

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

January 1944 to D Day



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

044167

# The grades of the Iron Cross

- **Iron Cross WW2**
- Iron Cross, 2nd class
  - 4.5 million awarded
- Iron Cross, 1st class
  - 300,000 awarded
- It was a progressive award, with the second class having to be earned before the first class and so on for the higher degrees.
- Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross
  - 7,161 awarded
- Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves
  - 863 awarded
- Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords
  - 147 awarded
- Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds.
  - 27 awarded
- Grand Cross of the Iron Cross
  - 1 awarded, Goering.



Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves

# Jan 44

- Efforts were under way to provide long-range fighter escort for the bombers but for a while it seemed a question whether long-range escort could be obtained in time to keep pace with the accelerating air war.
- As early as August the radius of action of the P-47 had been extended to 340 miles.
- The problem of escort for deep penetrations into Germany was faced squarely only after lack of escort had resulted in unsustainable losses.
- Hopes were pinned initially on the P-38, when on 15 October 1943 the 55th Fighter Group joined the seven P-47 groups already operating with VIII Fighter Command. With the addition of two 75-gallon wing tanks the Lightning could perform escort to a maximum of 520 miles from bases.
- During a mission to Bremen on 13 November the P-38's demonstrated their ability to go the distance (the longest to date for fighter escort), tangle on more than equal terms with the enemy, and provide invaluable support for the bombers over the target area.
- Left alone after the P-47's had reached the limit of their endurance the forty-seven P-38's found themselves outnumbered, possibly as much as five to one. As a result they were badly mauled. But the P-38's were responsible for holding bomber losses in the target area to a supportable level.



P-47D with a 75 US gal (62 imp gal; 284 L) drop tank buzzed the airfield at Bodney, England.

# Jan 44

- In September 1943 General Arnold urged the RAF to put as many of its Mustang-equipped squadrons as possible at the disposal of the Eighth Air Force for long-range escort. Air Chief Marshal Portal agreed to devote four such units to the daylight bombing project in January of 1944.
- On October 30 General Arnold had decided to stop any allocation of long-range P-51's or P-38's from going to tactical reconnaissance units or to any theater other than the United Kingdom for the remainder of 1943 -- this despite urgent requirements for those types in other quarters.
- However, all P-51 units destined for the ETO were being assigned to the Ninth Air Force, which was being groomed for the tactical support of OVERLORD.
- This situation had for practical purposes been remedied by an agreement made late in October establishing the support and protection of the heavy bombers engaged in POINTBLANK as the primary tactical role of all U.S. fighter units in the United Kingdom until further notice.
- Accordingly, the one P-51 group (the 354th) operating in the theater prior to 1944 flew almost exclusively in support of the daylight bombing campaign and under VIII Fighter Command control, although assigned to IX Fighter Command.



F-5A Lightning of the 7th Photo Group, 8th Air Force based at Mount Farm with drop tank.



# Jan 44

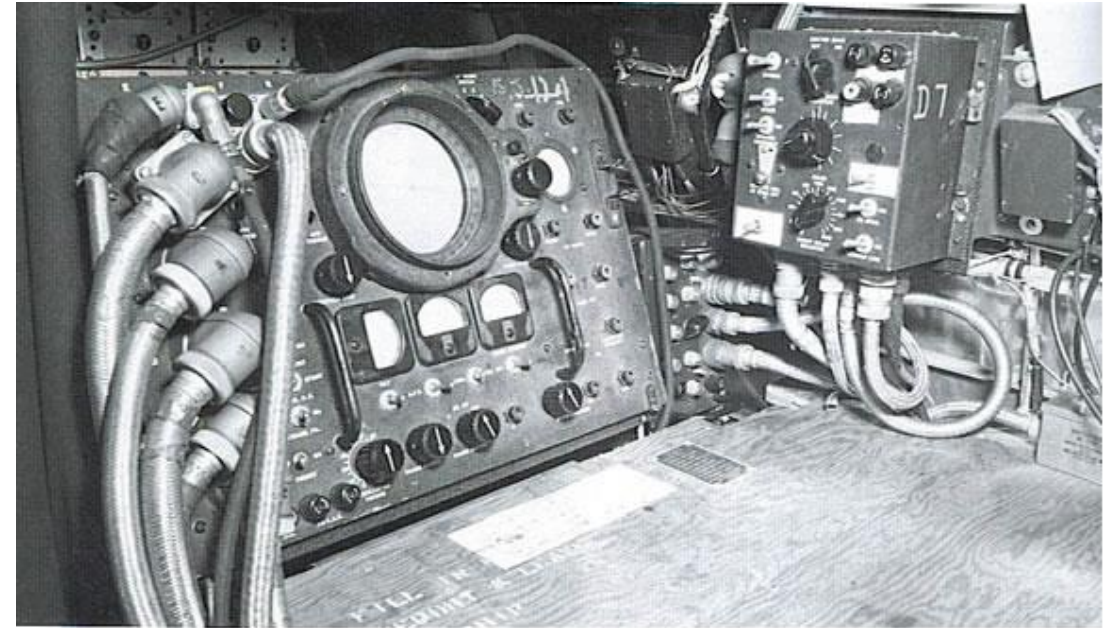
- The P-51's for the first time flew escort in a strategic mission on 5 December against targets in the Paris area.
- On 13 December P-51's helped take a large force of bombers to Kiel. The force attacked Kiel with support in the target area from the two long-range units of P-38's and P-51's. This was the first time the P-51's had flown to what was then the limit of their escort range. Enemy reaction proved exceptionally weak, however, and the Mustangs saw only light action.
- On 20 December on another bombing trip to Bremen the P-51's and P-38's were engaged more briskly. The P-47's provided support for the bombers to and from the target, leaving to the longer-range units the task of protecting the bombers over the target area. This time the enemy reacted with considerable intensity, trying as usual to place his rocket-firing twin-engine fighters in position to attack under the protection of the single engine planes. This the forty-four P-51's and thirty-five P-38's were able effectively to prevent.
- By January 1944 the value of the P-51 as a long-range escort plane had become so apparent that the allocations in the theater were completely revised.
- On 24 January British and American commanders came to an agreement which placed most of the P-51 units in the Eighth Air Force. Eventually, the Eighth would be equipped almost exclusively with P-51's, the P-47's and the P-38's being transferred to the Ninth Air Force.



P-51D 44-14888 of the 8th AF/357th FG/363rd FS, named Glamorous Glen III, is the aircraft in which Chuck Yeager achieved most of his 12.5 kills, including two Me 262s – shown here with twin single-use 108-gallon (409-l) drop tanks fitted.

# Jan 44

- Like Bomber Command the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Airforces were hampered by thick cloud over Germany during the winter of 1943/44.
- Precision bombing of specific high value targets had to give way to experimental use of H2S and H2X to bomb targets selected because radar could find them.
- Meanwhile they planned an all-out attack on the German aircraft industry to be delivered in the first full week of clear weather over most of central Europe with good enough weather in the base areas of southern Italy and eastern England to permit the bombers to take off and land.



The H2X was a USAAF ground-scanning radar based on the British H2S. Here it is seen installed in the navigator's location in a B-17 Flying Fortress.

# January 44

- January almost invariably brings heavy cloud over Europe and blind bombing on sky markers was necessary.
- Berlin apart from strategic issues was the best tactical target, for it alone had a built-up area large enough to ensure that, even if marker flares were offset or drifted, a high percentage of the bombs dropped would cause worthwhile damage.
- Strong groups of German fighters began to join the bomber stream even while it was over the North Sea, and, with improved search radar and other devices which homed on bombers' H2S, Monica and IFF radiation, the enemy had a greater degree of success.

# early 1944

- In December 1943 Herrmann moved on to be Luftwaffe Inspector of Aerial Defence.
- The number of night accidents involving single-seat fighters caused by poor weather in the winter of 1943/4, led to unsustainable losses in pilots and aircraft of JG 300.
- By early 1944 the Nachtjagdgeschwaders has been equipped with the advanced and "window-proof" Lichtenstein SN-2 VHF airborne radar.
- JG 300 gradually reverted to a standard day fighter unit, flying operations against the USAAF 8th and 15th Air Forces over Western Europe.





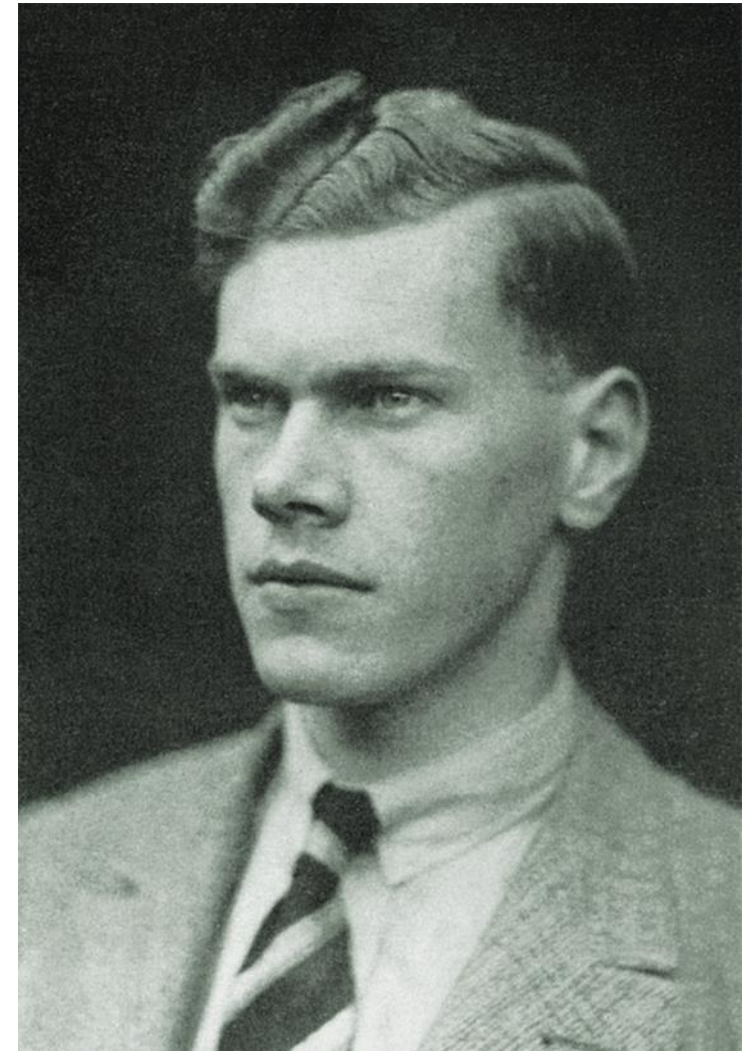
# 5 Jan 1944

- On 5 Jan 1944 No. 467 Squadron received news that Sgt Morley was safe after a long walk to Gibraltar.
- Lancaster JB121 took off from RAF Bottesford at 1703 hours on the night of 3/4th November 1943 to bomb Dusseldorf, Germany.
- PO Evans and Sgt Stead became POW's but nothing had been known about the rest of the crew.
- It subsequently transpired that Flt Sgt Garvey had also evaded capture and returned safe to UK.



# 5 January 44

- Doctor Jones (photo) had asked for special attention to be paid to the enigma traffic from the 15th company of the German Signals Experimental Regiment. New decrypts from that company reached him on the 5th of January 1944.
- The messages referred to flammen, flames, and they were unusual in that they gave ranges up to 350 kilometres well beyond normal radar range.
- The flames could be switched off and were not under the control of the observing station which seemed to find it easier to determine range rather than bearing.
- They can also sometimes be seen during the day and from the positions of the few plotting stations we were able to locate we realised they referred to the positions of our bombers.
- By a process of elimination I was quickly able to argue that the Germans were challenging and plotting the IFF (identification friend or foe) sets that had been kept switched on in some of our bombers and perhaps also in American aircraft too.



# 5 January 44

- The superstition had grown up in Bomber Command that leaving IFF on during raids over Germany provided some form of protection against searchlights flak or even enemy fighters.
- The Operational Research Section of Bomber Command in September 1942 had reported that experience over Germany had showed there is no evidence that the use of the J switch, by which the IFF was left switched permanently on, had any appreciable effect on the defences or the missing rate.
- But they added: “it is known however that many crews think the device effective, and it should be therefore be retained ... Since no evidence has come to light indicating any harmful effects of the J switch the psychological effects on the crew alone is sufficient to justify its retention.
- Doctor Jones was now able to point to actual raids during December where according to the Germans’ own Enigma reports nine out of the 41 aircraft lost on the 2/3 December against Berlin had been shot down because of their use of IFF four out of 24 lost on Leipzig on the following night and six out of 26 on Berlin on the 16/17 December.
- At last Bomber Command headquarters was sufficiently convinced to issue orders that IFF should be switched off and The Commander in Chief (photo) had sent a signal to all units flaying those idiots who believe in the joss-like protection of IFF.



# 6 January 1944

- With the lessening of Japanese submarine activity towards the end of 1943, the staff and aircraft of No. 66 Squadron were judged to be more urgently needed for training purposes and the unit was disbanded on 6 January 1944.



Avro Anson trainers in formation



**Date of Death:** 6 January 1944

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427) (1/433)

AWM 237 (64)

NAA : A705, 166/8/340

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	ED 547
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO -
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster ED547 took off from RAF Waddington at 0005 hours on the night of 6 January 1944 to bomb Stettin, Poland. Bomb load 3 x 1000lb, 1 x 500lb bombs, 44 x 30lb, 940 x 4lb incendiaries. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it did not return to base. Eleven aircraft from the Squadron took part in the raid, and two of these including ED547 failed to return.

**Crew:**

RAAF 409666 PO Connolly, F A Captain (Pilot)  
 RAF Flt Sgt L A Jeffries, (Navigator)  
 RAF Sgt M Turner, (Bomb Aimer)  
 RAF Sgt R W J Evans (Wireless Operator Air Gunner)  
 RAF Sgt D A Briggs, (Flight Engineer)  
 RCAF WO Class 2 L M Jackson, (Mid Upper Gunner)  
 RCAF Flt Sgt H S Reid, (Rear Gunner)

Post war investigations and enquiries failed to find any trace of the missing aircraft or crew. The names of the missing crew are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at Runnymede, Surrey, UK.

**Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A705, 166/9/328 Digitised. Commonwealth War Graves records.  
W R Chorley : RAF Bombe Command Losses of the Second World War, Page 276,  
Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	LL 678
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	J1 -L2
<b>Unit:</b>	514 Sqn RAF

**Summary:**

On the night of 12/13<sup>th</sup> January 1944, Lancaster LL678 took off from RAF Waterbeach at 2312 hours, detailed to bomb Gelsenkirchen, Germany. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base.

**Crew:**

RAAF 425136 PO Delacour, H S Captain (Pilot)  
RCAF FO Phillips, S A (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot)  
RAF Sgt G E Martin, (Flight Engineer)  
RAF FO Picton, T G (Navigator)  
RAF Flt Sgt G Palamountain (Air Bomber)  
RAF Sgt A C Benham, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RCAF Sgt F S Williams, (Mid Upper Gunner)  
RAF Flt Sgt G D Savage, (Rear Gunner)

The aircraft was shot down by a night fighter and crashed at 0124 hours on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1944, at Zuid Loo (Overijssel), a small hamlet, 3kms south east of Bathmen, Five of the crew were killed, and Sgt Martin, Flt Sgt Palamountain and Sgt Williams evaded capture.

Those killed are buried in the Bathmen General Cemetery, Netherlands. Bathmen is a small village in the province of Overijssel, 9kms east of the town of Deventer and 1.5kms south of the main road to Almelo.

Sgt Martin later reported : "The aircraft was attacked by a fighter on the way back from the target and the port wing caught fire and it spread rapidly. The aircraft crashed within a few minutes, and there were 4 or 5 members in the wreck. One was Phillips."

PO Williams said " I saw the Flt Engineer, bale out and the Bomb Aimer probably baled out. I was informed by the underground that four were dead in the aircraft and I thought one would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot who had ripped his chute, and would probably not get out".

# 14th-15th January

- On 14th-15th January 498 bombers were dispatched on the first full-scale attempt against Brunswick, but on this occasion the fighters made early contact between Bremen and Hanover and eight Australian Lancasters suffered determined attacks.
- All finally escaped and even claimed damage to five of the attackers, although in the confused circumstances these claims could not be verified.
- Three Lancasters of No. 467 were damaged by incendiary bombs dropped from other aircraft.
- The raid as a whole was a failure, the Australians finding only scattered sky markers over thick cloud.
- Only a small part of the very heavy bomb load actually hit the aircraft-component and engineering factories which were the real targets of this attack.
- 38 or 8% of the force failed to return.

Jerry McBrien 2023





# 20 January 1944

- On 20 January 1944 two more squadrons were transferred to 100 Group, No.s 169 and 239 both with Mosquitos flying night intruder missions.



# 20/1 January 44

- On 20th-21st January the Halifax bombers joined the Lancasters in an attempt to swamp Berlin's defences and counter-measures.
- Three spoof raids on Kiel, Hanover, and Dusseldorf were disregarded by the enemy controllers, who again concentrated on infiltrating their fighters into the bomber stream as soon as it crossed the coast.
- Four Australian crews were in combat before reaching Berlin but all escaped undamaged because of well coordinated crew tactics.
- The standard manoeuvre when a fighter was seen approaching, was a diving corkscrew with predetermined direction and rates of turn. This displaced the bomber in three dimensions from the fixed guns of the enemy and also allowed the turret gunners a well-practised deflection shot. Even if the fighter was not hit, it usually sheered away from determined opposition.
- More fighters were waiting over Berlin where, with searchlights illuminating a layer of cloud at 12,000 feet, the bombers could be effectively seen in silhouette.
- There were three more combats with Me-109's and FW-190's which attempted to attack from a blind spot underneath the bombers.





# 21 January 1944

- On 21 January 1944, Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein took off with his 2 crew men on a Zahme Sau (Tame Boar), a combination of ground controlled and airborne radar, night fighter intercept mission flying the Ju 88 R4+XM.
- They attacked 5 Lancasters. Four had been confirmed destroyed and the fifth was burning when their Ju 88 came under attack, presumably from British fighter escorts. In the attack, their left wing caught fire. Sayn-Wittgenstein ordered his crew to jump, and they parachuted to safety from the damaged aircraft.
- The next day, Sayn-Wittgenstein's body was found near the wreckage of the Ju 88. His parachute was unopened and it was deduced that he may have hit his head on the vertical stabilizer of his aircraft when trying to escape.
- At the time of his death, Sayn-Wittgenstein was the highest-scoring night fighter pilot in the Luftwaffe and was still the third highest at the end of the war, with 83 aerial victories to his credit.



# January 44

- After the Luftwaffe became aware of Monica from a crashed bomber, German scientists developed a passive radar receiver, named Flensburg (FuG 227).
- From early 1944, FuG 227 was used by nightfighter crews to home in on Allied bombers using Monica.



See aerial below the tail gunner's turret.

## 29 January 44

- On 29th January as an interim measure the American Eighth Air Force and R.A.F. Bomber Command were instructed to concentrate on key installations in the German fighter air-frame and the ball-bearing industries.

# Jan 44 raids with RAAF Squadrons participating

Take off date	Target	Dispatched	Attacked	FTR	% Attacked	% FTR of Attacked	Damage
1-Jan-44	Berlin	421	386	28	92	7	no effective concentration was possible.
2-Jan-44	Berlin	383	311	27	81	9	There was little confidence in the accuracy of the bombing .
5-Jan-44	Stettin	358	348	15	97	4	Only about 20 per cent of all bombs actually hit the town.
14-Jan-44	Brunswick	498	472	38	95	8	The raid as a whole was a failure
20-Jan-44	Berlin	769	697	35	91	5	The sky markers spread in a line running east to west, and crews of Nos. 460 and 466 claimed that by H2S checks they lay to the east of Berlin. Many fires were seen but there was far too much cloud for any accurate assessment.
21-Jan-44	Berlin	29	29	1	100	3	Only a few isolated fires were seen.
21-Jan-44	Magdeburg	648	585	55	90	9	nearly total failure.
27-Jan-44	Berlin	530	481	33	91	7	The glow of large fires reflected on the clouds the airmen were confident that the attack had been successful.
28-Jan-44	Berlin	680	596	46	88	8	For the first time fires appeared to amalgamate into a mass of flames too great for fire fighters to control.
30-Jan-44	Berlin	540	489	33	91	7	Experienced crews again estimated that most of the bombs fell on Berlin, and enemy broadcasts almost immediately admitted that "extensive areas of Berlin were hit".
Month Totals and Averages		4,856	4,394	311	91	7	

# Flight Sergeant John Lewis TEDGE

Service No: 419236

Born: Kalgoorlie WA, 18 September 1913

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

Unit: No. 5 Elementary Flying Training School, Narromine NSW

Died: Aircraft Accident (No. 5 Elementary Flying Training School Tiger Moth aircraft A17-403), Narromine, 3 February 1944, Aged 30 Years

Buried: Narromine War Cemetery, NSW

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Joseph Angus and Sarah Annie Tedge, of East Brighton, Victoria

Roll of Honour: Melbourne VIC

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

At 2145 hours on 3 February 1944, Tiger Moth A17-403 crashed during a night low flying exercise and Flight Sergeant Tedge was killed. The aircraft was flying low at a height of 50 feet in the low flying area on an authorised flight when he attempted to make a steep climbing turn to the right, but the aircraft stalled in the turn and it dived into the ground.

The crew members of A17-403 were:

Flight Sergeant John Lewis Tedge (419236) (Instructor Pilot)

Leading Aircraftman Cecil Beaufort Webber (439952) (Trainee Dual Pilot) Slightly injured, Discharged from the RAAF: 18 October 1947

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, 166/39/222

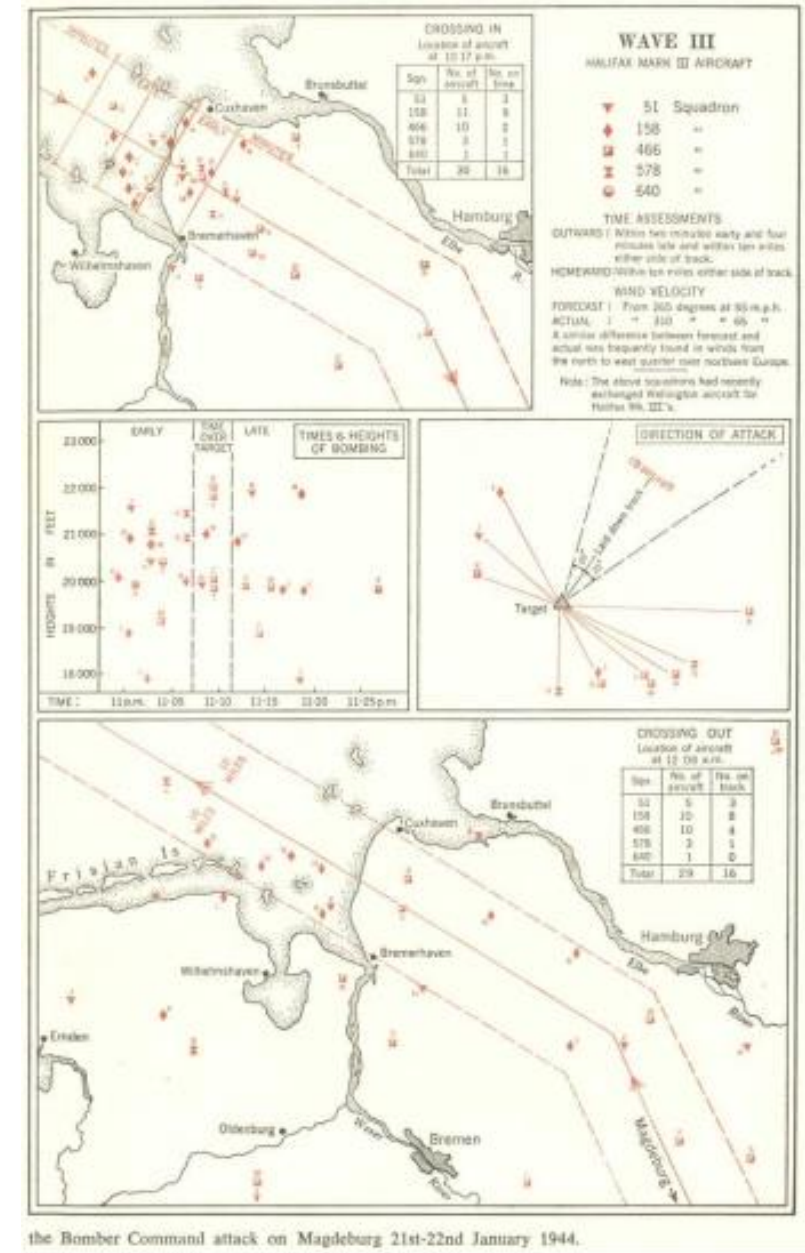


# DH.82A Tiger Moth in RAAF markings



# February 44

- Bomber Command was now employing five separate types of radio counter-measure. All these had some success in individual circumstances but with 6 per cent casualties during January they had obviously not defeated the new enemy route-interception tactics.
- The answer was sought in still greater concentration of the bomber stream, so that German pilots given a course to steer towards each raid would have less opportunity of making contact.
- Pilots were especially enjoined to keep strictly to the correct airspeed as with some aircraft ten minutes ahead of their planned time and others ten minutes behind, the actual length of the bomber stream would be doubled from 60 to 120 miles.
- There were many individualistic Australians who speeded to the front or lagged behind deliberately to avoid risk of collision with nervous crews who corkscrewed continually over enemy territory. Others pressed forward to bomb in order to be away before the target fighters were fully in action. Some indifferent pilots simply failed to regulate their speed correctly.





# February 44

- Jones continued to report IFF activity detected by the Germans for some weeks after the prohibition order on the use of IFF on operations had gone out.
- The Air Staff decided that the strongest representation should be made to Bomber Command and the Commander in Chief was called by the Secretary of State for Air, Archibald Sinclair, to explain what he was doing to ensure compliance.
- Sketch of Sinclair commissioned by the Ministry of Information in the Second World War period.



RAAF FATALITIES IN SECOND WORLD WAR AMONG  
RAAF PERSONNEL SERVING ON ATTACHMENT  
IN ROYAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS AND SUPPORT UNITS

**411775 Flying Officer HALL, Stanley George**

**Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A705, 166/17/480 Commonwealth War Graves records  
W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War, Page 74,  
Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	DV 382
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	KC – J
<b>Unit:</b>	617 Sqn RAF

**Summary:**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1944, Lancaster DV382 took off from RAF Ford at 0830 hours detailed to carry out an attack on the Antheor Viaduct, Sardinia, Italy. Having completed its mission, the aircraft was returning to base after refuelling, when it crashed 10 miles north east of Chichester. Seven on board were killed and Sqn Ldr Suggitt was injured, but died of his injuries on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1944. .

**Crew:**

RCAF Sqn Ldr Suggitt, WR DFC Captain (Pilot)  
RCAF Flt Sgt J Pulford, DFM (Flight Engineer)  
RAAF 41218 PO Gordon, J I DFC (Navigator)  
RCAF FO Davidson, N J (Navigator)  
RAAF 411775 FO Hall, S G (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RAF Flt Sgt J P Riches, (Air Gunner)  
RCAF FO J McB Dempster, DFM (Air Gunner)  
RAF Sqn Ldr Lloyd, T W DSO (Squadron Intelligence Officer)

Sqn Ldr Suggitt is buried in the Chichester Cemetery, UK.

Flt Sgt Pulford is buried in the Hull Northern Cemetery.

PO Gordon, PO Davidson and FO Dempster are buried in the Conningsby Cemetery, UK.  
Conningsby is 7 miles south west of Horncastle.

FO Hall is buried in the Wickham Market Cemetery, UK.

Flt Sgt Riches is buried in the Lingfield (SS Peter and Paul) Churchyard Extension, UK.

Sqn Ldr Lloyd was cremated in the Cheltenham Crematorium, UK At 52 years of age, he was the oldest officer killed in Bomber Command in 1944.

# 15 February 44

- When the February moon period was over, the largest force yet sent against the German capital was routed across the North Sea and down through the Baltic.
- A very meticulous timetable was observed by all aircraft and most Australians spent the time on the long sea courses ensuring that they were correctly positioned.
- Some air opposition was met between the Baltic coast and Berlin, but the stream arrived in good order and completed its task within thirty-eight minutes, a rate better than one aircraft every three seconds.
- One Lancaster fell out of the stream when damaged by two fighters before reaching the target, but its pilot, Warrant Officer Burke, claimed that his gunners shot down one Ju-88 and damaged an Me-110. He successfully jettisoned his bombs near Rostock and returned on three engines.
- Relatively few fighters were over Berlin, due to a successful spoof attack against Frankfurt-on-Oder, and Australian losses were confined to two Halifaxes. The usual thick cloud prevented visual identification or ground-marking technique, but H2S - equipped aircraft checked the position of well-grouped sky markers and bombed with confidence.
- At first bombs fell principally in western suburbs and then spread towards the centre



This map of central Berlin reveals the extent of the destruction (darkened areas) caused by Bomber Command up to February 1944.



# Flight Sergeant Dennis Leslie BAULDERSTONE

Service No: 416112

Born: Unley SA, 21 February 1921

Enlisted in the RAAF: 29 March 1941

Unit: No. 2 Air Observers School, Mount Gambier SA

Died: Aircraft Accident (No. 2 Air Observers School Anson aircraft AW878), Off the Victorian Coast, 15 February 1944, Aged 22 Years

Buried: Unrecovered

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Leslie Moore Baulderstone and Beatrice Baulderstone, of Rosefield, South Australia.

Roll of Honour: Unley South SA

Remembered: Panel 6, Sydney Memorial, Rookwood NSW

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

Remembered: World War II Honour Roll, National War Memorial of SA, North Terrace, Adelaide

On 15 February 1944, Avro Anson AW878 crashed into sea near Lady Julia Percy Island, killing its four crew members.

The crew members of AW878 were:

Flight Sergeant Dennis Leslie Baulderstone (416112) (Observer Instructor)

Leading Aircraftman Norman Thomas Kruck (435368) (Trainee Observer)

Leading Aircraftman Brian Carter Ladyman (436921) (Trainee Observer)

Flight Sergeant James Henry MacLellan (410684) (Pilot)

# Avro Anson



The interior of an Anson C Mark XI, looking forward from the passenger compartment towards the cockpit

# February 1944

- On 16th February 1944 Britain and Canada agreed to a 40 per cent reduction in both schools and trainees to gear output more closely to probable requirements.
- Australia had already made a voluntary reduction of 20 per cent in the intake to initial training schools by January 1944, but this was caused mainly by lack of sufficient serviceable aircraft to continue full flying training, and by the increasing difficulty of securing suitable trainees in view of the army's reluctance to release men already inducted; but this decline did not affect the drafts going to Canada for further training.
- In February 1944 Australia was asked to delay as long as possible the dispatch to the United Kingdom of aircrew graduating in March and April, and, although this was countermanded, it revealed the trend of future needs unless wholly unforeseen emergencies should arise.

# 17 February 44

- On 17th February the new directive was issued not only to the strategic bombers based in the United Kingdom but also to the American Fifteenth Air Force in Italy, stating that the
- "over-all mission remains the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system, the disruption of vital elements of lines of communication and material reduction of German air combat strength by successful prosecution of combined bomber offensive from all convenient bases".
- Under this general mission the primary objective was again German air-frame and ball-bearing production, with attacks against Berlin, German robot-weapon installations and targets in south and south-east Europe only when weather conditions were unsuitable to prosecute the main aim.
- This concept called for "overall reduction of German air combat strength in its factories, on the ground and in the air through materially supporting attacks by both strategic air forces, pursued with relentless determination against the same target areas or systems so far as tactical conditions allow, in order to create the air situation most propitious for OVERLORD."

# 19 February 44

- On 19th February daylight photo reconnaissance of Berlin was at last possible.
- F-O Holland of 540 Squadron R.A.F. made four deliberate runs over Berlin through heavy flak barrages to secure perfect photographs.
- These revealed that fresh damage in the ten major raids since the last assessment was spread over a very large area but that nowhere had large fires raged unchecked as had happened at Hamburg.
- Previous devastation had formed natural firebreaks in many districts, and the total of added destruction was only some 400 acres of built-up property.
- This included sixteen factories listed as extremely important targets such as the Siemens and Halske electrical works which suffered particularly heavy damage.
- 410234 K. R. Holland DFC, RAAF, 540 Squadron RAF, born Wentworth, NSW. FO Holland, a surveyor and civil engineer before enlisting in Melbourne on 5 December 1941, embarked for training in Canada under the EATS on 23 June 1942, arriving in the UK on 27 March 1943.
- After service with 543 Squadron RAF, a Spitfire photo reconnaissance unit, he converted to Mosquitoes and joined No. 540 Squadron RAF, another photo reconnaissance unit, on 28 October 1943.
- He was lost on operations when his aircraft crashed near Rostock, Germany, on 27 October 1944, while heading for Berlin to carry out further photographic reconnaissance.

Jerry McBrien 2023



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

SUK11895

Portrait of 410234 Flying Officer  
(FO) Keith Ross Holland DFC, RAAF,  
540 Squadron RAF,

# 19/20 February 44

- The third and largest raid on Leipzig on 19th-20th February was an anticlimax.
- The German fighters ignored a large-scale demonstration by mine-laying aircraft near Kiel and while investigating intruder activity over Dutch airfields, by an unlucky chance met the main bomber stream at the beginning of its journey.
- Night fighters persistently harassed the bomber stream.
- Incorrect wind forecasts upset the entire navigation plan.
- Most bombers arrived early at the scheduled turning points and milled round with greatly-increased risks from collisions as well as offering ideal targets for fighters.
- Twenty bombers were seen to go down in flames and another four as a result of collisions before the target was reached.
- The main stream was again early over Leipzig and crews of No. 460 who were in the first wave found Lancasters orbiting and bombing on all headings, even before the appointed time.
- When the Pathfinders laid their markers the attack settled down and most of the Australians were confident that a satisfactory concentration was achieved.
- 823 dispatched, 730 attacked, 78 failed to return.





## **`420761 Flight Sergeant LISTER, Herbert Sutton**

### **Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A9301 barcode 5329441 Micro Film No 463  
Commonwealth War Graves records W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command Losses  
of the Second World War, Page 90, Volume 1944..

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Halifax
<b>Serial number:</b>	JD 271
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	NA – M
<b>Unit:</b>	428 Sqn Royal Canadian Air Force

### **Summary:**

On the night of 19/20<sup>th</sup> February 1944, Halifax JD271 took off from Middleton St George at 2356 hours, detailed to bomb Leipzig, Germany. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base.

### **Crew:**

RCAF FO Woolverton, A W Captain (Pilot)  
RAF Sgt A W Gotham, (Flight Engineer)  
RAAF 420761 Flt Sgt H S Lister, (Navigator)  
RCAF FO Smith, G A (Bomb Aimer)  
RAF Sgt C W Sherratt, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RCAF Sgt E C Webb, (Air Gunner)  
RCAF Sgt N M Stewart, (Air Gunner)

The aircraft crashed in the Ljsselmeer off Andijk, Netherlands, and all the crew were killed.

FO Woolverton body came ashore, and he is buried in the Enkhuizen General Cemetery, Netherlands.

Flt Sgt Lister's body was taken from the water in 1984 and he is buried in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, Netherlands. Groesbeek is 10kms south east of the town of Nijmegen and close to the German frontier.

Flt Sgt Stewart's body was found near Andijk on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1944 and he is buried in the Andijk Easter General Cemetery, Netherlands.

All the other crew members have no known grave, and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, UK.

# 20 Feb

- At long last, on 19 February 1944, the weather over the German fighter factories began to open up, and during the six succeeding days the concerted bombing attack which had been planned by the Americans since November 1943 became a reality.
- On 20 Feb over 1,000 bombers were dispatched from the UK escorted by 17 groups of fighters to attack 12 aircraft plants most in the Brunswick Leipzig area. The result of this and the preceding Bomber Command attack was extensive damage in five of the ten largest war factories, including the Erla aircraft works, the A.T.A.G. assembly plant and an aircraft-engine works.
- Only 21 bombers failed to return.
- The effort on 21<sup>st</sup> was not much less but cloud over the main factory targets meant radar bombing and less accuracy.
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> the UK force was reduced by weather but the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force from Italy bombed Regensburg with 118 bombers. The Germans attacked earlier when fighter escort was thinner. The 8<sup>th</sup> lost 41 out of 430.



# 24 February

- On 23<sup>rd</sup> no operations were launched from UK due to forecast cloud. The 15<sup>th</sup> sent 102 to the Steyr ball bearing plant in Austria.
- On the 24<sup>th</sup> it was decided to strike hard at Schweinfurt's antifriction-bearing plants, most important of their sort in the Axis countries. In addition to the five combat wings of B-17's dispatched to Schweinfurt, three combat wings of B-24's were sent to Gotha to bomb the important Gothaer Waggonfabrik A.G., largest producer of twin-engine Me-210's, and a third force, amounting to five combat wings, was to bomb aircraft component factories and assembly plants in northeastern Germany and Poland at Tutow, Kreising, and Posen, all producing FW-190's.
- Three of the four bearing plants sustained major damage in the daylight raid with direct hits on machine shops, storage buildings, and power stations.

# 24/5 February 44

- The third target for Bomber Command in the week expressly devoted to crippling the German Air Force was Schweinfurt, the chief enemy centre for production of ball bearings.
- A large force of American heavy bombers attacked on 24th February and that same night Bomber Command went out in strength.
- To avoid the increasing difficulties shown by over concentration of the bomber stream a new device of splitting the force in two and attacking at an interval of two hours was attempted.
- More than 300 aircraft created diversions in various areas with the result that heavy opposition was only encountered along the last leg into the target.
- Here the Australians were unpleasantly surprised by the strength and vigour of the ground defences, and among several aircraft heavily damaged was a Lancaster of No. 467 carrying members of the R.A.F. Film Unit sent to make a complete record of the second phase of the raid.
- Australians in both waves submitted extremely optimistic reports and considered the marking ideal, but in fact the whole raid was misplaced and centred on two villages up to five miles south of Schweinfurt.





RAAF FATALITIES IN SECOND WORLD WAR AMONG  
RAAF PERSONNEL SERVING ON ATTACHMENT  
IN ROYAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS AND SUPPORT UNITS

**416501 Flying Officer HUTCHINSON, Jack Pierce DFC**

**Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A705, 166/18/173 Commonwealth War Graves records  
W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War, Page 101,  
Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	LL 797
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	UM – B2
<b>Unit:</b>	626 Sqn RAF

**Summary:**

On the night of 24/25<sup>th</sup> February 1944, Lancaster LL797 took off from RAF Wickenby, at 1810 hours, detailed to bomb Schweinfurt, Germany. This mission was the crew's final sortie of their operational tour. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base.

**Crew:**

RAAF 416501 FO Hutchinson, J P DFC Captain (Pilot)  
RAF Sgt B R Bowditch, (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot))  
RAF Sgt A Hodgson, (Flight Engineer)  
RCAF PO Goodkey, L E (Navigator)  
RAF FO Young, P H W (Air Bomber)  
RAF Sgt R Edgeworth, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RCAF WO2 H F Binder, (Mid Upper Gunner)  
RAF Flt Sgt K J Macey, (Rear Gunner)

The aircraft crashed at Marsal (Moselle), 10kms south east of Chateau-Salins, France. All the crew were killed and they are buried in the Marsal (Moselle) Churchyard, France. Marsal is a village and commune 50kms south east of Metz. Those killed are the only WW2 Commonwealth airmen buried in the Churchyard.

**Citation :**

The Citation for the DFC awarded to the then PO Hutchinson is as follows :  
" PO Hutchinson has attacked such important targets as Berlin, Milan, Peenemunde and Munich. While on the way to attack Munich, an engine caught fire and the aircraft had to be brought down onto the sea. As a result he and his crew had to spend some eighteen hours in the dinghy. On another mission, damage was sustained over Frankfurt and only by splendid airmanship did this officer succeed in flying the aircraft back to base. This officer's determination, skill and endurance have set a fine example to his crew,"  
London gazette 15/2/1944, Page 794).

# 25 February

- The weather on 25 February permitted the daylight bombing forces to choose almost any targets they wished in German territory. The decision was made in USSTAF headquarters to launch another full-scale coordinated attack by both strategic air forces against the remaining high-priority objectives in southern Germany. The Fifteenth was directed to attack the Messerschmitt component plant at Regensburg-Prüfening. The Eighth was given both Messerschmitt factories at Regensburg, the Messerschmitt parent plant at Augsburg, the antifriction-bearing plant of V.K.F. at Stuttgart, and the factory of Bachmann-Von Blumenthal at Fürth, manufacturing components and assembling Me-110's.
- The German fighters concentrated relatively larger forces on the Fifteenth than on the Eighth, with the result that the Foggia-based bombers lost 33 of their number on the Regensburg mission, or nearly one-fifth of the attacking force. The fighting was intense, and the bomber crews claimed large numbers of the enemy shot down. The Eighth, on the other hand, lost only 31 of its total force of 738 credited with sorties.
- All forces were able to bomb their primary targets on the 25th with generally good accuracy. Results were especially important at Regensburg and Augsburg, although a great deal of destruction was done also to plant and finished aircraft at Fürth.
- After 25 February the weather turned bad and ended the Big Week.



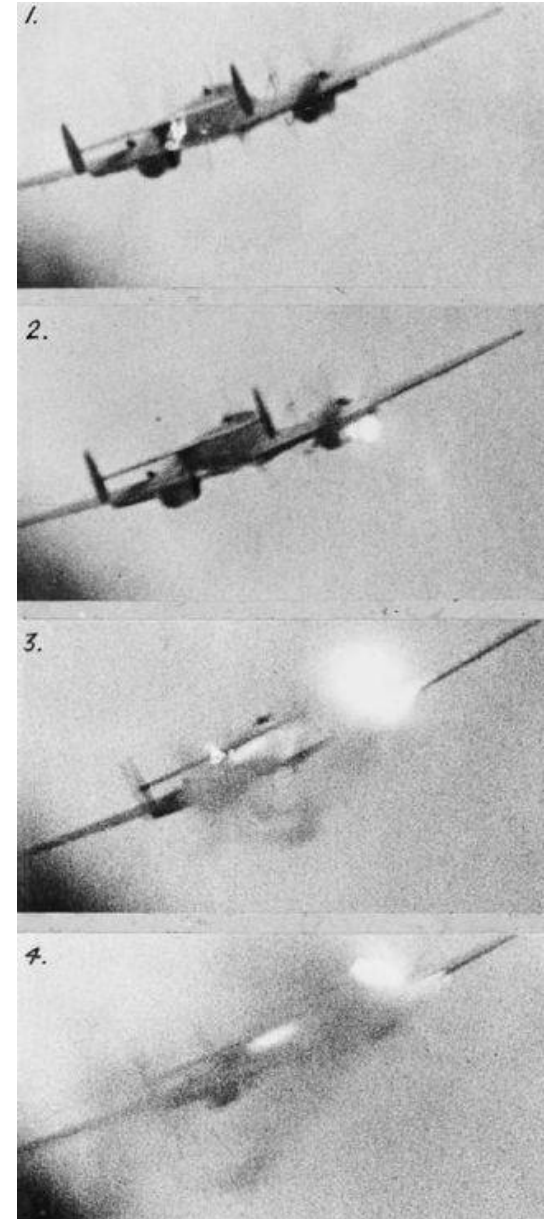
# 25/6 February 44

- Bomber Command achieved a very notable success at Augsburg on 25th-26th February.
- Again this raid followed immediately upon a heavy American daylight attack, and as at Schweinfurt the force was split into two halves.
- The R.A.A.F. Lancasters were in the first wave which flew southwards across France before turning east.
- Only a few fighters were encountered although many were airborne searching for the bomber stream.
- In cloudless weather the Australians were able to identify the river and other landmarks in relation to the Pathfinder flares and carefully dropped their incendiaries into the heart of the city.
- The second force including No. 466 met very few fighters which were presumably back at their bases refuelling.
- From Saarbrücken the Halifaxes were guided by the tremendous fires in Augsburg and simply flew on to drop their loads into the heart of the conflagration and to secure excellent night photographs.
- Over 60 per cent of Augsburg was devastated in this one raid and nearly all the M.A.N. factory complex (the largest single producer of marine diesel engines) was damaged. Almost as badly affected was the works of Martin Schmittner, manufacturers of aircraft components.
- 594 dispatched, 528 attacked, 21 failed to return.



# 26 February 1944

- On 19/20 February 1944, Heinz Vinke claimed five aerial victories, four Lancasters and one Halifax bomber earning him the title of "ace-in-a-day".
- On 26 February 1944 Vinke was shot down and killed while flying a Messerschmitt Bf 110 G-4 of 11./NJG 1 on a search and rescue mission over the English Channel.
- The victors were two Hawker Typhoons of No. 198 Squadron RAF, flown by F/L. (later Colonel) Raymond Lallamont DFC and F/O. George Hardy.
- Vinke's crew were also killed. Their bodies were never recovered.
- This gun sequence, taken from F/O Hardy's aircraft, shows Vinke's Messerschmitt's starboard engine exploding, shortly before it dived to its destruction in the English Channel.
- Heinz Vinke was credited with 54 aerial victories claimed in approximately 150 combat missions making him the eighteenth most successful night fighter pilot in history.



# Feb 44 raids with RAAF Squadrons participating

Take off date	Target	Dispatched	Attacked	FTR	% Attacked	% FTR of Attacked	Damage
15-Feb-44	Berlin	891	806	43	90	5	The usual thick cloud prevented visual identification or ground-marking technique, but H2S - equipped aircraft checked the position of well-grouped sky markers.' At first bombs fell principally in western suburbs and then spread towards the centre.
19-Feb-44	Leipzig	823	730	78	89	11	Bomber stream early ahead of Pathfinders., lots of nightfighters. Extensive damage in five of the ten largest war factories, including the Erla aircraft works, the A.T.A.G. assembly plant and an aircraft-engine works. Was caused by this raid and by 184 fortresses of the 8th airforce on the 20th.
20-Feb-44	Stuttgart	598	552	9	92	2	Tis were misplaced to the north of the city. Some valuable, if scattered, damage was done throughout the city
24-Feb-44	Schweinfurt	734	662	33	90	5	the whole raid was misplaced and centred on two villages up to five miles south of Schweinfurt.
25-Feb-44	Augsburg	594	528	21	89	4	Over 60 per cent of Augsburg was devastated
Month Totals and Averages		3,640	3,278	184	90	5	

RAAF FATALITIES IN SECOND WORLD WAR AMONG  
RAAF PERSONNEL SERVING ON ATTACHMENT  
IN ROYAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS AND SUPPORT UNITS

**130506 Leading Aircraftsman HOPE, Colin Strvan**

**Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A705, 166/18/306 Commonwealth War Graves records

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	
<b>Serial number:</b>	
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	
<b>Unit:</b>	548 Sqn RAF

**Summary:**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1944, LAC Hope was killed in a ground accident at Strathpine, Queensland, at approx 1720 hours. He was accidentally shot while practising unarmed combat with LAC McKerle an RAF member of the Squadron. He is buried in the Brisbane (Lutwyche) Cemetery, Australia.

# 12 March 1944

- Oberleutnant zur Lippe-Weißenfeld (14 July 1918 – 12 March 1944) was a Luftwaffe night fighter ace credited with 51 aerial victories, all of them claimed at night.
- He and his crew were killed in a flight accident on 12 March 1944.





#### 420740 Pilot Officer GILES, Edgar Albert James

**Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A705, 166/15/209 Micro Film No 463.

Commonwealth War Graves records W R Chorley RAF Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War, Page 135, Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Halifax
<b>Serial number:</b>	LW 688
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	AL – J
<b>Unit:</b>	429 Sqn Royal Canadian Air Force

**Summary:**

On the night of 24/25<sup>th</sup> March 1944, Halifax LW688 took off from RAF Leeming at 1903 hours, detailed to bomb Berlin, Germany. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base.

**Crew:**

EAAF 4220740 PO Giles, E A J Captain (Pilot)  
RAF Sgt R M Byrne, (Flight Engineer)  
RAF Flt Sgt H Nicholls, (Navigator)  
RAF FO Rousseau, F C (Air Bomber)  
RAF Flt Sgt W T G Peckham, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RCAF PO Hampton, W G (Mid Upper Gunner)  
RCAF Flt Sgt A W Larochelle, (Rear Gunner)

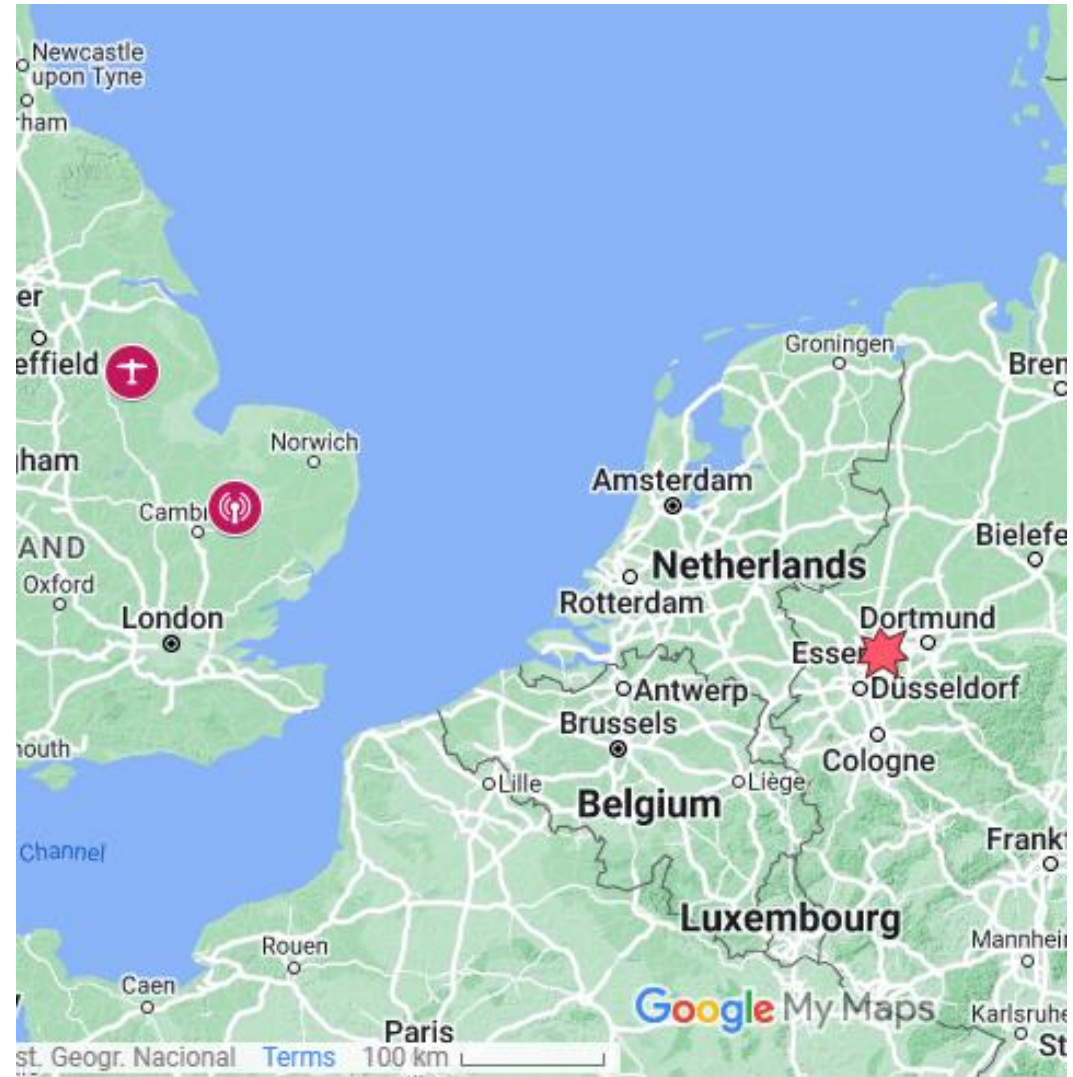
The aircraft crashed at 2130 hours between Sieseby and Thumbby, two small villages some 8kms SSE of Kappeln. Five of the crew were killed and Flt Sgt's Nicholls and Larochelle were POW's.

Those who lost their lives are buried in the Kiel War cemetery, Germany. Kiel lies 83kms north of Hamburg.

In a POW report Flt Sgt Larochelle stated "I last saw Giles .prior to my own departure from the aircraft. I had received no information from the Captain."

# 26/27 March 44

- On 26th-27th March Bomber Command went back in force to Essen for the first time in eight months.
- The notable Ruhr gun defences were strangely silent. Searchlights were still there in abundance but were blanketed by cloud, while enemy fighters had been drawn off by an attack an hour earlier on Courtrai and appeared over Essen only when the bombers were withdrawing.
- Ground markers laid by means of Oboe could be seen through the clouds while sky markers purposely offset towards the east were provided both as a navigation aid to the bombers and as a lure for German gun fire.
- Most crews considered this an astonishingly easy trip and unhurriedly dropped their bombs in the centre of Essen.
- Extensive repairs had been made to Krupps but at least twenty-four large buildings in the works received new or additional damage.
- 705 dispatched, 677 attacked, 9 failed to return.



# 30/1 March 44

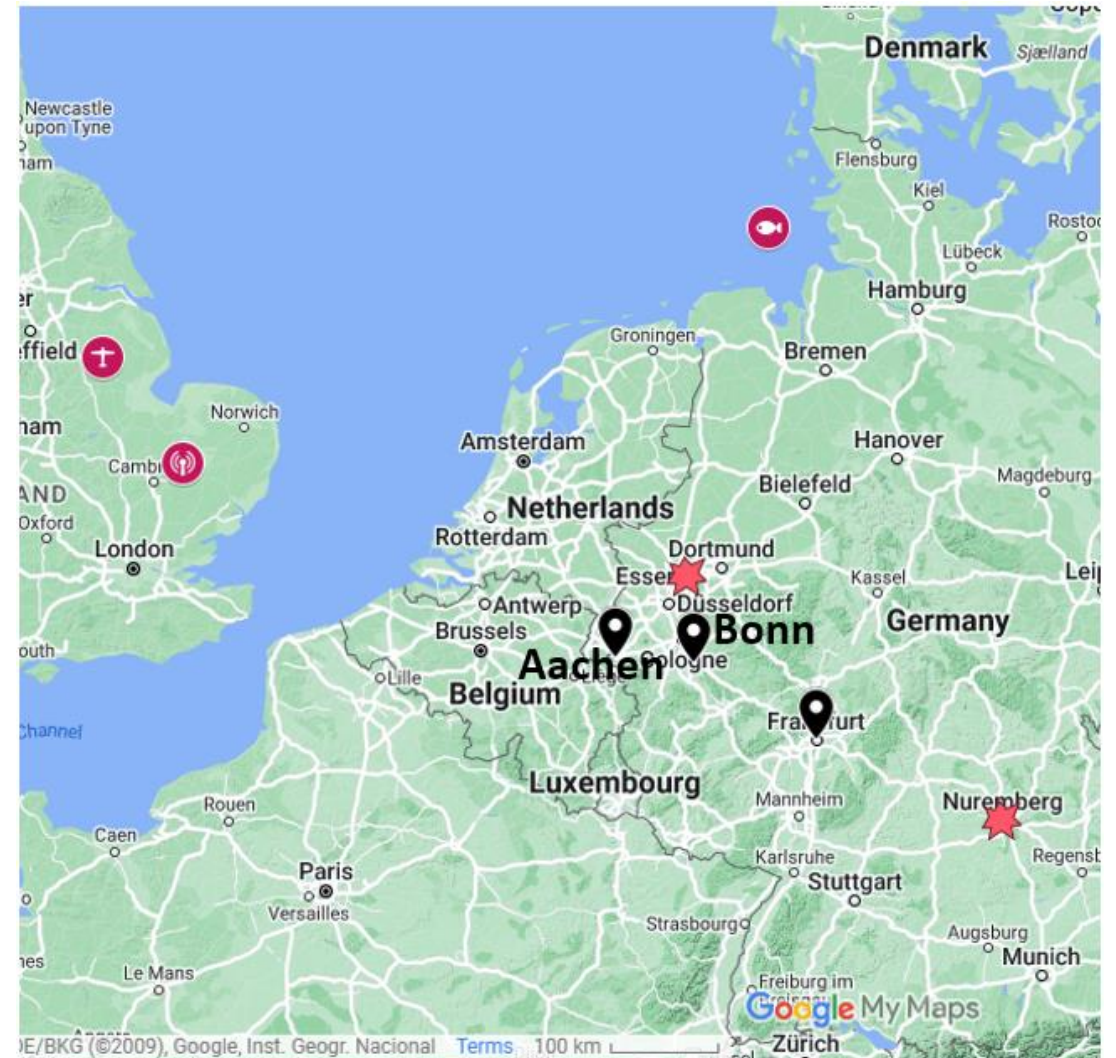
- On 30th-31st March Bomber Command went to Nuremberg.
- Fifty Halifaxes sent mine-laying in Heligoland Bight were ignored by the German controllers who concentrated night fighters at Bonn and Frankfurt-on-Main where they easily intercepted the bomber stream.
- Unforecast winds again led to large errors in navigation so that bombers soon spread over a broad belt to the north of the true track.
- The high cloud expected along the route dispersed altogether over Belgium and left the aircraft exposed in the light of a half-moon.
- A running battle was fought from Aachen eastwards and then southwards, with more and more fighters joining as the enemy correctly divined the probable target.
- At least twenty Australian aircraft were intercepted, but although most of them escaped by skilful flying or spirited return fire, Australian losses included the very experienced Utz, a flight commander of No. 460, who was killed.
- The Halifaxes suffered most heavily, losing thirty out of the total of ninety three dispatched.
- Thirty burning aircraft were counted between Aachen and Nuremberg by Flight Lieutenant Smith of No. 467.
- F-Lt M. F. Smith, DFC, 414734 ; 467 Sqn . Farmer; of Helidon, Q1d ; b. Flagstone Creek, via Allora, Qld, 16 Oct 1920. Killed in aircraft accident 17 Jun 1944.





# 30/1 March 44

- The Pathfinders were forty-seven minutes late and the town itself was covered in cloud.
- Australians found hundreds of aircraft milling round after the planned time to bomb still anxiously seeking the Pathfinders' flares.
- Several collisions were narrowly averted and soon some aircraft began to bomb independently.
- Impatient crews were dropping their bombs everywhere, and those lacking H2S and thus relying on the incorrect forecast winds bombed places as far distant as Schweinfurt, twenty-five miles away, having drifted away in the belief that they were circling Nuremberg.
- Even when the indicators were dropped they could not be seen through the clouds, and sky markers were as far as ten miles apart so that, in desperation, even the most patient crews were at last forced to bomb on the marker they considered most reliable.
- 187 failed to attack at all.
- The attack was inevitably widely scattered with no appreciable concentration of damage.
- Out of 795 dispatched ninety-five aircraft failed to return, another eleven were damaged beyond repair while the target at Nuremberg was only slightly damaged.



**Date of Crash :** 31 March 1944.

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427) (1/432) NAA : A705, 166/37/227.

W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War : Page 156, Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	LM 376
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO – O
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster LM376 took off from RAF Waddington at 2148 hours on the night of 30/31<sup>st</sup> March 1944 to bomb Nurnberg, Germany. Bomb load 1 x 4000lb bomb, 84 x 30lb, 900 x 4lb bombs. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base. Seventeen aircraft from the Squadron took part in the raid and two of these including LM376 failed to return.

**Crew:**

RAAF 408881 Flt Lt Simpson, A B Captain (Pilot)  
 RAAF 401842 PO Watts, R C (Navigator)  
 RAAF 408375 Flt Sgt K W Manson, (Bomb Aimer)  
 RAAF 414801 PO Johnson, G G (Wireless Operator Air Gunner)  
 RAF Sgt C P Curl, (Flight Engineer)  
 RAAF 426306 Flt Sgt C A Campbell, (Air Gunner)  
 RAF PO Weeden, R A (Air Gunner)

Post war it was established that the aircraft when outbound to the target area was shot down by an ME110 at Creppe (Belgium), 4kms SSW of Spa. Flt Sgt Manson and PO Watts became POW's, and the other five members of the crew evaded capture and were returned safe to the UK.

In a statement Flt Lt Simpson reported : "The aircraft was attacked by a night fighter south of Aachen when approaching target at 20,000 feet. The aircraft suffered extensive damage and was set on fire. I attempted to extinguish the flames but was unsuccessful. Aircraft was still under control. I instructed crew to abandon and all crew acknowledged. I waited until all the crew had left and then abandoned at 12,000 feet."



# 31st March 1944

- On 31st March 1944 there were in all personnel depots in the UK 10,500 aircrew waiting to enter advanced flying units. More than one fifth of this number were Australians.

# March 44 raids with RAAF Squadrons participating

Take off date	Target	Dispatched	Attacked	FTR	% Attacked	% FTR of Attacked	Damage
1-Mar-44	Stuttgart	557	503	4	90	1	considerable damage caused
15-Mar-44	Stuttgart	863	813	36	94	4	almost a complete failure, because of incorrectly forecast winds, many attacks by fighters, Pathfinder markers in clusters miles apart and dummy enemy markers.
18-Mar-44	Frankfurt a/m	846	769	22	91	3	the largest concentration of bombs ultimately occurred in the river-dock areas.
22-Mar-44	Frankfurt a/m	816	774	40	95	5	Reconnaissance later showed that, as a result of these two terrific blows, the centre of Frankfurt-on-Main had been almost blotted out.
24-Mar-44	Berlin	810	726	72	90	10	Precise assessment of this raid was impossible
26-Mar-44	Essen	705	677	9	96	1	twenty-four large buildings in the Krups works received new or additional damage.
30-Mar-44	Nuremberg	795	608	95	76	16	The attack was widely scattered with no appreciable concentration of damage.
Month Totals and Averages		5,392	4,870	278	90	6	

# End of March 1944

- It was intended "to force the enemy off the railways, initially within an area of 150 miles from the battle front".
- A proposal to accomplish this by mass attacks immediately before the landings was considered but rejected, as the enemy had demonstrated that railway tracks, like airfield runways, could be quickly repaired, and such a plan depended unduly on the vagaries of weather.
- A longer term plan was adopted to attack a large number of railway repair and maintenance centres and thus progressively to reduce "the movement potential and the motive power of the railway system".
- The plan allocated 39 targets to R.A.F. Bomber Command, 23 to the American Eighth Air Force and 18 to the light bombers of A.E.A.F.
- A category system similar to that for airfield attacks was adopted, so that after each raid it could be assessed how many "live" targets remained.
- Harris fought tenaciously against any diversion of Bomber Command from strategic attack against German industry, denied emphatically the possibility of daylight operations or the ability to hit tactical targets accurately by night, and pointed out the dangers of allowing the enemy to transfer air units to France.
- The American Eighth Air Force also had a plan to defeat Germany by systematic attack on her oil resources, and wished to prosecute this, while at the same time causing large air battles which would aid in the attrition of the Luftwaffe fighter resources.
- Late in March 1944, however, Eisenhower ruled that the rail interdiction campaign must proceed in the absence of a better plan to weaken the enemy materially before June.

# End of March 1944

- These targets in northern France allowed Oboe to again demonstrate its value in the precision delivery of markers or bombs, regardless of weather or the visibility of the target.
- Neither H2S nor Gee-H could provide the accuracy of Oboe.
- By guidance direction of individual aircraft, Oboe was used both to guide marker aircraft for the Main Force and for bombing aircraft making precision bombings of high value targets.
- The master of ceremonies technique, although it sometimes increased the danger to crews orbiting the target, reduced to a minimum wild bombing and thus prevented unnecessary casualties among French civilians.
- Transport experts and operational research sections advised that for optimum damage to rail centres, a maximum concentration of 500-lb bombs should be dropped around the main aiming point, sufficient to achieve a stated overall density of strikes.
- This involved a reduction of the normal Bomber Command force to approximately 100 aircraft, and radically changed the bomb-load.



The left side of this image shows an Oboe navigation console. The two CRTs, some of the largest built during that era, were used for gross and fine distance measurement.

# March and April 44

- In March and April 100 Group got two more Electronic Counter Measures Squadrons.
- No. 515 with Mosquitos and 214 with Fortresses.



RAF Fortress III HB796 served with No. 214 Squadron RAF of No. 100 Bomber Group from November 1944. Equipment Airborne Cigar radio-jamming equipment (large airials above the fuselage), and an Airborne Grocer aircraft radar jamming installation, the aerials of which can be seen on either side of the tail turret. HB796 was lost on 9 February 1945.



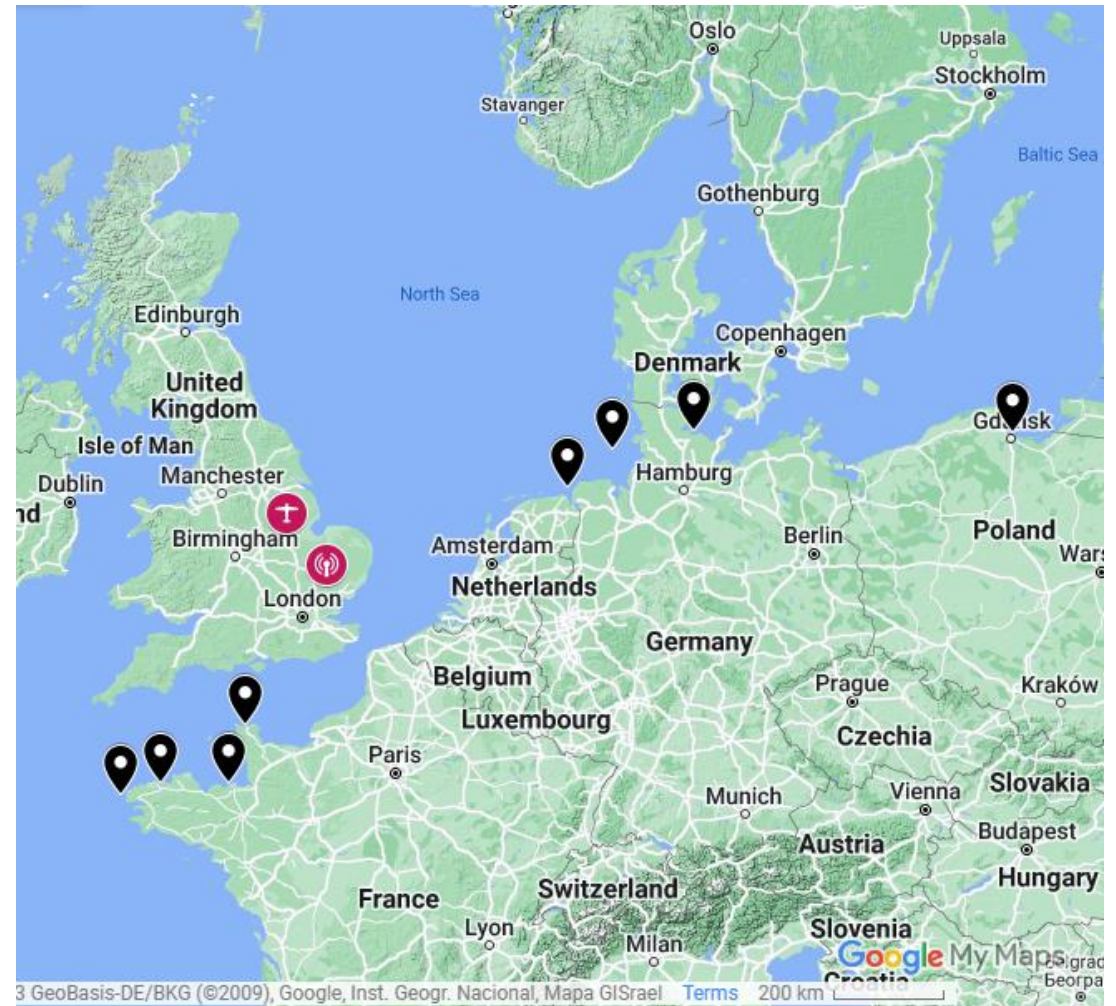
# 1 April 1944

Aircraft RAAF Squadrons		1st April 1944		
Squadron	RAAF	Others	%	
10 (C)	177	—	100	
451 (F)	—	—	—	
453 (F)	23	—	100	
455 (C)	31	39	44·3	
456 (NF)	34	14	70·8	
460 (B)	129	98	56·8	
461 (C)	131	42	75·7	
462 (B)	—	—	—	
463 (B)	96	70	57·8	
464 (Second TAF)	14	39	26·4	
466 (B)	131	74	63·9	
467 (B)	85	88	49·1	
	851	464	64·7	

RAAF Aircraft in RAF Squadrons	1st April 1944	
	Pilots	Other Aircraft
Bomber Command	183	467
Coastal Command	80	422
Second T.A.F.	84	23
Fighter Command	94	16
No. 38 Group	34	83
	475	1,011

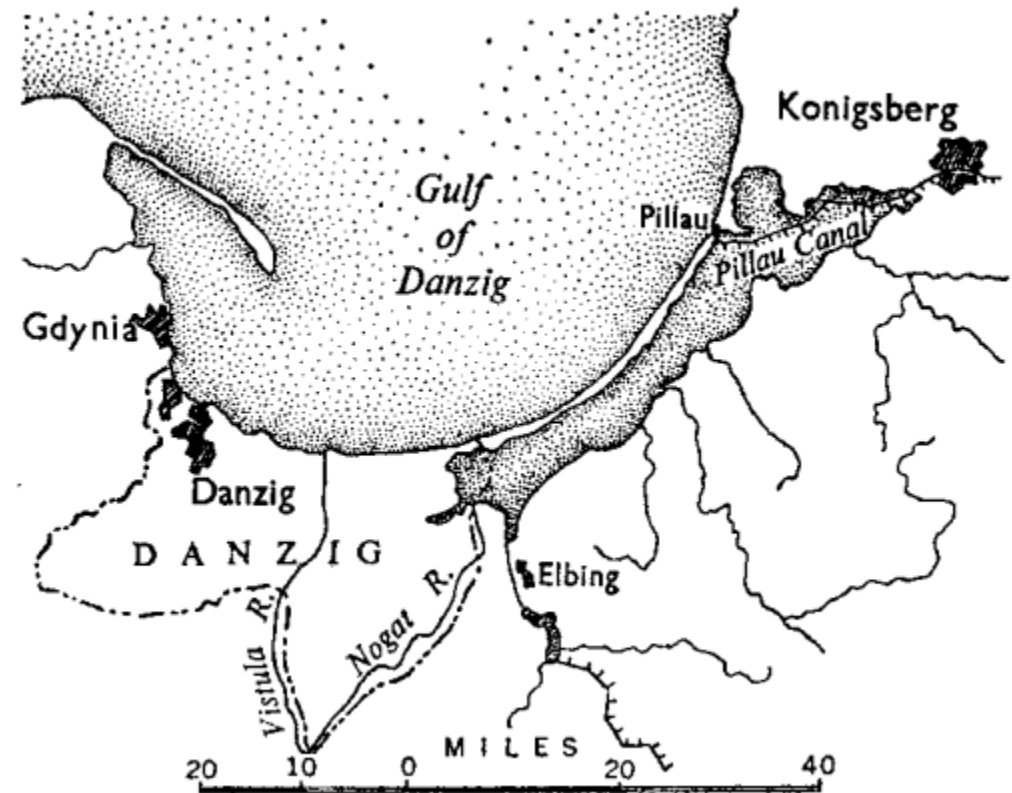
# April, May and June 1944

- Bomber Command also entered into sea preparations by a greatly increased program of mining during the second quarter of 1944.
- Strategically the aims were to disrupt U-boat training in the Baltic; to prevent or delay the passage of U-boats to operational areas, and to dislocate seaborne traffic and especially military supplies for Norway.
- Tactically the intention was to sow minefields which would guard the invasion area against enemy light warships and U-boats.
- The 7,161 mines laid by Bomber Command in April, May and June 1944 were distributed not only in the routine Baltic and Biscay areas, but in the channels between Ushant and Brest, and the approaches to Morlaix, St Malo and Cherbourg in the west, and the Frisian coast, the Heligoland Bight, Danzig and Kiel to the east of the intended invasion area.
- The main weight of this offensive was carried by Stirlings and Halifaxes of Nos. 3, 4 and 6 Groups.



# 9/10 April 44

- on 9th-10th April 11 Lancasters of No. 460 were in a special force which laid 450 mines in the Gulf of Danzig.
- For this very distant target, involving a round trip of nine hours, each Lancaster carried five mines, which for the first time were laid from high level.
- Enemy opposition was very strong and three R.A.A.F. aircraft were shot down and three others damaged, but the military result was significant as Danzig Bay was closed to traffic for 15 days.
- Other sorties were made by No. 460 on 18th-19th April to the Pomeranian Bay and on 12th-13th May to the Heligoland Bight, each time without loss.



# 10 April 44

- Including those still under construction there were 49 known gun batteries capable of firing across the approaches to the chosen assault area, and it was imperative to reduce to a minimum the number which would have to be engaged by warships escorting the invasion fleets.
- Again to avoid showing particular interest in any one area, diversionary attacks twice as numerous as the real ones were made in other areas.
- The campaign began on 10th April. The effort expended by D Day was:

## (a) Inside assault area

A.E.A.F.	1,755	sorties	2,886·5	tons of bombs <sup>a</sup>
Eighth U.S.A.A.F.	184	„	579	„ „ „
R.A.F. Bomber Command	556	„	2,438·5	„ „ „

## (b) Other areas

A.E.A.F.	3,244	„	5,846	„ „ „
Eighth U.S.A.A.F.	1,527	„	4,559	„ „ „
R.A.F. Bomber Command	1,499	„	6,785	„ „ „

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8,765	„	23,094	„ „ „
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# 14 April 1944

- 413707 Leading Aircraftman Robert (Bob) Yarra at "Wings" graduation parade, Empire Air Training Scheme.
- Bob Yarra was killed whilst on operations on 14 April 1944 when his aircraft was shot down whilst attacking the flying bomb base near Abbeville, France.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00943.003



# 14 April 1944

- On 14th April 1944 control of the Strategic Air Forces was vested in the Supreme Commander and the preparatory operations vital to the success of the invasion were given absolute precedence.
- Photo: Lieutenant General Frederick Morgan (Deputy Chief of Staff), Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith (Chief of Staff), Captain Harry Butcher, General Dwight D. Eisenhower (Supreme Commander), Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder (Deputy Supreme Commander).



# 14 April 1944

- The primary responsibility for air operations in support of the invasion lay with Leigh-Mallory (photo) (AOCinC Allied Expeditionary Air Forces), who coordinated his requirements for forces not under his direct control through the Deputy Supreme Commander, Air Chief Marshal Tedder.
- Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, KCB, DSO & Bar (11 July 1892 – 14 November 1944) AOC No. 12 (Fighter) Group 1940, No. 11 (Fighter) Group 1941. In 1942 he became C-in-C of Fighter Command before being selected in 1943 to be the C-in-C of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force. In November 1944, en route to Ceylon to take up the post of Air Commander-in-Chief South East Asia Command, his aircraft crashed in the French Alps and Leigh-Mallory, his wife and eight others were killed.



# 14 April 1944

- Early in April 1944 the "Overall Air Plan" specified:
- (a) Attacks against the Luftwaffe both in its production centres and on its bases within operational distance of the assault area;
- (b) dislocation of supply by attacks on rail centres, locomotives and on road and railway bridges;
- (c) neutralisation of coastal defences;
- (d) disruption of enemy W-T and radar facilities;
- (e) attacks on enemy flying-bomb and rocket sites;
- (f) attacks on military depots, dumps and assembly and camp areas;
- (g) harassing of coastwise shipping and sea-mining;
- (h) very complete and continuous photographic and tactical reconnaissance of enemy coast and rear areas;
- (i) incidental tasks including the supply of arms, munitions, radio equipment and leaders for para-military organisations in France and other German - controlled countries.

# 14 April 1944

- The Plan" gave the part to be played by each Service in the destruction or neutralisation of enemy coast defences.
- This plan raised spirited opposition from Bomber Command which contended that the use of heavy bombers by night against coastal batteries would be "extremely unreliable and almost wholly futile".
- Nevertheless Bomber Command was allotted a considerable share in the program, being directed chiefly against batteries still under construction.



Binbrook, United Kingdom, April 1944: Mr John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, getting out of the veteran Lancaster "G" for George, during his visit to 460 Squadron RAAF.



# 19 April 1944

- At the request of the British War Cabinet, on April 19, 1944, General Eisenhower (photo) directed Crossbow attacks on German V weapon sites to have absolute priority over all other air operations.





# 27 April 1944

- Somers, Vic. 1944-04-27. Empire Air Training Scheme Air Crew trainees marching to their classes after the morning parade at an RAAF Station.

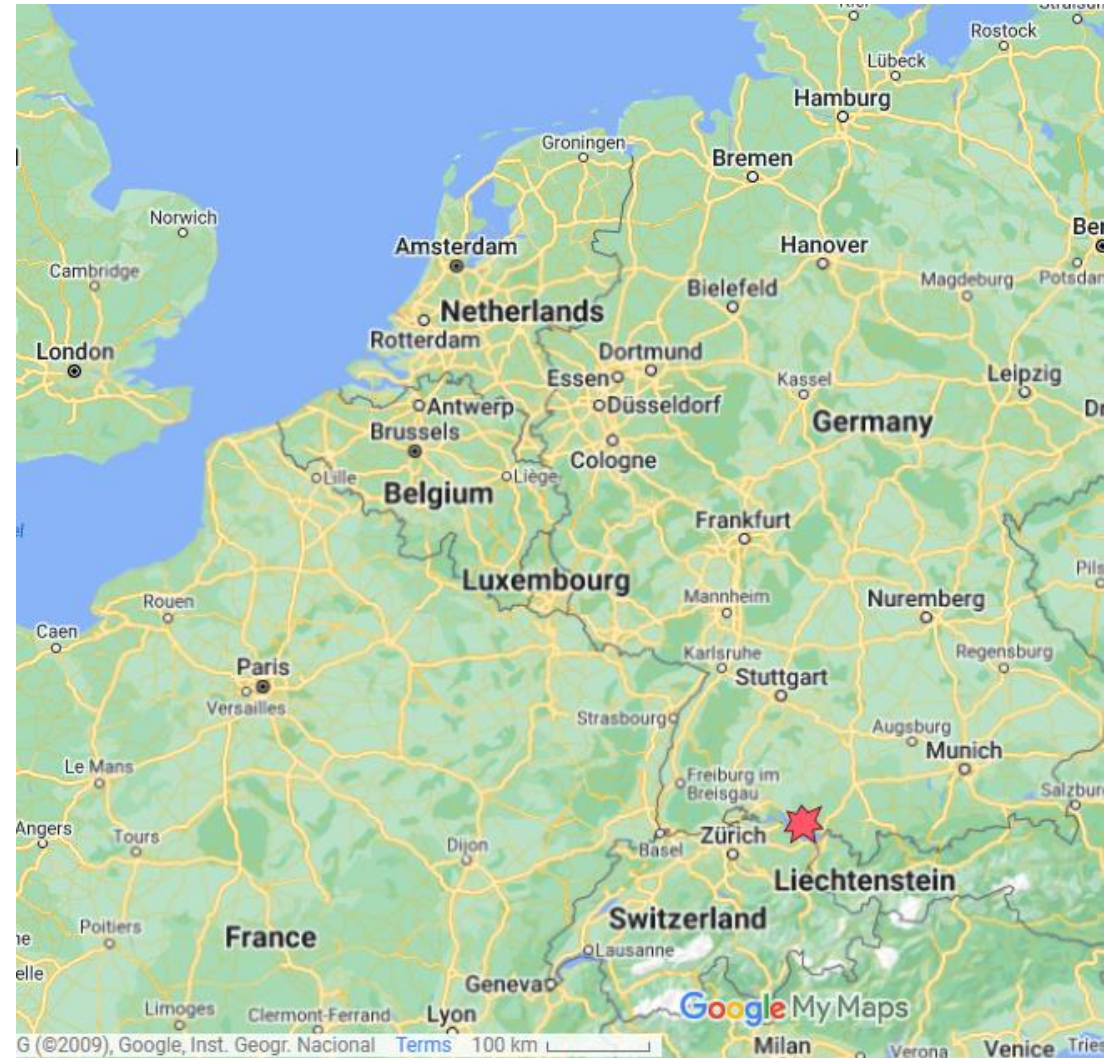


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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# 27/8 April 44

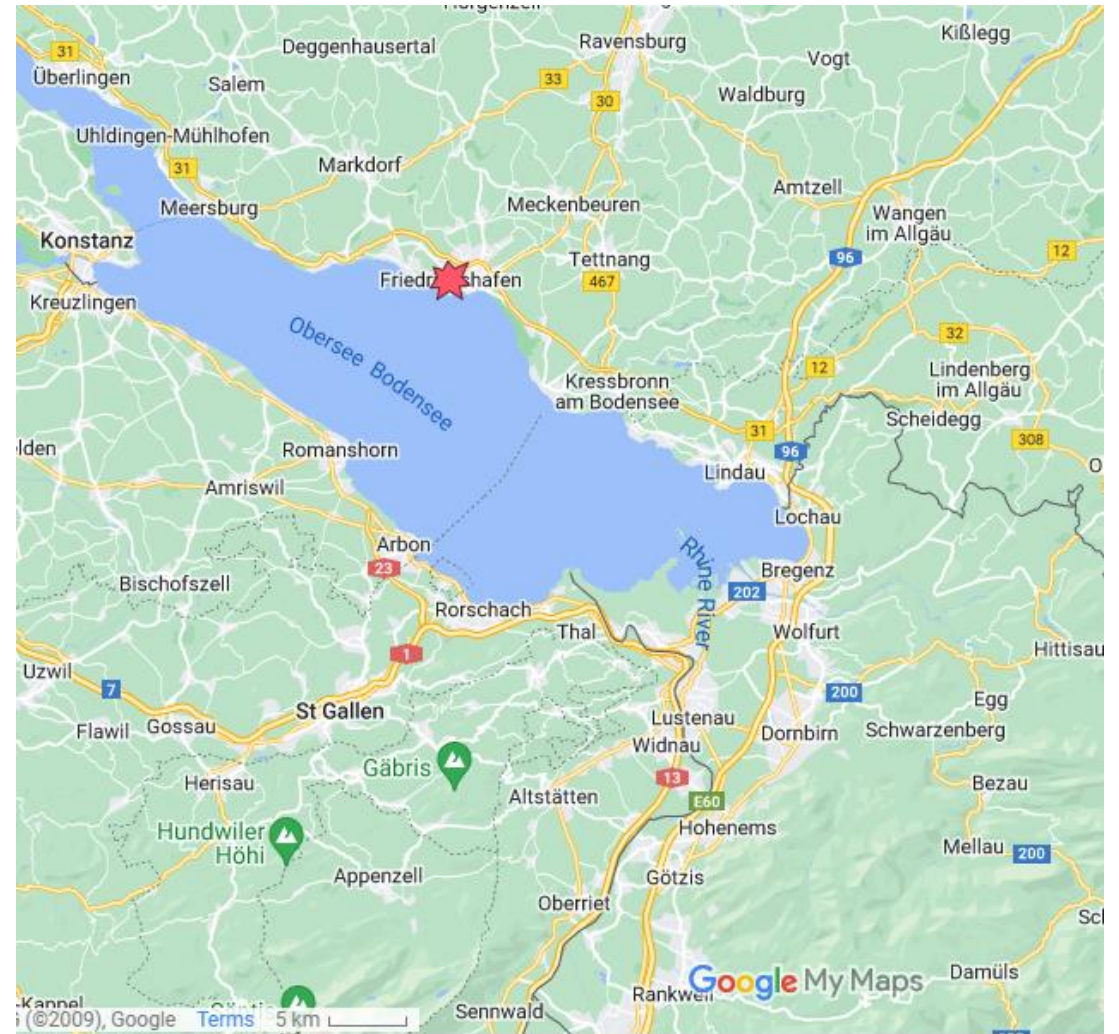
- Friedrichshafen, on the shores of Lake Constance, a very important centre of aircraft, tank-engine, gearbox and radar production, was attacked on 27th-28th April by 322 aircraft in good visibility from 20,000 feet.
- The initial marking was accurate and a "Master of Ceremonies" closely controlled the whole operation with the result that within 15 minutes the whole area was afire and rent by heavy explosions.
- Three Dornier factories, the Maybach tank-engine plant, the Zahnradfabrik works and the Zeppelin hangar were heavily damaged, together with more than half of the residential and business areas.
- The experiences of crews on this eight hours and a half flight varied widely, many captains reporting a quiet trip while later arrivals had to face fighters over the target.
- Three Lancasters of No. 460 were among the 21 shot down.





# 27/8 April 44

- Pilot Officer Peter's pathfinder Halifax of No. 35 was attacked and damaged by a night fighter both before and after reaching the target, the second attack setting the aircraft on fire abaft the mid-upper turret.
- Both the gunners suffered skin burns and their parachutes were destroyed as Peter, blinded by smoke, struggled to pull the Halifax out of a madly spinning dive.
- Two crew members successfully baled out before the aircraft at last came under control at 3,000 feet.
- The wireless operator now reported that his parachute had fallen through the escape hatch, so with three helpless men aboard the sluggish and hardly controllable Halifax, Peter turned back and ditched on Lake Constance.
- The injured gunners were placed in a dinghy and the whole party paddled southwards towards the Swiss shore, watching at the same time the mounting fires and explosions in Friedrichshafen during the later stages of the raid.
- F-Lt R. G. Peter, DFC, 415272. 51 and 35 Sqns RAF. Schoolteacher; of Victoria Park, WA ; b . Geraldton, WA, 13 Jun 1917.



# April 1944

- From 1st April to 5th June Bomber Command made 53 raids against the Rail system.
- R.A.A.F. squadrons joined in 13 of these attacks in April, the heaviest effort being that of No. 466 in No. 4 Group and Nos. 463 and 467 in No. 5 Group.
- All the attacks except those on Aachen (Main) and Ottignies resulted in important damage, although at several places more than one attack was required, especially at Villeneuve St George and Aulnoye where the enemy made a surprising recovery from the earlier attacks.
- The largest raid of all against Aachen had to be staged from 20,000 feet because of the accurate German defences, and although it failed in its precise objective much damage and destruction was caused in the centre and south-western suburbs of this German city.
- The greatest success was in the Paris area on 18th-19th April, when No. 5 Group attacked Juvisy from heights as low as 8,000 feet. The two R.A.A.F. squadrons at Waddington dropped 231 of the total 1,105 tons of bombs, all but one of the 17 crews of No. 463 returning with aiming point photographs.
- Subsequent reconnaissance showed that engine sheds, carriage and wagon shops and trans-shipment bays were almost totally destroyed, and over large areas of the marshalling yards there was a mass of debris and twisted rails. The concentration of bombs at Juvisy was the best so far attained on a small target.
- Casualties were light at the beginning of this campaign because all the westerly targets lay outside the normal enemy gun and fighter defended areas,
- In these 13 raids in April 2755 sorties were dispatched, 2639 bombers attacked and 42 failed to return.

# early May 44

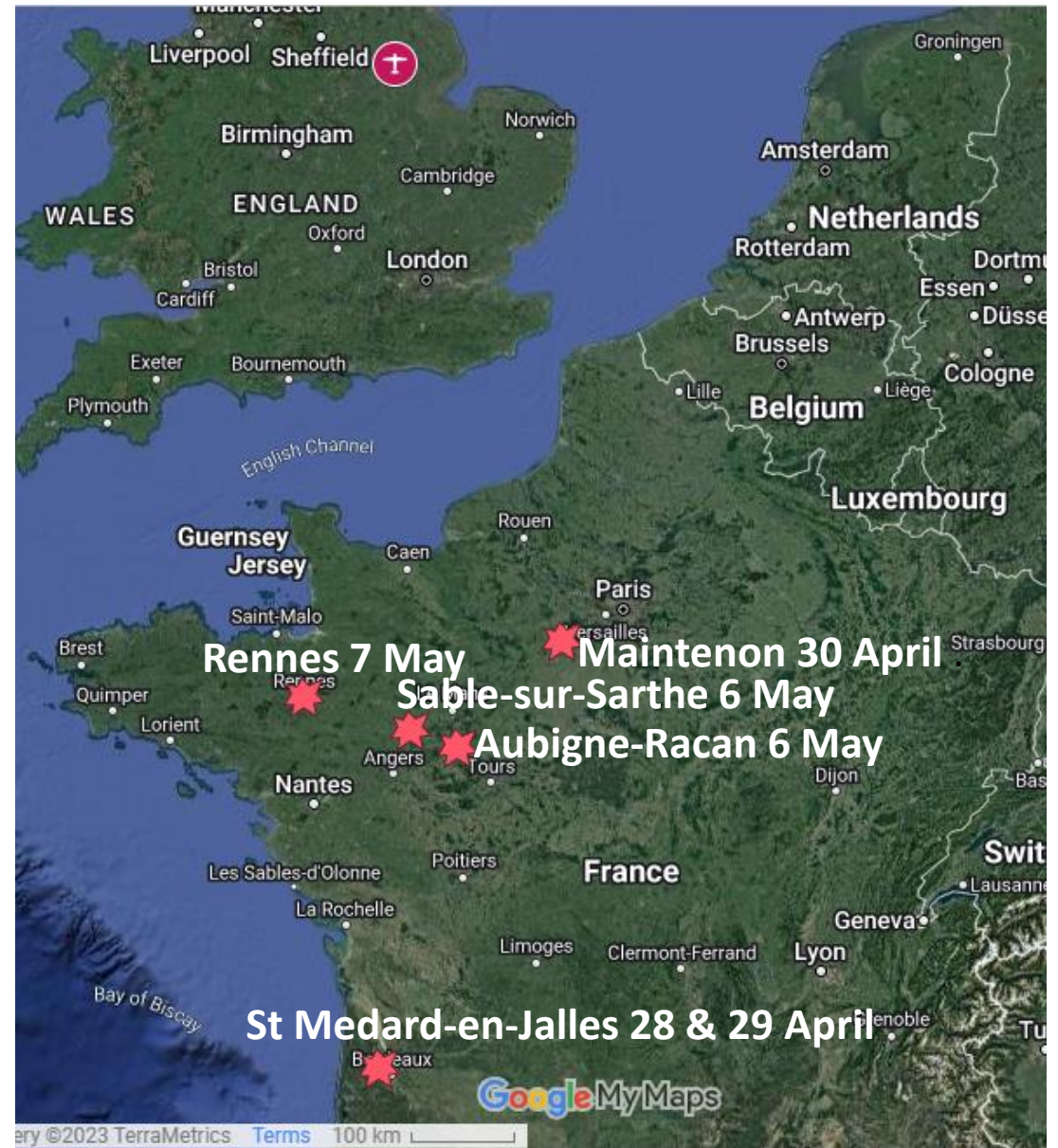
- As D-Day neared without any sign of a V-1 offensive and U.S. military strategists increased their pressure, the British lessened their insistence that CROSSBOW take higher priority than POINTBLANK and OVERLORD.
- The Allies had pummeled ski sites with Category A damage 107 times, and most of the sites were ruined.
- By early May, ski sites were no longer listed as primary targets.





# 28 April – 7 May 44

- the R.A.A.F. squadrons raided five of the largest ordnance factories and depots in France in April and early May.
- The targets became "a grand firework display".
- Wing Commander Tait, with an aircraft and crew of No. 467, even went down to between 1,000 and 1,500 feet so that members of the R.A.F. Film Unit could photograph the huge fires and explosions.
- At the same moment, 30 miles to the south-east, five Lancasters of No. 460, led by Group Captain H. I. Edwards, were engaged with 47 other aircraft of No. 1 Group in wiping out the ammunition dump at Aubigne-Racan.
- Gp Capt J. B. Tait, DSO, DFC, RAF. 51 and 35 Sqns RAF, 467 Sqn ; comd 51 Sqn 1940-41 , 1652 Conversion Unit 1941-42, 78 Sqn 1942, 22 OTU 1943-44, 617 Sqn 1944; Operations Offr, 53 and 54 Bases, Waddington, 1944, 100 Gp HQ 1944-45. Regular air force offr; of Abereynon, Glamorganshire, Wales; b. Manchester, England, 9 Dec 1916.
- Gp Capt Edwards VC was then the station Commander at Binbrook.



# May to 5 June 1944

- The campaign against German airfields was aimed to destroy maintenance, repair and servicing facilities rather than to block the aerodromes by craters which could be speedily filled in.
- Every airfield was constantly photographed after each attack to determine whether damage to major installations was sufficient to force an enemy withdrawal.
- It was then either removed from the target list or subjected to further attack.
- Both heavy and medium bombers shared in these attacks but the overwhelming majority of them were made by U.S.A.A.F. aircraft between 11th May and 5th June 1944.

	Attacks	Sorties	Tons of Bombs
Ninth U.S.A.A.F.	56	2,550	3,197
Second T.A.F.	12	312	487
R.A.F. Bomber Command	6	119	395
Eighth U.S.A.A.F.	17	934	2,638
	91	3,915	6,717

# 3/4 May 44

- On 3rd-4th May 338 heavy bombers, including 39 from RAAF Squadrons raided Mailly-le-Camp, a tank depot and park then housing considerable elements of the 21st Panzer Division, the main training centre in France for German armoured units.
- To ensure good results, a calculated risk was taken in dispatching this force in good visibility and bright moonlight.
- The Luftwaffe reacted promptly, and in very heavy engagements 42 bombers, including seven from the R.A.A.F. squadrons were shot down.
- The bombing from between 5,000 to 8,000 feet was very efficient, however, and the damage inflicted was on a tremendous scale.
- In one section of the camp, out of 47 buildings housing the transport section and barracks, 34 were totally destroyed and the others severely damaged, while in another large group of barrack buildings almost all were heavily hit.





**Date of Death:** 4 May 1944

**Source:**

AWM 64 (1/427) (1/432) AWM 237 (63) (64) NAA : A705, 166/21/147, 166/9/302  
Commonwealth War Graves records. W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command  
Losses of the Second World War : Page 209, Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	JA 901
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	PO – N
<b>Unit:</b>	467 Sqn RAAF

**Summary:**

Lancaster JA901 took off from RAF Waddington at 2149 hours on the night of 3/4<sup>th</sup> May 1944 to bomb military camps at Mailly-le-Camp, France. Bomb load 1 x 4000lb and 16 x 500lb bombs. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it did not return to base. Ten aircraft from the Squadron took part in the raid and one of these JA901 failed to return.

**Crew:**

RAAF 422038 PO Dickson, C Captain (Pilot)  
RAAF 423700 Flt Sgt O S Furniss, (Navigator)  
RAAF 426606 Flt Sgt S D Jolly, (Bomb Aimer)  
RAAF 426882 Flt Sgt R I Hunter, (Wireless Operator Air)  
RAF Sgt P J Weaver, (Flight Engineer)  
RAF Sgt H Skellorn, (Air Gunner)  
RAAF 424403 Flt Sgt H H Forden (Air Gunner)

Captured German documents recorded that the aircraft was shot down early on the morning of 4 May 1944 at Merz on Seine, 14kms south of Rommilly, France. Both Flt Sgt Jolly and Flt Sgt Hunter survived the crash and evaded capture. The remaining five crew members were killed. PO Dickson and Flt Sgt Furniss are buried in the Droupt-Sainte-Marie Churchyard Cemetery, while Flt Sgt Forden and Sgt Skellhorn are buried in the St Remy-Sous-Barbuise Churchyard. St Remy is a village some 22kms north of Troyes, Aube, France.

Sgt Weaver (RAF) is buried in the Terlingthun British Cemetery on the northern outskirts of Boulogne, locality Pas-de-Calais.

In his statement Flt Sgt Jolly reported "Returning from the target the aircraft was on fire presumably as a result of enemy aircraft. The Captain instructed the crew to abandon. I heard no one acknowledge. The aircraft was under control but on fire when I abandoned at approx 5000 feet. I saw one chute in the air possibly the Flt Engineer. No contact was made with any of the crew after landing."

Flt Sgt Hunter reported "The aircraft was on fire when I baled out at approx 5/6000 feet. I had extensive burns. I was in the hands of the Resistance movement and in hospital until liberated by the Americans on 28 August 1944. Do not think the Navigator and two gunners left the aircraft."

**Source**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A705, 166/26/454 Commonwealth War Graves records  
W R Chorley : RAF Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War, Page 212,  
Volume 1944.

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Lancaster
<b>Serial number:</b>	ND 783
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	UL – C2
<b>Unit:</b>	576 Sqn RAF

**Summary:**

On the night of 6/7<sup>th</sup> May 1944, Lancaster ND783 took off from Welsham Wolds at 0015 hours, detailed to destroy an ammunition dump at Aubigne, France. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off, and it failed to return to base.

**Crew:**

RNZAF Flt Lt Shearer, J M Captain (Pilot)  
RAF Air Cdr Ivelaw-Chapman, R (Pilot)  
RAF Sgt C N G Drew, (Flight Engineer)  
RAAF 414192 WO A H Biltuft, ((Navigator)  
RAAF 410968 Sgt J A Ford, (Air Bomber)  
RAF Flt Sgt C V Fox, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RAAF 418296 Sgt J W McLeod, (Air Gunner)  
RAAF 429953 Sgt A R Jackson, (Air Gunner)

Air Cdr Ivelaw-Chapman was a POW, and the most senior RAF Officer to be taken prisoner while in Bomber Command service. He had recently taken up a Staff Officer post in No 1 Group. Sgt Ford (RAAF) evaded capture, and was discharged as an FO from the RAAF on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

All the others in the crew were killed, and they are buried in the Bayeux War Cemetery, France. The town of Bayeux is in Normandy, 24kms north west of Caen. .



# 8/9 May 44

- The only airfield attack of this type made by R.A.A.F. squadrons was on 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> May when Nos. 463 and 467 provided more than half a force of 40 Lancasters which attacked Lanveoc-Poulmic aerodrome near Brest.
- The bombing was done from heights as low as 6,000 feet and, although several aircraft were damaged by gunfire, only the aircraft piloted by Flight Lieutenant Whitford of No. 83 Squadron was shot down.
- Reconnaissance photographs, revealed five hangars and nine barrack buildings destroyed and five oil storage sheds damaged, and this target was put at the bottom of the list of those still requiring attention.
- F-Lt A. P. Whitford, DFC, 406587. 467 Sqn, 83 Sqn RAF. Clerk; of Riverdale, WA; b. Perth, WA, 23 Feb 1921. Killed in action 9 May 1944.



# 8/9 May 44

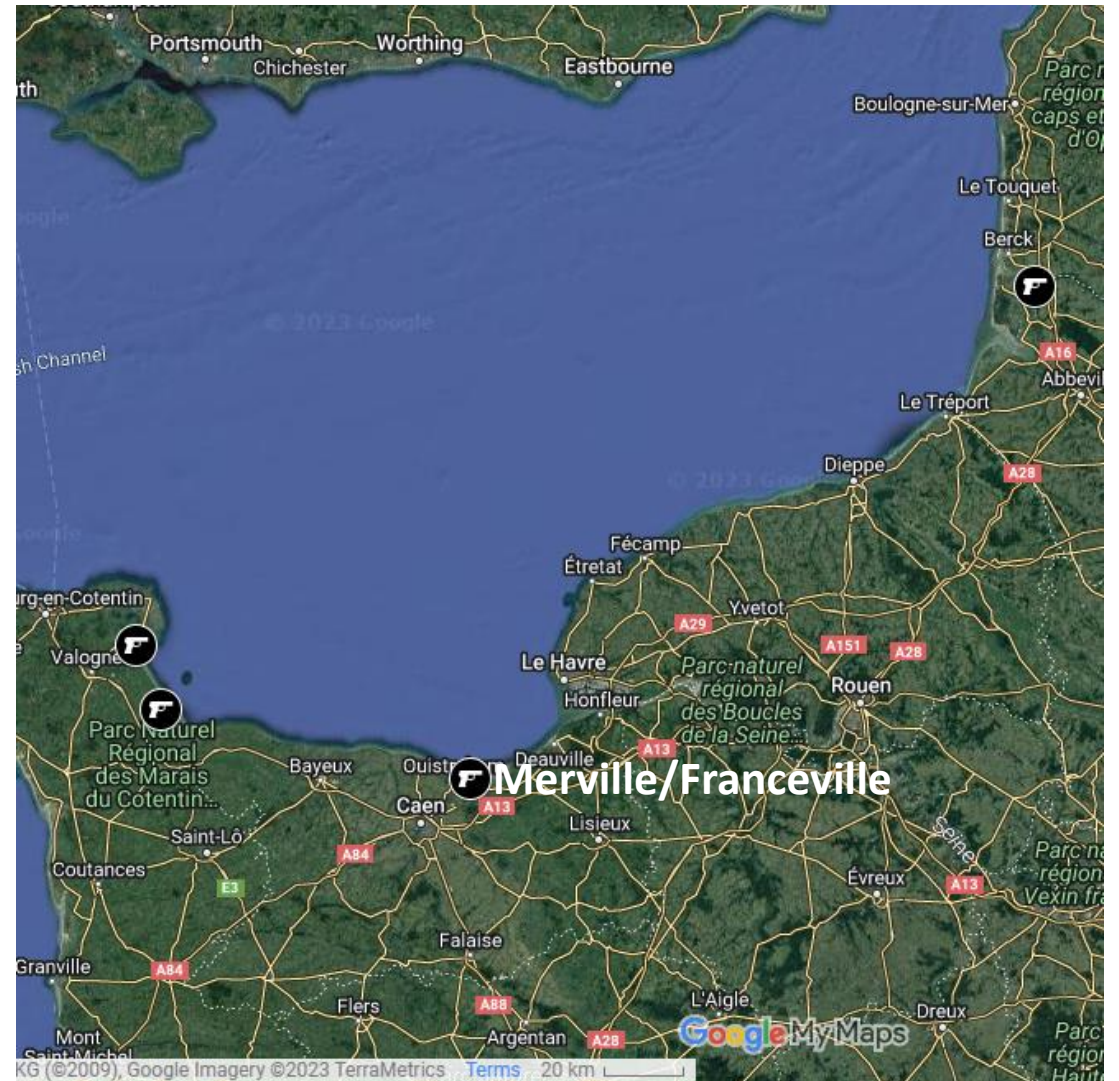
- On 8th-9th May six Halifaxes of No. 466 joined in a small-scale attack on a six-gun battery at Morsalines.
- The same target was attacked again on the following night, 13 R.A.A.F. Halifaxes being included in the total force of 62 sent out by No. 4 Group.
- Good results including direct hits on an ammunition dump were achieved, and after a third attack by heavy bombers and one by medium bombers the site was abandoned and maintained only as a dummy.





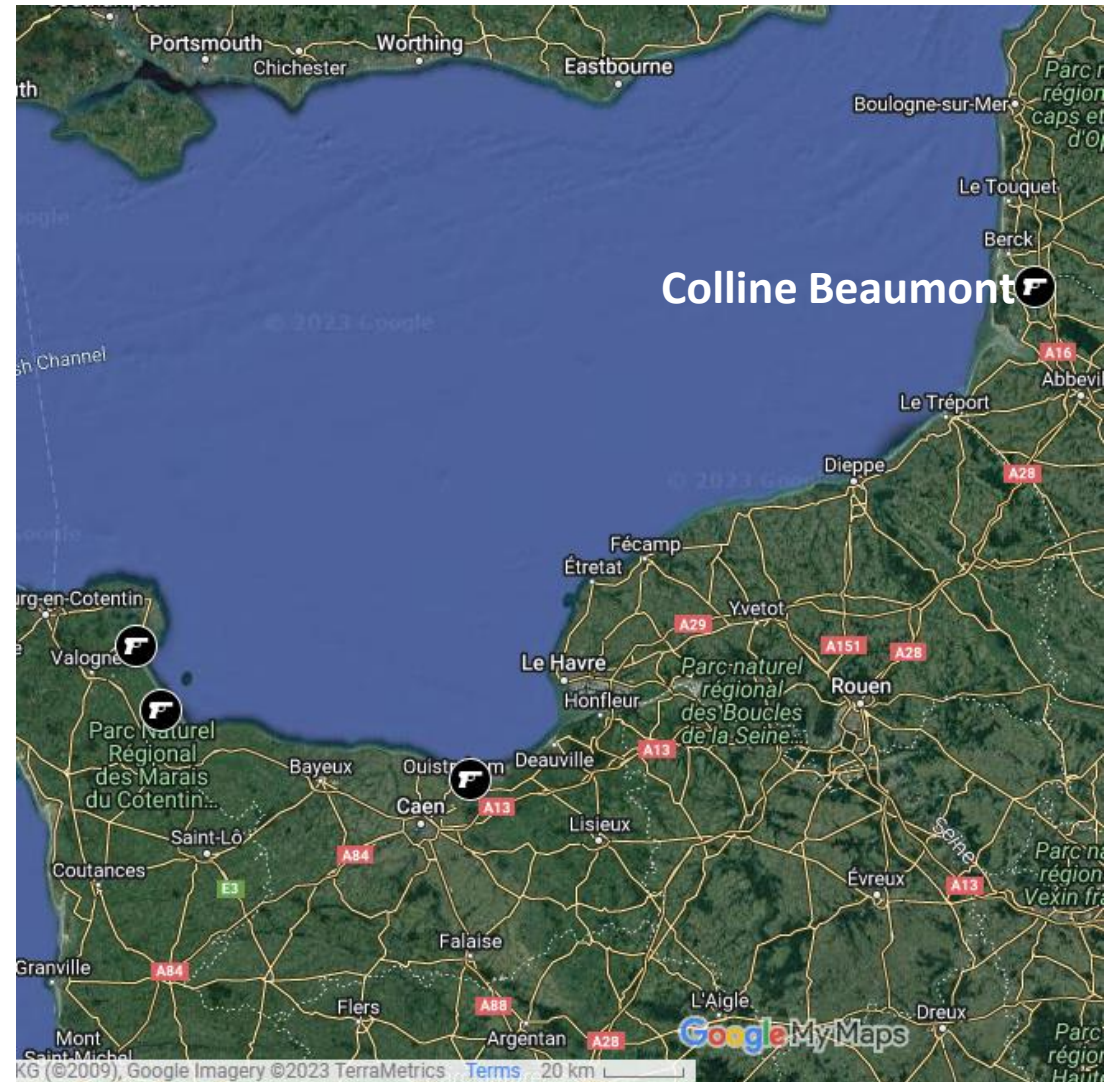
# 9/10 May 44

- A force from No. 1 Group including 10 Lancasters of No. 460 had attacked a battery between Merville and Franceville on 9th-10th May.
- When this and a second attack were indecisive, 20 R.A.A.F. Lancasters were dispatched against this battery on 27th-28th May causing considerable damage to the whole site, although the heavily casemated guns still appeared intact.



# 11/2 May 44

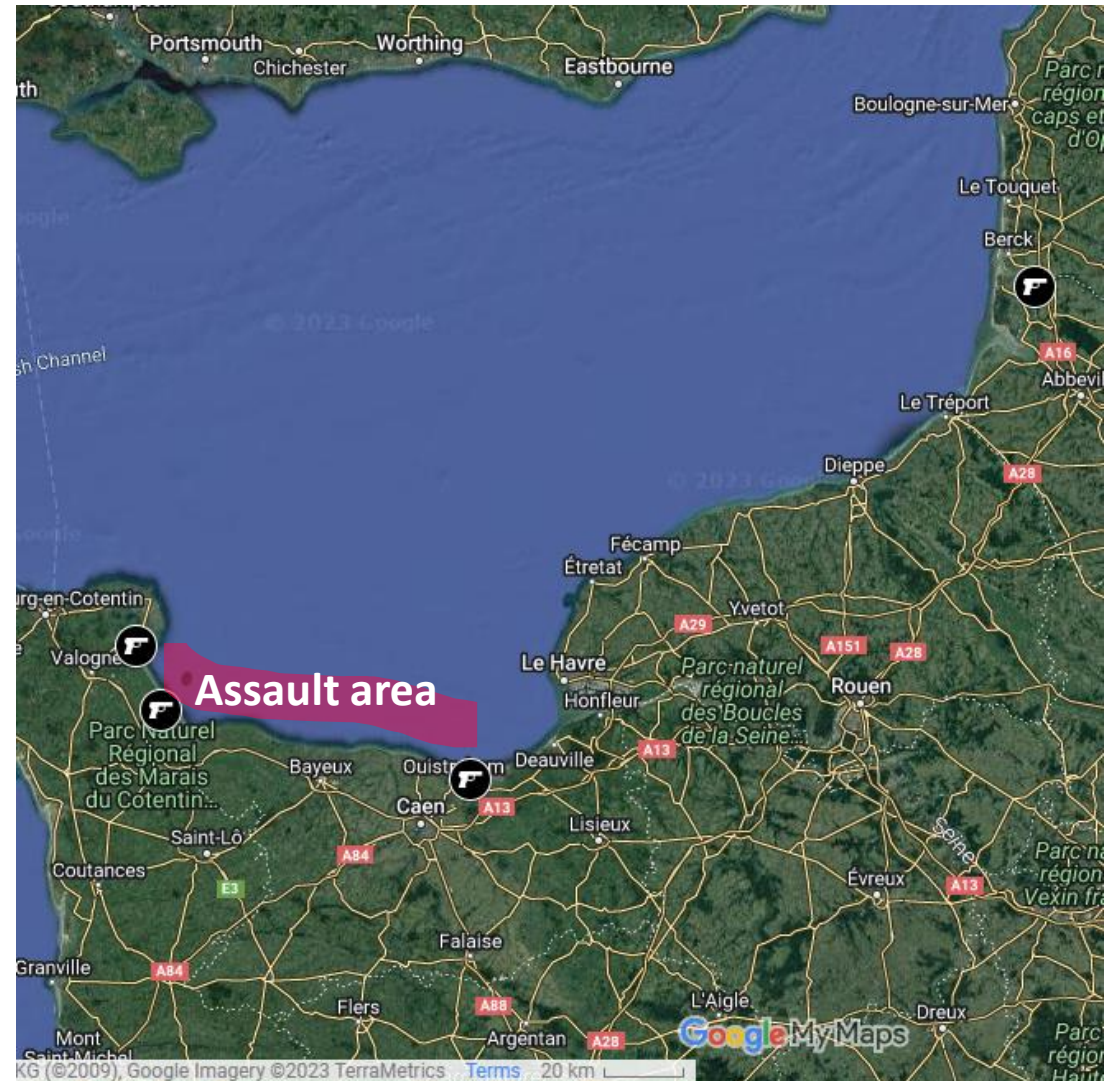
- On 11th-12th May 13 Halifaxes made an attack on a battery at Colline Beaumont, and No. 466 returned to the same target on 24th-25th May.





# 24 May 44

- On 24<sup>th</sup> May No. 460 had set a new squadron record, 24 Lancasters carrying 133+ tons of bombs against a battery outside the assault area.





# 25 May 1944

- Heinz-Wolfgang Schnaufer, now Gruppenkommandeur IV./NJG 1, became an ace-in-a-day for the first time on 25 May 1944 when he claimed five RAF bombers shot down between 01:15 and 01:29 for victories 70 to 74.
- The bombers had targeted the railway marshalling yard at Aachen.



# 28/9 May 44

- 22 No. 460 Lancasters in a total force of 56 attacked Eu on 28th-29th May.
- On the same night Nos. 463 and 467 made their only contribution to this preparatory bombing of coastal gun emplacements when they sent out 21 Lancasters with 55 others to attack St Martin de Varreville.
- No. 463 crews in particular returned with excellent photographs showing the aiming point and the markers, one of the best being obtained by Flying Officer Schultz, who was on the last trip of an extremely meritorious tour of operations.
- A report, later captured, on this raid by the battery commander stated:
- “Several direct hits with very heavy bombs were made on No. 3 casemate which apparently burst open and then collapsed. . . the rest of the casemates remained undamaged . . . the iron equipment hut which contained signals apparatus, the armoury, the gas chamber and artillery instruments received a direct hit and only a few twisted iron girders remain. the men's canteen received several direct hits and was completely destroyed. The messing huts, containing the battery dining room, the kitchen and clerk's office were completely destroyed by near misses.”

Jerry McBrien 2023



# May/June 1944

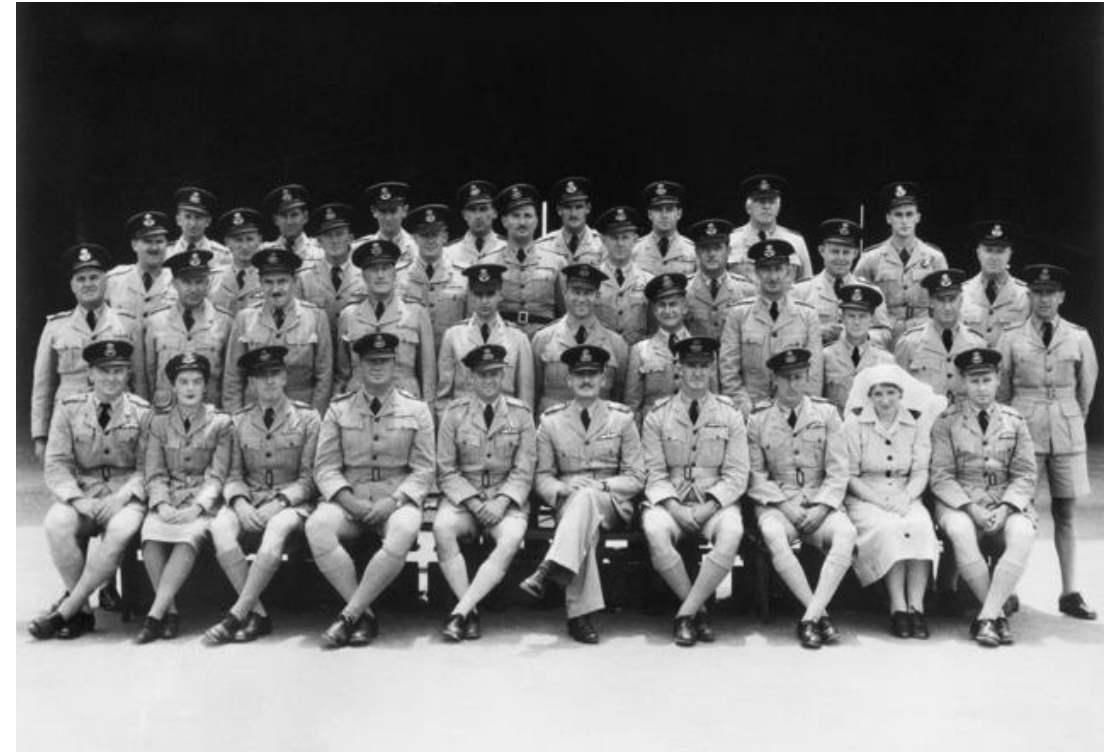
- The RAAF squadrons participated in another 11 rail system attacks in May and June.
- All the attacks resulted in important damage except at Hasselt where on the first occasion difficult bombing conditions led the master bomber to abandon the operation and send aircraft back with their bombs.
- A significant increase in enemy counter-measures against the rail system attacks was noticeable during May when many Australians had to ward off night fighters.
- The heaviest setback suffered by the R.A.A.F. squadrons was on 10th-11th May when Waddington provided 31 of the total force of 86 Lancasters which attacked Lille. Squadron Leader H. B. Locke of No. 97 Squadron controlled this force and the bombing was very concentrated and effective. Gun defences were not unduly heavy but in numerous combats with enemy fighters Nos. 463 and 467 each lost one flight commander and two other crews, or 20 per cent of the crews sent out. In the whole force 12 out of 89 failed to return.
- The last raid of the series, against Trappes near Paris on 2nd-3rd June, was again well executed but once more enemy fighters were waiting over the target; with the aid of moonlight and special flares they found many opportunities to attack. 16 bombers out of 128 failed to return.
- In these 11 attacks 1302 bombers were dispatched, 1069 attacked and 47 failed to return.

# May 1944

- No. 1 EFTS relocated to Tamworth, New South Wales, during 17–28 May 1944, reportedly to allow for the expansion of civil aviation at Parafield.
- As of December 1943 No.1 EFTS had eighty-five students under n and a total of 1,628 d through.



Parafield, SA. Group portrait of the officers of No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) RAAF. December 1942



Parafield, SA. Group portrait of the officers of No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) RAAF. December 1942

## Pilot Officer Harry Martyn RADCLIFFE

Service No: 407876

Born: Adelaide SA, 11 November 1917

Enlisted in the RAAF: 1 February 1941

Unit: No. 4 (Observer) Advanced Flying Unit (RAF)

Died: Ground Accident, Scotland 2 June 1944, Aged 26 Years

Buried: Stoneykirk Cemetery, Wigtownshire, Scotland

CWGC Additional Information: Son of Ernest Ware Radcliffe and Lucy Gwendoline Radcliffe, of Highbury, South Australia; husband of Nellie Jean Radcliffe, of Croydon, South Australia.

Roll of Honour: Unknown

Remembered: Panel 129, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT

Remembered: World War II Honour Roll, National War Memorial of SA, North Terrace, Adelaide

On 2 June 1944, Pilot Officer Radcliffe, a staff Wireless Operator, was detailed to fly on a night navigation flight in Anson 9176. He had returned to the briefing room to collect his flying helmet and was walking back to his dispersal aircraft along the taxiing track, when he was struck on the head by the port propeller of LV290, taxiing in the same direction in which he was walking.

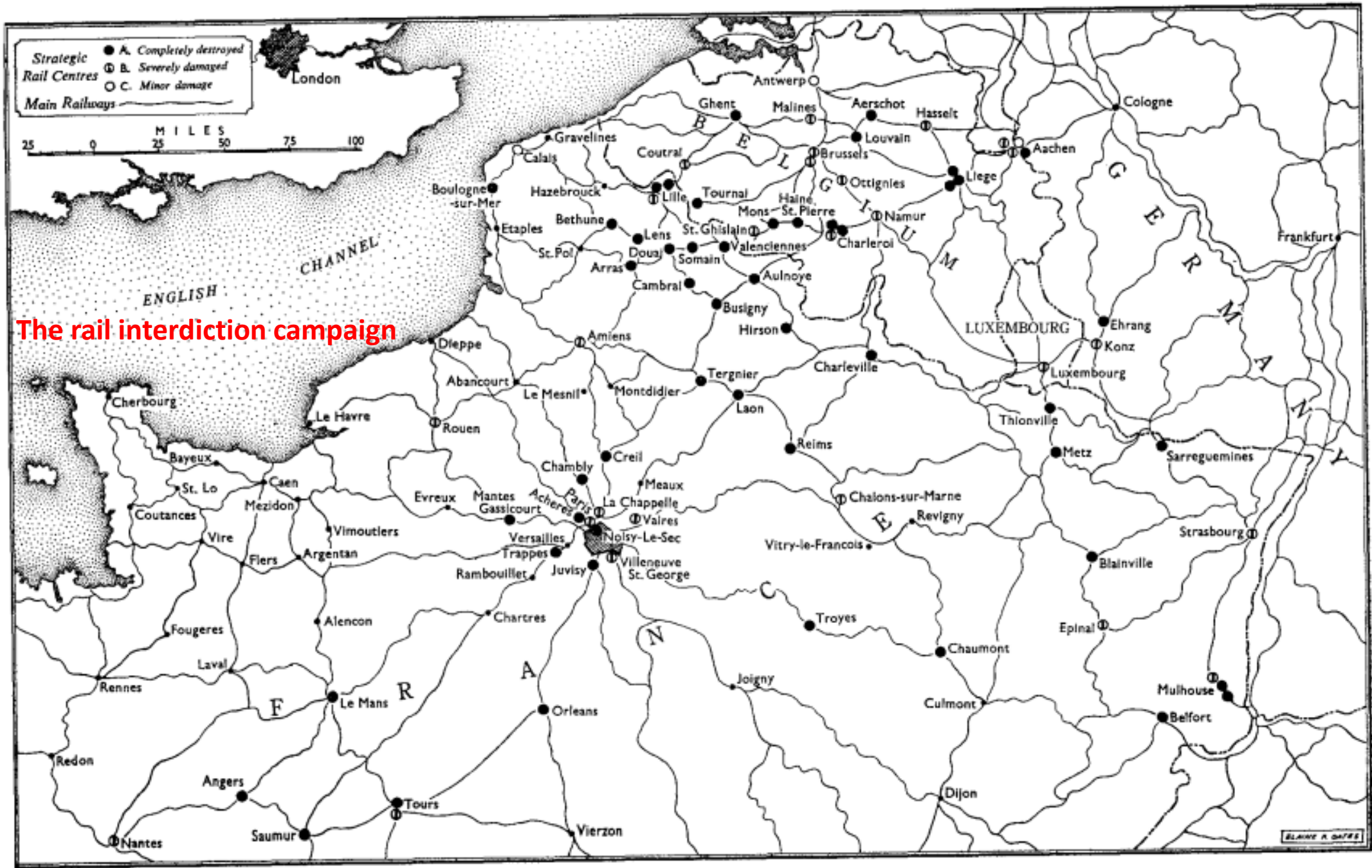
Anson LV290 was detailed to fly on a night navigation flight. Flight Sergeant Jacobs a staff Pilot in Anson LV290 was marshalled by torches from the dispersal point to the taxiing lane. It was then indicated that he proceed to the taxiing post. While taxiing between the taxiing lights at normal taxiing speed, Pilot Officer Radcliffe appeared in front of the aircraft moving in the same direction as the aircraft. Jacobs shouted and at the same time swung the aircraft to the right. Pilot Officer Radcliffe also moved to the right and was hit by the port propeller resulting in the port engine stopping. The aircraft at the time had its navigation lights on and the downward identifying light.



# 2/3 June 1944

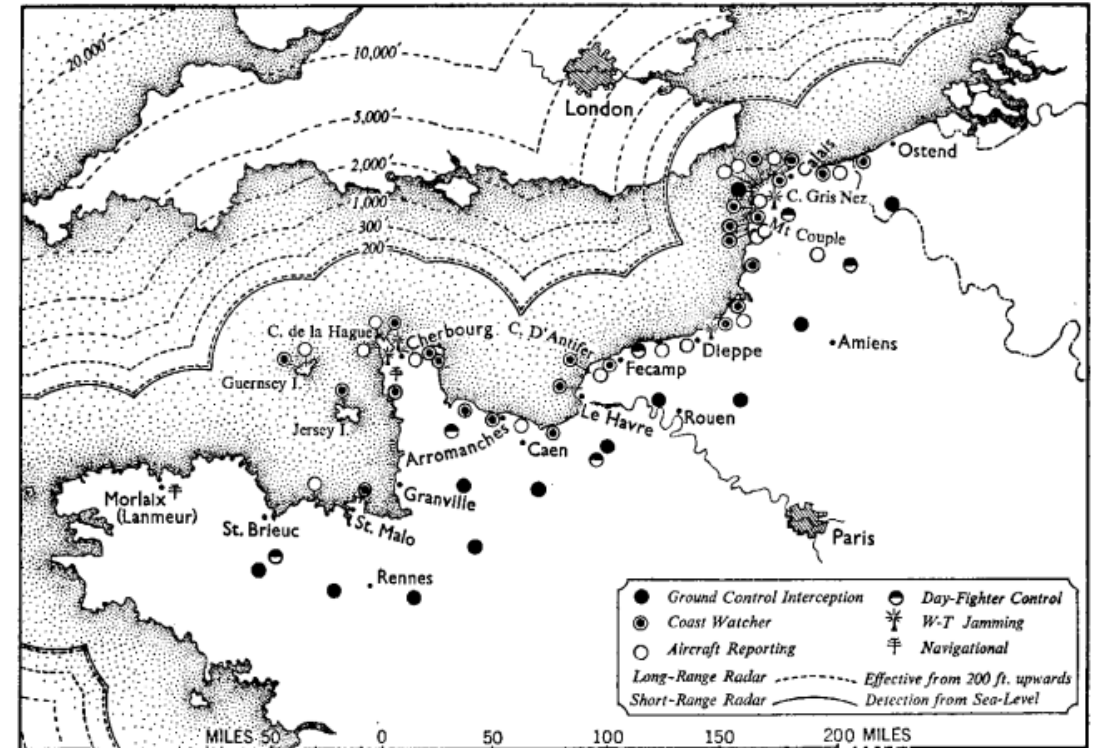
- On the Trappes operation on 2nd-3rd June the Halifax flown by Pilot Officer Bancroft of No. 158 Squadron was extensively damaged in a desperate encounter with a Ju-88.
- All the instruments and the inter-com system were damaged, the hydraulic system was destroyed, causing the bomb-doors and flaps to fall open, and a large hole, three feet long and the full width of the aircraft, was smashed in the floor.
- Another gaping hole appeared near the radio position, both turrets were useless, one of the petrol tanks was holed, and fires broke out in the bomb bay and near the rear bulkhead.
- Bancroft wrestled with the controls of this battered hulk while his navigator, Pilot Officer Fripp, aided by the only two other survivors, tackled and extinguished the fires.
- The compasses had been destroyed but luckily the sky was clear and Bancroft steered by the North Star and managed to find Hurn airfield and get down safely.
- F-O B. D. Bancroft, DFC, GM, 421635. 158 and 96 Sqns RAF. Composer; of Pennant Hills, NSW; b. Rockdale, NSW, 29 Oct 1916.
- F-O C. F. A. Fripp, DFC, 423092; 158 Sqn RAF. Farm labourer; of Tuggerah, NSW; b. Wyong, NSW, 27 Jul 1923.
- F-O Bancroft was later the only survivor out of seven when Dakota KN468 crashed on 13th June 1945, approx 2 miles east of Dinawa railway station near Patna India, while on a daytime transport of equipment flight. Fire broke out in the aircraft during the flight and the port engine ceased to function.





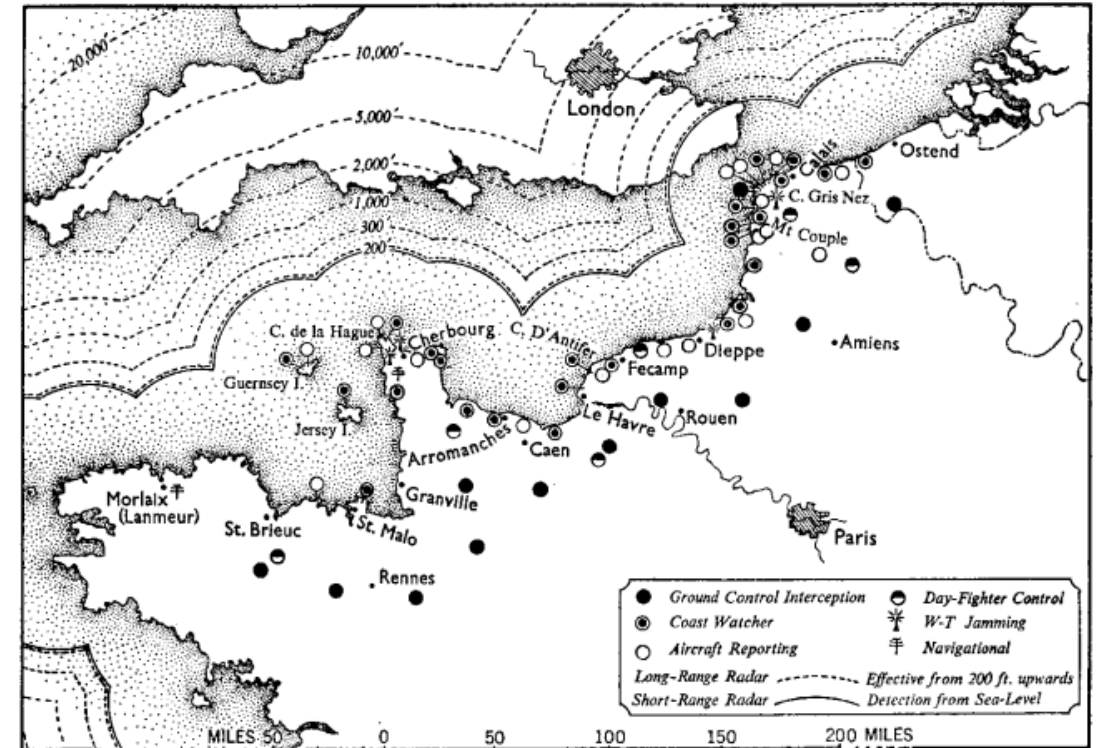
# 3/4 June 44

- During the first week in June, Bomber Command joined in the campaign against enemy early-warning equipment by attacks on navigational stations and W-T stations important in the general defence of the assault area. Stations at Sortesville, south of Cherbourg, Lanmeur and Mont Couple were put out of action by forces containing only a few Australians.
- On 2nd-3rd June No. 460 contributed 23 Lancasters to a raid by 107 aircraft against the W-T station at Berneville-Grand near Dieppe. A concentrated attack demolished all seven aerial masts, obtained direct hits on several of the main buildings protected by blast walls and badly shattered some of the unprotected minor buildings.
- The previous night 16 Halifaxes of No. 466 had been in a similar force attacking Ferm d'Urville, near Cherbourg, the headquarters of the German signals Intelligence service in north-west France, but the target had been completely shrouded in cloud and no great optimism was shown by pilots returning after bombing on sky markers.
- There was a view that the target was too hard for Bomber Command and that the Tactical Air Forces would have to do it in daylight.



# 3/4 June 44

- Dr Jones, who was managing decisions about which stations to destroy, which to jam and which to leave operational so they could detect spoof invasions in the Pas de Calais, looked at the photo reconnaissance and realised that there had been a very small error with the markers but the concentration was so tight that the station was undamaged. He encouraged Bomber Command to have another go.
- The second attempt to destroy Ferm d'Urville on 3rd-4th June was made by No. 5 Group, Nos. 463 and 467 each dispatching 13 Lancasters in a total force of 100. Flight Lieutenant van Raalte of No. 97 headed the Pathfinders, and dropped the spot marker in the centre of the target. Wing Commander Brill of No. 467 reported that he circled the target during the whole attack and had never seen such a close concentration of bomb-bursts.
- The subsequent photographic interpretation report stated: "The station is completely useless"





- Thanks for your attention.