

Sgt A W Savory Flight Engineer 988963 RAF

Sgt Augustus William Savory 988963 was posted from 1661 Heavy Conversion Unit to 83 Squadron on the 9th of July 1943 as a Flight Engineer with the crew of Canadian pilot Sgt E R Stiles, who was commissioned on the 1st of September 1943 after completing three ops as Second Pilot.

83 Squadron was first formed at Montrose, Scotland, on the 7th January 1917 and was re-formed as a bomber squadron in August 1936. At the outbreak of war the Squadron was flying Hampdens and was re-equipped with Manchesters early in 1942 and a few months later the first Lancasters arrived. In mid-August 1942, 83 Squadron based at RAF Wyton became part of the newly-formed Pathfinder Force, operating under 8 Group.

During the Second World War 83 Squadron flew 5,117 operational sorties. Their squadron code was OL



“Percutere Defendere”

Sgt Savory flew on 11 raids with named Pilots and their short debriefs as follows;

23-24 August 1943. Berlin. Pilot Sgt Stiles, Lancaster JA712 OL-B. Took off 20.28hrs – landed at 03.35hrs. Bombed at 23.46 hrs, course 340° magnetic, height 20,000ft, speed 150 Knots. Bombed red and green Target Indicators. High Explosives seen to explode - 2 reds believed dummies according to Rear Gunner seen south of target at 23.42hrs. Did another run and bombed on reds, which were all backed-up by greens. Attack seemed concentrated N of Spree. Some fires SW of town.

27-28 August 1943. Nuremberg. Pilot P/Off Tolchard, Lancaster JA712 OL-B. Took off 21.05hrs – landed at 04.02hrs. Bombed at 00.26hrs, course 03° magnetic, height 16,000ft, speed 148 Knots. Built-up area and red TI's in bombsight. HE's seen to explode. 3 red TI's seen in triangle at 00.22hrs, not backed up. Ground well-illuminated by

numerous fires between 00.22 and 00.26hrs. Several scattered reds to east of target. Attack scattered. No track markers on route home.

5-6 September 1943. Mannheim. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster JA712 OL-B. Took off 20.16hrs – landed at 02.35hrs. Bombed at 23.15 hours, course 060° magnetic, height 19,000ft, speed 150 knots. Bombed estimated centre of green Tl's and fires. Glow of fires visible 50 miles away coming up to target. Fires spread over a wide area with much smoke estimated at 6,000ft. The whole town was well alight.

16-17 September 1943. Modane. P/O Stiles, Lancaster ED602 OL-F. Took off at 19.51hrs – landed at 03.10hrs. Bombed at 00.15hrs, course 110° magnetic, height 14,000ft, speed 160 knots. 2/10ths cloud, visibility good. Centre of greens in bombsight. On approach at 00.01 hrs, Tl's seen, but having made an overshoot, took a second run.

3-4 October 1943. Kassel. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster JA913 OL-G. Took off at 18.45hrs - landed at 00.31hrs. Bombed at 21.16hrs, course 130° magnetic, height 13,000ft, speed 145 knots. No cloud, hazy. Saw greens ignite and cascade. Yellow Tl's in bombsight when dropped. Good concentration of Tl yellows and 4 greens. 2 greens seen 2 miles south of main concentration. Saw 5 fires on leaving target, which seemed to have a good hold.

4-5 October 1943. Ludwigshafen. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster ED908 OL-J. Took off at 18.50hrs – landed at 00.34hrs. HE and flares only dropped at 21.21hrs, course 120° magnetic, height 12,000ft, speed 140 knots. Clear, dark, some ground haze. On approaching target one red and 2 yellow Tl's seen going down at 21.18hrs. When over target special equipment showed only two blips, which was not sufficient identification to drop Tl Reds, which were withheld. Fires seen spreading in target area when on homeward course.

7-8 October 1943. Friedrichshafen. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster ED908 OL-J. Took off at 20.48hrs – landed at 01.15hrs. Sortie abandoned. Flight Engineer reported serious leakage of petrol, and unless a return was made immediately, there would be a danger of not being able to make a home landing. It was considered advisable to save petrol, and to drop bombs in open country, and this was done.

8-9 October 1943. Hanover. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster JA686 OL-K. Took off at 23.20hrs – landed at 04.02hrs. Bombed at 01.33hrs, course 210° magnetic, height 18,000ft, speed 155 knots. No cloud, some haze. Tl's seen to cascade and bombs explode. Several yellows seen well concentrated with reds and greens. Two reds seen nearly two miles to west. Some fires and very large explosion seen at 01.42hrs, probably on west of town.

18-19 October 1943. Hanover. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster JA686 OL-K. Took off at 17.27hrs – landed at 22.28hrs. Bombed at 20.12hrs, height 18,000ft, course 191° magnetic, speed 140 knots. 8/10ths cloud, but could see through it. Bombed on "Y" [H2S Radar]. Damaged own aircraft incendiary through starboard fin.

20-21 October 1943. Leipzig. Pilot P/O Stiles, Lancaster JA913 OL-G. Took off at 17.30hrs – landed at 00.25hrs. Bombed at 21.06hrs, height 18,000, course 205° magnetic, speed 145 knots. 10/10ths cloud. Saw 2 TI yellow through cloud, and bombed those. Saw no TI's or Wanganui flares [code name for a specific type of flare] on run in at 20.56hrs. On second run two TI yellows seen to cascade and incendiaries seen through cloud. After bombing one Wanganui flare seen at 21.11hrs.

26-27 November 1943. Berlin. Pilot F/O Smeaton, Lancaster JB459 OL-T. Took off at 17.37hrs. Aircraft failed to return.

Sgt Savory was killed in action on the 27th of November 1943, along with the rest of his Crew, and all are buried in Durnbach Cemetery.

The aircraft crashed at Seelenberg in the Hochtaunus, 3km northwest of Oberreifenberg, Frankfurt. Eye witnesses on the ground reported seeing the aircraft flying to the northwest with its wings on fire. The tail then broke off and the aircraft crashed in a forest where the aircraft exploded, along with its bomb load. The crew were initially buried in a small churchyard in Seelenberg, before being reinterred at Durnbach, after the war.

The mission was to Berlin and was part of the Battle of Berlin. Immediately prior to take-off, another 83 Squadron Lancaster had exploded on the ground, killing 20 RAF personnel and a number of Italian POWs. Two of the destroyed aircraft's engines had to be removed from the runway, before the squadron could take-off.

Pilot. F/O A B Smeaton (collective grave 6 D 5-7, buried with Savory and Nunn)

F/E. Sgt A W Savory

Nav. F/O V W J Nunn

B/A. F/L R M Smalley DFC (grave 6 D 4)

WOp. Sgt R A F Gillam (grave 6 D 3)

Mid. F/S R S Nelson RAAF (grave 6 D 2)

Rear. Sgt W S Walton (grave 6 D 1)

Two German night fighters claimed three British aircraft that night, in a three minute period in the Frankfurt area. The Pilots were Leutnant Lothar Sachs and Feldwebel Ulrich Veh of 3./JG300, engaged in the Wild Boar technique, flying single engined fighters. Unfortunately these claims were not confirmed by Luftwaffe Command. The aircraft, all Lancasters, were either JB459, JB538 of 7 Squadron, or DS793 of 115 Squadron.

Leutnant Sachs was wounded on the 8th of March 1944 whilst in daylight combat with an American B-17 Flying Fortress, and survived the war with three night time "kills".

Feldwebel Veh was promoted to Oberfeldwebel. He was killed in action on the 8th of March 1944 at Treuenbrietzen, in a daytime crash. He attained six night time "kills".

Lancaster JB459 was a MkIII and was "posted" to 83 Squadron on the 9th of October 1943, and when lost had clocked up 33 flying hours.

P/Off Tolchard, F/Off Smeaton, F/Sgt Nelson and Sgt Walton were all ex 49 Squadron air crew, posted into 83 Squadron in September 1943.

F/Sgt Nelson RAAF. Interestingly enough F/Sgt Nelson was attached to 49 Squadron from July to September 1943. On the 4th of September 1943 when his Lancaster JB126 was returning from a raid to Berlin after being shot up by Flak it crashed into the North Sea off of Blyth, Tynemouth. The only survivors were Nelson and Underwood the Bomb Aimer.

F/O Nunn. Prior to meeting his death, he had been interned in Sweden, following operations to Stettin in April 1943. Within a few weeks of returning to operations, he had been obliged to bale out over Norfolk while returning from Bochum in late September.

Circumstances of raid to Berlin 26th November 1943.

443 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitoes assigned. The Berlin force and the Stuttgart diversionary force flew a common route over Northern France and on nearly to Frankfurt before diverging. The German Controllers thought that Frankfurt was the main target until a later stage and several bombers were shot down as they flew past Frankfurt.

Only a few fighters appeared over Berlin, where Flak was the main danger, but the scattered formation of the bomber stream at Berlin meant that bombers were caught by fighters off track on the return flight and the casualties mounted. 28 Lancasters were lost, 6.2% of the force, and 14 more Lancasters crashed in England.

The weather was clear over Berlin but, after their long approach flight from the south, the Pathfinders marked an area 6-7 miles north-west of the city centre and most aircraft bombed there. Because of Berlin's size, however, most of the bombing still fell within the city boundaries and particularly on the semi-industrial suburb of Reinickdorf; smaller amounts of bombing fell in the centre and in the Siemensstadt (with many electrical factories) and Tegel districts. 38 war-industry factories destroyed and many more damaged.

The now routine destruction of housing and public buildings also took place but not on as great a scale as on the 2 previous raids to Berlin. The Berlin Zoo was heavily damaged on this night. Many of the animals had been evacuated to Zoos in other parts of Germany but the bombing killed most of the remainder. Several large and dangerous animals – leopards, panthers, jaguars, apes – escaped and had to be hunted down and shot in the streets.

Because of the confusion caused by so many raids in a short period, it was only possible for the Germans to record an approximate number of people killed, on this night, of about 700-800. The local officials did, however, produce a report in January 1944 giving details of the combined casualties of the three raids 22-23, 23-24 and 26-27 November. 4,330 people were killed, of whom the bodies of 574 were never recovered.

The districts with the most deaths were Tiergarten, 793; Charlottenburg, 735; and Wedding, 548. 157 of the dead were foreign workers and 26 were prisoners of war. The property damage was extensive, with 8,701 dwelling buildings containing 104,613 flats/apartments destroyed, and several times that number damaged. 417,665 people lost their homes for more than a month and 36,391 for up to a month.

Stuttgart

157 Halifaxes and 21 Lancasters on a diversionary raid. 6 Halifaxes lost, 3.4% of the force. The bombing was very scattered and caused little damage but part of the night-fighter force was drawn off from the Berlin operation.

Minor Operations

19 Stirlings and 14 Wellingtons minelaying off Texel and in the Frisians, 5 OUT sorties. No losses.

Total effort for the night

666 sorties, 34 aircraft (5.1%) lost.