

## Flight Lieutenant J B Smith DFC

The following data relating to Flight Lieutenant Smith DFC has come from a number of sources which are listed in the bibliography (97 Sqn Operations Record Book January to June 1944)

SMITH, Flight Lieutenant John Baird, DFC. NZ414691

Born 5 Claremont Street, Dunedin 16<sup>th</sup> August 1916

Parents: Thomas Smith (Born Glasgow Scotland), Martha (nee Baird born Ballymena Northern Ireland)

Attended Southland Boys High School, Invercargill 1929 / 1933

Home address: 539 Broadway, Wellington E5, New Zealand

Occupation: Optician, Spear and Murray Limited, Wills Street, Wellington N2, 1939/1941

**17/8/41:** enlisted LAC A/Pilot RNZAF Levin/ITW

**28/9/41:** 3 EFTS [no 3 elementary flying training school]

No. 3 Elementary Flying Training School at R.N.Z.A.F station Harewood, New Zealand

No. 3 Elementary Flying Training School

Flying DH82 Tiger Moths (see picture), this school was established in August 1940 to train new pilots. This became one of the largest flying schools in the country when, after No. 2 EFTS was closed down at RNZAF Station Ashburton in October 1944, its instructors and aircraft were absorbed into this school. **From:** <http://www.cambridgeairforce.org>

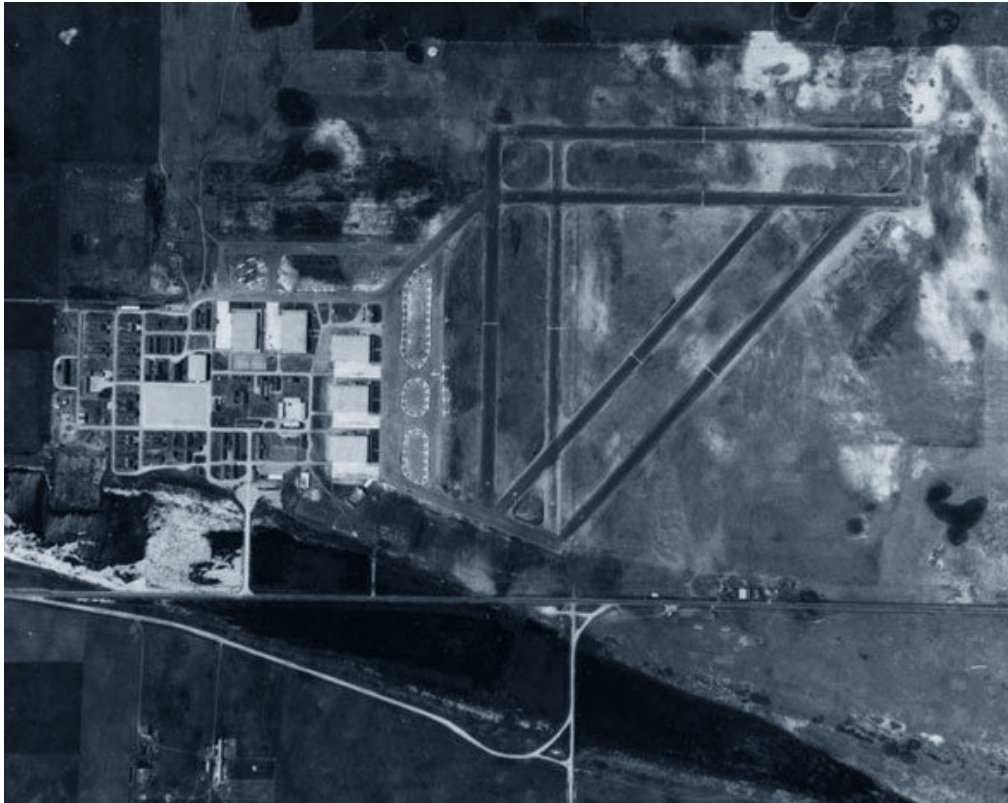
**28/9/41:** Embark for Canada

**17 November 1941** Attached to RCAF

**1 Dec 41, 4SFTS**

**No. 4 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) Course number 44**

**RCAF Station Saskatoon** was a World War II British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) base operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). It was located at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. Soon after the Second World War broke out, the airfield became home to No. 4 Service Flying Training School (SFTS), one of dozens of military air training facilities created under the BCATP. This station flew Avro Anson and Cessna Crane twin-engine trainers until 1944, when 4 SFTS was disbanded.



An aerial view taken vertically above **No. 4 Service Flying Training School** at Saskatoon. Close inspection of this photo reveals that the dotted oval shapes in front of the hangars are in fact 65 perfectly arranged training aircraft (probably Ansons and Cranes. In addition on the ramp in front of the upper hangar line are a dozen or more additional aircraft) RCAF Image. **From:** <http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/379/language/en-CA/Ghosts-of-Saskatchewan.aspx>

Extract from the end of course report at Saskatoon, signed by Wing Commander CF Newcome Commanding Officer, upon receiving his Pilot Wings:

This pupil has shown a high aptitude for learning of a high order and has progressed in a high average manner in all phases of his flying training. Is a confident capable pilot, light on controls, and handles aircraft very well both in the air and on the ground. Airmanship is good, high average in navigation ... instrument flying a high average. Will develop into a sound average service pilot.

Above average student, a willing and hard worker, a good sense of leadership and attitude towards service good.

**From** Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Form T53A revised 19-8-41

**5/12/41:** Pilots Badge & Sgt/Commissioned

**27/3/42:** 1 Y Depôt

No. 1 Y Depot was a holding unit headquartered in Halifax, Canada, with detachments in several large Canadian cities, including Montreal and Toronto. It was more an address than a place of residency. Airmen on the move would be assigned to this unit for pay and rations, but could be and would be physically located just about anywhere. **From:** <http://www.rwwalker.ca>

**8/4/42:** attached to RAF & embarked for UK

**1/5/42:** 3PRC – Personnel Reception Centre Bournemouth

**13/5/42:** 15(P)AFU – Pilot Advanced Flying Unit RAF Ramsbury  
([http://www.ramsburyatwar.com/Ramsbury\\_Airfield.htm](http://www.ramsburyatwar.com/Ramsbury_Airfield.htm))

**RAF Ramsbury** is a former Royal Air Force station located 5 miles (8.0 km) east-northeast of Marlborough, Wiltshire England equipped with Airspeed Oxfords who taught the pilots the rudimentary skills needed to control multi-engined aircraft

**24/6/42:** [attached to 1516 BATF (Beam/Blind Approach Training Flight) for c.1 wk commenced or finished 19 Jul], 26 OTU (Wellington).

26 OTU's purpose was specifically to train crews for RAF Bomber Command's night offensive. Here they would fly practise missions; navigation exercises and generally to get to know their aircraft, their functions and to work as a close-knit team. When fully proficient they would be posted to an operational Wellington Squadron.

Photographs of 26 OTU aircraft are hard to find. The unit's aircraft used three different unit fuselage codes - EU, PB and WG, almost certainly to differentiate between flights, or aircraft based at the satellite airfield of Little Horwood. This Wellington, LR132 WG-V of 26 OTU was based at RAF Wing. source - RAF Bomber Airfields of WW2 by Jonathan Falconer. From: [http://www.bansteadhistory.com/Memorial/2\\_F.html](http://www.bansteadhistory.com/Memorial/2_F.html)

**24/7/42:** 466 Sqn RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force )  
Wellington Bomber - 29 ops)  
**Last operation 2/8/43**

No. 466 Squadron RAAF was formed at Driffield, Yorkshire, on 15th October 1942, as a medium-bomber squadron, equipped with Wellington aircraft and under the control of No. 4 Group. It moved to Leconfield in December 1942, but returned to Driffield in June 1944, and remained based there for the rest of the European war.



Beginning operations against the enemy on 13th January 1943, with a mine laying (or Gardening) mission off the Frisian Islands, the squadron continued with Wellingtons until the end of August 1943, and during this period dropped 620 tons of bombs and laid 330 tons of mines. Halifax B.III's replaced the Wellingtons (which were disposed of in September 1943), and with these No. 466, during the remainder of the European war, made 170 raids on 92 different targets. **From:** <http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/bombercommandno466squadron.cfm>

The Vickers Wellington was a British twin-engine, long range medium bomber designed in the mid-1930s at Brooklands in Weybridge, Surrey, by Vickers-Armstrongs' Chief Designer, R. K. Pierson in response to specification B.9/32.

Top speed 378 km/h

Wingspan 26 m

Length 20 m

First flight June 15, 1936

Designer: Barnes Wallis

Manufacturer: Vickers-Armstrongs



**17/8/43: Citation Distinguished Flying Cross Gazette Issue 36135 published on the 13 August 1943.** [466 Sqn RAAF (Wellington)] A cool, resourceful and determined pilot, this captain of aircraft has attacked most of the enemy's most important objectives. He has also successfully laid mines in enemy waters during adverse weather. His sorties include two daylight attacks on Emden and one in which his aircraft received very severe damage during combat with an enemy fighter. At all times Flying Officer Smith has displayed outstanding courage and a fine fighting spirit

**22/8/43:** 3 FIS Oxford 10 OTU (Whitley) as instructor

The **Armstrong Whitworth Whitley** was the main aircraft which was based and used by 10 OTU at RAF Abingdon until 1944. The Whitley first flew in March 1936 and entered service with the RAF in 1937. The A.W.38 Whitley was manufactured at Baginton near Coventry which was adjacent to the present day Coventry Airport. This was the first modern heavy bomber used during the early part of WW2. This aircraft was not always popular with aircrew and often referred to as the *Flying Coffin*. There is not a single example of the aircraft in existence today. In the Coventry Air Museum there is rear body and tail section of a Whitley. **From:** <http://rafabingdon10otu.co.uk/>

**13/10/43 – 10/11/43:** No 48 OTU Staff Pilots Course

**14 /1/44: Citation Mention in Despatches** London Gazette Issue 36329 published on the 11 January 1944. Page 13 of 28 Flying Officer JB Smith RNZAF

**26<sup>th</sup> January 1944 – Dear Mrs Cross I have the pleasure in advising that your son, Flying Officer John Baird Smith DFC, has been mentioned in Dispatches for Meritorious Service rendered as a member of the Royal New Zealand Air Force**

**23/3/44: PFF NTU** (Path Finder Force Navigation Training Unit) RAF Warboys was a station near Cambridge and was home to the Path Finder Force Navigation Training Unit. The unit was set up to provide additional training to pilots and navigators for the Path Finder Force prior to posting to a PFF Squadron.

**Note:** 1<sup>st</sup> operation with 97 Squadron (Squadron ORB January to June 1944) 20/4/44

### **Flight Lieutenant J B Smith DFC Time Line with 466 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force**

The data is from 466 Squadron (Sqn) Operations Record Book (ORB) From: <http://www.naa.gov.au> and John Dann <http://www.halifaxlv827.co.uk>

**15/10/42:** Official Formation date of 466 Squadron Bomber Command Letter BC/S 21717/5/Org dated 14/10/42

**31/10/42:** posted in to 466 Sqn at Driffield

**31/10/42:** the Sqn possessed 14 complete aircrews, 9 trained on Wellington 1c's. 3 on Wellington 111s remaining 2 on Hampdens

**6/11/42:** Wellington X3409 Wing Commander Bailey test flew this aircraft – the Sqn's first flight

**8/11/42:** Sqn code letters – HD

**15/11/42:** the Sqn Cdr and eight captains of crews visited 102 Sqn RAF Pocklington, these 8 went as second pilots on a raid to Geneva Northern Italy P/O JB Smith being one of the captains

**21/11/42:** Night flying practice P/O Smith and Sgt Babington

**25/11/42:** the first of the Sqn's new Wellington X (Hercules V1) arrived

**6/12/42:** the two remaining aircraft to complete the establishment of 18 were ferried by Sqn pilots from Harwarden near Chester, visibility fell to about 1200yds for their arrival but both pilots (**P/O JB Smith** and Sgt Ford) showed fine airmanship in locating and landing safely.

**14/12/42:** Mine laying

**21/12/42:** search for Halifax of 78 Sqn ditched in the sea in the area of Skegness; gale-force conditions. 3 of the crew rescued by ASR (Air Sea Recue) launch.

**27/12/42:** Squadron moved to RAF Leconfield

#### **RAF Leconfield Data**

<http://www.forgottenairfields.com/united-kingdom/england/east-riding-of-yorkshire/leconfield-s1018.html>

53°52'37"N 000°26'07"W

Leconfield air field (RAF Leconfield) located in Yorkshire near to Beverley. Construction of the airfield began in 1935 and was completed in December 1936. Designated a bomber airfield, it featured 5 large hangars. Four of the hangars were built fronting the 'bombing circle, while a fifth was placed to the rear at the south end.

The airfield reopened in December 1942 receiving 196 and 466 Squadrons, both flying Wellingtons. Australian manned 466 Sqn and flew its first combat mission on 13 January 1943, and 196 Sqn on the night of 4/5 February. However, 4 Group was re-equipping to become an all-Halifax unit, so the Wellingtons were phased out.



RAF Leconfield from the air in May 1945



**11/1/43:** Sqn non-operational due to turret failure

**14/1/43:** mine laying off Ameland, visibility poor and only 21 aircraft hit target

Wellington X HE164 HD-B F/O Smith JB Pilot, Sgt Duckmanton HC 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1603 – 2021 Mines dropped from 900feet at 1755 hours. Cloud base at 200 feet, raining and almost dark. Pinpoint Ameland and fix. Both mines dropped.

**26/1/43:** ten aircraft took off to attack **Lorient** in NW France, nine bombed the target

Wellington X HE164 HD-B F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1714- 2339 7/10 cloud tops 3000. Visibility good. Bombed from 10,000 feet at 2024. Estuary and River Scorff and entrance channel to Port de Commerce identified with aid of flare. Big fires in target area and fires on both banks of River Scorff also on Keroman Peninsular.

**Summary:** at least seven aircraft found target and found not very concentrated fires. Visibility fairly good to a nd from target but cloud over target varied 3/10 to 9/10. Rear Gunner of aircraft HE-411 while over target at 2032 hours height 8500 feet saw enemy aircraft pass accross tail of own aircraft from starboard to port in a dive of apporximately 150 yds. Enemy aircraft did not appear to see own aircraft. Most aircraft report light flak from target and some inaccurate heavy flak. Heavily flak was also coming from Lannion and Guernsey. HE212 reported light flak from enemy coast to target and back. Balloons reported over target at 3/4000 feet. Only few searchlights over target hampered by cloud. Aircraft HE212 from height 10,000 feet at 2029 hours saw lighted flare path at 48 degrees 45 minutes N. 03 degrees 15 Minutes W. A great number of white lights on ground over whole section of the route. Concentration of light around Guingamp. Aircraft HE164 [F/O Smith] at 2014 hours height 10,000 feet just north of target saw a deep red ball of fire rise slowly to height of own aircraft then fall. Another aircraft at 2029 hours height 9000 feet junt North of target saw a bright orange light burning for a few seconds at 600 feet. It then fell to the ground and distintigrated. Aircraft HE153 at 2036 hours height 10,000 feet just after leaving target area saw a large red ball of flame falling to the ground lighting the cloud as it passed through. Later therre was a big white flash. Various [crews] suspected decoy fires were reported. In particular aircraft HE164 [F/O Smith] reports a rectangel of brilliant white lights S.E. of target on East Bank of river Blavet. Object: Bombing Attack on Lorient

**30/1/43:** 8 aircraft required for daylight bombing on **Emden**, this was to be done under cloud cover from a low level.

Wellington X HE164 HD-B F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1116 – 1634. Bombed from 2000 feet at 1320 hours. 10/10 cloud base at approximately 800 feet. Spent 20 minutes in Emden area coming in and out of cloud. Could not locate primary and eventually bombed built-up area close to large wood, railway and canal. Believed Aurich. Bombs dropped from cloud – bursts felt and heard but not seen.

**Summary:** aircraft HE153 had total failure of port engine and returned early. Cloud base at target area approximately 800-1000 feet. The five aircraft which reached kept breaking cloud to pinpoint themselves and on most occasions experienced sharp and accurate bursts of light flak. Two aircraft (HE212 and HE514) broke cloud right on target and had an excellent view of Emden. They then shot back in cloud and bombed from 11 and 12 hundred feet respectively. Aircraft HE411 attacked through cloud on DR and HE389 got a fix. Subsequently confirmed by pinpoint. Aircraft HE164 [F/O Smith] was unfortunate and though spending 20 minutes in area breaking through cloud at intervals could not locate

primary. Eventually built up area with woods and canal, railway and large road all running through it. Believed to be Aurich and bombed it. Two aircraft are missing (HE397 and HE471). On way out Cu and S Cu 8/10 – 10/10 base 2500 tops 6000 with occasional rain showers. Base falling to 1500 and tops to 1200 over target 10/10 base 700 tops 6000. Visibility was good below cloud. On return journey cloud broke over Frisians then small amounts towards English coast. Light icing in showers. Light anti-aircraft fire was reported from Norderney and Schiermonnikdg. Aircraft HE212 reports merchant vessel 3000/4000 tons alongside submarine slips with cranes. Aircraft HE514 reports three lines of small tramp vessels about 15 in each line at S.W. end of Nuer Binnen Hafen also ships in Dollart Basin. Aircraft HE411 reports two groups of three ships each probably coastal vessels hove to just N of Norderney. Aircraft fired approx 800 rounds in three bursts. Ships returned fire without effect.

**4/2/43:** weather – visibility good – small amounts of medium cumulus cloud. Wind light NW veered to SW. Nine aircraft were requested for a bombing attack on **Lorient**. All aircraft successfully attacked the target and returned. Eighteen aircraft from this station were airborne in a period of seventeen minutes. A very good night's work with the exception of photography. No results were obtained due to incorrect loading of photo flashes.

**Wellington X HE501 HD-J** F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. Bombs were dropped from 9000 feet at 2111 hours. The weather was clear with good visibility. Bombs fell a little short, but end of stick thought to have fallen in north part of target area. River bend 3 miles north of target was illuminated by searchlights. The town and docks were well alight and the blaze of the fires was seen from the French coast on the way in. A better show than last trip – fires were larger and more concentrated.



Flt Lt J B Smith and aircrew 466 Squadron 4<sup>th</sup> February 1943 Wellington X HE501 HD-J  
(Courtesy of J Dann <http://www.halifaxlv827.co.uk/>)

Looking at picture from the left: Sgt P E Pilborough Wop/AG [Commissioned F/O], P/O Jeffrey DFC B/A [Squadron Leader S R Jeffrey MBE DFC], F/O Smith JB DFC Pilot (KIA 4/5/44/ 97 Sqn), P/O Vaizey DFC Navigator (KIA 21/7/44), Sgt P J Moloney A/G

**Summary:** all aircraft report an excellent show. The target was well lit up and visibility was excellent. Actual results of bombing difficult to assess as target was well alight, but all crews were well satisfied. Conditions on the whole were good but haze near base on return caused a little trouble, otherwise weather was ideal. At target area light and heavy flak was moderate – light flak was effective at 10,000 feet, occasionally reaching 12,000 feet. Some crews were impressed with the increase of searchlights, without a comparable increase of flak. Estimates of searchlights varied from 12 to 30 both in cones and in rows. No reports of aircraft going down over target. Aircraft HE501 [F/O Smith] reported 2034 hours passing over cluster of lights, and presumed them to be ships. Bursts of heavy flak came from amongst these. Aircraft HE411 reported gun flashes from 50deg N 03 20' W at 2033 hours. Several aircraft reported very bright rectangular decoy of white lights on west bank of river, 3 1/2 miles NNW of target. A bright square of lights also reported at Poulay 12 miles N of target, and bright yellow orange lights, described as a glowing fire and a beacon without characteristics at Pleubian on N French coast.

**7/2/43:** weather – visibility good with small amounts of cloud – wind N but backed later to NW. Seven aircraft requested for bombing **Lorient**. A large number of aircraft took part – 18 from this station. The raid was a great success – weather conditions ideal. One of our aircraft had navigation failure and returned early. Some photos were obtained.

Wellington X HE501 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1920 – 0100 bombs were dropped from 9000 feet at 2152 hours. No cloud but much smoke. Fires were visible from French coast and river Scorff identified. There were huge fires in the dock area on the west bank of the river. Saw gutted buildings and volumes of smoke. There were fires all over the town. Bombs believed to have fallen in the dock area on the east bank.

**Summary:** it was mostly reported that flak was a good deal less than on previous occasions. Both heavy and light flak spasmodic and slightly more intense at a little distance from the town. In the town itself defence appeared to have given up the struggle except for occasional outbursts, though two or three aircraft thought heavy flak was a trifle more intense than on previous raid. Flak generally was a deterrent barrage rather than aimed, searchlights were very few. One or two cones of up to half a dozen N of town and E of river. Some aircraft reported balloons between 3,00 and 7,000 feet in and around the town. Several decoys were reported near the town. HE153 reported aircraft with light in nose too far away to identify, at about 3 miles north of target.

**17/2/43:** Weather - poor visibility – less than 2000 yards – persisted until late afternoon. Varying strato cumulus cloud and light southerly winds. Three aircraft detailed to attack **Emden** in daylight with cloud cover. All aircraft carried out their tasks without opposition from flak, but two encountered fighters. HE150 flown by Flying Officer JB Smith had a combat with a ME110 and by skilful flying avoided extensive damage. The ME110 was beaten off by the rear gunner Sgt Robbins using his guns manually since the hydraulic systems had failed. The aircraft was landed at base without additional damage without flaps or trimming tabs and it was then discovered that the starboard petrol tanks had been holed and on fire. The oil tank punctured, both hydraulic services, intercommunications set, pitot head and dependant instruments were out of action. The rear turret armour plating was scored by an explosive bullet and the Perspex cupola blown out on the starboard side. None of the crew was injured. Following an SOS signal from the aircraft, four other aircraft of the Squadron stood by to make an immediate search, but this was fortunately unnecessary. Three other aircraft were detailed for mining operations but this was cancelled due to weather conditions.



Wellington X **HE150** HD-A F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. It was clear over the target but hazy with poor visibility and 10/10ths cloud on outskirts of target area. Horseshoe Bay to south of town clearly identified also Ems river clearly seen. Bombs were dropped at 1627 hours from 8000 feet. Bombs seen to explode and thought to have fallen in N part of town. **Aircraft extensively damaged by ME110** (pictured). A successful trip but the moon was too bright.



**Summary:** Cloud remained 10/10ths across the sea with tops approx 9,500 feet. Immediately west of target at approximately 1830 hours this suddenly broke completely. Aircraft HE156 reported aircraft stooging around 20 miles from Emden but evidently not seen them. **Aircraft HE150** (F/O Smith) was attacked by ME110 at 1845 hours at 9000 feet. Rear gunner opened fire but made no claims. Own aircraft dived into cloud and enemy aircraft being lost. Five minutes later when cloud cover broke another attack was delivered by an ME110 from port. Enemy aircraft crossed to starboard and attacked again. Although own aircraft dived to port into thin cloud at 6000 feet, yet another attack was made. Both attacks were continuous and a number of hits were registered, starboard wing petrol pipes being hit and rear turret was severely damaged. Aircraft landed safely but swung off runway due to a burst tyre. No claims were made. There was no flak whatever over target on Frisian. A solitary searchlight was seen on NE tip of Ems Estuary in cloud and one in far distance.

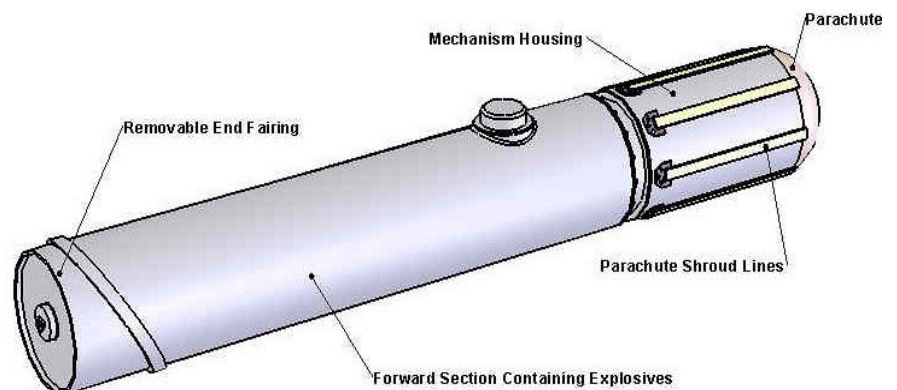
**25/2/43:** Weather – some smoke haze, light westerly winds and small amount of cumulous cloud. Eleven aircraft were prepared for an attack on **Hamburg**. This was changed at 1300 hours to **mining** (also known as gardening or dropping vegetables) by eight aircraft. Seven aircraft took off at 2000 hours. Six laid their mines successfully of **Schiermonikoog**. The seventh returned early having reported a possible dinghy sighting. This was supported by a report from another aircraft.

**Sea Mines:**

Mk. I-IV - 1,500 lbs. and 1,850 lbs

First introduced for Bomber Command Operations in April 1940, the Mk. I - IV was sturdily built and designed to withstand drops from aircraft flying at 200 mph at altitudes varying from 100 to 15,000 feet. Containing approximately 750 lbs. of explosives the mine could be detonated using various triggering devices depending on the application required. The type along with the Mk. V and VII became the standard mine used by the Command until being replaced by the Mk. VI in 1944.

From: [http://www.lancaster-archive.com/bc\\_bombsmineincendiaries.htm](http://www.lancaster-archive.com/bc_bombsmineincendiaries.htm)



**Mk.I Air Deployable Anti-Ship Mine**

Wellington X HE501 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, Sgt Ludgater AC 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2013 – 0003. Target attacked by pinpoint on Schiermonikoog through gap in clouds. Mines dropped at 21.46 hours from 6,000 feet.

**Summary:** In most cases cloud prevented extremely satisfactory pinpointing. Weather was fair at first. Cloud was 5/10 to 8/10 up to 3,000 feet, increasing to 10/10ths with occasional gaps. It was similar on return.

**26/2/43:** Weather – Smoke haze, light westerly winds and small amounts of cumulus clouds. Eleven aircraft took part in a highly successful major attack on **Cologne**. All aircraft reached and bombed their objectives and returned to base without damage. One aircraft HE510 captained by F/O JB Smith beat off an attack by a JU 86 in the target area. Opposition from flak and searchlights was intense in the early stages of the attack and faded out within about fifteen minutes.

Wellington X HE501 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1851 – 0057. Weather clear but ground haze. Primary attacked but no TI markers were seen, which Captain considers due to being late on target. Town clearly identified by river Rhine and lake to north west. Bombs dropped at 2129 hours from 16,500 feet and believed to have fallen in north west of old town. Many fires seen, principally south of Cologne.

**Summary:** TI Markers do not appear to have been dropped at zero hour

**1/3/43:** Weather – some stratus cloud 3-6/10 variable cumulus. Visibility 4-9 miles. Westerly winds light. Five aircraft were required for mining operations in **Heligoland Bight**. One failed to return. The Captain was Sgt Barrow and aircraft HE376. Due to repair work only the north-south runway was usable and this made take-off and landing rather a problem with prevailing westerly winds.

Wellington X HE501HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1911 – 0018. Vegetables not planted, but jettisoned safe at 52 57' N 08.00 E from 1000 feet at 2100 hours. Sea mist made pin pointing difficult, flak seen believed from Wangerooge, and run up to planting point started: before reaching same aircraft suddenly engaged by much accurate flak from several points on the sea and 4 searchlights exposed. Evasive action taken but as aircraft sluggish vegetable jettisoned safe. Aircraft got away after violent evasive action.

**3/3/43:** Weather – 10/10 Stratus cumulus cloud persisted all day and until midnight. S E wind 15mph, visibility good. Eleven aircraft took part in a heavy attack on **Hamburg** at about 2130 hours. All crews reported the raid a success and returned without incident.

Wellington X HE501 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1846 – 044. Bombs dropped from 17000 feet at 2125 hours. Primary attacked on Green Markers seen in bomb sight, two bursts seen. 3 big fires and many small ones seen just before coast was reached on homeward journey. An enormous flash was seen from target area. White marker flares very useful. Visibility good but much smoke from fires.

**10/3/43:** Weather – 10/10 stratus cloud, S W winds 10-15 mph, moderate visibility. At 0810 hours two aircraft were ordered for a **sea search**. The detailed instructions were not received until 1000 hours but the aircraft were airborne at 1045 hours. Two further aircraft were required for mining operations. Instructions were received at 1030 hours but cancelled at 1320 hours. A deterioration of visibility and increase of cloud due to front approaching.

Wellington X HE501HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1040 – 1341. Search completed – no incidents

**12/3/43:** Weather – clear and fine. Light southerly winds, strato cumulus cloud increased during the afternoon and smoke haze reduced visibility. Twelve aircraft were prepared for an attack on **Essen**, and all took off at approximately 1926 hours. One returned early due to oxygen failure but the other eleven bombed on target and returned. Sgt Treacher W.op/AG in aircraft HZ271 flown by Flt Sgt Tozer was injured in the arm by a piece of shrapnel. The attack, which was a major one involving some 450 aircraft, appeared to be successful. Opposition was severe as was expected in the Ruhr area but was exhausted about half way through the attack.

Wellington X HE501HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 1926 – 0011. Bombs dropped from 16,000 feet at 2125 hours. Primary attack on TI's seen in bombsight. Many fires in works and Essen. About 2136 a terrific flash seen followed by orange and yellow flame with much greasy smoke. Later similar fire seen, burning debris thrown into the air. Visibility good but smoke haze.

Picture of Essen from <http://www.halifaxlv827.co.uk>

**4/4/43:** Weather – poor visibility during the morning with little cloud. Light S W winds. Three aircraft flew a sea search during the day, one remaining for 8 hours 37 minutes, at night 17 aircraft took off the attack **Kiel** and a further aircraft was sent to 196 Squadron (RAF Driffield). The attack was a large scale one using PFF method but results were difficult to assess due to the cloud conditions over the target. From the Squadron's point of view the 24 hours was a remarkable period. Twenty operational sorties were flown altogether and at night eighteen aircraft were airborne on the same attack. Aircraft HZ279 (Wellington X) flown by F/O Macfarlane on a sea search was airborne for 8 hours and 37 minutes and still had more than 1 hour's fuel left. This was unusual endurance or a standard fuel load of 750 gallons. The same aircraft flown by Flt Lt Renolds completed a sortie to Kiel taking off 1 hour and 56 minutes after its return from the sea search. During the 16 hours 47 minutes commencing at 1014 hours, the aircraft was airborne on operational missions for 14 hours and 51 minutes.

Wellington X HE501 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, P/O Jeffrey RS B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2052 – 0329. Bombs dropped from 16,000 feet at 2340 hours. No marker was seen. Bombed red glow due to marker on fire. Oxygen failed ¼ hour before reaching target and did not come on again. Sky marking method should have been used. 10/10 cloud.

**8/4/43:** Weather 10/10 cloud base 3000 feet N W winds 15 – 20 mph. Visibility 5 – 8 miles. Eight aircraft were requested for an attack on **Duisburg**. All took off at 2125 and short following intervals. Weather conditions were extremely poor and severe icing caused the early return of two aircraft. The target area was completely obscured by several layers of cloud and no results of bombing could be observed. Flak opposition was scattered but two aircraft sustained fairly serious damage and one aircraft is missing.

Wellington X HE501HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, P/O Jeffrey RS B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2135- - 2156. Trip abandoned and all bombs brought back as Goon and Artificial Horizon u/s.

**10/4/43:** Strato cumulus cloud 10/10 base 3000 tops 6000 feet, visibility good. Wind 15 mph. Thirteen aircraft took off to attack **Frankfurt**. Navigation was accurate and all aircraft reported reaching the target area but 10/10 strato-cumulus cloud made observation

impossible and the PFF technique employed did not produce good concentration. Wellington HE570 flown by Flt Lt Renolds collided with an unknown aircraft 50 miles from target on return but reached base with a badly damaged tail plane. One aircraft HE506 P/O Booy failed to return.

Wellington X HE501HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, Aus 408585 Sgt McMorrison LA 2nd Pilot, P/O Jeffrey RS B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 22330 – 0640. Bombs dropped from 16,000 feet at 0243 hours. Bombed glow of fires seen through cloud. No release point flares seen, though green flares were seen at three positions given at briefing.

**14/4/43:** Weather – a warm front crossed the area during the morning producing rain and low cloud, but by evening it was fine and clear with S W winds 10 – 15 mph. Eleven aircraft were ordered for an attack on **Stuttgart**. All took off on time but one returned after three hours due to illness of the Air Gunner. The remaining ten carried out a very successful attack on the target. Wellington X HZ256 was attacked by a night fighter and the Air Gunner (Sgt RP field) was killed; three other members of the crew were injured. The aircraft crash landed at RAF Ford. All surviving members of the crew distinguished themselves by carrying on after the attack to bomb their objectives and successfully navigated their aircraft back.

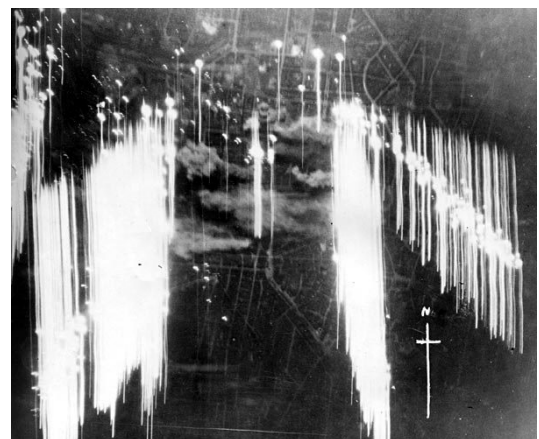
Wellington X HE501 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, P/O Jeffrey RS B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2103 – 0505. Bombs dropped from 16,000 feet at 0059 hours, river Neckar clearly seen. Bombed concentration of green TI's which were preceded by red TI's and white flares. Many fires burning as aircraft left target area. Perfectly clear, no cloud.

**26/4/43:** Weather – 10/10 cumulo stratus cloud dispersing later to 2-5/10. Good visibility, strong surface winds westerly 30-35 mph gusting to 50 mph. Fourteen aircraft were required for an attack on **Duisberg**. These were all airborne on time but two returned early due to technical defects; the remaining twelve joined in a heavy and successful attack on the objective made by about 550 aircraft.

Wellington X HE326 HE-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, P/O Lawson JW 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot, Aus 400016 F/S Fyfe HL B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 0024 – 0546. Bombs dropped from 14,500 feet at 0233 hours. Bombed on red TI surrounded by Green seen in bomb site. Many fires seen in TA. Visibility good, ground haze.

**4/5/43:** Weather – small amounts of low cumulus cloud, visibility good. Wind light NE. Fifteen aircraft were prepared for an attack on **Dortmund**. One aircraft failed to take off due to ignition trouble. One returned early due to a faulty CSU. One aircraft missing – Sgt James Captain. The remainder completed a very successful attack on the target in spite of heavy opposition from the Ruhr defences.

Wellington X HE326 HE-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 22.53 – 0333. Bombed from 18,000 feet at 0128 hours on Red and Green TI's, centre of 3 Red TI's in sights. Big fires concentrated around markers. Two big explosions soon after leaving target area. Captain reports that he was fired at by presumably one of our own convoys, position 53.48: 01.26E at 2333. **Mandrel** used. Clear with ground haze. **Picture of Dortmund** from <http://www.halifaxlv827.co.uk>





**Mandrel** – jammer for *Freya* and *Würzburg* radar used by 100 Group. No. 100 (Bomber Support) Group was a special duties group within RAF Bomber Command. It was formed on 11 November 1943 to consolidate the increasingly complex business of electronic warfare and countermeasures within one organisation. The group was responsible for the development, operational trial and use of electronic warfare and countermeasures equipment. It was based at RAF stations in East Anglia, chiefly Norfolk.

The group was a pioneer in countering the formidable force of radar-equipped Luftwaffe night fighters, utilising a range of electronic 'homers' fitted to de Havilland Mosquito fighters which detected the night fighter's various radar and radio emissions, and allowed the RAF fighters to home in onto the Axis aircraft and either shoot them down or at the very least disrupt their missions against the bomber streams. Other Mosquitoes would patrol around the known Luftwaffe fighter airfields ready to attack any landing night fighters they came across. **From:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No.\\_100\\_Group\\_RAF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._100_Group_RAF)

**12/5/43:** Weather – 10/10 Strato cumulus cloud 1000 – 1500 base with intermittent rain. Fresh SW winds 20 – 25 mph with moderate visibility. Fifteen aircraft were detailed to attack **Duisburg**. All took off according to plan and all attacked the target, so joining the greatest bombing raid of the war. All returned to base but rapidly deteriorating weather caused Wellington X HE530 (Captain, Sgt C Trinder) to lose the aerodrome and crash into nearby high ground with the unfortunate loss of the crew and aircraft.

Wellington X HE326 HE-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2340 – 0428. Bombed from 18,000 feet at 0208 hours on TI's in middle of 2 reds surrounded by greens in sights slightly to east of AP. Several fires seen in target area, but were just beginning to take hold. Mandrel used.

**13/5/43:** Weather – variable cumulus cloud, good visibility SW winds 10 – 15 mph. Fourteen aircraft detailed to attack **Bochum**. Thirteen aircraft took off and fourteenth was stopped by the runway collapsing. The raid was reported as very successful in spite of very strong opposition. One aircraft (Captain, F/O Sampson) failed to return, another (Sgt Hicks CGM) due to propeller failure had great difficulty reaching land after three of his crew had left by parachute; force landed in a field in Norfolk.

Wellington X HE326 HE-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2354 – 0526. Bombed from 20,000 feet at 0228 hours. Identified by TI markers. Yellow markers seen on track, Green markers in bombsight. One explosion seen after target area had been left. No fires seen. Visibility clear, slight haze on ground. **Picture of Bochum from** <http://www.halifaxlv827.co.uk>

**29/5/43:** Weather – fine and clear with NE winds. During the afternoon a demonstration of formation flying was given by the Squadron in connection with the "Wings for Victory" weeks in Hull and Beverley. Fourteen aircraft were despatched to attack **Wuppertal**. Three failed to return and the remainder were diverted due to weather conditions at base.

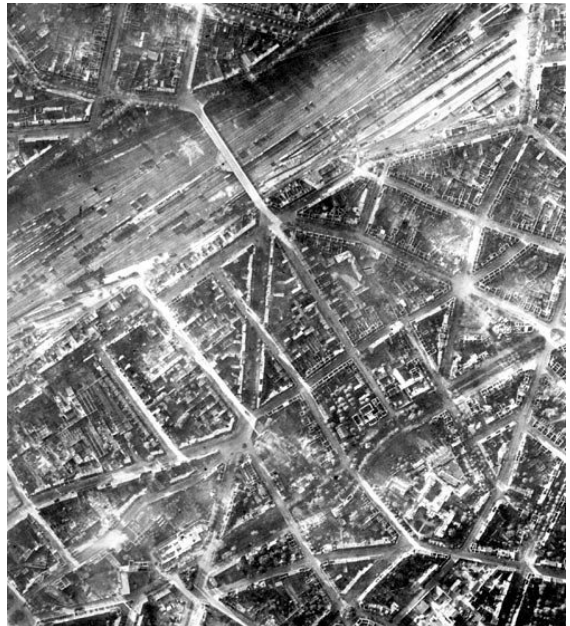
Wellington X HE150 HD-A F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Flt Lt Warren PS W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2228 – 0343. Bombed from 18,000 feet at 0103 hours. Red and Green markers seen, bombed Green. Own results not seen. Good concentrated raid. Plenty of fires and smoke over the target. Searchlights and flak in Ruhr area very good and concentrated. Good visibility with smoke from fires.

**11/6/43:** Weather – a weak cold front affected the area during the period. 10/10 medium cloud with varying strato cumulus with base 2000 feet. Southerly winds 10 – 15 mph, visibility 4 – 6 miles. Sixteen aircraft were required for an attack on **Dusseldorf** and all were prepared and tested. Over 800 aircraft took part in what proved to be a highly successful raid, in spite of the weather over this country. Fourteen of the aircraft of the Squadron



attacked and the remaining two are missing. The Captains were F/O F Mackelden and Sgt Green.

Wellington X HE326 HE-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G, Aus 413826 Flt Sgt Colless GS 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot. 2321 – 0449. Bombs dropped from 18,000 feet at 0150 hours. Bombed on Green TI's in bombsight. Green seen to cascade at the time of bombing. Reds were seen cascading 7 minutes before bombing. Identified target by TI markers. Very good fires and very large cloud of smoke above target area. **Mandrel** used. Visibility good with isolated patches of cloud at 7,000 feet, some smoke. **Picture of Dusseldorf** from <http://www.halifaxlv827.co.uk>



**14/6/43:** Weather – variable cumulus with much medium cloud above. Occasional showers with good visibility and south westerly winds. Four aircraft were dispatched at 0600 hours to search for a Fortress crew missing from an attack on Kiel. A further four proceeded to **St Eval** for mine laying operations, three at **St Nazaine** and one at **Lorient**. The search aircraft found only an empty dinghy and the mine laying aircraft all completed their tasks and returned safely to base.

Wellington X HE326 HE-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 0011 – 0538. Mines dropped as ordered from 700 feet at 0208. Belie Isle, Houat and Hoedic clearly seen. Parachutes seen to open. Mandrel used. Visibility very good.

**28/6/43:** Weather – 10/10 stratus cloud base 2-3000 feet with NE winds 10-15 mph. Fourteen aircraft were detailed for an attack on **Cologne**. Thirteen of these took off and attached the target, the fourteenth being a non-starter due to a technical fault. The probable destruction of a night fighter (JU88) was claimed by Sgt Hicks CGM and his Air Gunner P/O Cairns. Another aircraft piloted by P/O young was damaged by flak over the target and had to land at Martlesham Heath

Wellington X HF481 F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Boyce KD Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2327 – 0423. Bombed from 18,000 feet at 0202 hours. Identified by Ground and Sky markers. Two Red ground markers seen to fall through cloud and reflected glare, bombed at moment of release sky markers appeared in line of sight. Fires and explosions observed at 0210 on leaving target area. 10/10 cloud at 4,000 feet, visibility good above.

**3/7/43:** Weather – small amounts of high cloud, otherwise fine and clear with light northerly winds. Fourteen aircraft were detailed for an attack on **Cologne**. All these took off as scheduled and twelve completed a very successful attack. One failed to return (Captain – P/O Edmonds, who was making his 30<sup>th</sup> and last sortie of his operational tour) and one returned early due to engine trouble.

Wellington X HF473 HD-A F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2256 – 0417. Primary attacked from 18,500 feet at 0127 hours. Identified by Red and green Marker flares. Ignition of own incendiaries not observed. Fires beginning to catch nicely in target area on eastern side of river. Searchlights as good as ever. Flak much more intense. Visibility good, slight haze.

**13/7/43:** Weather – 10/10 strato cumulus base 2-3,000 feet. Fresh SW winds 15 – 20 mph. Good visibility. Fourteen aircraft were required for an attack on **Aachen**. All aircraft took off and twelve completed a highly successful attack in conditions of very bright moonlight, greatly favouring night fighter opposition. One aircraft (Sgt Gunning – Captain) failed to return.

Wellington X LN292 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G, Aus 416794 Sgt Thorpe RE 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot. No attack made. Aircraft returned early owing to port engine failure and starboard air pressure very low. Aircraft was unable to maintain height. Incendiaries jettisoned safe at 0020 from 5,500 feet, position 53.38 N 00.25 E. Monica not fitted.

**24/7/43:** Weather fine, no cloud. Wind light and easterly, visibility good. Two training cross country flights were organised for 0930 hours. Sixteen aircraft were required for a bombing attack on **Hamburg**. This number was raised to seventeen and all aircraft took off, completed the attack and returned to base. This was the Squadron's best performance to date and this success was reflected in the outstanding quality of the operation as a whole. 791 aircraft took off and dropped over 2,000 tons of bombs. 12 were missing.

Wellington X LN292 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, Aus 412787 Sgt Wills HC 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2254 – 0400. Primary attacked from 20,000 feet at 0123 hours. Target identified by Green Tis. Markers seen at time of release and bombed between two Green Tis. Much smoke and many fires. 72 bundles of window released.

**25/7/43:** Weather – early morning fog – clearing during the morning. Light southerly winds. Ten aircraft were required for an attack on **Hamburg** and six for gardening near Scharnhorn Island. These were changed to ten on Essen and six mining near **Ameland** at 1700 hours. All aircraft took off as ordered but two returned early from Essen due to technical defects and one was missing (Captain – Sgt Thorpe). The mines were laid successfully. Wellington X LN292 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, Aus 409527 Flt Sgt Evans JE 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2300 – 0225. Primary attacked from 700 feet at 0046 hours. Pinpointed on Schiermonifooog. Mines laid as ordered, parachutes seen to open. Clear visibility.

**27/7/43:** Weather – some medium cloud but otherwise fine and clear with light SW winds. Fifteen aircraft were detailed for an attack on **Hamburg**. All aircraft took off and attacked target and returned safely to base. Again the attack was highly successful and all crews reported an intense conflagration and [a] pillar of smoke rising to 20,000 feet.

Wellington X HE292 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, Aus 416796 Flt Sgt Smart MJ 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot, Aus 415197 Flt Sgt Trewern WC B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2245 – 0347. Primary attacked from 19,000 feet at 0124 hours. Identified by Yellow and Green TI. Bombed on Green which were seen to cascade at 0123 hours. Many large fires and much smoke seen in target area up to 16,000 feet. Monica fitted. Good visibility with 3/10ths cloud. Very successful trip and well concentrated attack.

**1/8/43:** Weather – occasional thunder showers, otherwise good visibility and SW winds 10 – 15 mph. Sixteen aircraft were required for **mining** – eight at **Lorient**, eight at **St Nazaire**. All aircraft proceeded to Harwell to refuel. Fourteen took off from there and twelve succeeded in finding the correct pin-point and laying their mines.

Wellington X LN292 HD-J F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2245 – 0450. Primary attacked from 500 feet at

0142 hours. Pin-point on Pte.De Trevignon, checked on Raguenes. Laid as ordered, parachutes seen to open and strike water. Moderate to good visibility – 4 miles.

**2/8/43:** Weather – warm, no cloud, wind light SE. Severe icing conditions during the night. Fifteen aircraft were requested for an attack on **Hamburg**. Fourteen aircraft attacked the target, one returned from the enemy coast on one engine. Very severe weather conditions with heavy cloud and icing mad the operation rather hazardous and results difficult to assess.

Wellington X HF485 HD-N F/O Smith JB Pilot, F/O Lax GT B/A, F/O Vaizey Nav, Sgt Pilborough DE W/AG, Sgt Moloney PJ A/G. 2355 – 0518. Primary attacked from 9,000 feet at 0221 hours. Owing to electrical storms in target area, and hail, Captain flew beneath. Green Tis were seen on run up, but were not burning when aircraft bombed estimated centre. Glimpses of water were seen, believed to be Docks and the Aussen Alster. There were a number of small scattered fires in the target area, but they were not burning vey well. Many bombs had been jettisoned before the target was reached. Discharged 60 bundles of window intermittently from 10,000 feet.

### **466 Sqn ORB August 1943**

Leconfield.

	Sorties	Missing Aircraft
March	90	2
April	92	3
May	118	7
June	111	5
July	108	4
August	168	3

A record number o f mines (236) were laid during August, establishing the Squadron as the leading mining Squadron in Bomber Command.

The following officers were posted from the Squadron: F/O AA Macfarlane (NZ 415344), **F/O JB Smith (NZ 414691)**, P/O WE Adams (Can J172355), F/O RS Bue (Can J11866), P/O DE Midgley (Can J 17310), F/O WS Gaunt (116793), P/O AW Coxall (142500), P/O CT King (142529), P/O WA Jones (146013), P/O DF Bateman (124383), P/O J Cummin (142891), **F/O JD Vaizey (118824)**, P/O RL Young (147314)

### **From 97 Squadron Operations Record Book January – June 1944**

#### **22/4/44 – Brunswick (Braunschweig Germany)**

**ND706A** F/O J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.W.Weston, F/L L.C.Jones, F/Sgt D.E.D.Harvey, W/O J.R.Chapman, W/O E.L.Wright. Up 2337 Down 0530. 12 x cluster flares, 1 x target flare, 1 x green flare. On arrival over Brunswick weather was clear with slight haze permitting visual identification of target. On first run in using H2S, picture was lost due to taking evasive action. On 2nd run two lanes of flares spread across target area were seen. Own flares were dropped in middle. When last flare was released, RSF was seen to fall. Good concentration of fires.

**See:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing\\_of\\_Braunschweig\\_in\\_World\\_War\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing_of_Braunschweig_in_World_War_II)

**Note:** the first time the crew have only incendiaries on board.

**23.4.44** 4 aircraft detailed for night flying training.

**24.4.44** Training during day. 15 aircraft detailed for operations. The attack was made against Munich in clear sky and good visibility. Fighter activity between Augsburg and Munich, also later in attack. First yellow TI seen to cascade Datum point at 01.32 hours. Flares generally went down to time and straddled the town. B/U markers rather wide on East bank of river. Leader broadcast to bomb RSF but later when he saw slight tendency to seep back, dropped green TI to indicate correct marker and broadcast later in attack. Attack believed very successful. Good fires seen and well concentrated. Large explosion seen. Photographs confirm accuracy of marker. P/O Lasham landed on return at Tangmere, aircraft being damaged by flak, and short of petrol. Damage also caused by incendiaries from another aircraft. F/Lt Waugh and crew failed to return from this operation – no news having been received since take-off. Average time of sortie – 10 hours.

#### **24/4/44 – Munich**

**JB708J** F/O J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.W.Weston, F/L L.C.Jones, F/Sgt D.E.D.Harvey, W/O J.R.Chapman, W/O E.L.Wright. Up 2102 Down 0701. 12 x cluster flares, 1 x green TI no 4. Weather over Munich clear, very slight haze. Bombed on H2S picture and visually on town. Timed run from datum point. Target marking excellent and bombing round markers concentrated. Gunners report fires and smoke from 150 miles and consider raid best ever seen.

**25.4.44** Stand down in the afternoon.

**26.4.44 14** Lancasters detailed to operate against Schweinfurt tonight. Attack was carried out in good visibility – much fighter opposition and many aircraft seen to fall. Owing to change of wind the attack was late. First illumination unsatisfactory. Reserve flares better. First RSF fell too far south, second RSF assessed as accurate and backed up by initial B/U. Owing to smoke screen, red spot fires barely visible. All backers up and reserves called in to concentrate markers. Bombing believed accurately concentrated around the target area. Leader assessed Main Force as very good. All aircraft returned safely.

#### **26/4/44 – Schweinfurt**

**From: ND739Z W/C E.J.Carter, [Master Bomber]** P/O G.Dunning, F/L R.J.Conley, F/O H.W.Rieger, F/L A.Chambers, W/O F.R.Watson, S/L M.Bryan-Smith. 6 x 7" hooded flares, 2 x green TI no 4, 6 x green RSFs. Weather clear. Bombed on H2S and visually. First flares undershot to south-west of built up area. First RSF also undershot. First flares 0207.6 hours – all bombing to the south of the TIs. Datum point markers seen in correct position. H2S limited range and poor definition. Through change of wind it was obvious that we would be 15 minutes late so instead of going on route detailed we cut through from 4820N 0725E to target (north of Mannheim) which made us arrive a few minutes early. Contacted Mosquitoes on VHF using Channel C as Channel B was badly jammed. Then sent out first order to the Flares Force to change to Channel C. Waited several minutes for Flares Force. When they dropped first flares, they were a slight undershoot. The smoke screen was in operation, the Marker Leader requested more illumination, I therefore, ordered Reserve Flare Force to drop their flares to the north of those already down. Marker 3 dropped a RSF which Marker 1 assessed as being south of the aiming point. Then Marker 1 dropped a RSF which should have been green and these were assessed as being on the aiming point. Due to smoke screen these were hardly visible and I, therefore, called in all the Backers-up, including the reserves, to bomb the northerly RSFs, which I believe most of them did, although one bombed the southerly one. Someone in the Flare Force dropped a green TI which fell to the east of the target – I don't think, however, that this affected the attack in any way. By this time (0224 hours) I called in the Main Force to bomb the northerly RSFs which most of them did, although some of the early bombs were aimed at the south end. I then called the Deputy Controller to mark the northerly aiming point with green spots, which he did. All markers were very quickly obscured by smoke from bombs and smoke screen but it was apparent that the bombing spread from the aiming point to the south spot fires. I, therefore, dropped all green TI, green spot fires, intending to re-

mark the aiming point. These, however, fell approximately 1500 yards short. I, therefore, gave the Main Force the order to bomb the greens with 1000 yard overshoot. This they immediately did and I believe the bombing concentrated around target area. Main Force did their job very well indeed.

**JB708J** F/O J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.W.Weston, F/L L.C.Jones, F/Sgt D.E.D.Harvey, W/O J.R.Chapman, **W/O E.L.Wright**. Up 2130 Down 0606. 12 x 7" flares, 2 x green TI no 4. Bombed on H2S confirmed by visual. Huge explosion seen at 0224 hours. Target illumination rather widespread and whole attack was late. Green spot fires and green TI seen but no assessment of their accuracy was made, but bombing looked very concentrated. All flares dropped on one run as original 6 had not gone before orders to back up were received.

**Note:** W/O E L Wright – last trip with this crew, posted to 120 TU Chipping Warden (97 Sq ORB May 1944)

**27.4.44** Some flying training – crews resting after operations.

**28.4.44 15** Lancasters have been detailed to attack a Maintenance Depot at Kjeller just outside Oslo. The attack was made in clear weather from 6-10,000 feet. Opposition nil. Datum point markers accurate. Flares provided perfect illumination on time. The raid was highly effective – hangars and buildings were seen to blow up. Excellent photos of aiming points obtained. All crews returned safely.

**28/4/44 – Kjeller (Oslo)**

**From: ND739Z W/C E.J.Carter, [Master Bomber]** P/O G.Dunning, F/L R.J.Conley, F/O H.W.Rieger, F/L A.Chambers, W/O F.R.Watson, S/L M.Bryan-Smith. Up 2115 Down 0434. 6 clusters 7" flares, 6 x 1000lb MC. (Controller). No cloud over target area. Visibility perfect. Bombed visually. Datum point markers accurate. Flares released on visual identification. Flares seen over centre of runway, ours dropped to illuminate buildings on northern edge of airframe works. TI seen on bombing run. Some smoke on north-west corner of building "E". Our own bombs went in salvoes approximately 200 feet north. Arrived target area 0103 hours having previously descended to 6,000' and found bombing wind 003-36mph. I then received bombing wind 330-30mph from "J" and next from D/97 350-35. I then broadcast bombing wind of 353-35mph and wind appeared to be accurate. Datum point was down approximately on time and was kept backed up throughout the attack. Flares went down on time at Zero and target area was immediately illuminated perfectly. First marker to go down was on target "B" and for some reason was a RSF which dropped 200 yards north of target "B". A green was then put down just south of target "B" and then assessor passed instructions to bomb between green and red spot fire. These instructions passed on to "Beetroot" Force. A RSF was then dropped between buildings 7 and 9 (Illustration S523) but as buildings shielded, I asked Marker Leader to re-mark. This he did very accurately and second RSF went through building 5. This burned inside building and was difficult to see. I, therefore, asked marker leader to back up on target "A", when he informed me that all other spot fires had hung up and that no more were available for marking. I, therefore, called in both forces A and B (0127 hours) to bomb. At 0133 hours most of the HE seemed to have been dropped and I called in the incendiary force. At the same time it was apparent that target "B" had been very thoroughly covered while very little bombing appeared to have been directed at target "A". The markers on this target had meanwhile completely disappeared. I, therefore, ordered all remaining aircraft with an HE or incendiary to overshoot target "B" by approximately 2000 yards due west in an attempt to cover target "A". The bombing then spread in the direction of target "A" and it is possible this was eventually completely covered but this was difficult to assess due to lack of markers. Note – markers took so long to mark target "B" that the flares had completely died before target "A" was marked. I, therefore, called in Reserve Force (0124 hours) who completely illuminated the whole of target area and enabled markers to mark successfully target "A". Conclusions Green spot fires too weak to be satisfactory. Single spot fires of any colour are not effective on targets of this nature, since if they penetrate or fall between two buildings, they are practically invisible.



Very obvious dummy fire sites illuminated approximately 300 yards to north of target "B". I warned "Beetroot" Force at 0135 to beware of these dummies. ND764E S/L A.H.Lynch, Sgt J.P.Olive, P/O G.H.Wright, Sgt A.Dunae, F/Sgt J.R.Whitehead, Sgt J.Phillips, P/O J.W.Paige. Up 2106 Down 0431. 6 x cluster 7" flares, 6 x 1000lb MC. No cloud, good visibility. Target identified by flares and visually. Flares laid on time. Dropped own flares in area covered by existing flares. Good concentration achieved. When making bombing run much smoke seen around RSF which tended to obliterate them and ground detail.

**JB708J** F/O J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.W.Weston, F/L L.C.Jones, F/Sgt D.E.D.Harvey, W/O J.R.Chapman, Sgt J.Peill. Up 2105 Down 0526. 6 x cluster 7" flares, 6 x 1000lb MC (Medium Capacity see <http://www.wwiiequipment.com>). Weather over Kjeller clear. Excellent visibility. Target identified visually by runways, river and sheds of factory. Every detail clear and a cluster of flares fell accurately before own. On instructions at 0115.10 hours, one RSF fell on west aiming point at 0118 hours approximately, then one green spot fire east of aiming point at 0120 hours approx. Second RSF seen eastern end of shed and western aiming point at 0130 but was not subsequently backed up. Aircraft was then called in to bomb this. Bombing excellent on western aiming point. Huge explosion in target area at 0138 hours.

**29.4.44** 15 Lancasters detailed to attack a factory at Clermont-Ferrant near Paris. The attack was made in good visibility from about 7,500 to 9,000 feet. First red spot fire seen in light of flares to be very accurate. Marking carried out promptly. Raid went according to plan and was well backed by Main Force, both 4000s and incendiaries. Operation was successful and good photos obtained. All returned safely to base.

#### **29/4/44 – Clermont-Ferrand**

**ND415B** F/O J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.W.Weston, P/O D.E.D.Harvey, F/L L.C.Jones, W/O J.R.Chapman, Sgt J.Peill. Up 2203 Down 0440. 6 clusters 7" flares, 6 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5" recco flares. Target identified by H2S (bombed visually). On approach to target white flares fell and continued in profusion for 3 minutes. Aircraft backed this up at 0115 hours, then flares ceased dropping at 0120 hours. RSF mostly accurate. Aircraft instructed to bomb centre of RSF with 200 yards overshoot. Huge red glow from fires.

**Note: F/Sgt D E D Harvey commissioned**

**30.4.44** Stand down from operations. Some training carried out.

**1.5.44** Some training was carried out in the morning. That night 15 Lancaster aircraft were detailed for an attack on an explosives works at Toulouse. Our aircraft opened the raid by illuminating the target with 7" flares. Mosquito aircraft then located the actual aiming point, and marked it with Red Spot Fires, which were backed up by 97 Squadron aircraft. The Red Spot Fires were, unfortunately, at times obscured by smoke, but the great majority of aircraft managed to bomb the markers, and the raid was subsequently proved by PRU photographs to have been satisfactory. Three very violent explosions were observed during the raid. The weather was very good and opposition negligible. All our aircraft returned safely.

#### **1/5/44 – Toulouse**

**JB708J** F/O J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.W.Weston, F/L L.C.Jones, P/O D.E.D.Harvey, W/O J.R.Chapman, **Sgt J.Peill**. Up 2153 Down 0527. 6 clusters 7" flares, 3 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 1000lb MC (LD), 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Vis good, slight haze on ground. Target identified by H2S. Illumination at beginning was insufficient with a delay in dropping and assessing RSFs. Further flares requested, very effective, and RSFs appeared to be on

aiming point. This attracted very good concentration of bombing and there was one large fire over the area.

**Note: Service Number: 658300 F/Sgt J H Peill 50 Squadron Lancaster Aircraft Code: VN-H Aircraft Serial: PD292 Shot Down 4-5<sup>th</sup> January 1945, Interned at Royan**

**2.5.44** No flying today. Operational stand down. No training due to bad weather.

**3.5.44** A considerable amount of training was carried out in the morning. Operations that night were directed against a German military camp and supply depot at Mailly-Le-Camp. Our aircraft kept the target illuminated from 00.14 to 00.29 hours whilst the Mosquito aircraft marked the actual aiming point for the Main Force to bomb. The raid was extremely successful and the target was completely destroyed. Fighter opposition was exceptionally intense during a period from the end of the attack until crossing the French coast home. The whole operation was carried out in brilliant moonlight and on the return journey many of our aircraft flew at heights between 50/200' above the ground, often flying down German occupied aerodromes, strafing searchlights and flak towers! One of our aircraft – "A" captained by F/O Ross Ellesmere RCAF, did not return from this mission. The weather was very good.

**4.5.44** Some training this morning but an operational stand-down tonight owing to bad weather.

**5.5.44** Practice bombing and other training this morning. An operational stand-down tonight due to bad weather, but some local training was carried out.

**Note:** Flying Officer Sherman RCAF Air Gunner joins crew replacing Sgt Piell

**6.5.44** Some training this morning. Operations tonight were detailed against an ammunition dump at Louailles, France. The raid was effected in brilliant moonlight, and no additional illumination was necessary. Mosquito aircraft located the target visually and marked it with Red Spot Fires, which were later backed up by Lancaster aircraft from this Squadron. The marking and backing up were very accurate and the target was soon well hit, explosions occurring regularly throughout the attack. The defences were only moderate with about four to six flak guns hosepiping red and green tracer up to about 6,000 ft. The weather was very good. All our aircraft returned safely.

**7.5.44** Slight training this morning. The target for tonight was the aerodrome at Tours. Here again the objective was identified visually by Mosquito aircraft which marked the aiming point with extraordinary accuracy with Red Spot Fires. These were backed up with Red Spot Fires dropped by this squadron. The bombing on the markers was accurate, and many hits were observed. This raid was afterwards proved by photographic reconnaissance to have been quite successful. The fighter opposition was negligible and the flak defences consisted of approx six light guns. All of the seven aircraft detailed from this Squadron returned successfully.

**8.5.44** A large amount of training was carried out today. An operational stand-down that night.

**9.5.44** No training today. Operations this evening were directed against a ball bearing factory at Annecy – a small target in the centre of a town lying in a mountain valley – a target demanding the utmost skill to hit it. The attack was carried out in brilliant moonlight. Mosquito aircraft from 627 Squadron identified the factory and dropped Red Spot Fires a pre-determined distance away from it. The raid controller, S/Ldr Simpson of this Squadron,

then assessed their proximity to the aiming point and passed a false wind speed and direction to the bombing aircraft for them to put on their bombsights. This allowed the Main Force to aim at the Red Spots and yet have the bombs fall on the aiming point. The whole of this procedure was necessary because the target was so small that if the Red Spots had been put directly on the aiming point they would have soon been extinguished by own bombs. However, everything went according to plan, and the factory was so quickly demolished that the controller gave the order to cease bombing in order that the risk to the French civilian population may be minimised. Subsequent photographic cover showed the target to be absolutely gutted and the raid a complete success. There was no fighter opposition and no flak. The weather was good, and all of our aircraft returned safely.

**10.5.44** A training programme was carried out this morning. The target for the night's operation was Lille marshalling yard and locomotive factory. Of the 8 aircraft detailed by this Squadron, 6 were detailed to illuminate the target with flares and two to direct the attack. The attack opened to plan, the flares were dropped accurately, and the aiming point was marked visually with Red Spot Fires dropped by Mosquito aircraft. The attack was so accurate that the Red Spot Fires were extinguished by our own bombs and the target had to be re-illuminated and re-marked. Subsequent aiming point photographs proved the accuracy of the attack. **Two of our aircraft, captained by F/Lt Smith RNZAF and F/O Edwards, failed to return from this mission.** Another aircraft captained by F/Lt Walton received a direct hit by a flak burst resulting in the death of F/O Ward RAAF, the mid upper gunner. The weather was good during the whole attack, and the defences which consisted of light flak were moderate.

#### **10/5/44 – Lille**

**ND961N** **S/L H.B.Locke**, (Controller for the marking / bombing) F/Sgt C.D.Hooton, F/L T.H.Makepeace, P/O J.M.Nedwich, W/O A.P.Boulton, F/Sgt J.W.McLaren, P/O M.J.Bridgman. Up 2207 Down 0118. 6 x 7" cluster flares, 3 x TI RSF, 2 x TI green No 4, 1 x 4000lb HC, 3 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. (Controller). No cloud, very hazy. Target identified on H2S. Good run in on RSF. Flares seemed very scattered but Mosquito managed to drop RSF which was assessed 60 degrees 150 yards. Winds received from wind finder and passed 001/26 to Director by VHF approx 2323 hours but only acknowledged by W/T at 2335 hours. Passed to Flare Force 2328 hours VHF. Bombing started at 2331 hours approx and smoke soon obscured RSF in direction of Main Force bombing run. Direction ordered the bombing to cease on W/T and fired red-red. Target then re-marked and Main given no wind 336 degrees/13 at 2356 hours. We then went in to bomb. Interference on VHF and W/T made controlling very difficult and I failed to establish any contact with Director. No assessment of 2nd marker from Director. Main reason for delay was that heading chosen for attack seemed to be reciprocal of prevailing ground wind. After second marker went down bombing considerably improved. I consider that even without interference on VHF, there were too many leaders talking throughout the attack which is likely to produce chaos.

**JB708J** F/L J.B.Smith, Sgt A.R.Rowlands, F/O A.R.Weston, F/L L.C.Jones, P/O D.E.D.Harvey, W/O J.R.Chapman, F/O S.G.Sherman. Up 2201. 6 x 7" cluster flares, 3 x TI RSF, 2 x TI green No 4, 1 x 4000lb HC, 3 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. **Aircraft missing.**

**Note:** F/L Smith was the Deputy Controller for this sortie and therefore the crew would have been one of the most experienced in the Squadron at that time. F/O Sherman's first trip with this crew; his details of service below.

Flight Lieutenant Smith's aircraft was hit by flack, exploded in mid-air, and all the crew were killed, and the same fate befell the aircraft and crew captained by Pilot Officer Edwards (Bending 2005)

**On the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1944**, eighty nine aircraft of No 5 Group attacked a target at Lille, hardly a twelve minutes flying time from the Belgian coast, and experienced a similar delay to that which had cost No 1 Group so dear a week before. The initial target indicators were extinguished by bombs, and the aiming point had to be remarked. During the hiatus, twelve bombers were shot down – a loss rate of 13 per cent (Currie 1995)

The heaviest setback suffered by the RAAF squadrons was on the 10<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> May when Waddington provided 31 of the total force of 86 Lancasters which attacked Lille, near the Belgian border. 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 [Squadrons] each lost one flight commander and two other crews, or 20 per cent of the crews sent out (From chapter 2 Air Preparations for the Assault on North-West Europe).

**Details from other aircraft and crews on the raid (10/11 May 1944 – Lille) showing the difficulty and the intensity of the German defences (details from 97 Sqn ORB Jan / Jun 1944):**

**ND764E** F/L W.H.Walton, F/Sgt L.C.G.Mayhew, F/Sgt W.Williams, P/O E.Rees, P/O F.D.Roberts, F/O H.T.Ward, F/Sgt J.D.Hadlington. Up 2202 Down 0142. 6 x 7" clusters, 1 x 4000lb HC, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Weather clear over Lille, smoke haze. Target identified on H2S. First marker, soon after original illumination, was seen obscured, and bombing was stopped while further flares were dropped to aid re-marking. After we had dropped out reco flares, we orbited until instructions were clearly understood to bomb. There was considerable interference on VHF making communications exceedingly difficult. Bombing round second markers appeared very good. No apparent scatter. At position 51.09N 02.45E at 0023 hours 9,000' on homeward run, predicted heavy flak damaged mid upper turret, blew off left hand gun, damaged hydraulics, rear of fuselage, tail unit, DR compass, navigation light, intercom; all u/s as a result. Mid upper gunner found to be hit and was removed from turret. Reasonable landing made without intercom. Flying Officer Ward's injuries fatal.

**JB683C** F/O J.M.Smith, Sgt F.J.Ratcliffe, F/O M.E.Hatch, F/Sgt R.A.Symmonds, Sgts N.M.Greenley, J.J.Garrood, D.J.Watts. Up 2200 Down 0115. 6 x 7" clusters, 1 x 4000lb HC, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Target located on RSF and visually on RSF. H2S u/s just after crossing enemy coast, impossible to drop flares on box as briefed so we circled target for bombing only, but cease bombing order was received and re-marking called for. We waited for some flares to go down and on hearing Controller's order for more flares to west of these, we dropped ours visually. Bombing was then very concentrated. Computer u/s; bombing done with emergency computer and sight gear.

**ND807P** F/O W.M.Reid, Sgt W.Richards, F/O R.D.Parker, F/Sgt G.D.Moir, F/Sgt B.Harthill, F/Sgt D.P.Cannings, Sgt G.Brown. Up 2203 Down 0112. 6 x 7" clusters, 1 x 4000lb HC, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Weather clear, ground haze. Identified target on H2S. Re-marking became necessary and more flares were asked for. Fresh lot of reserve flares went east of target, so we were asked to drop our internally stowed flares to west of these. Main Force came in after second marking and did some very good bombing resulting in several good explosions around 2355 hours; there was no scatter of bombs noted.

**ND452S** F/O R.W.Reynolds, F/Sgt N.D.Owen, Sgts S.R.E.Baynes, N.H.Chollerton, F.Broughton, F/Sgt G.O.Edmunds, F/O J.D.Fletcher. Up 2204 Down 0104. 6 x 7" clusters, 1 x 4000lb HC, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Weather over Lille – cloud, vis moderate. Target located by RSFs. Flares down on time. RSF obscured at time of bombing. Only one message heard from Controller – "Bombing Wind". VHF u/s 2320 hours. Left target area early, cannot express opinion about main attack.

**ND813Q** P/O S.A.Edwards, Sgt D.H.Ryder, F/Sgt R.Heap, F/Sgt H.Grant, Sgts H.M.Kent, G.J.Hill, F/Sgt J.Diggle. Up 2159. 6 x 7" clusters, 1 x 4000lb HC, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. **Aircraft missing.**

**ND495M** P/O E.L.Perkins, Sgt F.Coxhead, F/O W.Hunt, F/Sgt J.Fairbairn, F/Sgt J.P.Coman, F/Sgt J.K.Russell, F/Sgt M.H.McBride. Up 2158 Down 0129. 6 x 7" clusters, 1 x 4000lb HC, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Weather clear at first; slight drifting cloud later at 3-4,000'. Visibility moderate. First RSF was blown out, further one down about 10 minutes later which was bombed. On leaving, a large triangle of small fires was seen. A first wind for RSF was heard 337/26 at 2335 hours approx.