

The 4T9er

LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET!

The 49 Squadron Association Magazine
August 2019 Issue 54



The International Bomber Command Memorial
Lincoln

IN MEMORIAM

W. Day A. Morgan D. Snowden R.F. Money

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Angela Rossi

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 54th issue of The 4T9er and as usual I start by thanking those who are helping keep us afloat with their donations.

I regret that I must report the passing of four 4T9ers. Bill Day was a friend of the late 49er Jack Shearing and was proposed as a 'Friend' by him in recognition of the part he played in the rededication of the 49 Squadron Memorial on Worthing Pier. Bill was trained as a wop/ag and served in the Middle and Far East on communications flights from the U.K.. Alan Morgan died on 18th May aged 96. On 21st February 1944 Alan was the flight engineer in P/O Jack Lett's crew when they bombed Stuttgart. This is his account of the life changing event that happened on this operation:

'Shortly after leaving the target the main entrance door blew open. Sgt. Campbell the wireless operator went back to try to deal with it. After a while, the skipper instructed me to go back and see if I could help. I found the W/OP had passed out from lack of oxygen but I managed to connect him up to the supply at the rest bed and he soon regained consciousness. The skipper then told me to carry on with the attempt to close the rear door. I also passed out when my oxygen bottle expired. At the same time I was close to the open door with an outside temperature of minus 42 degrees. My skipper sensed that something had gone wrong and reduced height from 22,000ft. Down to 10,000ft whilst the bomb aimer Sgt. Mackew came to my assistance.

'We made an emergency landing at Ford and from there I was taken to Chichester Hospital for treatment on my badly frost-bitten hands. Jack and the rest of the crew flew back to Fiskerton with the bomb aimer acting as flight engineer.' [Sadly the bomb aimer Gerry Mackew was killed just two months later, on April 23rd, whilst still flying with Jack Lett when he was hit by shrapnel during a raid on Brunswick. He was just 21 years old. Jack Lett went on to complete 34 operations and was awarded the DFC.]

Meanwhile, for Alan gangrene had set in and he was transferred to East Grinstead where all his fingers were amputated at the first knuckle. Fortunately

he was under the care of Sir Archibald McIndoe, thus he became a member of the famous Guinea Pig Club.

“After the war I made a living as a skilled jig borer and tool maker and have led a full life thanks to the skill of Sir Archibald.” Many years ago I visited

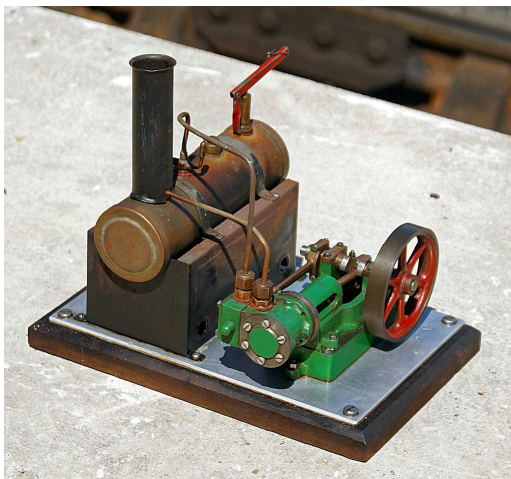


Photo: John Oates

Alan and he kindly presented me with two model steam engines. One is a commercial model but the one illustrated was machined and constructed by him, a wonderful testament to his skill in spite of his handicap.

It must be said that during the tough times, and there were tough times, Alan was supported by a strong woman, his wife Ella. Many years ago during a visit to their home Alan was telling me of all the good and exciting things that had happened to him as a 'Guinea Pig' and I said to him, “So none of that would have happened if

you hadn't lost your fingers.” He replied, “I wouldn't change a thing.” In January 2012 Daphne 'Snowy' Snowden rang and asked if she could join our association as a Friend. I asked her why she wished to do this and she said that she was passionate about Bomber Command as her father was S/Ldr Henry Maudslay DFC who failed to return from the Dams Raid. Sadly a friend of hers left a message to say that Daphne had died. Finally the daughter of Roy Money telephoned to say that he died on March 9th aged 89. Roy was a sergeant navigator on Lincolns flying in the crew of Sgt. Newphrys.

On June 5th Barbara and I went to the National Memorial Arboretum to give our memorial a polish before the D-Day Commemoration Gathering to be attended by Prince William. Whilst doing this a group of children, aged about ten, arrived with two teachers, one of whom asked us about the memorial and our connection. The children listened attentively as I gave them a short talk. They were all particularly interested in Bomber Command as their school was near High Wycombe, the former home of Bomber Command Headquarters, now Strike Command.

I welcome New Associate Member Angela Rossi, the daughter of Sgt Edwin Alexander Read who flew 14 ops in the mid upper turret of F/O F Eltis' Lancaster. Angela was only sixteen when her father died.

My latest Kindle book is 'Secret Wartime Britain' by Colin Philpott and it puts an interesting slant on crime during WWII. I have always been surprised, and not a little disgusted, by the rise in crime during hostilities. The author explains that, "...much of that was because the number of crimes on the statute book went up dramatically to deal with the exigencies of war.

"The legislation and regulations which created a myriad of new ways of breaking the law in wartime Britain were conceived in the febrile atmosphere of the 'Phoney War' over the winter of 1939-40 and the subsequent threat of invasion the following summer. Two Emergency Powers (Defence) Acts were passed, the first in 1939 and the second in 1940 which essentially gave the Government sweeping powers to conduct war. These included the power to create offences by Order of Council which were enshrined in the various sets of Defence Regulations and came into effect as the war progressed.

"...The belief in the danger of the 'enemy within' and a 'Fifth Column' led, among other things, to the creation of a range of new offences. The official record of crime in wartime Britain 'Criminal Statistics England and Wales, 1939 to 1945', [*I can't believe that Scotland and Northern Ireland were crime free. ED..*] published by the Home Office in 1947, lists thirty-six different categories of defence regulation offences including those relating to misleading acts, interference with HM Forces, sabotage, photography, protected places and areas, looting and publication of disturbing reports. There were also a range of offences related to matters like the blackout, use of public shelters, use of fuel, control of employment and industry. There were even offences related to pigeons!"

The book also states, "Cabinet papers from the time reveal the level of paranoia even at the top of Government. The then Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, sent a note to cabinet colleagues on 5th June 1940 urging discretion when dining in restaurants. He warned them of the dangers of conversations being overheard by Italian waiters."

"Midway through the war, there was concern about whether punishments for 'Caress Talk' were severe enough. *The People* newspaper reported on December 13th 1942 that the Home Office had advised magistrates that they should impose stricter sentences for 'Careless Talk' offences. In 1943 the Home Office produced a paper proposing an increase in sentences under Defence Regulation 3. The proposal was to increase the maximum sentence to seven years' imprisonment. In the end, the penalties stayed the same, three months' imprisonment or £100 fine on summary conviction and two years' imprisonment or a £500 fine for conviction on indictment."

Little wonder that crime figures went up!

'Til the next time.

Commencing on page 9 of Issue 53 of The 4T9er, May 2019, we included a report by Associate Member Robert McEaney of the visit to Bolstern, Germany, to remember the crew of 49 Squadron Lancaster ND474 which crashed on the night of 15/16 March 1944. Unfortunately space did not permit the inclusion of Robert's speech. This enforced omission is remedied herewith:

Good morning-

Fr Shinto, Fr John, Mayoress Doris Schroter, President of the German War Graves Agency Wolfgang Schneiderhan, the people of Bolstern and our dear friend Anton Stork.

We are delighted to rekindle the bonds of friendship that blossomed five years ago when over 35 relatives came to this beautiful village to mark with you in friendship the 70th Anniversary of the death of the seven airmen in March 1944.

That journey was, as our journey is today, a pilgrimage of remembrance and reconciliation. In making it we remember not just the airmen but also the kindness of the people of Bolstern who during the dark days of conflict showed such humanity.

None of us here today would have known the airmen, we are very much representing our parents' generation, acknowledging their loss and their sacrifice while at the same time celebrating the humanity of the villagers. You the people of Bolstern gave our parents loved ones not just the dignity of a Christian burial but the honour of laying them to rest in the cemetery here among your own deceased loved ones.

We know that our parents' generation would have found both strength and sustenance from the knowledge that the airmen received a proper burial and that in the spirit of Christian fellowship they are remembered annually in this church by your prayers.

While we can never rewrite the past we each have a duty to work towards a new and brighter future. The first and noble chapter of our ongoing journey of friendship was written 75 years ago when the people of this beautiful village demonstrated their humanity to the deceased airmen.

On behalf of all the members of our Relatives Group I would like to thank our dear friend Anton Stork and the people of Bolstern for the warmth of your friendship, the depth of your humanity and your ongoing respect for our shared past.

It is very appropriate that Mr Wolfgang Schneiderhan, President of the German War Graves Agency, is with us this weekend; his recognition of your and our shared journey is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

THE MUNICH RAID

By

John Chatterton

We were first back, as we had promised the ground crew we would be.

We knew it was our last trip as the Wing Commander had taken me on one side after briefing and told me so. This was far better than announcing it publicly where superstition reigned supreme. The Wing Co shared our Lanc Y Yorker with us, which was a great advantage since he only operated about once a month, and his actual words were “make sure you bring MY aeroplane back safely, as I’ve got most of my second tour to do on her”.

The ground crew got to know somehow - they were the most dedicated bunch you could ever have come across – spot on professionally, but also, always trying to improve our comfort where ever possible. For instance, in place of the crude and totally inadequate devices that Avro saw fit to issue with the Lancaster, our rigger had fitted up the superior Mk 1 Toilet Tube, complete with funnel, that saw a lot of use during the nine and three quarter hours to Munich. Incidentally – I was pleased to hear from the last skipper of Y Yorker, who took her on her last trip – number 123, that it was still being appreciated sixteen months later.

As we clambered aboard to start the engines, the crew chief, Sgt. Alan Rubenstein, one of the few Rhodesians left on 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron said “Darn if I won’t see you in myself in the morning!” And Wee Jock the rear gunner piped up with “Aye and don’t forget the beer!”

9 ¾ hours later we were taxing smartly around the peri track to dispersal, Wee Jock complaining as usual about the slight bump on landing, and I promised to do better when we gathered again in six months time for our second tour. We turned a corner and could see our dispersal ahead.

The bomb aimer said “The whole blooming lot have turned out to see us back!” Sure enough, instead of a lone airman with a couple of torches, there was the whole ground crew:- engine fitters, riggers, electricians, wireless mechanics and armourers together with the odd bowser driver. “Hope there’s still some beer left!”, said Wee Jock. He needn’t have worried – they had not opened a single bottle.

This was soon remedied however – and beer and banter flowed freely. My throat was too full for words, but I managed to get a few mouthfuls down, all the time wishing it was hot coffee.

Many toasts and responses were made amid a lot of leg pulling. The armourer said “It will be a darn sight safer on dispersal now you lot have finished!” referring to the time that our Canadian mid upper gunner had inadvertently loosed off about twenty rounds above everybody’s heads, severely frightening

the rooks in the spinney half a mile away.

There was more in this vein, then the crew bus dragged up with a squeal of brakes and a clatter of loose objects:- it was our favourite WAAF driver.

“Hi Carol – have a beer and come back in 10 minutes!” “All right then,” she said, fishing out from behind her seat one of the standard issue RAF white enamel mugs. She knocked back the beer, and left – letting in the clutch with her usual gay abandon.

She came back after 10 minutes, and again 10 minutes later, accepting the odd half pint each time, but finally decanted us at debriefing.

We heard later that the party around Y Yorker went on for some time, gathering in the neighbouring dispersals. Carol was busy picking up the other 15 crews – the last of whom landed at 7.35 so she contrived to pass Yorker’s dispersal several more times, and each time the enamel mug was deployed.

We enquired about her the next day, and learnt that she was found back at the MT section, immaculately parked between two other trucks. She was still sitting at the wheel, a beatific smile on her face, eyes closed, and singing softly to herself “I’m dreaming of a white Christmas” – most appropriate!

At Debriefing was our favourite Intelligence Officer, Henry Treece, ex School Master from Humberside who became a well known author after the war.

I looked round at my crew, sitting at this table for the last time. The crew that I had taken for granted for the last 8 months. The crew that had never let me down. I felt quite humble that they called me skipper, and that night after night they put their lives in my hands. I was very proud of them.

In my euphoric state I just went through the motions answering Henry’s questions, but the navigator, meticulous as ever, filled in the details:-

Munich attacked at 01.48. Height 19,000 feet. Heading 155 degrees magnetic. Indicated Air Speed 180. Weather clear – some cirrus haze at 20,000 feet. One red spot fire in bomb site.

People came over to congratulate us. Crews with 27, or 28 ops, very warmly (they were our mates of course). Crews with 15 or 16 ops, a little bit enviously. And the new boys looked at us with a certain degree of awe.

Then suddenly it hit me – it was all over.

No more gritting my teeth to face the miles of Berlin flak.

No more desperate manoeuvres to try and escape the coning search lights.

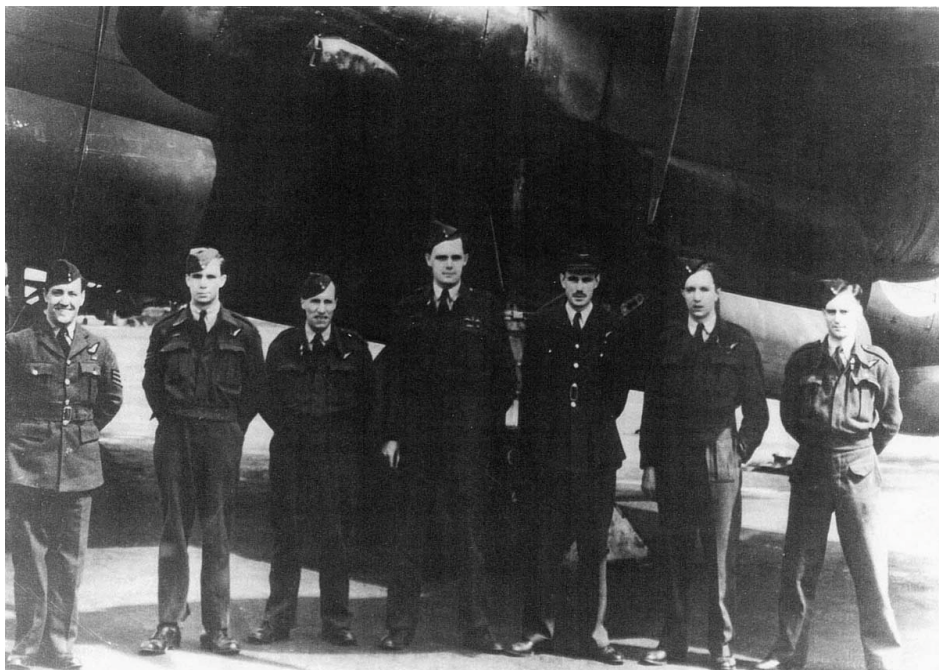
No more sitting on the edge of my seat waiting for “Corkscrew Port Go!”

No more groping through the clouds on instruments worrying about the ice.

And

No more FEAR.

*Adapted from the book “Ploughshare to Shining Sword”
by Richard Underwood with thanks to Mike Chatterton.*



**END OF TOUR PHOTOGRAPHS,
DUNHOLME LODGE MAY 1944**

Above: The Chatterton crew. Below: With their ground crew.





VISIT TO DUNHOLME LODGE AND THE IBCC.

On June 30th four members of the ‘Crew’, Stuart Keay, Alan Parr, Ed Norman and Colin Cripps with their wives, ‘ground crew’, visited Dunholme Lodge during the National (open) Garden Scheme, courtesy of Margaret and Brian Wykes.

Whilst the memorial shown above and a number of RAF buildings come as no surprise, the scenes on page 10 have just the opposite effect to those visiting the former RAF bomber station. The beautiful orchard and walled garden breathe a peace that could never have been present during the war.

The memorial and a museum were created by Brian and Margaret and we are most grateful to them for perpetuating the memory of Dunholme Lodge from where 49 Squadron flew during the month from September 22nd to October 23rd 1943 when problems were experienced with Fiskerton’s runway.





The museum building can be seen in the middle distance above, and beyond which were the runways. Referring to the lower photograph on page 9, Brian and his colleagues had mown a life size outline of a Lancaster, a most thoughtful touch.





In the afternoon we visited the IBCC. The above photograph shows the view from the main building whilst the lower photo illustrates the reverse scene.



75th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF D-DAY

I'm grateful to my friend Phil Waterfield for sending these photographs which he took at Duxford on June 6th during the departure of the Dakotas for the D-Day commemoration in Normandy.





The Dakotas prior to take off. In the foreground is a DH Dragon Rapide.



**The UK's only airworthy Boeing B17G - 'Sally B'.
Sally appears to have stripped off since I last saw her!**

WOODHALL SPA 40'S FESTIVAL
13th-14th July 2019

By
Carol Bonfield



They've hailed it as their 'most successful festival yet.' My husband Steve and I were amongst the 45,000 visitors who were greeted by a feast of entertainment at this, Woodhall Spa's eighth 1940s festival. As newcomers to such events, we were amazed by the amount of effort that had gone into the



weekend; the whole village it seemed had been transported back to World War 2. We were entertained by singers, dancers and pipers as we strolled past decorated shopfronts and 40s vehicles, keeping an eye open for Churchill, Montgomery and the occasional Capt. Mainwaring along the way. We witnessed explosions and gunfire in the grounds of Petwood Hotel as a re-enactment took place to mark the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden, followed by a gentle hum in the distance that announced the imminent approach of the Lancaster – then all eyes were skywards as it made its spine-tingling flypast directly above the heads of the silenced onlookers.

This was our first 40s festival; it will not be our last.



‘Monty’ visits Petwood Hotel.







I am grateful to Wg Cdr Jim Nicholls, who is based at RAF High Wycombe, firstly for informing me of the ceremony in France, secondly for arranging the laying of our wreath and thirdly for sending me the following report.

FRENCH PAY TRIBUTE TO WORLD WAR II LANCASTER CREW

The crew of a World War II Royal Air Force Lancaster have been honoured with the unveiling of a new memorial in the French field where they crashed. For years their foreign final resting place had been cared for by local children. Now the French community in St Martin-sur-Oreuse have come together with British families and military colleagues to pay tribute to 7 men who gave their lives in defence of the UK and her allies.

75 years ago the men of Lancaster JB701 were on one of 12 aircraft from 49 Squadron who took off from RAF Fiskerton in Lincolnshire bound for a bombing raid over Northern Germany. In the early hours of 29 July 1944 the crew were shot down by an enemy fighter aircraft near Sens, 120km south of Paris. None survived the crash and they were buried together in the nearby cemetery of St Martin-sur-Oreuse.



Bob Kirkpatrick was only 18 months old when he lost his father that day, 30-year-old air gunner Sergeant George Kirkpatrick. Now 76, Bob, his wife and two nieces travelled from Great Bookham in Surrey to unveil the new memorial nestled in trees on the edge of the farmland field.



“My father and many others gave their lives so that we could all be free. For the past 75 years this French village community has honoured my family by tending his grave, ensuring his sacrifice is remembered. This part of France, like many others, will remain connected to Britain by the blood in the soil. I am happy that my father is buried with his crew and that his resting place is protected by friends he never met.”



The bringing together of families and friends is the work of local man Monsieur Jean-Luc Prieur who has been searching for living relatives and raising awareness of the crew's story for the past 15 years. Some of the men in the 1940's photographs remain a mystery; the crew who ranged in age from 20 to 31 had home towns spread across the UK including Cardiganshire, Cornwall and Croydon.

Bob's cousin spotted Jean-Luc's advert in a local Nottingham paper as George Kirkpatrick had lived in Sutton-in-Ashfield. Bob and his brother then researched their father's role in the RAF.

“I've sat in the rear gunner's position in a Lancaster. You could not take your parachute in there - it's isolated and cramped. My father must have had tremendous courage to clamber down to that seat. I've heard they would kick out the perspex canopy to get a clearer view to fire their guns; that meant you'd be flying long hours in sub-zero temperatures. The courage that must



have been required to do that, for so many missions, with flak exploding around you. I take my hat off to all of the crews of Bomber Command for the job they had to do.”

More than 55,573 young men died whilst flying with Bomber Command in World War II. Flight Lieutenant Neil Farrell flies the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) Lancaster, commemorating all those who have served in the RAF and Royal Flying Corps.

“Talking with the veterans about their experiences during WWII brings home the significance of continuing to fly the RAF BBMF fleet of WWII aircraft as a living tribute to them. We should never forget the sacrifices they made nor the hardships they faced in defence of their country.”

Wg Cdr Nicholls sent the following e-mail:

“A very moving event, broken into 3 serials: one for a resistant fighter,



one for the 7 crew at the CWGC graves and then the unveiling of the new memorial, with a fly past from a nearby flying club.

“You may be amused to know that during the ceremony, the landowner’s Labrador was overly keen to meet people and bounded around happily. I pointed out

to the organiser, M. Jean-Luc Prieur, that your Sqn motto was “Beware of the dog!” - Jean-Luc translated that to the attendees!

“(I took along some 49 Sqn beer from Ferry Ales at Fiskerton, which didn’t last long.)”

Editor’s footnote:

The photograph at the head of this article shows the collective grave of:

F/L W L: Powell Pilot

Sgt. J F West Flight Engineer

F/O G E Franklin Navigator

F/S D C Stevens Wireless Operator

Sgt. G E Kirkpatrick Mid Upper Gunner

F/O A S Cole Bomb Aimer

Sgt. T Moore Rear Gunner

Of the five headstones one bears the names of F/L Powell and F/S Stephens and another the names of F/O Franklin and F/O Cole.

It is not unknown for air gunners to exchange positions for some operations.

Further extracts from Paul Gaunt's tribute to his father, reproduced here with is kind permission.

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

By

Paul Gaunt

Part 5

Eighth Operation: Bombing Cologne, October 13th/14th, 1941

HAMPDEN AE132

P/O WOOD: pilot

Sgt REID: navigator

Sgt GAUNT: wireless operator & air gunner

Sgt POINTER: air gunner

Up 0107 hrs, down 0722 hrs (6 hrs 15 mins.)

Details of Sortie:- On DR position Namur heavy Flak and concentration of searchlights observed three miles to port. Found Rhine and reached Cologne, but being unable to pinpoint railway yards, bombed town.

Summary of Events:- Weather widespread mist and local fog becoming fair.

Visibility poor, but improving later. Nine aircraft to stand by to bomb Cologne.

At 0107hrs, eight aircraft took off (one having a taxiing accident prior to take off and being unable to proceed). Four were successful in bombing main objective. Several aircraft experienced severe icing conditions and in one case an engine cut out on return, though a soft landing was made. One aircraft had a spin of 8000 feet owing to icing and on pulling out, the aileron controls were useless, necessitating forced landing on return. Two unsuccessful aircraft bombed areas in Cologne. No aircraft missing from this raid.

Results:- 30 Hampdens and nine Manchesters; Searchlight glare prevented target identification. Cologne reported only a few bombs. Six people killed, five injured and damage to 17 houses. No losses.

Ninth Operation: Bombing Duisberg, October 16th/17th 1941

HAMPDEN AE132

P/O WOOD: pilot

Sgt REID: navigator

Sgt GAUNT: wireless operator & air gunner

Sgt POINTER : air gunner

Up 0037 hrs, down 0600 hrs (5 hrs 23 mins.)

Details of Sortie:- 9/10 Cloud encountered and DR navigation to target, moderate flak, did a square search and then encountered intense and accurate flak, so presuming it to be Duisberg, bombed it.

Summary of Events:- Weather - scattered squally showers, becoming fine, visibility 6-12 miles, deteriorating.

16 aircraft to stand by, five to lay mines in the Baltic, eight to bomb objective Duisberg and three to carry out intruder patrols in searchlight belts, to assist main effort.

1750 hrs - Gardeners cancelled.

1800 hrs - All intruders took off and were successful in breaking up the searchlights. Of the eight bombers, none were able to bomb main objective. One aircraft did not take off owing to damage sustained in a taxiing accident. Flak estimated position of Duisberg, which was bombed by all aircraft and several burst seen through cloud, 10/10 cloud prevented any accurate bombing. Results:- 87 Aircraft - 47 Wellingtons, 26 Hampdens and 14 Whitleys, with eight further Hampdens carrying out searchlight suppression flights. The target was cloud-covered and only estimated positions were bombed. One Wellington lost.

Tenth Operation: Bombing Bremen, October 20th/21st, 1941

HAMPDEN AE132

P/O WOOD: pilot

Sgt WEST: navigator

Sgt GAUNT: wireless operator & air gunner

Sgt POINTER: air gunner

Up 1846 hrs, down 0152 hrs (7 hrs 5 mins.)

Details of Sortie:- No pinpoint obtained at Bremen except for searchlights. Circled round picking up rivers in light of numerous flares. Being unable to pinpoint - bombs dropped off DR position of Bremen. Flak exceptionally accurate.

Summary of Events:- Weather fine at first, variable skies later and scattered squalls, wind 30 mph. 16 aircraft to stand by, six bombers and 10 fire-raisers to attack Bremen and two to lay mines in the area of the Fresian Islands.

1800 hrs - all aircraft took off at short intervals and two gardeners were successful in laying mines in the Fresian area. Owing to intense haze and darkness only five bombers successfully attacked the target, making pinpointing impossible. Two unsuccessful aircraft returned their bombs to base, but the others attacked DR position of target, Bremen town, Flak and searchlight

concentrations in vicinity of target Oldenberg and Flarepath at Croningen. Several aircraft experienced severe icing and other difficulties included failure of intercom and heating systems and in only one case were bursts observed. All 49 Squadron aircraft returned safely.

Results:- 153 Aircraft, consisting of 82 Hampdens, 48 Wellingtons, 15 Stirlings and eight Manchesters to two aiming points. Five Aircraft lost - two Hampdens, two Wellingtons, and one Manchester. Returning crews claimed to have started fires in the target area. The Bremen report records only that this was a small raid and gave no details.

Sobering Thoughts

Results of Bombing November 10th/11th, 1941 - February 22nd, 1942

The two main factors in any military campaign are the results as compared with the cost of casualties sustained. Things were moving adversely against Bomber Command; it is thought that heavy casualties can be sustained as long as operable results are being achieved. Bomber Command throughout this period, however, was definitely not getting the results it would have liked and the losses in men and machines were unjustified. The evidence available on bombing results makes for sobering thoughts. Firstly, the disturbing reports of the ineffectiveness of attacks on targets in Germany; these reports coming through neutral countries for many months. In the first six months of 1941, the RAF collected its own evidence from three sources. Firstly, there were many verbal reports from the returning bomber crews, these were processed and passed on with a certain amount of optimism by squadrons and groups, to finally arrive on a report on which most public announcements were made. Secondly, there was the photographic reconnaissance unit, formed to obtain evidence of damage carried out to enemy installations; only a minimum amount of good photos could be used and these sometimes conflicted sharply with the crew reports and was not always accepted as conclusive. Thirdly, the only real evidence held by the RAF was the accumulated stock of individual aircraft bombing photographs taken by that proportion of the forces whose planes were fitted with bombing cameras. It was in August 1942 the Butt Report was completed – its conclusions were illuminating.

Butt analysed 4,065 individual aircraft photographs taken during 100 night raids in June and July 1941. Despite the fact that it was usually the more experienced crews in the squadron who were given these cameras, only one in four of the crews which claimed to have bombed a target in Germany were found to have been within five miles of that target. In the full moon period, the proportion of crews whose bombs fell in the five mile zone increased to two in five on all targets (about one in three over German targets), while in the none moon periods of each month, the five mile zone was hit by one in fifteen crews

on all targets (about one in twenty on German targets). In the areas affected by industrial haze, the proportion of successful crews was considerably less. These poor and very disappointing figures were to be compounded by the fact that only the photos of crews reporting successful bombing in the first instance had contributed to the figures. A third of all crews despatched on operations did not even claim to have reached the target area. Very early on in the war, it became apparent that daylight raids brought high losses, bombers could not defend themselves and flight cover was not an option over Germany. Later in 1944-45 with the use of drop tanks, allied forces gave cover virtually all the way to the target and back. The North American P-51 Mustang, with its Rolls-Royce Merlin engine built under license in America, was to be many a bomber crews' saviour. Night time raids were to be preferred by the British bomber squadrons. During this early period of the war, bomber crews were not in the picture regarding the overall situation. Some had good results, some had bad and as far as losses were concerned, it was that other part of 'the equation' – that it happened to other aircrew.

Operations July 7th/8th to November 10th had cost 414 night bombers and 112 day bombers lost over enemy territory, in the sea or shot down over England by German intruders. These losses were approximately identical to the numbers of the entire front line strength of aircraft and crews in four months. The percentage loss of aircraft despatched was 3.5% by night and 7.1% by day.

Eleventh Operation – Anti-Shipping & Mine Laying in Kiel Bay November 1st/2nd, 1941

HAMPDEN AE132

P/O WOOD: pilot

Sgt WEST: navigator

Sgt POINTER: wireless operator

Sgt GAUNT: 2nd wireless operator

Up 1951hrs, down 0358 hrs (7 hrs 7 mins.)

Details of Sortie:- Vegetable planted in primary position from 700 feet. Light very good 8/10ths cloud at 2000 feet. Fix on coast at Bult and timed run to position. Parachute seen to open and splash seen. Wing bombs returned.

Summary of Events:- Four aircraft to standby for anti-shipping mine laying in Kiel Bay, two aircraft successfully laid mines, the other two aircraft sought shipping targets in the Frisians. In heavy rain with poor visibility 1,500 yards, Flight Lieutenant de Mestre (AD980) and crew attacked shipping from 1,000 feet. A near miss was made on one ship, but the remainder overshot. During the attack the Hampden was hit by flak and the rear gunner Pilot Officer

Holmes was wounded. The crew returned to Scampton safely. The second aircraft detailed for anti shipping was piloted by Squadron Leader Drakes (AE224). Nothing was heard from this crew after take off. It is thought that a night-fighter shot them down over the North Sea.

Squadron Leader David Baron Drakes and crew are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

FTR AE224

S/L D B DRAKES: pilot
(missing)

P/O W H CHEETHAM: air
gunner & observer
(missing)

P/O V D BEANEY: navigator (missing)

F/Sgt W A WATSON:
(missing)



*Aircraft & Crew Losses
Essen Intruder, November
8th/9th, 1941*

P.O. Wood who piloted some of Tubby's early operations. He was killed in November 1941.

Three aircraft were despatched to Essen. One of these was to bomb and was piloted by Sergeant Freeman and his crew. Freeman, a little later was to become Tubby's pilot (64125). This aircraft was followed by two intruders, one of these P1206 (EA-Z) piloted by Warrant Officer Christopher Saunders DFM and crew were shot down by a German night fighter flown by Oberfeldwebel Wey of 11/NJG2. The aircraft was hit over the Dutch coast and set on fire. It was seen to circle Berkhout, South West of Hoorn in Holland. The wreckage sank deep into the marshy ground and the bodies of Sergeants John Kehoe (of Eire) and Stanley Mullenger have never been recovered. The pilot, Warrant Officer C A Saunders, and navigator, Sergeant James D'Arcy, are both buried in Bergen general cemetery.

FTR P1206

W/O C A SAUNDERS: pilot (killed)

Sgt J M D'ARCY: navigator (killed)

Sgt J E KEHOE: wireless operator & air gunner (missing)

Sgt S G MULLENGER: as above (missing)

[In 2007 the wreckage of P1206 was excavated by a Dutch salvage team and the remains of John Kehoe and Stanley Mullenger recovered. They were laid to rest, adjacent to their pilot and navigator, with Full Military Honours on May 7th 2008. The wreckage of P1206 was presented to RAF Scampton Museum on October 21st of that year where it is on display. See The 4T9er issues 11 and 13. ED.]

*The Flying Accidents, including the Hackthorn Hall Tragedy,
November 11th, 1941*

In the late afternoon of Tuesday, November 11th, 1941, Sergeant Pilot Keith Bryant was detailed to ferry X3135 over to Dunholme Lodge. The pilot took along two members of the ground crew, LAC Andrew Wilson and AC2 Walter Fulcher. The Hampden was seen to make a steep left hand turn before crashing into the ground at Hackthorn Hall, north east of Scampton Aerodrome. Tragically, all on board were killed.

Crashed X3135

Sgt K BRYANT: pilot (killed)

LAC A G WILSON: (killed)

AC2 W H FULCHER: (killed)

To be continued.

READER'S LETTERS

Associate Member Peter Jones e-mailed:

“For general interest and it may be something that is already well known, but I have just read a book called ‘Black Night for Bomber Command’ by Richard Knott. This refers to operations on 16th/17th December 1943, the night of my father’s first operational flight with 49 Sqn. It chronicles the loss of a significant number of aircraft on return to the UK due to severe bad weather, primarily fog. Interestingly Fiskerton was one of a handful of airfields (mostly just East of Lincoln) that were relatively unaffected by the fog and 49 Sqn suffered only one aircraft lost. Not a book specifically about 49 Sqn, although there are several mentions, but very well written and a very interesting read.”