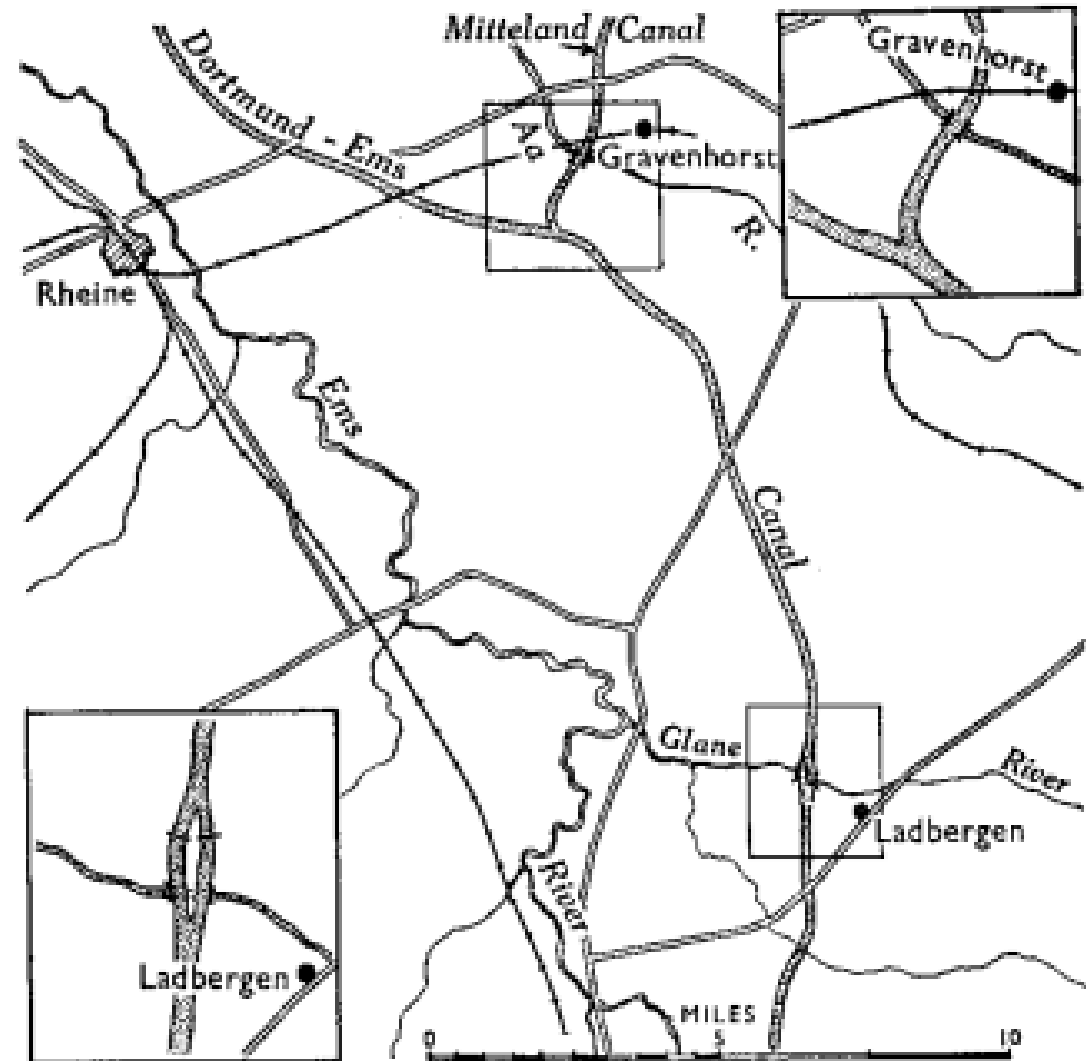
# 21st-22nd November 1944

- Of the six special rail targets R.A.A.F. squadrons attacked only two.
- On 21st-22nd November 23 Lancasters of No. 460 flew in a force of 283 to bomb marshalling yards at Aschaffenburg, but heavy low cloud foiled the master bomber, who instructed crews to bomb on navigational or radar fixes.
- Most aircraft bombed on a large red glow which H2S radar confirmed as being in the general target area but which some crews thought was a decoy.
- Photographs taken after the attack showed some damage to station buildings, the goods depot and rolling-stock as well as to scattered industrial and residential buildings north of the marshalling yards, but it was a disappointing result for the expenditure of 1,350 tons of bombs.



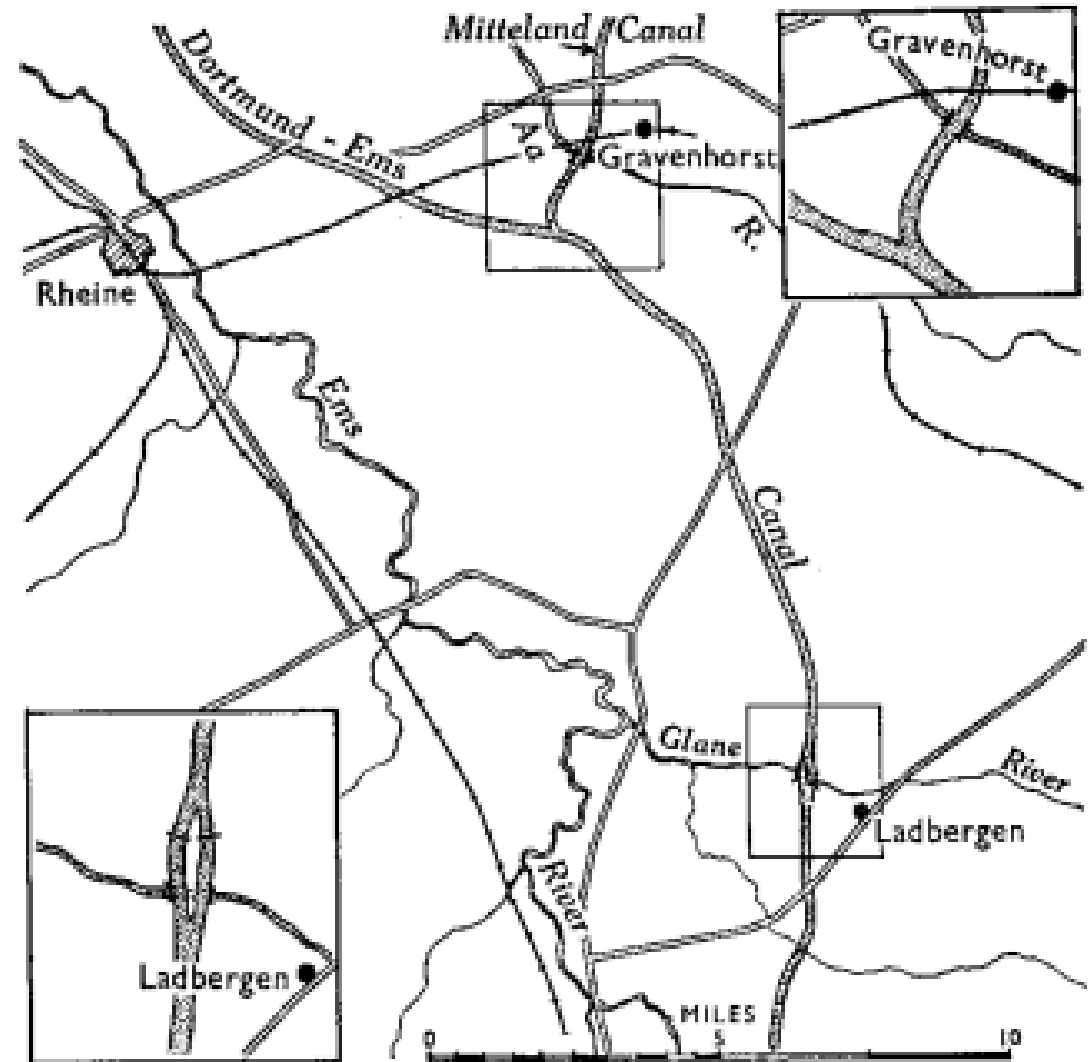
# 21st-22nd November 1944

- Again the Germans began feverishly to repair the damage to the Dortmund-Ems Canal, and by 21st-22nd November another attack by No. 5 Group was warranted.
- The aiming point was again close to the Ladbergen bottleneck at a point where the western arm of the canal crosses the River Glane.
- Conditions for attack were far from ideal as a blanket of cloud covered the target at an altitude of 4,000 feet, but many of the 30 R.A.A.F. and 90 other crews of the main force showed great determination in descending below cloud so that they might achieve a precision attack.
- These tactics, typical of the especially aggressive spirit consciously propagated in No. 5 Group, were successful and the aqueduct received many direct hits.
- Other bombs fell on the canal banks and a breach 190 feet in length was made south of the aiming point while the safety lock to the north was also damaged.



# 21st-22<sup>nd</sup> November 1944

- A repeat attack on the Mittelland Canal was ordered for 21st-22nd November, but as Nos. 463 and 467 were at Ladbergen that night only a few R.A.A.F. aircrews operated in this force.
- Again attacks were made successfully from below cloud level and the canal was breached and drained of water for a distance of approximately 31 miles, leaving many barges stranded.





## Flight Sergeant Calvert Philip BYRNE

Service No: 436143

Born: Bowral NSW, 6 October 1920

Enlisted in the RAAF: 11 November 1942 (at Perth WA)

Unit: No. 11 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Training Unit RAF

Died: Aircraft Accident (No. 11 Pilot Advanced Flying Training Unit Oxford aircraft ED138), UK, 23 November 1944, Aged 24 Years

Buried: Luton General Cemetery, Bedfordshire

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Philip Percy and Delia Gertrude Byrne, of Tallong, New South Wales, Australia.

Roll of Honour: Goulburn NSW

Remembered: Panel 119, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: Cenotaph Undercroft, State War Memorial, Kings Park WA

Flight Sergeant Byrne was killed in the crash of Airspeed Oxford ED138. Sergeant Campbell White (R/184474) (RCAF) was on board but was not killed in the accident.

### References:

Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour On-Line Records (RAAF Casualty Information compiled by Alan Storr (409804))

Commonwealth War Graves Commission On-Line Records

Department of Veteran's Affairs On-Line WWII Nominal Roll

National Archives of Australia On-Line Record A705, 166/6/813

# Royal Air Force Airspeed AS.10 Oxford II, 1942



**Date of Crash:** 27 November 1944.

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427 (1/432)

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	PD 398
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO -
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster PD398 took off from RAF Waddington at 2353 hours on the night of 26/27<sup>th</sup> November 1944 to bomb Munich, Germany. Nineteen aircraft from the Squadron took part in the raid and one of these PD398 failed to return.

**Crew:**

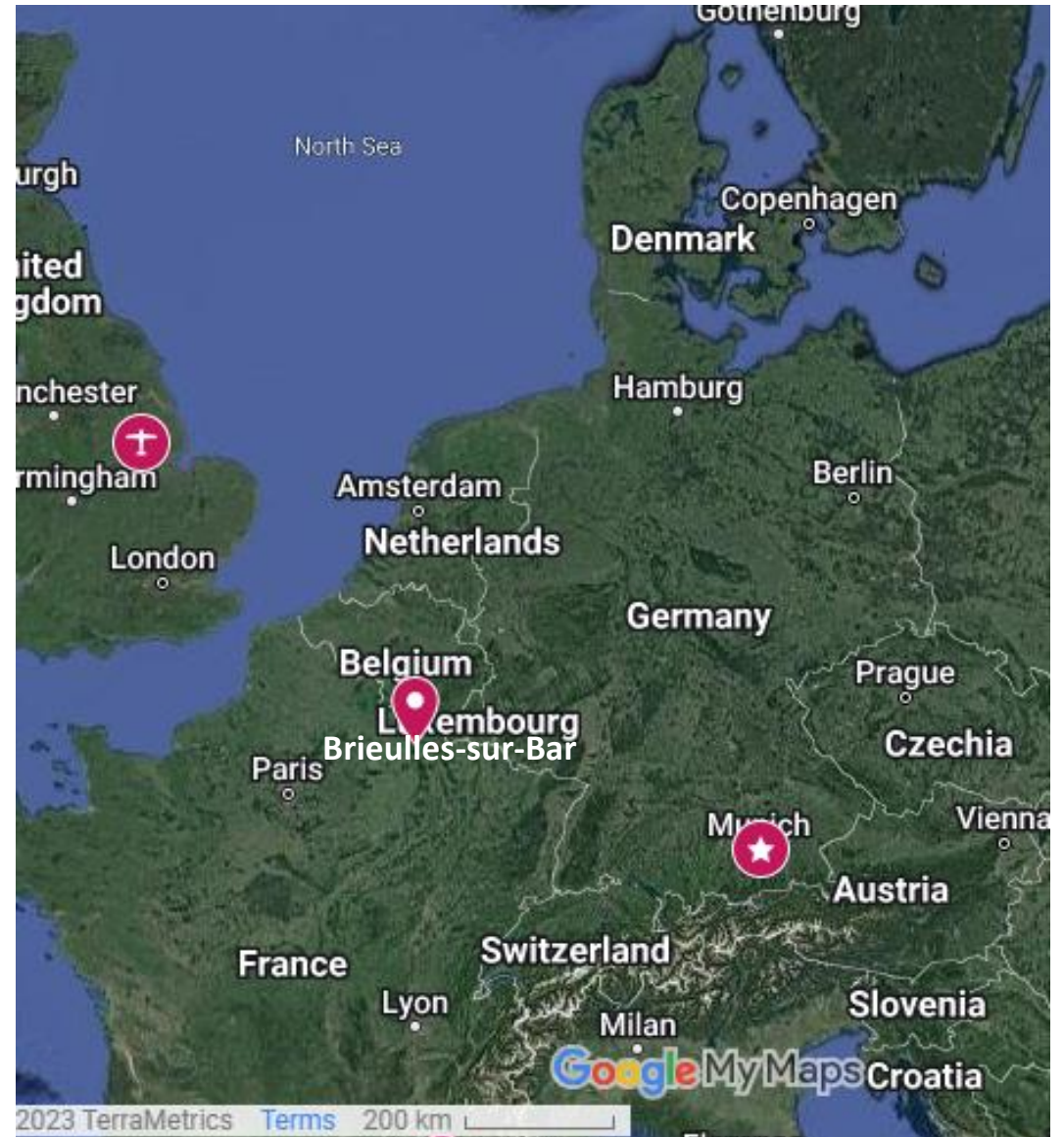
RAAF 415937 FO Findlay, A Captain (Pilot)  
 RAF Flt Sgt S W G Kenward ( Navigator)  
 RAAF 427661 Flt Sgt K J Quealy, (Bomb Aimer)  
 RAAF 427556 Flt Sgt G E Seeber, (Wireless Operator Air)  
 RAF Sgt S C Fawcett, (Flight Engineer)  
 RAAF 431387 Flt Sgt C J Lovell, (Air Gunner)  
 RAF Sgt J W Whitmore, (Air Gunner)

The pilots report in the ORB records the following "Sortie completed at 0515 hours. Leaving the target the Navigator was sick and he removed the oxygen mask. Fifteen minutes later he was found at his seat by the WOP who replaced the mask. The Flt Engineer turned up the oxygen and the Nav made a fair recovery. By 0600 hours Nav had worked out a nav position by DR and MTA's but position uncertain as not fully recovered. Attempted to fix position by GEE, Loran, W/T and VHF loops until 0855 but without success. Decided base could not be reached and landing would be better at Juvincourt. GEE lined up on supposed position of airfield but no reply obtained. Fuel down to 80 gallons. Obvious forced landing necessary. Selected open space where US trucks could be identified. Fired red cartridge and attempted wheels down landing. On first run ground appeared very wet. Pulled wheels up and landed in field ahead with all crew in crash positions. Good landing made at Brieculles at 1030am. No one injured. When ground examined it was seen that wheels down landing was almost impossible."

Brieculles-Sur-Bar is located in the French Department of Ardennes, some 12kms north-east of Vouziers.

# 26-27 November 1944

- On 26th-27th November the Waddington squadrons battled through electrical storms and severe icing conditions on the long journey to Munich which like Nuremberg had administrative and political as well as industrial importance as a target.
- Despite these handicaps a well - timed raid developed although, as the average bomb-load was only three tons instead of the normal five, there was insufficient weight of attack to cripple the city.
- 278 dispatched, 258 attacked, 781 tons, 1 failed to return.





# 27<sup>th</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> November

- No. 460 had greater success the next night, 27<sup>th</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> November, when a very concentrated attack was made on Freiburg and the centre of the town was devastated.
- 381 dispatched, 375 attacked, 1,696 tons, 1 failed to return.



# 28th-29th November

- Another "topping-up" raid on Essen was made on 28th-29th November which achieved significant new damage.
- The Driffield squadrons joined in this attack without undue incident and without loss,
- 316 dispatched, 308 attacked, all returned.

# 29th November

- No. 460 joined in a daylight attack on Dortmund, the largest city in the Ruhr, on 29th November.
  - The attack laid waste large areas of the city and caused heavy damage to steelworks, smaller engineering factories and railway facilities.
  - 311 dispatched, 291 attacked, 6 failed to return including 1 from No. 460.
- Map

# Warrant Officer Maxwell Frederick GOLSBY-SMITH

Service No: 421724

Born: Penrith NSW, 23 August 1922

Enlisted in the RAAF: 28 March 1941

Unit: No. 37 Squadron (RAF)

Died: Aircraft Accident (No. 37 Squadron Wellington aircraft LN798), Italy, 15 November 1944, Aged 22 Years

Buried: Bari War Cemetery, Italy

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Keith Jenkins Golsby-Smith and Stella Gladys Golsby-Smith, of Griffith, New South Wales, Australia

Roll of Honour: Griffith NSW

Remembered: Panel 122, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: Griffith Cenotaph, Griffith NSW

Remembered: Penrith City Memory Park, Penrith NSW

At 1155 hours on 15 November 1944 Wellington LN798 took off from Tortorella aerodrome to carry out an air test. The aircraft crashed during the test and three of the crew members were killed and two were injured.

The crew members of LN798 were:

Flight Sergeant William Jack Duncan (672271) (RAFVR) (Pilot)

Flight Sergeant R H Foster (R/199287) (RCAF) (Air Gunner) Injured

Sergeant A S Gosden (1396920) (RAFVR) (Bomb Aimer) Injured

Warrant Officer Maxwell Frederick Golsby-Smith (421724) (Wireless Operator Air)

Sergeant Louis Henry Page (1583358) (RAFVR) (Navigator)

References:

Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour On-Line Records (RAAF Casualty Information compiled by Alan Storr (409804))

Commonwealth War Graves Commission On-Line Records

Department of Veterans' Affairs On-Line WWII Nominal Roll

National Archives of Australia On-Line Record A705, 166/16/483

Register of War Memorials in New South Wales On-Line



# November

- In November Bomber Command attacked the oil targets on 11 day and 5 night missions.
- All the 10 synthetic plants in the Ruhr were assessed as inoperative by 30th November, and by this time the Air Ministry had agreed to share some of the burden of attack not only against the distant Politz and Leuna-Merseburg targets previously battered by the U.S.A.A.F. but also against a number of benzol plants which had hitherto not been attacked but were now recognised as providing a significant percentage of current German production.



German Oil Targets

# End November

- In October 1943 No. 460 Squadron had operated only on nine nights because of fog and other weather limitations; in November only six raids were possible, bringing the squadron's total sorties for two months to 286.
- The squadron's tally for the same two months of 1944 was 551 sorties in 28 separate operations, which can also be compared significantly with its effort of 631 sorties during July and August 1944 when it had all the advantages of summer weather and short trips to French targets.
- Slightly more than half the weight of Bomber Command's attack fell at this time on German industrial cities, while oil targets, transport centres, and targets in relation to Eisenhower's plan to open the Scheldt estuary all absorbed approximately equal parts of the remaining effort.
- Harris remained convinced that only sustained area attacks could defeat the reorganisation and rebuilding of German industrial resources energetically pursued by Speer during what had been virtually six months' respite from heavy bombing.
- This conviction was strengthened by the apparently ineffective attacks made at this time by the U.S.A.A.F. on enemy ordnance and vehicle depots or on aircraft factories and air force facilities. Heavy attacks on the German transport system, enthusiastically advocated by Tedder, were difficult to prosecute in bad weather, and as Germany's rail facilities were greatly in excess of purely military needs there seemed little hope of quickly creating the kind of "traffic desert" achieved in France as a preparation for OVERLORD.
- Singlemindedness and the absence of any obvious superior target system permitted Harris within two months and a half to rain nearly 86,000 tons of bombs on industrial cities throughout Germany. This campaign involved 20,465 sorties for a loss rate of only 1 per cent.
- The R.A.A.F. squadrons took part in 34 attacks against 23 different targets and dispatched 1,233 aircraft which dropped 5,450 tons of bombs.

# 30th November-1st December

- Although badly hit Duisburg was by no means knocked out and Nos. 462 and 466 returned in a force of 500 bombers on 30th November-1st December.
- 576 dispatched, 554 attacked, 3 failed to return.

# 2nd-3rd December 1944

- The two Driffield squadrons attacked Munster in daylight on 16th November and
- Hagen during the night of 2nd-3rd December, each time without loss and with satisfactory though not outstanding results.
- In other raids against Hamm, Leverkusen, Neuss, Oberhausen, Solingen and Witten, which further damaged the steel, chemical and transport facilities of the Ruhr, only a relatively small number of individual Australians were involved.



# 3rd December

- A new threat requiring assistance from Bomber Command arose as the American troops approached the Roer. The river was already very swollen, but the Allies were acutely aware that, while the enemy held the Urft and Schwammenauel dams at the head of the valley, he could at will release a flood which would carry away all bridges and make the river impassable for some time.
- The Roer dams were known to be equally as strong as the Sorpe and thus, when it became an urgent military requirement to damage and drain them, Bomber Command decided to employ much larger forces than in the previous one-squadron Tallboy attacks.
- On 3rd December 200 Lancasters of No. 1 Group went to Urft but it was covered by cloud which hid the target indicators. As neither the master bomber nor his deputy could identify the aiming point all squadrons, including No. 460, abandoned the attack.



# 4th-5th December 1944

- Two forces were dispatched on 4th-5th December against Karlsruhe and Heilbronn and both achieved moderate success.
- No. 460 had a quiet night over Karlsruhe.
- 535 dispatched, 514 attacked, 2,309 tons, 1 failed to return.
- Nos. 463 and 467 had trouble both with icing and with enemy fighters which swarmed to the bomber stream after some loads of incendiaries had been dropped by accident or in emergency on the outward journey.
- Twelve bombers were shot down including one from each R.A.A.F. squadron while Flying Officer Huxtable, Flight Lieutenant Kynoch, Flying Officer Shanahan and Flight Lieutenant Redwood all had to fight off enemy attacks.
- 292 dispatched, 284 attacked, 1,267 tons, 12 failed to return.
- F-Lt D. C. Huxtable, DFC, 421733; 463 Sqn. Clerk ; of Double Bay, NSW; b. Wairoa, NSW, 20 Apr 1923.
- F-Lt P. K. Shanahan, 425902; 467 Sqn. Junior clerk; of Brisbane; b. Rockhampton, Qld, 20 Mar 1924.
- F-Lt H. G. Redwood, DFC, 428804; 467 Sqn. Clerk; of Newcastle, NSW; b. Newcastle, 14 Sep 1923.
- F-Lt T. E. Evans, DFC, 429220; 467 Sqn. Clerk; of Hamilton, NSW; b. Stockton, NSW, 18 Jun 1924.

**Date of Death:** 4 December 1944.

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427) (1/432)

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	LM 100
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO -
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster LM100 took off from RAF Waddington at 1625 hours on 4 December 1944 to bomb Heilbronn, Germany. Bomb load 1 x 4000lb bomb, 14 x 106 x 4lb incendiaries. Twenty aircraft from the Squadron took part in the raid and one of these PB 740 failed to return. LM100 completed the mission and landed at 2230 hours. The Rear Gunner Sgt R W Steele was however killed during the mission.

**Crew:**

RAAF 419657 FO Kynoch, W M Captain (Pilot)  
 RAAF 422885 FO Robinson, A N (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot)  
 RAF Flt Sgt J G Scammell, (Navigator)  
 RAAF 419946 FO Chalk, J A (Bomb Aimer)  
 RAAF 415481 Flt Sgt K R Morris, (Wireless Operator Air Gunner)  
 RAF Sgt W T J George, (Mid Upper Gunner)  
 RAF Sgt R W Steele, (Rear Gunner)

The Pilots report in the ORB records the following “ Sortie completed. Fighter attack on aircraft at 1936 hours, height 13,200 feet. R/T, starboard flap and main plane trailing edge, under carriage, hydraulic line severed, stbd wheel punctured, fuselage forward of rear turret and stbd outer prop damaged. Rear Gunner killed in fighter attack. Landed at Manston.”

This was the first trip by the Rear Gunner since leaving hospital after being shot up by a fighter on a previous mission.

# 5th-6th December 1944

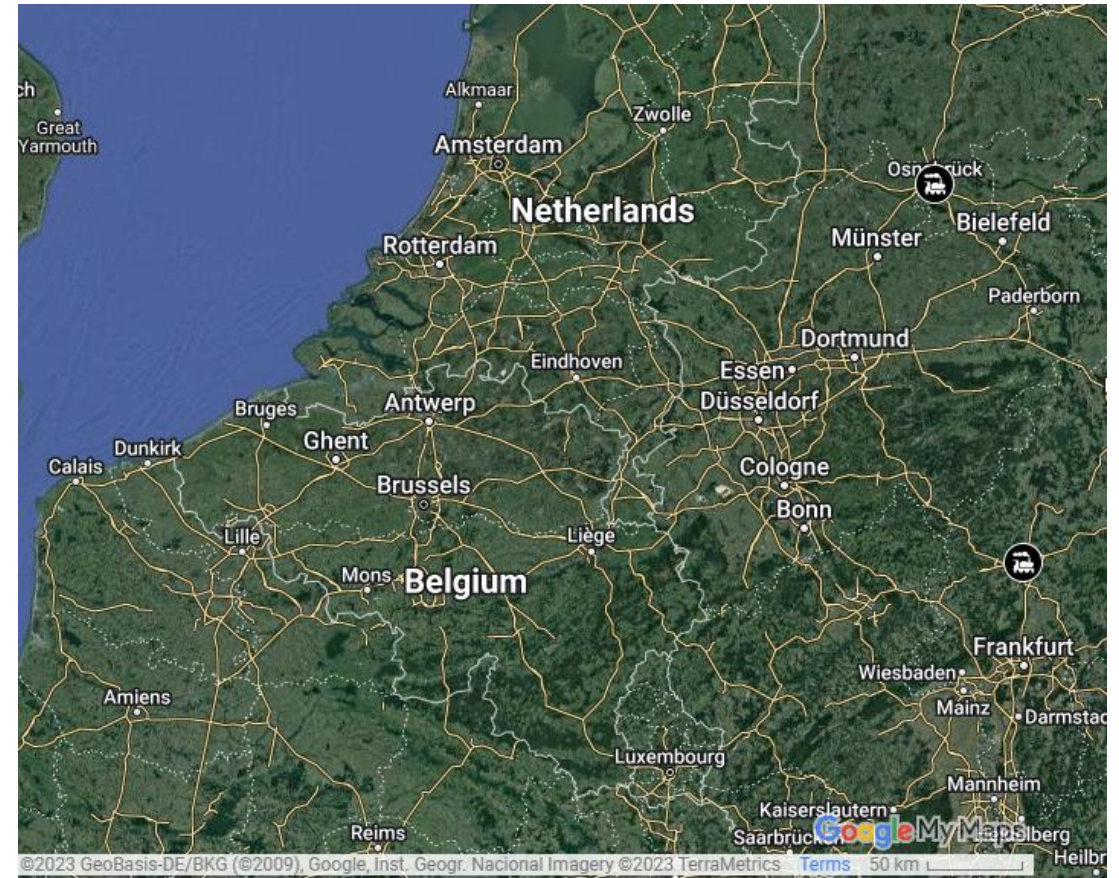
- Twenty-nine crews of Nos. 462 and 466 were enthusiastic on 5th-6th December when a force of 497 Lancasters and Halifaxes attacked marshalling yards at **Soest** to follow up a daylight raid by the Eighth Air Force.
- There were no difficulties in identifying the target and fires spread rapidly, accompanied by heavy ground explosions.
- The actual damage caused by this raid could not be distinguished from that created in the earlier daylight raid, but the general effect of both was to overload repair facilities and, at least temporarily, to create serious delays in all types of rail traffic through this area.





# 6th-7th December 1944

- R.A.A.F. squadrons had mixed success on 6th-7th December when both Osnabrück and Giessen were attacked.
- The Halifaxes sent to Osnabrück failed to achieve any real concentration of bombing as crews were unable to see the target markers.
- 453 dispatched, 416 attacked, 1,370 tons, 8 failed to return.
- Nos. 463 and 467, in a deeper penetration against both the city and marshalling yards of Giessen, had clear weather and laid waste the northern suburbs, against more than usually determined enemy fighter opposition.
- 263 dispatched, 251 attacked, 1,207 tons, 7 failed to return.



# 6th-7th December 1944

- Wing Commander Forbes of No. 463 reported that enemy fighters appeared to wait until the main force was called in to bomb before they dropped high-level flares which illuminated the whole area.
- Forbes was on his bombing run when his Lancaster was attacked by three Ju-88's, but good fire control and instructions for evasion given by Flight Lieutenant Winston (the squadron gunnery officer) shook off the fighters.
- Shortly afterwards two more Ju-88 's attacked but these also were outmanoeuvred. During these clashes one fighter was seen going down in a shallow dive and it was claimed as possibly destroyed.
- Flying Officer Bennett was also on his bombing run when he saw an Me-110 taking up position to attack another Lancaster. He ordered his mid-upper gunner to open fire and the port mainplane of the fighter was seen to break away and the Me-110 spiralled downwards on fire.
- Wing Cdr Forbes was lost on a bombing mission over Mehringen, Germany on 21 February 1945.
- F-O K. E. H. Bennett, 424117. 61 and 189 Sqns RAF, 463 Sqn. Draftsman; of Annandale, NSW; b. Paddington, NSW, 15 Apr 1922. Killed in action 18 Dec 1944.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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414219 Wing Cdr W. A. Forbes DFC (right), CO of No. 463 Squadron RAAF; 415192 Sqn Ldr D. J. Sullivan DFC (left), Flight Commander of the Squadron, and 416685 Sqn Ldr E Le P Langlois DFC, Flight Commander of No. 467 Squadron RAAF, with Mr A. S. Drakeford, Australian Minister for Air, at RAF Waddington.

## Leading Aircraftman Edward Francis PONTEY

Service No: 444034

Born: Berowra NSW, 17 December 1925

Enlisted in the RAAF: 1 January 1944

Unit: No. 8 Service Flying Training School, Bundaberg QLD

Died: Aircraft Accident (No. 8 Service Flying Training School Anson aircraft DJ236), near Bundaberg, 8 December 1944, Aged 18 Years

Buried: Bundaberg General Cemetery QLD

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Lieutenant William Francis Pontey MM and Bessie Elizabeth Pontey, of Berowra, New South Wales

Roll of Honour: Unknown

Remembered: Panel 116, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

At 1530 hours on 8 December 1944, Anson DJ236 crashed near Woodgate approximately 16 miles south east of Bundaberg and the crew members were killed.

The accident occurred during a non-operational air to air camera gunnery exercise, when structural failure of the port main plane resulted in the aircraft diving vertically to the ground from 3,000 feet.

The crew members of DJ236 were:

Leading Aircraftman Edward Francis Pontey (444034) (Trainee Pilot)

Leading Aircraftman Ronald Norman Rose (444041) (Trainee Pilot)

References:

Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour On-Line Records (RAAF Casualty Information compiled by Alan Storr (409804))

Commonwealth War Graves Commission On-Line Records

Department of Veterans' Affairs On-Line WWII Nominal Roll

National Archives of Australia On-Line Record A705, 166/33/263; A9845, 64



# 4th - 11th December

- Next day (4<sup>th</sup>) No. 8 Group attacked Urft with 30 specialist path - finder crews which attacked in three waves, each wave bombing on a signal from the leading aircraft, but no assessment of results could be made.
- On 8th December the task was given to No. 5 Group but weather conditions and smoke rising from bomb bursts caused the master bomber to break off the attack when only 129 out of 205 Lancasters had bombed. All except one of the 29 R.A.A.F. aircraft carried their bombs back to base.
- No. 5 Group tried again on 11th December with 239 aircraft but only 7 out of 30 R.A.A.F. crews bombed through gaps in the cloud as strict orders had been given that there must be no orbiting or second runs over the target. Some of the 180 crews who did bomb claimed direct hits without, however, any evidence of serious damage to the Urft dam.
- Meanwhile on 5th December No. 3 Group had sent 56 Lancasters to attack the Schwammenauel dam, but only two aircraft dropped their bombs.
- Subsequent photographs revealed that the head of the Urft dam was deeply chipped but that it was not vitally damaged by nearly 2,000 tons of bombs rained on it. Bomber Command had failed to solve Bradley's tactical problem, and he had reluctantly decided to capture the dams by ground action before attempting to cross the Roer River.



# 12th-13th December

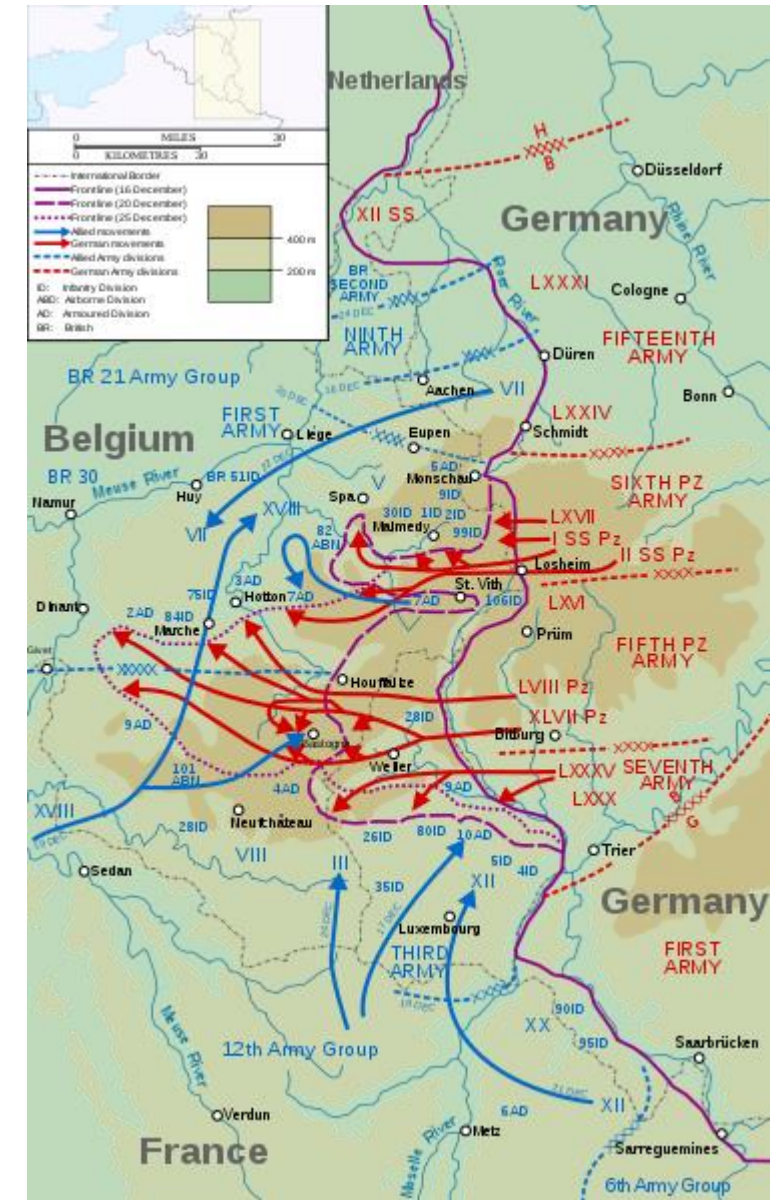
- A second "topping-up" raid on Essen was made before the end of the year on 12th-13th December, this achieved significant new damage .
- The Driffield squadrons joined in the attack without undue incident and without loss, but No. 460 suffered a heavy blow when Squadron Leader Clark, a fine flight commander, was shot down.
- 550 dispatched, 529 attacked, 6 failed to return.
- Sqn Ldr J. Clark, DFC, AFC, 402439. 458 Sqn, 148 Sqn RAF, 460 Sqn. Clerk; of Menangle, NSW; b. Waverley, NSW, 28 Aug 1915. Killed in action 12 Dec 1944.

# 15th-16th December 1944

- No. 460 continued its record of bombing successes without loss with a raid against the I.G. Farben chemical factories at Ludwigshaven on 15th-16th December.
- 334 dispatched, 319 attacked, 1554 tons, 1 failed to return.

# 16 December 1944

- The Germans launched a surprise attack with two Panzer armies through the densely forested Ardennes region towards the Belgian Port of Antwerp on the morning of 16 December 1944.
- They achieved total surprise due to a combination of Allied overconfidence, preoccupation with Allied offensive plans, and poor aerial reconnaissance due to bad weather.
- The strategic bombers were not able to prevent the Germans gathering sufficient fuel stocks to launch the Ardennes venture but they had almost certainly ensured there was not enough to maintain it for long.



# 16 – 23 December 1944

- The thick fog which aided the initial assault lifted only slightly on 17th December thereafter for four days low cloud over bases and rain and snow throughout the battle area prevented any effective local air effort.
- Strategic bombing forces, better based in Britain, were called upon to join the battle. They were forced back on the German communications system, a target which had proved disappointing during recent months.
- Thus on 17th-18th December Bomber Command made a three-pronged attack against Duisburg (Nos. 462 and 466), Munich (Nos. 463 and 467) and Ulm (No. 460), all communication centres which might be used by enemy supplies or reinforcements en route to the Ardennes.
- Attack was then concentrated on targets nearer to the battlefield, and in daylight Trier was attacked on 19th, 21st and 23rd December. No. 460 was sent against marshalling yards at Bonn on 21st-22nd December but, although both ground marking and sky marking techniques were attempted, R.A.A.F. crews considered that only scattered damage was achieved.
- The same night, in equally atrocious weather, No. 462 made a disappointing raid against the Nippes marshalling yard at Cologne.
- Better results were obtained at Bingen on the 22nd-23rd when 10 out of 12 crews of No. 466 each returned with an aiming point photograph and circumstantial reports of heavy explosions very close to the target markers.





# 21st-22nd December

- On 21st-22nd December, Nos. 463 and 467 each contributed 17 Lancasters to a force of 207 bombers which attacked Politz. This was nominally an Eighth Air Force commitment, but the Americans had either been weathered in at their bases or forced to concentrate on tactical duties or other target priorities since their very successful raid in October which had temporarily put Politz out of action.
- The attack was considered essential because of its possible reaction on the outcome of the Ardennes offensive, Politz then being the largest German oil plant considered capable of maximum production.
- The long flight to Stettin even in December presented few problems to No. 5 Group because of the partial breakdown of enemy air-warning systems.
- The main force reached the Politz area compactly to find itself favoured with clear skies and only a slight ground haze.
- Flak opposition was less than expected and the Lancasters from Waddington had no difficulties during their bombing runs.
- Analysis of photographs taken during the raid showed that the markers were offset by approximately one mile from the true aiming point, but post-raid reconnaissance photographs showed serious damage in the power station, water-gas plant, carbonising ovens and a gas-holder.



# 23 - 24 December 1944

- On 23rd December the weather changed dramatically with the arrival of a high-pressure system moving westwards which was to give five days of excellent flying weather. The Luftwaffe, taking advantage of its preknowledge of the weather, reacted with unaccustomed energy and purpose and mounted 800 fighter sorties over the battlefield on 23rd December.
- Next day German armoured spearheads advanced to within five miles of the River Meuse, but at the same time Allied strategic bombers struck hard at German air bases.
- In daylight on 24th December some 1,400 heavy bombers of the U.S.A.A.F. dropped 3,500 tons of bombs on 11 airfields east of the Rhine.
- Bomber Command contributed three telling blows when No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group attacked Lehausen airfield at Dusseldorf, No. 4 Group bombed Mulheim airfield at Essen and (by night) No. 3 Group was sent to Hangelar airfield at Bonn.
- At Mulheim 15 crews of No. 466 arrived to find that the western side of the aerodrome was already enveloped in smoke and the master bomber was directing newcomers to the eastern half, which also soon became heavily cratered. Eight R.A.A.F. Halifaxes were hit by flak but all returned safely.



# 24 December 1944

- On 22 June 1944, Strüning again shot down three RAF bombers.
- On 15 November, Strüning was part of the guard of honour at Nowotny's funeral in Vienna. Nowotny had been killed in action on 8 November 1944.
- Strüning was shot down and killed in action over Cologne on Christmas Eve 1944.
- Strüning was credited with 56 nocturnal aerial victories claimed in 280 combat missions. All of his victories were claimed over the Western Front in Defence of the Reich missions against the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command.



# 24th December 1944

- On 19th/20th October Doleman and Bunch (photo) in a Mosquito Intruder of No. 157 Squadron shot down a Ju88 and damaged another, on 6th/7th November they destroyed two Me110s and a Ju88 and in three nights from 22nd to 24th December they claimed three Me110s and a Ju88 destroyed and another Ju88 probably destroyed.
- They are believed to have killed Strüning while he tried to attack a Lancaster bomber





# 24 - 25 December 1944

- A repeat raid against Nippes on the 24th - 25<sup>th</sup> was conducted by Lancasters of No. 1 Group.
- The attack was made in clear weather and crews of No. 460 who identified the target without difficulty confirmed that the marking was accurate.
- After 550 tons of bombs had fallen smoke rose several thousand feet into the air; nearly all the tracks were cratered and the marshalling yard was covered in debris from shattered rolling-stock.
- The locomotive depot and the engine and waggon repair shops were badly damaged in this and the earlier raid.



## Flight Lieutenant Raymond Henry CURTIS

Service No: 264150

Born: London, England, 3 January 1903

Enlisted in the RAAF: 17 January 1942 (at Melbourne VIC)

Unit: No. 10 Elementary Flying Training School, Temora NSW

Died: Illness, Melbourne VIC, 5 January 1945, Aged 40 Years

Buried: Springvale War Cemetery, Melbourne VIC

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Raymond and Edith Curtis

Roll of Honour: Sydney NSW

Remembered: Panel 115, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

On 25 December 1944, Flight Lieutenant Curtis, (Administrative and Special Duties) was admitted to the No. 2 RAAF Hospital, suffering from acute gingivitis. On 5 January 1945, he was taken to the operating theatre for dental examination under anaesthetic. During the operation indications of respiratory insufficiency became apparent, and he was transferred to the Royal Melbourne Hospital for treatment on a mechanical respirator, but he died at 1630 hours that day.

### References:

Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour On-Line Records (RAAF Casualty Information compiled by Alan Storr (409804))

Commonwealth War Graves Commission On-Line Records

Department of Veterans' Affairs On-Line WWII Nominal Roll

National Archives of Australia On-Line Record A705, 166/8/979

# 23 - 31 December 1944

- The airfield blitz and swarms of Allied medium, light and fighterbombers suppressed the Luftwaffe and subjected the German army to continuous attack.
- Between 23rd and 31st December the American Ninth Air Force flew over 10,000 sorties and claimed the destruction of more than 2,300 motor vehicles, 200 tanks or armoured cars, 170 gun positions, 600 railway waggon, 45 locomotives, 330 buildings and 7 bridges.
- This material damage and the creation of choke points on roads leading westward did much to slow down the German drive to the Meuse.
- Having failed to secure either Malmedy or Bastogne, the Germans were forced to push all their main road traffic through St Vith which provided opportunities for fighter-bombers unequalled since the Falaise pocket.



- Thanks for your attention