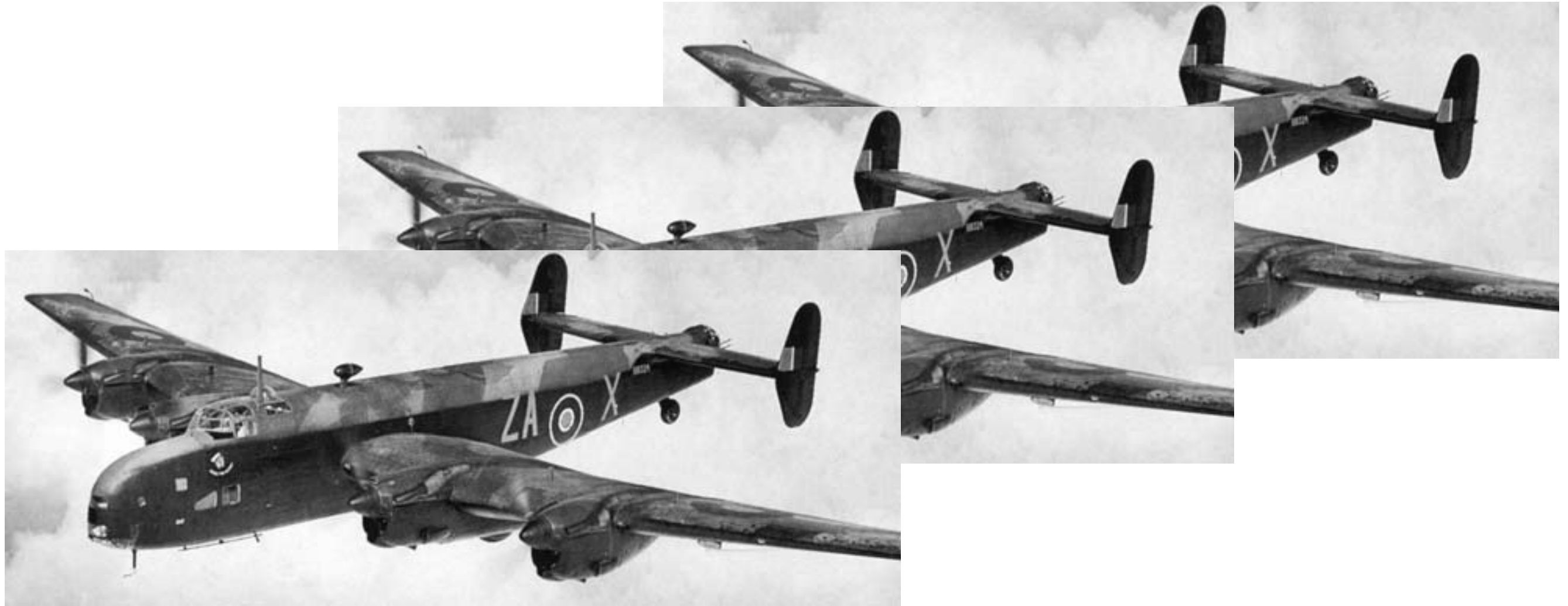




Halifax B MkII, Series 1, of No. 10 Squadron, RAF

# Dresden



In the early spring of 1945 Bomber Command carried out the most devastating air attack ever known. If the number killed can be used as a yardstick, compare the fatalities of the American nuclear attacks on Japan with the 'conventional' weapon attack on Dresden. Hiroshima death toll 71,379, Nagasaki death toll over 80,000, Dresden 135,000.

Our Nation had been at war for five years and during that time Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris had advocated his area bombing policy to the Government and to the Chief of Air Staff, a policy to shorten or even end the war, but to no avail. Eventually it became expedient for the Government to re-appraise his policy, and the outcome was the attack on Dresden.

The following pages are a collection of documents from Groups, Squadrons and Intelligence units that had actual participation in the attack – these are contained in the Introduction, and are followed in the main section by statements from Politicians of the day, recollections of airmen involved, figments of imagination by so called Air Historians and transcripts or copies of letters pertaining to the attack.



**Sir Arthur Harris**

In no way do they reflect completely my personal views. I have only endeavoured to put together a jumble of documents written by people who should have the facts but, at the end of it all, I found myself left with the following thoughts:-

Why was the 'Establishment' so defensive about the reason for the attack?

Why were they so embarrassed by the outcome of the attack?

After all we were at war and the object of the exercise was to win by all means possible with minimum loss to us.

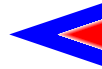
To people of my generation Harris had an option that appealed. To some of us it could mean that we would celebrate our 21st Birthday!!

## INTRODUCTION

Whilst peace may be described as 'absence of war', such a desirable condition is seldom based on the absence of armed forces, for it is the prime peace time function of armies, navies and air forces to preserve the status quo by diligent rehearsal of their ultimate wartime roles. Such is the essence of deterrence, freedom is worth fighting for, but it is preferable that it should be defended before war becomes the sole remaining alternative to subjugation.

Prior to WW2 successive British governments had done little to prevent the war and even less to prepare for it. Therefore when war became inevitable, thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen were sacrificed by poorly planned, poorly equipped units sent to attack targets that had little or no military significance when balanced against the ultimate objective.

Military records now indicate extremely poor leadership and little support from certain sections of the Government for a swift conclusion to the war. It took the Royal Air Force more than three years to rid itself of poor quality leaders and to demand and get in unequivocal terms of reference its priorities and objectives from the Government. It also took the Government almost as long to decide that war was not a game that had rigid rules, and once entered into, had to be won. Decisions, however hard to make, required responsibility from the Government and history records show some of our Leaders of the day have endeavoured to duck their responsibility for actions that took place on their recommendatons.

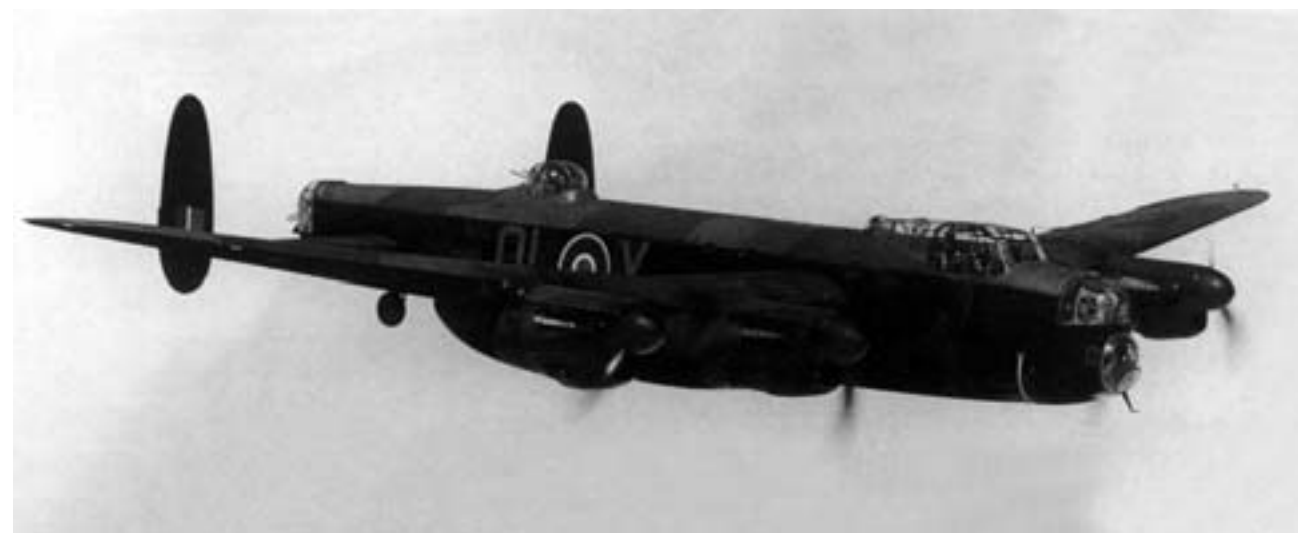


The account that follows is one such action, but before commencing, let us look at the RAF Command that was responsible for carrying out the Government orders from the opening of hostilities in 1939.

At the commencement of hostilities in 1939 until early 1940 the AOC. Bomber Command was Sir Edgar Ludlow Hewitt, a lack lustre leader, who was replaced for a brief period by Sir Charles Portal. On October 4th 1940 Sir Richard Peirse became AOC. when Sir Charles Portal became Chief of the Air Staff.

During this period London was being blitzed to a degree that newspapers were describing the German attacks as 'Terror Bombing' therefore it wasn't surprising when Portal tried to get our so called 'Precision' bombing policy changed to that of carpet bombing as a reprisal technique. Also it will be recalled that by the Rules of Warfare agreed by a Washington Conference on the limitations of Armament (1922), aerial bombardment for the purpose of terrorising civilians, destroying private property or injuring non combatants is prohibited! What a ludicrous state of affairs. The Germans however had no such scruples for on the night of November 14-15th 1940 their aircraft bombed Coventry. Righteously indignant the British public demanded city for city retaliation and the Government concurred. Within 24 hours the order had gone to Bomber Command that in future they would simply aim at the centre of any town they attacked. However, at this time Bomber Command attack techniques were disastrous failures due to poor navigation standards, poor bombing ability and poor equipment compounded with poor leadership. Lord Cherwell's examination observed that fewer than one aircraft in three had bombed within five miles of the designated targets and mostly in open country.

*Lancasters and Halifaxes alike were now able to carry upwards of 8,000 lb of bombs on an average mission, which was more than twice the amount the Fortresses and Liberators could lift*



Things had to change and in February 1942 Sir Arthur Harris became AOC Bomber Command, recalled from Washington where he headed the RAF delegation, to replace Peirse due to his complete failure of bombing policy. He (Peirse) went to India and continued his service with equal lack of distinction. Harris had a formidable task to undertake, but his basic belief was that a bomber force of sufficient size could make the enemy capitulate by systematic destruction of large centres of population. Gradually under his leadership Bomber Command efficiency and striking power became a formidable military machine but Harris was limited in his action by the Target Priority listing given to him by the Casablanca conference. He observed these directives but still clung to his original idea that a plan drawn up, in early 1944, known as 'Thunderclap' based on the theory that one massive 24 hour coup de grâce on Berlin, or

some other city or cities, could conclude the war overnight.

Lancasters and Halifaxes alike were now able to carry upwards of 8,000 lb of bombs on an average mission, which was more than twice the amount the Fortresses and Liberators could lift. All in all Bomber Command had now become the most powerful and efficient force of its kind the world had ever seen.

'Thunderclap' did come up for consideration at this stage but there was considerable argument and confusion over which city should be used to jolt both Nazi leaders and the German people into a frame of mind in which they might make an organised surrender, as against months or even years of 'underground' resistance to a forced peace.

Berlin, Chemnitz, Leipzig and Dresden were among the cities discussed – all of them rapidly becoming congested with hundreds of thousands of Germans fleeing before the Russian advance, and all of them important links in the German communications network in the east of the country. Harris favoured wiping Berlin off the face of the Reich and simultaneously knocking out several other cities for good measure.

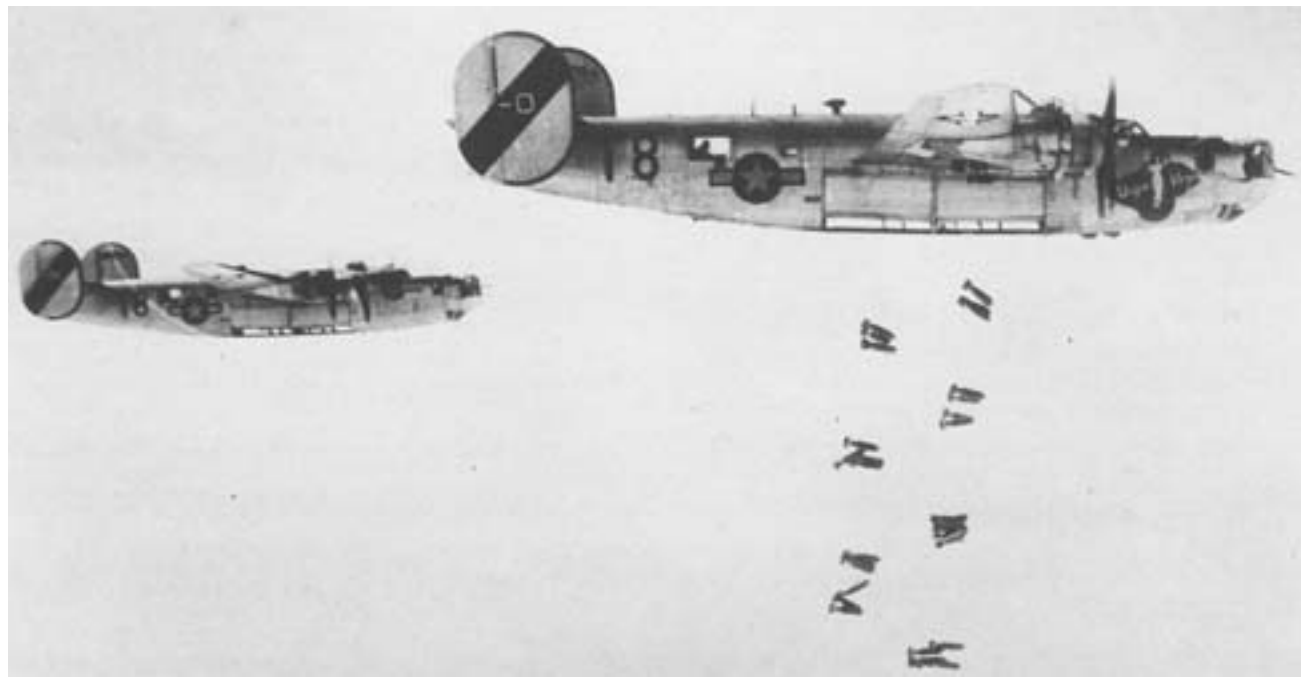
Portal, the Chief of Air Staff, Bottomley his Deputy, Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Secretary of State for Air, and Spaatz the American Air Commander were all involved in two, three, four and five handed discussions on the matter, which became even more frantically confused because Yalta was looming. Churchill wanted to be able to tell Stalin something positive, at the conference of the Grand Alliance, which the Russians were convening at Yalta, about how Western bombing policy would immediately help the advancing Eastern Allies.

On 26th January, Portal (who had been at Churchill's side at Yalta) came out against a really massive attack being made on Berlin, on the grounds that it was too big to be knocked out completely and that the casualties to crews would be unwarrantably heavy. He wanted the highest priority for the continuing oil campaign, plus watered down but moderately heavy attacks on Berlin and other cities Harris had mentioned, or any others considered suitable.

Sinclair, on the same day, addressed a memo to the Prime Minister in which he also favoured the stepping up of the attacks on oil, with the bombing of cities a lesser priority, to be taken up at random when the weather was unsuitable for the oil offensive. Perversely, he kept his foot in the door on 'Thunderclap' without in any way endorsing it, by saying that this was still 'under consideration'.

*...and on 27th January Bottomley formally directed Harris to make 'one big attack on Berlin and related attacks on Dresden, Leipzig and Chemnitz...and related cities'*

Churchill was far from pleased by the apparent vagueness being shown in the matter and demanded to know within twenty four hours whether Berlin and any other large cities in East Germany were going to be major targets in the near future. This brought matters to a head, and on 27th January Bottomley formally directed Harris to make 'one big attack on Berlin and related attacks on Dresden, Leipzig and Chemnitz...and related cities'.



*The Yanks were now tasting blood too often for them to be brought to heel...*

Churchill was at once informed of this and a tentative date was pencilled in (weather permitting) of 4th February when the moon would be on the wane. Again, however, there was a certain amount of confusion over priorities, and when Spaatz was called in on the plan, he was also told that oil was still top priority, with some form of 'Thunderclap' second priority.

Characteristically, Europe's wayward weather now proceeded to blow the politicians' plans about a bit. February opened with excellent day bombing conditions and atrocious nights. So it came about that, within hours of the opening of the Yalta conference, the 8th AAF was able to institute an impressive series of fighter escorted heavy bomber raids on Berlin, Leipzig, Magdeburg and Chemnitz, whilst Bomber Command's range was restricted to important but less dramatic attacks on oil, transport, shipping and rocket sites around the north sea coasts. Only a number of day flying Mosquitos were able to

keep the flag flying for Churchill (as he pursued his arguments with Stalin) in attacks on Eastern front targets.

Indeed it was not until the night of 13/14th February that the skies opened up for a major raid in the east, and by this time Dresden was the only 'unmarked' city open to Harris from the list prepared by Bottomley.

As he prepared to press the button for an all out blitz on Dresden, the AOC must have known that even this raid would be too little and too late in relation to the promise of 'Thunderclap'. British and American bombing policies had been thrown out of step by the weather at a vital time. The Yanks were now tasting blood too often for them to be brought to heel, as it were, for a combined raid by more than 4,000 bombers. Harris's belief – inherited from Douhet via Trenchard – that one massive blow from the air, delivered at the right point, could instantly finish war, would never be put to the test in Europe. Only the atom bombing of Japan in due course would seem to bear out the validity of his theory.

The bombing of Dresden that night was nevertheless an act of deliberate fury, aimed at shortening the war. The Germans considered the rococo city safe because of its beauty, and had made it an important communications centre for the Russian front. To Harris it was important also as the largest Reich city still intact. He gave it 'stick' as never before, with firestorms, devastation and death the agony of its fate.

*The world was stunned by the magnitude of Bomber Command's attack on Dresden, more so as the city had proved to be undefended...*

The world was stunned by the magnitude of Bomber Command's attack on Dresden, more so as the city had

proved to be undefended. Even the atom bombs, shortly to fall on the Japanese, would not equal the devastation nor surpass the death toll achieved in this one 'conventional' raid. But equally Harris and his aircrews felt no guilt over Dresden, as the Americans would apparently feel guilt over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The millions who had died in the concentration camps or who had been enslaved by their German conquerors would have raised instant and heartfelt Hosannas to the night's work of Bomber Command and its Old Testament-style leader had they known of it.

The Nazis had Sown the Wind (in Harris's phrase) when they were all powerful. Now they were reaping the Whirlwind. After Dresden the point was reached where all-too-few worthwhile targets remained in the RAF's retributive force. But the Command which had suffered so long and with grievous casualties went on hitting. They had somehow endured the longest continuous battle of the war; they had suffered fears, hardships and slaughter on a scale never before endured by any force of their size. Those who remained considered themselves bloody lucky to be alive at all. Over the years Bomber Command had embraced the sweet flower of a generation of natural leaders. Most had died terrible deaths slamming their young bodies against the Nazi Fortress of Europe. Precision came to Bomber Command all too late, but it allowed the last volunteers to pick off targets in the Spring of 1945 relishing each strike as a blow for a lost friend.

*The Nazis had Sown the Wind (in Harris's phrase) when they were all powerful. Now they were reaping the Whirlwind*

Those – and this is the view of the official history – who claim that Bomber Command's contribution to the war was less than decisive are factually in error.

That was how it was...

## **BOMBER COMMAND**

Just as the policy and tactics of the bombing war gradually evolved, so did Bomber Command itself. The mighty force available at the end of the war grew from the brave but fragile squadrons that had raided Wilhelmshaven in September 1939. This Chapter will examine Bomber Command at a precise moment during these years – 13/14th February 1945, the day of the Dresden raid.

Bomber Command's front line was a great chain of nearly sixty operational airfields stretching through eastern England from Darlington to Cambridge. About one third of these had been the RAF's pre-war stations with extensive facilities and comfortable accommodation. Postings to these 'Gin Palaces' were much sought after by aircrews. The less fortunate had to make do with the more spartan Nissen huts of the temporary airfields built since the beginning of the war. Sir Arthur Harris at his headquarters near High Wycombe was fifty miles from his nearest bomber station, Gransden Lodge, and over two hundred miles from the Canadian station at Middle-St-George in County Durham. Between Bomber Command headquarters and the operational squadrons were three intermediate levels of Command – Group, Base and Stations; although all major decisions were made by Harris. Rarely has a military commander had such a powerful and flexible force under his own personal control.

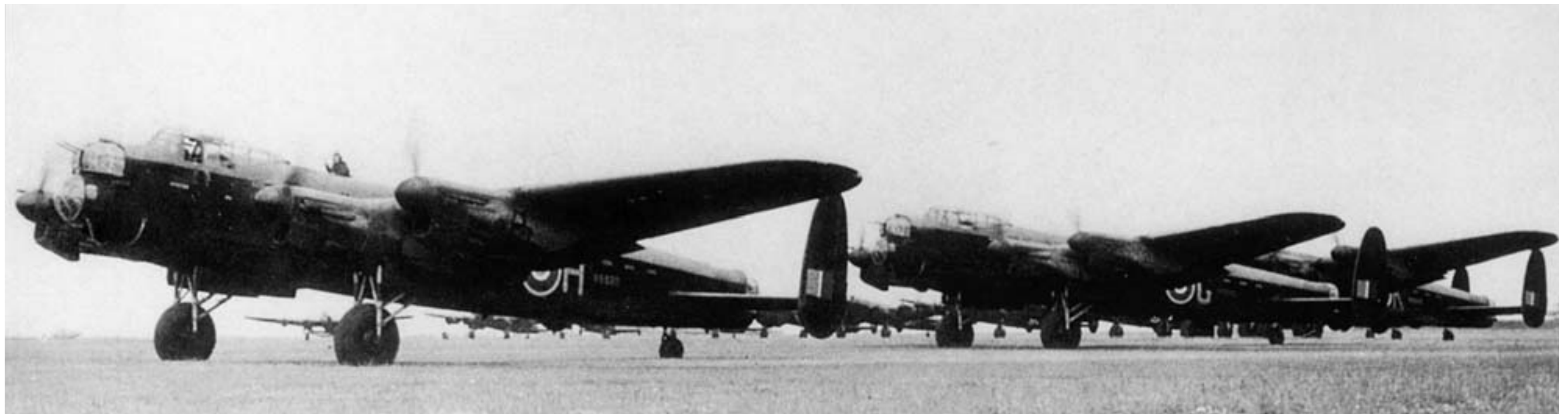
The Group was a long established organisation containing an average of a dozen squadrons ideally all equipped with the same type of aircraft. In February 1945 Bomber Command contained seven operational groups, three training groups and a signals group. The Base was a recent innovation as the Groups had grown in size, this small extra link had been inserted into the chain of command. The Base was commanded by an Air Commodore and was housed on an operational airfield. It controlled the airfield and usually two more. These became unofficially a 'clutch'. The setting up of the Base system was just about complete at this time. The final link in the chain joining the Commander in Chief to his Squadrons was the

*The Squadron, led by a Wing Commander, was the basic operational unit. The average bomber station contained either a three flight squadron of thirty bombers...*

Station – the permanent organisation on a bomber airfield, commanded by a Group Captain, that provided facilities for the Squadron that operated from there.

The Squadron, led by a Wing Commander, was the basic operational unit. The average bomber station contained either a three flight squadron of thirty bombers or two double-flight squadrons with forty bombers in all.

The seven operational groups were situated in three distinct areas; Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and East Anglia. Together in Yorkshire were two Groups which between them operated all of Bomber Command's remaining Halifax Squadrons. 6 Group, with six airfields in the Vale of York and one just over the border in Durham, was a unique Group in that it was Canadian. Its thirteen Squadrons were all RCAF; its Commander was a Canadian officer and most of the running costs of the Group were met by Canada. In spite of this, 6 Group was fully integrated operationally into Bomber Command.



A close neighbour of the Canadians was 4 Group, based in south and east Yorkshire with nine RAF squadrons, and the Australian 466 Squadron at Leconfield. This was a pre-war Group, the original night bombing Group whose Whitleys had flown to Germany dropping leaflets on the very first nights of the war. Now it was equipped throughout with Halifax aircraft. 4 Group was never one of the glamorous groups with a specialist role of elite Squadrons. It had been tucked away in the north of England since 1939, plodding away at the bombing war, usually operating inferior aircraft and taking higher-than-average losses. It was the workhorse of Bomber Command.

The Group Commander was Air Vice-Marshal Roderick Carr, a New Zealander with a sound reputation.

Coming south, the next bomber area was in Lincolnshire with two large all-Lancaster groups. In the north of the county was 1 Group under Air Vice-Marshal EAB Rice, a South African badly crippled from a first world war leg wound. Rice was a friend and admirer of Sir Arthur Harris. His philosophy and that of his Group was to dispatch the heaviest possible bomb-load as often as possible to Germany.

**A Lancaster from No. 617 Squadron.**



*Next came 5 Group, whose airfields were on the low hills of mid Lincolnshire. If any part of Bomber Command can have said to have had 'glamour' then 5 Group, possibly with the Pathfinders, had this quality*

1 Group contained twelve squadrons of which three merit special mention. 101 Squadron at Ludford Magna was the Squadron whose aircraft were fitted with the 'Airborne cigar' (or ABC) radar jamming equipment and its eight man Lancasters were sent on every long raid. For this reason 101 Squadron often operated when their own Group was resting and claimed to have taken part in more bombing raids than any other Bomber Command squadron. 460 Squadron at Binbrook was the senior of the four Australian squadrons in Bomber Command, and 300 (Masovian) was the only Polish squadron in the Command.

Next came 5 Group, whose airfields were on the low hills of mid Lincolnshire. If any part of Bomber Command can have said to have had 'glamour' then 5 Group, possibly with the Pathfinders, had this quality. 5 Group was the first to be equipped with the Lancaster. It had raised and now maintained 617 Squadron of 'dam-busting' fame and, during the course of the war, its airmen were awarded more than half of Bomber Command's VC's. In 1945 it was the largest of the Groups. 5 Group had been commanded by Harris earlier in the war and other commanders felt that he still favoured his old Group. This is possibly so but the reason may be as much that the present commander, Air Vice-Marshal The Hon. Ralph Cochrane, had more to offer than many of his contemporaries. Cochrane was an English officer with a naval background; he had flown



airships with the RNAS in WW1. He was a reserved, austere man who was always trying to improve bomber tactics in general and bombing accuracy in particular. It is certain that both Cochrane and 5 Group made an immense contribution to the bombing war and morale in its squadrons was high. The two Lincolnshire groups could carry a greater tonnage of bombs than the other groups combined.

Situated south of the Fens were the remaining groups, all completely different: 3 Group, 8 Pathfinder Group and 100 (Bomber Support) Group.

3 Group with its airfields around Ely was Lancaster equipped except for 138 and 161 (Special Duty) Squadrons stationed at Tempsford. These two Squadrons flew Resistance agents and supplies as far afield as Norway, Poland and Yugoslavia, sometimes landing in Russia or North Africa after a long flight. They spent so much time over enemy territory that their tour of operations ended at 250 hours if it came before the normal thirty completed trips. 3 Group's commander was a Yorkshireman, Air Vice-Marshal R Harrison. He was older than the other group commanders and was typical of the senior RAF officer who had been promoted steadily since the first war. He was a quiet man, a bachelor and a keen fisherman. He was a respected commander but his influence on the bombing war was confined to running his own Group.

In complete contrast to the quiet Harrison was his close neighbour Air Vice-Marshal DCT Bennett of 8 (Pathfinder) Group, one of the most interesting of the bomber commanders. Donald Bennett, from New South Wales, had served in the RAAF and the RAF from the 1930 to 1935. He then joined Imperial Airways where among other things, he piloted the small flying boat 'Mercury' in the 'Mayo' composite

where a large seaplane took off with a smaller one carried pick-a-back on its upper wing surface. The smaller plane, 'Mercury', could in this manner carry a far greater fuel load than if it had taken off under its own power. Once released from 'Maia' its mother, 'Mercury' had a tremendous range. In 1938 Bennett broke existing records of 4,000 miles by flying this small machine for forty-two hours to cover 6,000 miles with only a wireless operator as a companion. In 1940 he helped to establish the Atlantic Ferry by which American built aircraft were flown to England. In September 1941, he returned to the RAF where he was given the rank of Wing Commander of a Halifax squadron in 4 group. In 1942 he was shot down while attempting to bomb 'Tirpitz' in Norway but he escaped via Sweden.

When the Pathfinder force was formed in late 1942 Harris personally selected Bennett as its commander, resisting pressure to accept a more senior regular officer. When Pathfinder force became 8 Group, Bennett was promoted to Air Vice-Marshal at the age of only thirty two having risen from Wing Commander in just over a year.

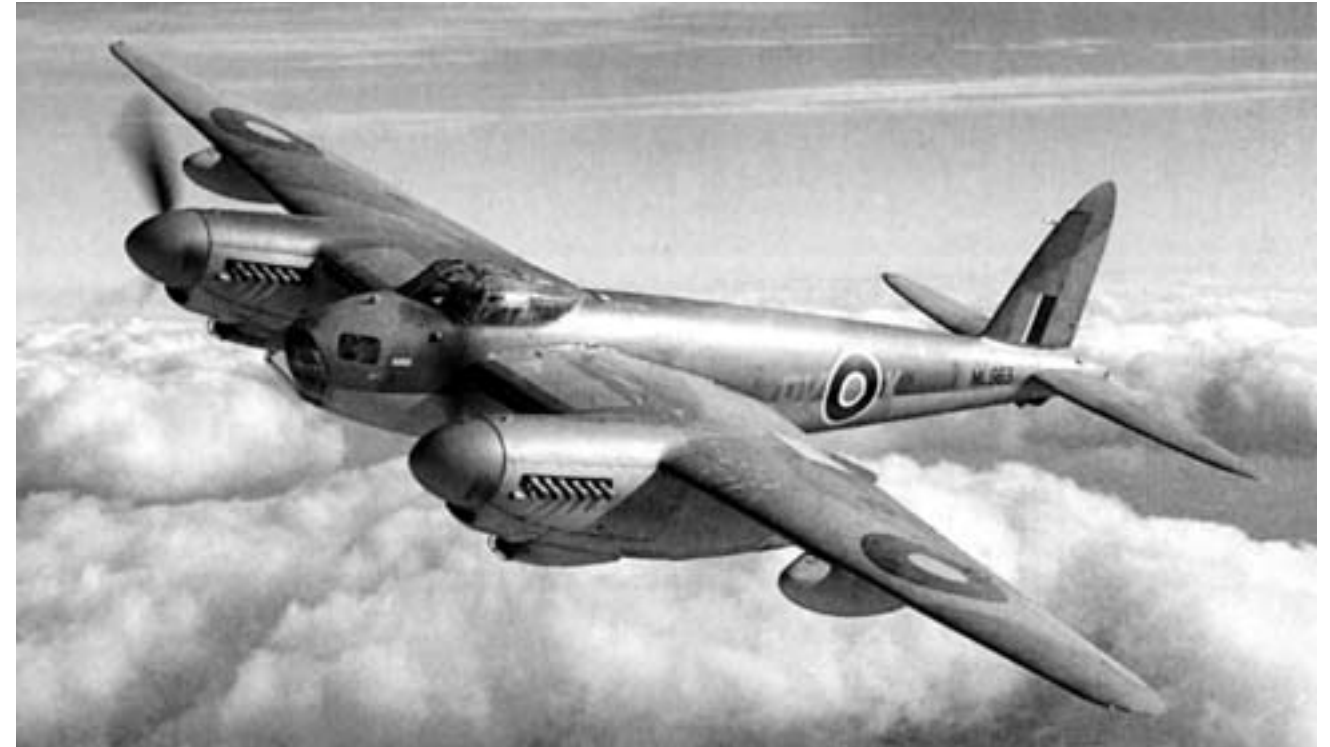
Bennett's rapid promotion was not surprising. He was a brilliant navigator and his ability as a pilot, engineer and wireless operator was probably equal to that of any man in his group. Bennett's relations with some of his contemporaries were not good. He believed that not only Pathfinder methods, but all navigation and routing recommendations also should be accepted by others without question. He called those group commanders who opposed his views 'the unruly Barons of Bomber Command'. In turn they found it difficult to work with this brash young officer who had been appointed by Harris to the most interesting job in Bomber Command.

*The last Bomber Command group to be formed was 100 (Bomber Support) Group stationed in Norfolk*

Such clashes of personality are not unusual in time of war and there is no evidence that the relationships ever became petty or spiteful. Bennett and Cochrane were often in conflict over tactics. On the other hand Carr, Bennett's old commander in 4 Group, thought Bennett 'a brilliant man who I always backed'. Few were neutral where Bennett was concerned but of one thing there was no doubt – he had the complete and absolute confidence of the crews. They may have found him intolerant and hard to please but, because of his ability as an aviator and his powers of leadership, they followed him without question.

The last Bomber Command group to be formed was 100 (Bomber Support) Group stationed in Norfolk. The successes of the German night fighters in 1943 had led to the creation of a number of units whose task it was to support the bombers in various ways. In November of that year these units had been collected into a new group whose sole object was to help the bombing force. Its Commander was Air Commodore (later Air Vice-Marshal) EB Addison, an expert in signals and radio-countermeasures. 100 Group was to do great things in the last year of the war. It was equipped with 'Serrate' Mosquito squadrons, low level intruder Mosquitoes and Fortress aircraft for Radar jamming.

This then is Bomber Command on the eve of the attack on Dresden, seven Groups, nearly eighty squadrons and about 1,000 aircraft. Morale was high and there was no shortage of



crews. By this time there were hardly any pre-war Regulars still flying with Bomber squadrons – and as Bennett was heard to remark 'The Gentlemen have had their turn, now it is up to the Players'.

It might also be recalled that at this time any 'Player' over the age of twenty two was considered to be 'Getting On'.

# ORDER OF BATTLE

**RAF Bomber Command  
13/14 February 1945**

## **No.1 Group**

**(Air Vice-Marshal EAB Rice H.Q. Bawtry Hall)**

| <b>SQUADRON</b> | <b>STATION</b>     | <b>AIRCRAFT</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 12 Squadron     | Wickenby           | Lancaster       |
| 100 “           | Elmsham Wolds      | “               |
| 101 “           | Ludford Magna      | “               |
| 103 “           | Elmsham Wolds      | “               |
| 150 “           | Hemswell           | “               |
| 153 “           | Scampton           | “               |
| 166 “           | Kirmington         | “               |
| 170 “           | Hemswell           | “               |
| 550 “           | North Killingholme | “               |
| 576 “           | Fiskerton          | “               |
| 625 “           | Kelstern           | “               |
| 626 “           | Wickenby           | “               |
| 300 (Polish)    | Faldingworth       | “               |
| 460 (RAAF)      | Binbrook           | “               |

## **No. 3 Group**

**(Air Vice-Marshal R Harrison)**

**H.Q. Exning, Newmarket**

| <b>SQUADRON</b> | <b>STATION</b>  | <b>AIRCRAFT</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 15 Squadron     | Mildenhall      | Lancaster       |
| 75 “            | Mepal           | “               |
| 90 “            | Tuddenham       | “               |
| 115 “           | Witchford       | “               |
| 138 “           | Tuddenham       | “               |
| 149 “           | Methwold        | “               |
| 186 “           | Stradishall     | “               |
| 195 “           | Wratting Common | “               |
| 218 “           | Chedburgh       | “               |
| 514 “           | Waterbeach      | “               |
| 622 “           | Mildenhall      | “               |

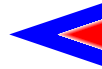


**No. 4 Group****(Air Vice-Marshal CR Carr)****H.Q. Heslington Hall, York**

| <b>SQUADRON</b> | <b>STATION</b> | <b>AIRCRAFT</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 10 Squadron     | Melbourne      | Halifax         |
| 51 "            | Leconfield     | "               |
| 466 "           | Driffield      | "               |
| 76 "            | Holme          | "               |
| 77 "            | Full Sutton    | "               |
| 78 "            | Brighton       | "               |
| 102 "           | Pocklington    | "               |
| 158 "           | Lissett        | "               |
| 640 "           | Leconfield     | "               |
| 346 "           | Elvington      | "               |
| 347 "           | Elvington      | "               |

**No. 5 Group****(Air Vice-Marshal The Hon. Ralph Cochrane)****H.Q. Morton Hall, Swinderby**

| <b>SQUADRON</b>   | <b>STATION</b> | <b>AIRCRAFT</b> |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 9 Squadron        | Bardney        | Lancaster       |
| 44 "              | Spilsby        | "               |
| 49 "              | Fulbeck        | "               |
| 50 "              | Skellingthorpe | "               |
| 57 "              | East Kirkby    | "               |
| 61 "              | Skellingthorpe | "               |
| 106 "             | Metheringham   | "               |
| 189 "             | Bardney        | "               |
| 207 "             | Spilsby        | "               |
| 227 "             | Strubby        | "               |
| 617 "             | Woodhall Spa   | "               |
| 619 "             | Strubby        | "               |
| 630 "             | East Kirkby    | "               |
| 83 "              | Coningsby      | "               |
| 97 "              | Coningsby      | "               |
| 627 "             | Woodhall Spa   | Mosquito        |
| 463 RAAF Squadron | Waddington     | Lancaster       |
| 467 "             | "              | "               |



**No. 6 Group**

**(Canadian)**

**(Air Vice-Marshal CM McEwen)**

**H.Q. Allerton Park Castle, Knaresborough)**

| <b>SQUADRON</b>      | <b>STATION</b>       | <b>AIRCRAFT</b> |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 408 (Goose) Squadron | Linton-on-Ouse       | Halifax         |
| 415 (Swordfish) “    | East Moor            | “               |
| 419 (Moose) “        | Middleton St. George | “               |
| 420 (Snowy Owl) “    | Tholthorpe           | “               |
| 424 (Tiger) “        | Skipton-on-Swale     | Lancaster       |
| 425 (Alouette) “     | Tholthorpe           | Halifax         |
| 426 (Thunderbird)    | Linton-on-Ouse       | “               |
| 427 (Lion) “         | Leeming              | Lancaster       |
| 428 (Ghost) “        | Middleton St. George | “               |
| 429 (Bison) “        | Leeming              | “               |
| 431 (Iroquois) “     | Croft                | “               |
| 432 (Leaside) “      | East Moor            | Halifax         |
| 433 (Porcupine) “    | Skipton-on-Swale     | Lancaster       |
| 434 (Bluenose) “     | Croft                | “               |

**No. 8 Group (Pathfinder)**

**(Air Vice-Marshal DCT Bennett)**

**H.Q. Allerton Park Castle, Knaresborough**

| <b>SQUADRON</b>   | <b>STATION</b>   | <b>AIRCRAFT</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 7 Squadron        | Oakington        | Lancaster       |
| 35 “              | Gravelly         | “               |
| 105 “             | Bourne           | Mosquito        |
| 109 “             | Little Staughton | “               |
| 128 “             | Wyton            | “               |
| 139 “             | Upwood           | “               |
| 142 “             | Gransden Lodge   | Lancaster       |
| 156 “             | Upwood           | Lancaster       |
| 162 “             | Bourne           | Mosquito        |
| 163 “             | Wyton            | “               |
| 405 RCAF Squadron | Gransden Lodge   | Lancaster       |
| 571 “             | Oakington        | Mosquito        |
| 582 “             | Little Staughton | Lancaster       |
| 608 “             | Downham Market   | Mosquito        |
| 635 “             | Downham Market   | Lancaster       |
| 692 “             | Gravelly         | Mosquito        |

**No. 100 Group (Bomber Support)****(Air Vice-Marshal EB Addison)****H.Q. Bylaugh Hall, East Dereham**

| <b>SQUADRON</b>    | <b>STATION</b>   | <b>AIRCRAFT</b>  |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 23 Squadron        | Little Snoring   | Mosquito         |
| 85 “               | Swannington      | “                |
| 141 “              | West Raynham     | “                |
| 157 “              | Swannington      | “                |
| 169 “              | Great Massingham | “                |
| 171 “              | North Creake     | Halifax          |
| 192 “              | Foulsham         | “                |
| 199 “              | North Creake     | “                |
| 214 “              | Oulton           | Halifax/Stirling |
| 223 “              | Oulton           | Fortress 111     |
| 239 “              | West Raynham     | Mosquito         |
| 462 “RAAF Squadron | Foulsham         | Halifax          |
| 515 “              | Little Snoring   | Mosquito         |

**Sir Robert Saundby****AIR MARSHAL SIR ROBERT SAUNDBY**

**Deputy A.O.C-in-C. Bomber Command**  
**K.C.B., K.B.E., M.C., D.F.C., A.F.C.**

When asked to comment on the attack on Dresden, my first reaction was that I had been too closely concerned and I was not in any way responsible for the decision to make a full-scale air attack on Dresden. Nor was my Commander-in-Chief, Sir Arthur Harris. Our part was to carry out,

to the best of our ability, the instructions we received from the Air Ministry. And, in this case, the Air Ministry was merely passing on instructions received from those responsible for the higher direction of the war.

The story is a highly dramatic and complex one, which still holds an element of mystery. I am still not satisfied that I fully understand why it happened. That the bombing of Dresden was a great tragedy, no one can deny. It was one of those terrible things that sometimes happen in wartime, brought about by an unfortunate combination of circumstances. Those

*The advocates of nuclear disarmament seem to believe that if they could achieve their aim, war would become tolerable and decent. They would do well to ponder the fate of Dresden, where 135,000 people died as a result of an air attack with conventional weapons*

who approved it were neither wicked nor cruel, though it may well be that they were too remote from the harsh realities of war to understand fully the appalling destructive power of air bombardment in the spring of 1945.

The advocates of nuclear disarmament seem to believe that if they could achieve their aim, war would become tolerable and decent. They would do well to ponder the fate of Dresden, where 135,000 people died as a result of an air attack with conventional weapons. On the night of March 9/10 1945, an air attack on Tokyo by American heavy bombers using incendiaries and high explosive bombs, caused the death of 83,793 people. The atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed 71,379 people.

Nuclear weapons are of course, far more powerful nowadays, but it is a mistake to suppose that, if they were abolished, great cities could not be reduced to dust and ashes, and frightful massacres brought about by aircraft using conventional weapons. And the removal of the fear of nuclear retaliation – which makes modern full-scale war amount to mutual annihilation – might once again make resort to war attractive to an aggressor.

It is not so much this or the other means of making war that is immoral or inhuman. What is immoral is war itself. Once full-scale war has broken out it can never be humanised or civilised, and if one side attempts to do so it would be most likely to be defeated. So long as we resort to war to settle differences between nations, so long we will have to endure the horrors, barbarities and excesses that war brings with it. That to me is the lesson of Dresden.

Nuclear power has at last brought us within sight of the end of full-scale war. It is now too violent to be a practical means of

solving anything. No war aim, no conceivable gain that war could bring, would be worth a straw when balanced against the fearful destruction and loss of life that would be suffered by both sides.



There has never been the slightest hope of abolishing war by agreement or disarmament, or for reasons of morality and humanity. If it disappears it will be because it has become so appallingly destructive that it can no longer serve any useful purpose. Let us hope that the horrors of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Hamburg, may drive home to the whole human race the futility, savagery, and utter uselessness of modern war.

We must not make the fatal mistake, however, of believing that war can be avoided by unilateral disarmament, by resort to pacifism, or by striving for an unattainable neutrality. It is the balance of nuclear power that will keep the peace until mankind, as some day it must, comes to its senses.

## **IRA C. EAKER, LT. GEN. U.S.A.F. (RET.)**



Ira C Eaker

*Our Fortresses and Liberators had been designed for day bombing. They flew in close formation for support, and the bombardiers could find and hit vital targets...*

It may not be inappropriate that I undertake to comment on the attack on Dresden since I was the first U.S. Army Air Corps bomber commander

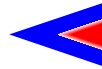
in Europe in the last war, and later commanded the Eighth Air Force in England from October 1942 until January 1944. In these capacities I worked closely with the principal British and

U.S. commanders, who directed and carried out the bombing raids on German targets, including Dresden. I well remember the target directives and bombing policies.

The bombing policy, like all major military decisions, was agreed by the heads of Allied Governments – President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Marshal Stalin – upon the advice of their military Chiefs of Staffs. When I first arrived in England in 1942 to command our bomber groups and to organise, in close co-operation with British Bomber Command, for the combined air offensive, all directives from the heads of state and Combined Chiefs of Staff were channelled through Air Chief Marshal Portal, Chief of Air Staff of the Royal Air Force. It was fully understood and agreed by all hands that the British night bombing effort, approved and then in progress, was thereafter to be supplemented by United States daylight bombing against important enemy munitions targets, submarine pens, airplane and tank factories, and, later, petroleum production and transportation. This was confirmed at the Casablanca conference.

This combined United States – British bombing offensive made necessary for the Germans greatly to augment their defences, to stand watch around the clock. This effort kept thousands of workers from the munitions labour force and greatly reduced the number of divisions which the Germans could send to the Eastern Front. At one time more than half a million Germans were involved day and night defending themselves against our air offensive.

Our Fortresses and Liberators had been designed for day bombing. They flew in close formation for support, and the bombardiers could find and hit vital targets like munitions factories. However, the weather often obscured targets. Radar



was then developed and employed for target identification through cloud cover. This method never produced the accuracy of visual bombing, and it is understandable why the Germans charged us with indiscriminate area bombing.

Also, vital enemy targets were located in and near centres of population. It was clear to us all that many civilians would be killed or rendered homeless when such targets were attacked. We never permitted this factor to spare a vital target. I did not believe then, and do not believe now, that a factory turning out 'planes, bombs, tanks, submarines or guns should be spared to prevent hazard to enemy civil populations, particularly civilians working in those plants turning out munitions later to be hurled at our gallant soldiers, sailors and airmen. A skilled worker in a German munitions factory was contributing to our casualties just as certain as enemies in uniform. It was our directive and duty to bring the war to successful conclusion as quickly as possible.

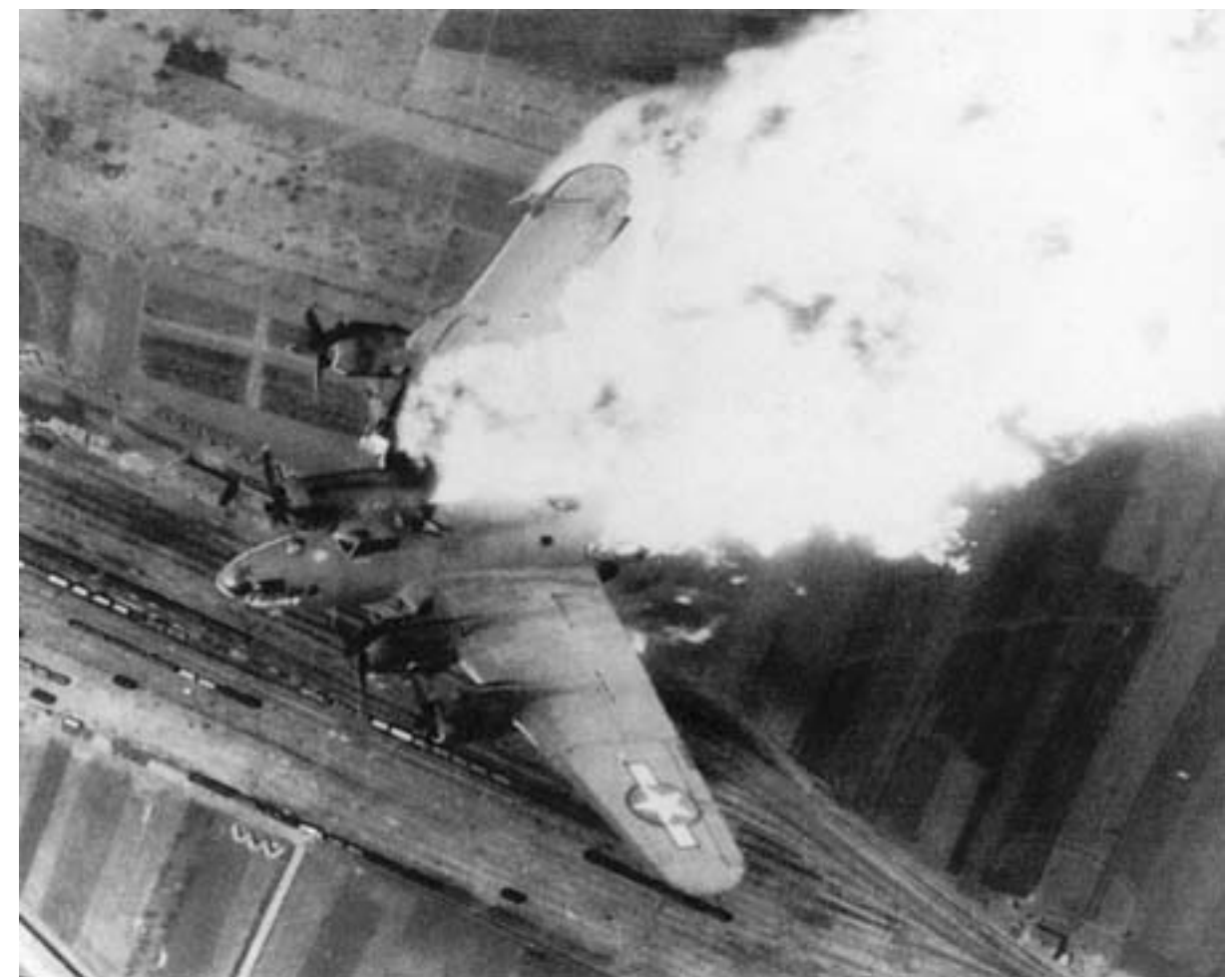
The enemy would be defeated when he had lost the will to fight; our bombing was directed toward that end.

*I find it difficult to understand Englishmen or Americans who weep about enemy civilians who were killed but who have not shed a tear for our gallant crews lost in combat...*

The heads of the Allied governments, their Chiefs of Staff, and the senior commanders in the field were not fiends or barbarians who relished the taking of human lives. I knew these men well. I admired and respected their habits, characters and their complete dedication to their military assignments, their countries and their peoples. I find it difficult

to understand Englishmen or Americans who weep about enemy civilians who were killed but who have not shed a tear for our gallant crews lost in combat with a cruel enemy. It is well to remember at this very time, V-1s and V-2s were falling on England, killing civilian men, women and children indiscriminately, as they were designed and launched to do. It might be well to remember Buchenwald and Coventry, too.

Worries exist about whether Dresden was a proper military target. The same argument, strangely enough, is popular now. Our Air Leaders today advocate a 'counterforce' air strategy. All military airmen generally believe that our weapons should be designed and produced in sufficient quantities to destroy





112

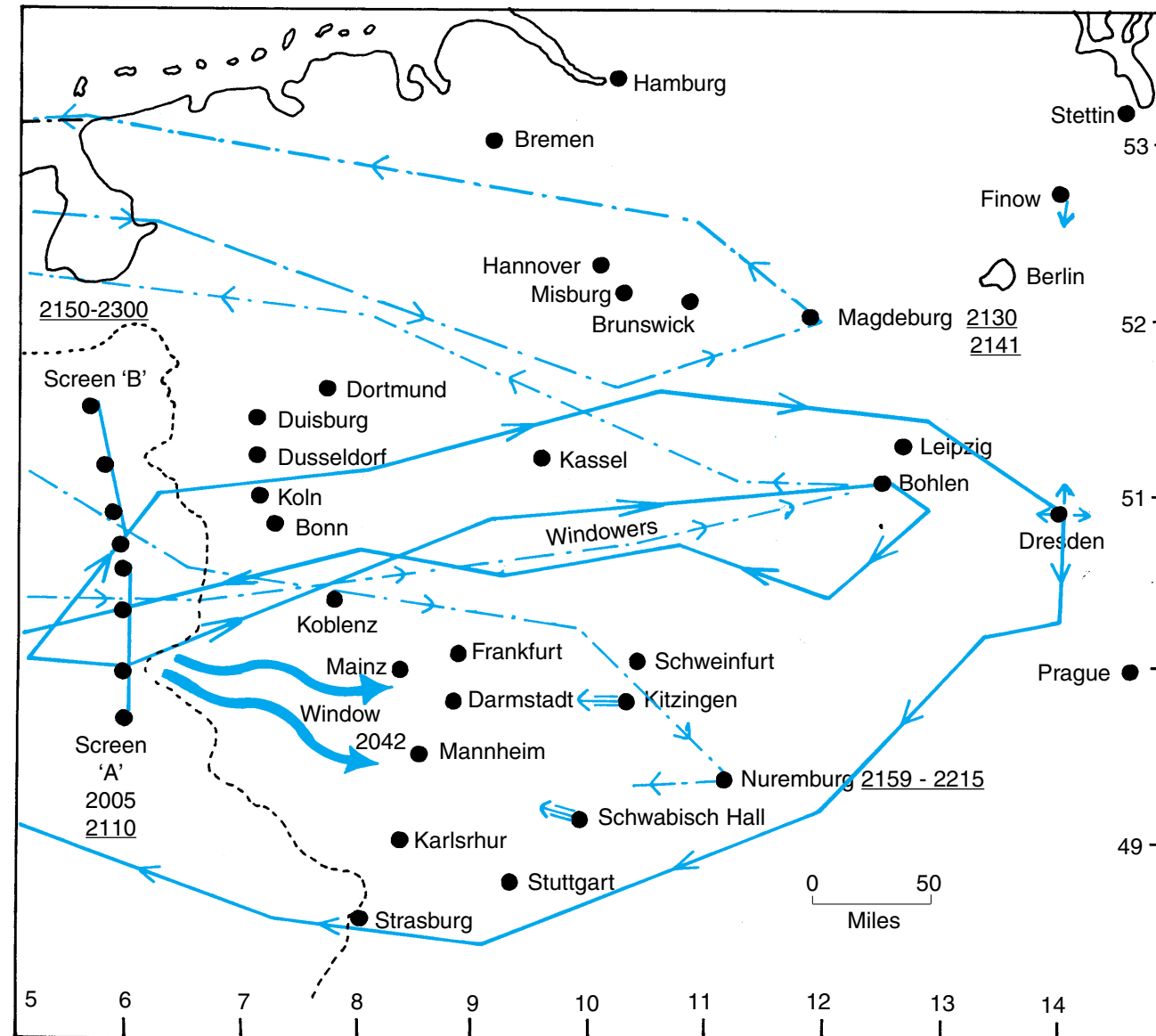
the enemy's warmaking potential, not his cities.

Nevertheless, some people advocate that we need only sufficient nuclear weapons to destroy the enemy's great centres of population. By a strange coincidence, those who now lead in condemning the bombing of civilians in the last war appear to be the 'fail safe' crowd who would now give us only enough weapons in the future for the destruction of enemy cities.

I deeply regret that British and American bombers killed 135,000 people in the attack on Dresden, but I remember who started the last war and I regret even more the loss of more than 5,000,000 Allied lives in the necessary effort to completely defeat and utterly destroy Nazism.



# FIRST PHASE

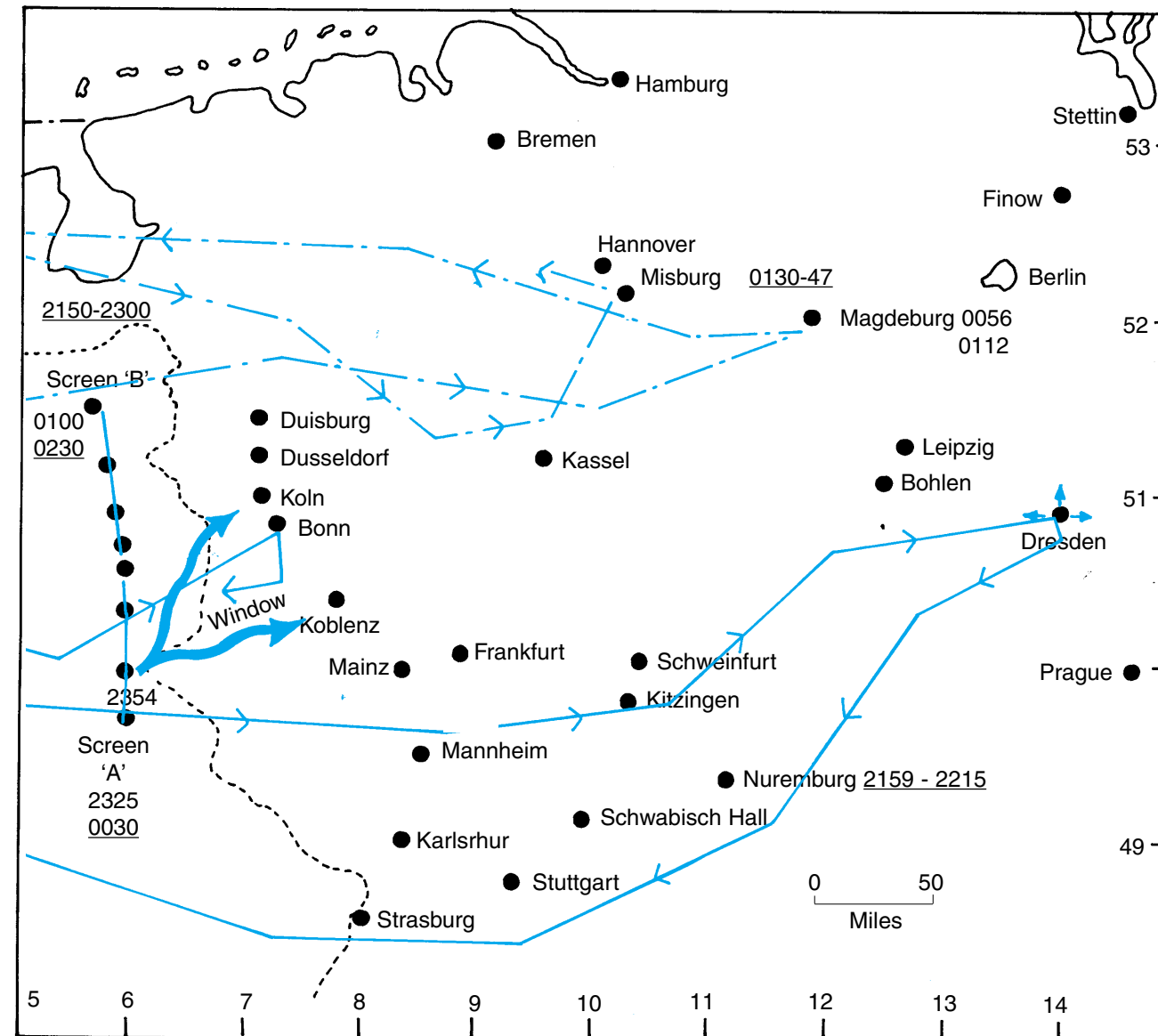


COMBINED BOMBER COMMAND OPERATIONS NIGHT 13/14th Feb.1945

The map does not portray the route of the Low Level Intruders over the airfields at Dortmund, Kassel and Gutersloh. Neither does it portray the High Level Intruders operating in the South. These aircraft gave greater credibility to the Window Feint Force.



## SECOND PHASE



### COMBINED BOMBER COMMAND OPERATIONS NIGHT 13/14th Feb.1945

The Bonn Feint and the Window Feint Force breaking through the Mandrel Screen gave the impression that the target was well North, and covered the more Southerly route of the Main Force.

SECRET

APPENDIX 45  
To F.540 of No. 1 Group  
for February 1945

115

FROM HQ NO. 1 GROUP 131515A  
TO 12, 13, 14, 15, BASES AND ALL OPS STATIONS.  
INFO 71 BASE AND HQBC.

SECRET QXX BT

A. FORM B SERIAL NO. 1649. TASK NO. 1762.

B. 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1945

C. SEE CURRENT INTELLIGENCE SIGNAL. A TOTAL OF 500 LANCASTERS PLUS PFF WILL BE ATTACKING THIS TARGET.

D. TO DESTROY BUILT UP AREA AND ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES AND RAIL FACILITIES.

E. NIGHT 13/14 FEBRUARY 1945

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| F. 12BASE | 53 A/C         |
| 13 BASE   | 71 A/C         |
| 14 BASE   | 66 A/C         |
| 15 BASE   | <u>63 A/C</u>  |
| TOTAL     | <u>253 A/C</u> |

G. "CHEVIN" AIMING POINT "CHEVIN" – 'A'

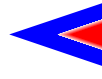
H.1 AND H.2 NIL

J. RESULT OF THE RAID WITH THE AID OF PILOTS REPORTS PHOTOGRAPHS AND H2S PHOTOGRAPHS. ALL AIRCRAFT TO CARRY PHOTO-FLASHES, AND AS MANY AS POSSIBLE TO CARRY H2S CAMERAS.

K. AND L

(A) BASES – (B) READING – (C) 50.00N/02.00E – (D) 49.45N/09.05E –  
(E) 49.55N/09.05E – (F) 50.50N/12.00E – TARGET – (G) 50.55/13.55E  
(H) 50.30N/12.40E – (I) 49.15N/11.30E – (J) 48.30N/09.20E – (K) 48.30N/07.10E –  
(L) 49.00N/05.00E – (M) ORFORDNESS – (A) BASES.

M.1. "H" HOUR WILL BE 01.30 HOURS.



116

M.2. (A) 1ST WAVE

|         |           |            |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 12 BASE | 11        | A/C        |
| 13 BASE | 13        | A/C        |
| 14 BASE | 5         | A/C        |
| 15 BASE | <u>11</u> | <u>A/C</u> |
|         | <u>40</u> | <u>A/C</u> |

2ND WAVE

|         |           |            |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 12 BASE | 14        | A/C        |
| 13 BASE | 15        | A/C        |
| 14 BASE | 7         | A/C        |
| 15 BASE | <u>14</u> | <u>A/C</u> |
|         | <u>50</u> | <u>A/C</u> |

3RD WAVE

|         |    |     |
|---------|----|-----|
| 12 BASE | 15 | A/C |
| 13 BASE | 19 | A/C |
| 14 BASE | 9  | A/C |
| 15 BASE | 15 | A/C |

4TH WAVE

|         |           |            |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 12 BASE | 14        | A/C        |
| 13 BASE | 15        | A/C        |
| 14 BASE | 7         | A/C        |
| 15 BASE | <u>14</u> | <u>A/C</u> |
|         | <u>50</u> | <u>A/C</u> |

5TH WAVE

|         |           |            |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 12 BASE | 9         | A/C        |
| 13 BASE | 9         | A/C        |
| 14 BASE | 3         | A/C        |
| 15 BASE | <u>9</u>  | <u>A/C</u> |
|         | <u>30</u> | <u>A/C</u> |

TIME ON TARGET "H" TO "H" PLUS 3

PLUS 30 LANCS OF 3 GROUP AND 37 LANCS OF 6 GROUP

T.O.T "H" PLUS 3 TO "H" PLUS 6

PLUS 40 LANCS OF 3 GROUP

T.O.T "H" PLUS 6 TO "H" PLUS 9

PLUS 30 LANCS OF 3 GROUP

T.O.T "H" PLUS 9 TO "H" PLUS 12

PLUS 40 LANCS OF 3 GROUP

T.O.T "H" PLUS 12 TO "H" PLUS 15

PLUS 30 LANCS OF 3 GROUP AND 30 LANCS OF 6 GROUP LANCS OF 6 GROUP



(B) SUPPORTERS T.O.T “H” MINUS 6 / MINUTES

14 BASE – 16 A/C OF 12 SQUADRON PLUS 4 A/C OF 626 SQUADRON.

(C) 15 A.B.C. AIRCRAFT OF 101 SQUADRON ARE TO BE SPREAD EVENLY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE ATTACK

N.1. MINIMUM PETROL LOAD FOR ALL AIRCRAFT TO BE 2154 GALLONS.

N.2. BOMB LOADS (MAIN FORCE)

(A) 50% OF MAIN FORCE AIRCRAFT ARE TO CARRY FOR PREFERENCE

(1) 1 X 4,000LB H.C.  
10 X 500 X 4LB I.B. CLUSTERS  
2 X 60 X 4LB I.B. CLUSTERS

OR (2) 1 X 4,000LB H.C.  
PLUS A PROPORTION OF 500 AND 750LB CLUSTERS  
2 X 60 X 4LB I.B.

OR (3) 1 X 4,000LB H.C.  
7 X 150 X 4LB I.B

(B) 50% OF AIRCRAFT ARE TO CARRY FOR PREFERENCE

(1) 1 X 2,000LB H.C.  
14 X 500 X 4LB I.B. CLUSTERS

OR (2) 1 X 2,000LB H.C.  
PLUS A PROPORTION OF 750 AND 500LB CLUSTERS

OR (3) 1 X 2,000LB H.C.  
11 X 150 X 4LB I.B.

(C) IN ALL CASES 10% I.B'S TO BE “X” TYPE

SUPPORTERS TO CARRY AN H.E. LOAD

1 X 4,000LB H.C.  
9 X 500LB M.C. OR G.P. FUSED TO 0.25 SECONDS

N.3. DISTRIBUTOR SETTINGS

CLUSTER LOADS = 0.1 SECONDS  
S.B.C. LOADS = 0.2 SECONDS  
H.E. LOADS = 0.25 SECONDS

#### N.4. SECURITY

SIGNALS AND RADAR SILENCE (INCLUDING ABC AND H2S) IS TO BE MAINTAINED AS FAR AS 06.00E ON THE OUTWARD JOURNEY.

#### N.5. NAVIGATION LIGHTS

ARE TO BE BURNED AS FAR AS 06.00E ON THE OUTWARD JOURNEY.

#### N.6. SUPPORTERS

SUPPORTERS MUST MAKE EVERY ENDEAVOUR TO BOMB AT "H" MINUS 6 1/2 MINUTES. THEY ARE TO BOMB BETWEEN 18/20,000 FT USING BEST NAVIGATIONAL AIDS AVAILABLE, SINCE NO MARKERS SHOULD BE VISIBLE AT THIS TIME. ABOVE ALL THEY ARE TO BOMB EXACTLY AT "H" MINUS 6 1/2 MINUTES.

#### N.6. WINDOW

(A) 50% OF AIRCRAFT TO CARRY AND DROP "M" TYPE WINDOW (ONE THIRD OF THIS NUMBER "MB") AS FOLLOWS

START RATE "D" = 49.52N/06.00E

START RATE "G" = 51.00N/13.19E

START RATE "D" = 50.48N/13.35E

STOP FINALLY = 49.55N/04.00E

#### CORRECTION

ALL AFTER START RATE "D"

STOP FINALLY = 49.55N/04.00E

#### A TOTAL OF 550 BUNDLES PER AIRCRAFT

(B) 50% OF AIRCRAFT ARE TO CARRY ORDINARY TYPE WINDOW AS FOLLOWS

START RATE "D" = 49.52N/06.00E

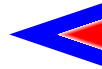
START RATE "G" = 51.00N/13.19E

START RATE "D" = 50.48N/13.35E

STOP FINALLY = 49.55N/04.00E

#### A TOTAL OF 590 BUNDLES PER AIRCRAFT

(C) ALL AIRCRAFT ARE TO CARRY AN ADDITIONAL 24 BUNDLES OF ORDINARY TYPE WINDOW FOR USE IF ENGAGED BY HEAVY PREDICTED FLAK.



N.7. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE TIMING IS TO BE PARTICULARLY STRESSED AND AIRCRAFT ARE NOT TO SET COURSE FROM THE RENDEZVOUS POSITION 06.00E BEFORE THEIR CONCENTRATION TIME. FREQUENT TIME CHECKS ARE TO BE MADE BEFORE REACHING THIS POINT AND PARTICULARLY AT READING AND POSITION 02.00E.

N.8. WIND BROADCASTING

8 AIRCRAFT FROM EACH BASE ARE TO BE DETAILED TO ACT AS WINDFINDERS. THESE AIRCRAFT ARE TO TRANSMIT TO THIS H.Q. WIND VELOCITIES FOUND. FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE PASSED BY TELEPHONE BY THE DUTY NAVIGATION OFFICER.

N.9. OTHER GROUPS

3 GROUP – “CHEVIN” = 01.30 HOURS – 170 LANCS

6 GROUP – “CHEVIN” = 01.30 HOURS – 67 LANCS

ROUTES AS FOR NO.1 GROUP

5 GROUP – “CHEVIN” = 22.15 HOURS – 200 LANCS

ROUTE – BASES – READING – 50.00N/02.00E – 50.00N/05.00E – 51.00N/06.00E –

51.10N/08.00E – 51.43N/10.20E – 51.35N/12.40E – TARGET

50.55N/13.55E – 50.25N/13.55E – 50.30N/13.10E – 49.55N/11.50E

48.25N/09.00E – 48.30N/07.10E – 49.00N/05.00E – ORFORDNESS – BASES

4 GROUP – GQ1514A – 22.00 HOURS – 200 HALIFAX

6 GROUP – GQ1514A – 22.00 HOURS – 115 HALIFAX

8 GROUP WHITEBAIT MOSQUITOS

N.10. METHOD

(A) THE METHOD FOR TONIGHT WILL BE CONTROLLED NEWHAVEN WITH EMERGENCY WANGANUI.

(B) PFF AIRCRAFT WILL OPEN THE ATTACK WITH LONG STICKS OF ILLUMINATING FLARES AT “H” MINUS 6. THE AIMING POINT WILL THEN BE MARKED WITH LARGE SALVOES OF MIXED RED AND GREEN T.I’S AND WILL BE KEPT MARKED WITH RED T.I’S. IF AIMING POINT IS NOT MARKED VISUALLY THE TARGET AREA WILL BE MARKED WITH GREEN T.I’S IN THE EARLY PART OF THE ATTACK.

(C) IF GROUND MARKING IS OBSCURED BY CLOUD THE RELEASE POINT WILL BE FMARKED WITH SKY MARKING FLARES RED/GREEN STARS IGNITING AT 15,000FT.

(D) A MASTER BOMBER WILL GIVE AIMING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAIN FORCE WHO ARE TO LISTEN OUT FROM "H" MINUS 15 MINUTES  
 MASTER BOMBER "KINGCOLE"  
 DEPUTY MASTER "KINGCOLE TWO"  
 MAINFORCE "STRONGMAN"  
 FREQUENCIES (1) VHF BOMBER COMMON  
 (2) 6440 KC/S  
 (3) 5865 KC/S

(E) MAINFORCE ARE TO AIM THEIR BOMBS IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER OF PREFERENCE.

(A) MASTER BOMBERS INSTRUCTIONS.

(B) CENTRE OF MIXED RED AND GREEN T.I'S.

(C) CENTRE OF RED T.I'S.

(D) CENTRE OF GREEN T.I'S.

(E) CENTRE OF SKYMARKING FLARES RED/GREEN STARS ON THE EXACT HEADING OF 069 DEGREES TRUE/073 DEGREES MAGNETIC.

#### N.11. INTRUDERS

IN THE EVENT OF INTRUDER ACTIVITY AIRCRAFT ARE TO FLY WEST FOR TEN MINUTES AND THEN SOUTHWEST UNTIL EITHER RECALLED OR DIVERTED.

#### TACTICS

(A) RENDEZVOUS AT READING AT 8/10,000 FT AND CONTINUE AT THIS HEIGHT AS FAR AS 01.30 DEGREES EAST ON TRACK

(B) THEN CLIMB TO BE AT 12/14,000 FT BY 03.00E ON TRACK

(C) MAINTAIN THIS HEIGHT TO 06.00E ON TRACK

(D) THEN CLIMB TO BOMBING HEIGHT 16/20,000 FT BY 09.05E

(E) MAINTAIN THIS HEIGHT FOR BOMBING AND AS FAR AS 05.00E ON THE RETURN JOURNEY

(F) THEN LOSE HEIGHT KEEPING ABOVE CLOUD SO AS TO CROSS CONTINENTAL COAST OUT AT 6/10,000 FT

(G) MAINTAIN THIS HEIGHT TO THE ENGLISH COAST THEN LOSE HEIGHT GRADUALLY TO BASE AREAS

O. ACKNOWLEDGE

P. 131515A

# SECRET

## APPENDIX 46

### To F.540 of No. 1 Group For February 1945

No. 1 Group summary of Operations, Night 13/14 February 1945

#### Target Dresden

|                |     |  |
|----------------|-----|--|
| Detailed       | 265 | Lancasters (Including one 5 Group Photographic Aircraft) |
| Took-off       | 261 | “  |
| Successful “A” | 244 | “  |
| Successful “B” | 1   | “  |
| Abortive NOET  | 10  | “  |
| Missing        | 4   | “  |
| Outstanding    | 2   | “  |

#### Successful “A” Time on Target 0123 to 0152 hours, 14,000 to 20,000 ft.

Weather on route was clear until approximately three degrees East, where a front was passed with cloud tops at 16,000 feet. From this point until twelve degrees East there were large areas of broken cloud with tops of from 12 to 18,000 feet. Here the cloud dispersed entirely and conditions were again clear when the target was reached, although there was a thick bank of cloud with tops to 8,000 feet just to the East.

Crews report that the result of 5 Group's attack were visible twenty minutes flying time from the target, and supporting aircraft bombing before the main attack commenced, reported that the fires by 5 Group were still burning well and that the

main concentration was situated in the area South of the River Elbe between the marshalling yards and our aiming point with a few smaller fires burning to the North. The marking commenced punctually with illuminating flares which were reported as being hardly necessary as the built up area was clearly visible in the light of the fires. Green T.I's were dropped and at the commencement the Master Bomber's instructions were to overshoot these markers by two seconds. Later the Master Bomber instructed crews to bomb the Red T.I's which had been dropped in the centre of the fires. Towards the end of the attack the fires had reached such intensity that it became difficult to distinguish markers, and the Controller's final instructions which were given from 01.42 hrs onwards, were to bomb the centre of the fires. By the end of the attack the whole built up area to the South of the river was a mass of fires with another smaller area to the North. There are only a few reports of incendiaries being dropped short. Among several explosions a particularly impressive one at 01.37 hrs is reported. All reports indicate a most successful attack and some crews compare it favourably with the one on Nuremburg on the night of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> January. The results of the attack were clearly visible for over 100 miles on the return journey.

Ground defences were very weak with only a small amount of heavy flak and no searchlights. One aircraft sustained damage from heavy flak in the target area and three other aircraft which strayed off track on return sustained damage from the heavy flak, one at Ausburg, one at Nuremburg and a third at Stuttgart. There was little evidence of enemy night fighter activity and only three of our aircraft were engaged in combat, one with a single-engined aircraft in the target area which did not return fire, one with a JU88 near Nordlingen on return and

the third with an ME 410 SW of Stuttgart. In each of the two latter our aircraft claimed strikes on the enemy aircraft, which returned fire. No damage was sustained by our aircraft. In combat with the JU.88 the pilot momentarily lost control of our aircraft and gave orders to abandon. Before he could gain control the Mid Upper Gunner had baled out.

The 244 aircraft claiming to have attacked the primary target dropped: –

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 73 x 4,000lb H.C.    | 460 x No. 14 Clusters  |
| 69 x 4,000lb Minel 2 | 61 x No. 14 "X" type Clusters                                      |
| 100 x 2,000lb H.C.   | 12 x No. 15 Clusters   |
| 46 x 500lb M.C.      | 1502 x 150 x 4lb Incendiaries<br>(including 28,200 x 4lb "X" type) |
| 62 x 500lb G.P.      | 244 x 60 x 4lb Incendiaries  |

In addition the four missing aircraft carried: –

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1 x 4,000lb H.C.             | 2 x 4,000lb M2  |
| 1 x 4,000lb H.C.             | 22 x No. 14 Clusters  |
| 2 x No. 14 "X" type clusters | 14 x 150 x 4lb Incendiaries<br>(including 267 x 4 "X" type) |

Making a total of: –

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 74 x 4,000lb H.C.  | 571 x 140 Clusters  |
| 71 x 4,000lb M2    | 63 x No. 14 "X" type Clusters                                     |
| 101 x 2,000lb H.C. | 12 x No. 15 Clusters  |
| 46 x 500lb M.C.    | 1527 x 150 x 4lb Incendiaries<br>(including 28,467 x 4lb incends) |
| 62 x 500lb G.P.    | 250 x 60 x 4lb  |

### Successful "B"

One aircraft with engine trouble attacked TRABEN TRABACH Northeast of TRIER, dropping :- 1 x 2,000lb H.C., 11 x 150 x 4lb incendiaries including 165 x 4 "X" Type.

### Missing

1. 103/"O" P/O Rimmington (3) 5<sup>th</sup> Wave
2. 101/"J" F/O Davis (9) A.B.C.
3. 626/"D2" F/O Driver (8) 1<sup>st</sup> Wave
4. 576/"O2" F/O Young (8) 4<sup>th</sup> Wave

Nothing was heard from these aircraft after take-off.

### Aborted Not over Enemy Territory

1. 625/"B" Engine Trouble.
2. 625/"K" Rear Turret U.S.
3. 626/"H2" Engine Trouble.
4. 166/"R2" Flight Instruments U/S.
5. 550/"C2" Rear Gunner ill.
6. 626/"W2" Pilot ill
7. 150/"S" Engine Trouble.
8. 550/"B2" Collided with No. 9 shortly after take-off.
9. 300/"W" Collided with No. 8 shortly after take-off.
10. 576/"C" A.S.I. U/S.

### Outstanding

1. 100/"B" Landed at Juvincourt. These a/c 2 x 2,000lb H.C. 25 x No. 14 Clusters.
2. 576/"X2 Landed at Juvincourt. These a/c 3 x No. 14 "X" type Clusters.

# **SECRET** **FORM 540 OPERATIONS RECORD** **BOOK**

## **H.Q. No.3 Group**

Exning 13/14 February 1945.

### **Target Dresden**

Detailed:– 168 Sorties:– Cancelled:– 6. Abortive:– 7.  
Missing:– 1.

The attack was carried out in the direct support of the Russian offensive and seemed to have been highly successful. The weather in the target area was clear. Although the T.I.'s appeared scattered at first, the Master Bomber soon got the bombing concentrated, and when the attack was finished, the town appeared to be well and truly ablaze, and smoke was rising to considerable heights. There were no searchlights and Flak was slight. Crews were enthusiastic regarding the results. This was the first night on which Dresden had been attacked in force by Bomber Command. It was attacked two hours earlier by other Groups, the fires from which were visible when our crews arrived.

The low losses are due probably to the tactics used and the excellent support given by the Bomber Support Group.

# **SECRET** **FORM 540** **OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

## **H.Q. No.4 Group**

Heslington Hall  
13/14 February 1945

### **Attack on Target "A"**

#### **Bohlen**

23 aircraft of 10 Squadron Melbourne, 15 aircraft of 51 Squadron Snaith, 23 aircraft of 76 Squadron Holme, 21 aircraft of 77 Squadron Full Sutton, 23 aircraft of 78 Squadron Brighton, 17 aircraft of 102 Squadron Pocklington, 22 aircraft of 158 Squadron Lissett, 14 aircraft of 346 Squadron Elvington, 12 aircraft of 347 Squadron Elvington, 15 aircraft of 466 Squadron Driffield, 12 aircraft of 578 Squadron Burn, and 14 aircraft of 640 Squadron Leconfield were detailed.

196 aircraft attacked the primary target, 12 aircraft were abortive, not over enemy territory, 2 aircraft abortive over enemy territory.

Casualties:– 1 aircraft of 77 Squadron is missing.

Results:– Owing to 10/10 cloud over the target, there is little evidence on which to base an assessment of this attack but it seems to have been scattered. A few breaks in the cloud were found outside the target and three photographs showing ground detail were plotted. One seven miles north east, and two fourteen and a quarter miles south west. The Master

Bomber ordered crews to bomb T.I.' Green and to ignore the "Reds", none having been dropped by PFF.

There was some confusion due either to the presence of decoy markers or to scattered PFF markers, or even both. Decoy fires also appear to have been lighted. Where possible the Master Bomber's instructions were followed, though a number of crews saw little but a glow in the cloud. Ground defences were moderate in the target area but more intense in Mersberg and Zeitz. There was slight fighter activity at the target.

## **SECRET** **FORM 540** **OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

### **H.Q. No.5 Group**

Morton Hall

Night of 13/14 February 1945

### **Target Dresden**

248 Lancasters and 9 Mosquitos were detailed, 2 were cancelled, 246 Lancasters and 9 Mosquitos took off. 8 returned early, 244 were successful. 1 failed, 1 outstanding and 1 missing.

Casualties:— 463 Squadron – F/O Fernley-Stott.

Results:— There was 9–10/10ths medium cloud in three layers, at approximately 3 – 5,000ft, 6 – 8,000, and 15–16,000ft. Visibility was good between layers. The Controller appeared satisfied with the position and concentration of the markers and bombing was carried out on the glow of Red T.I.'s No results were observed owing to cloud conditions, but the general impression was that the attack went according to plan. Meagre Flak was experienced over the target, a few bursts of heavy Flak, no light. One or two fighters were seen in the target area. One Lancaster bombed Cologne, owing to engine failure on the outward journey.

# SECRET FORM 540 OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

## H.Q. No.6 Group

Allerton Hall  
13/14 February 1945

### Operations

Below is a summary of aircraft detailed for, and results of an attack on Dresden.

| Squadron | A/C       | No Detailed | Successful |     | Abort NOET | Outstanding |
|----------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----|------------|-------------|
|          |           |             | "A"        | "B" |            |             |
| 419      | Lancaster | 15          | 15         |     |            |             |
| 424      | Lancaster | 7           | 7          |     |            |             |
| 428      | Lancaster | 9           | 9          |     |            |             |
| 431      | Lancaster | 14          | 13         |     | 1          |             |
| 433      | Lancaster | 7           | 7          |     |            |             |
| 434      | Lancaster | 15          | 15         |     |            |             |
| Totals   |           | 67          | 66         |     | 1          |             |

Weather was clear to 3/10ths patchy cloud with tops 4-5,000ft. Visibility was good though there was some haze and smoke from the previous attack. Markers were well concentrated and target land marks were seen clearly by the light of the flares and fires from the previous raid. The Master bomber was clearly heard. He instructed crews to bomb the centre of the markers and later the centre of the fires. Several large explosions were seen including an orange one and two

huge red ones. Smoke plumes rose to 15,000ft. Late arrivals reported the target to be a sea of fire with the glow visible for 160 miles. Fires from the previous raid were seen 60 miles away on the route in. This was considered to have been an excellent attack. Slight heavy flak in loose barrage form was encountered, but there were no searchlights. Two aircraft were shot down in the target area, one homeward, and one outward. A few enemy fighters were seen and there were two combats on the homeward route but no claims. 220.2 tons of high explosive were dropped.

### Operations

Below is a summary of aircraft detailed for, and results of an attack on Bohlen.

| Squadron | A/C     | No Detailed | Successful |     | Abort NOET | Outstanding |
|----------|---------|-------------|------------|-----|------------|-------------|
|          |         |             | "A"        | "B" |            |             |
| 408      | Halifax | 16          | 15         |     | 1          |             |
| 415      | Halifax | 15          | 15         |     |            |             |
| 420      | Halifax | 14          | 14         |     |            |             |
| 425      | Halifax | 14          | 14         |     |            |             |
| 426      | Halifax | 14          | 12         |     | 2          |             |
| 427      | Halifax | 14          | 14         |     |            |             |
| 429      | Halifax | 14          | 13         | 1   |            |             |
| 432      | Halifax | 14          | 13         |     | 1          |             |
| Totals   |         | 115         | 110        | 1   | 4          |             |

There was 10/10ths strato-cumulus cloud, possibly in two layers at 4–5,000ft and 8–10,000ft, horizontal visibility was fair to good. No illuminating flares or sky markers were reported. T.I.'s red, which were probably dummies, were widely scattered, and as soon as the Master Bomber instructed crews to bomb near the edge of the glow of the Green T.I.'s, dummy greens appeared. Few results were seen but one big dull orange explosion lit up the target for five minutes. The glow of large fires was seen up to 90 miles away on the return, but crews consider the attack to have been scattered. Slight to moderate heavy flak was encountered. A few fighter flares were seen from 09.00E into the target on track. Several fighters were sighted but no combats were reported.

All our aircraft were diverted to American Bases on return. 253 tons of high explosive were dropped.

# **SECRET** **FORM 540 OPERATIONS RECORD** **BOOK**

## **No.8 (P.F.F.) Group**

Huntingdon

Night of 13/14 February 1945

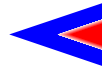
### **Targets**

Dresden, Magdeburg, Bonn, Dortmund, Misburg, Nuremburg & Synthetic Oil Plant Bohlen. Period 21.41/06.51 hours.

### **Attack on Dresden**

In accordance contained in Form B.505, 61 Lancasters took off. 59 attacked the primary target; 1 was abortive and 1 was missing. On approach to the target large fires were visible from the previous attack, and despite illuminating flares the smoke from these fires made it impossible to identify the aiming point with certainty. The Master Bomber therefore instructed the Blind Markers to drop their Green T.I.'s and after assessing these, ordered the Main Force to overshoot by 2 seconds. Later bombing was directed on to Red T.I.'s: and finally the centre of the fires. Bombing was very well concentrated with some tendency to overshoot the area covered by the first attack. A large fire area was left burning, visible for many miles on the return journey and all crews were enthusiastic at the results achieved. Pathfinder Force Provisional Analysis of Operations No.226 attached.

18.29/02/26 Hours.



### **Attack on Braunkohle-Benzin AG Bohlen**

In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 8 Mosquitos and 34 Lancasters took off; 7 Mosquitos and 21 Lancasters attacked the Primary target; 1 Mosquito and 13 Lancasters were abortive. Owing to cloud conditions the Master Bomber instructed the Illuminator who had not dropped, to retain their flares, and told the Main Force to bomb first the rear edge of the glow of Green T.I.'s and later its centre. The T.I.'s appear to have been somewhat dispersed over the marked area. However, a large explosion was seen at 22.06 hrs. Several crews reported seeing Red markers, but no Red markers were dropped. These are believed to have been dummies, and the Master Bomber instructed crews to ignore them.

Defences:– Slight to moderate heavy flak, barrage and predicted.

Pathfinder Force Provisional Analysis of Operations No. 227 attached.

19.49/00.17 Hours.

### **Attack on Magdeburg (First attack)**

In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 62 Mosquitos took off. 61 attacked the primary target and 1 was abortive. The attack opened at 21.30hrs with T.I. Yellow and flares Red/Green Stars dropped by 7 of the H2S aircraft. The T.I.'s were generally well grouped, with close bunches of sky markers above them, and although the T.I.'s quickly disappeared into cloud, they, or their glow, were bombed by all crews. Bomb bursts were seen within the area of the glow on the cloud and bombing is thought to have been fairly well concentrated.

Defences:– Negligible heavy flak – jet aircraft seen on homeward route.

23.16/03.44 Hours.

### **Attack on Magdeburg (Second attack)**

In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 9 Mosquitos took off and attacked the primary target. All three Marker aircraft dropped markers and bombed on H2S. The T.I.'s were not seen by the following aircraft, five of which bombed successfully on Loran. Several bomb bursts were seen close together.

Defences:– Slight heavy flak, predicted and accurate for height.

23.30/03.44 Hours.

### **Attack on Misburg (Experimental attack)**

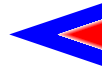
In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 8 Mosquitos took off; 7 attacked the primary target and 1 was abortive. 4 aircraft successfully bombed by means of their precision device and the remaining 3 aircraft carrying precision device attacked by means of navigational aids.

Defences:– Nil

22.31/02.22 Hours

### **Attack on Bonn (Spooft attack)**

In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 16 Mosquitos attacked the primary target. All OBOE aircraft successfully dropped T.I.'s Red on their precision device. These markers, together with T.I. Greens dropped by other aircraft, quickly disappeared into cloud and although some crews bombed the glow, most attacked by means of



navigation aids. Some bomb bursts were seen in the marked area, but cloud precluded any further assessment.

Defences:- Nil

19.20/23.11 Hours.

**Attack on Dortmund (Spoof attack)**

In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 6 Mosquitos took off; 5 aircraft attacked the primary target and 1 was abortive. 2 aircraft attacked by means of their precision device, and 3 having failure of their precision device attacked by means of their navigational aids.

Defences:- Negligible

20.03/00.43 Hours.

**Attack on Nuremburg (Experimental attack)**

In accordance with instructions contained in Form "B" No. 506, 8 Mosquitos took off; 7 attacked the primary target and 1 was abortive. 3 aircraft bombed by means of their precision device, and 4 aircraft, having failure of precision device attacked by means of their navigational aids.

Defences:- Few ineffective searchlights.

**SECRET  
FORM 540  
OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

**No.83 Squadron P.F.F.**

Coningsby

13 February 1945

Orders for operations came through early and the Squadron detailed fourteen crews. Squadron briefing was held at 14.45hrs the target being Dresden. Take off was soon after five o'clock into a lovely sunny evening. The following crews took part:-

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Primary Blind Marker | Flare Force 1         |
| F/L Duncan W 50      | W/C Twiggs B 32       |
| F/L Norbury J 53     | F/O Phillips M 34     |
| <br>                 | <br>                  |
| F/O Cassidy T 24     | Flare Force 3         |
| F/O Inniss D 46      | F/O Dodson Y 17       |
| Flare Force 2        | F/O Brown Q 21        |
| F/L Siddle S501/2    | <i>Emergency Wave</i> |
| F/O McNeil G 15      | F/L Pereira U 29      |
| F/O Shand L 22       | F/L Edwards A 38      |
|                      | F/L Cartwright R 31   |

On the circuit return W/Cdr Twiggs had a narrow escape from collision having his tail damaged by another aircraft.

Note F/L Siddle will also act as LINK 2.

# **SECRET** **FORM 540** **OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

## **No.97 (Straits Settlements) Squadron**

Coningsby  
13 February 1945

### **ATTACK ON DRESDEN**

Rain during the morning prevented early flying but Operations were laid on to attack Dresden a very important rail centre for the supply of German armies at the Russian Front. Take off for the sixteen crews detailed was at 18.15hrs with "H" Hour at 22.15hrs. Although the route outward went through the Ruhr North of Cologne, no one was troubled by the defences. Marking at the target was both quick and accurate by all the Primary Blind Markers, Flare Forces and Mosquitos, although a thin layer of stratus cloud existed over the target. Main force was called in to bomb and it was done very well to judge by the Controller's remarks. No photographs were obtainable. All crews returned safely to Base. Other Groups detailed to attack the same target two hours later reported first seeing the fires 150 miles away. Their photographs showed considerable destruction wrought by the previous attack.

Lancaster 111 "R" PB156 F/L F P Taylor

Time Up 18.20 Time Down 02.52

Load 5 x R/P Flares Green/Red  
5 x 1,000 M.C. (Delay)  
2 x 1,000lb T.I. Green

Half cover 7/10ths layer cloud with stratus at 15,000ft. Target identification on H2S. Through a slight break in cloud a Green T.I. was seen to drop about 22.02<sup>1</sup>/2hrs. Flares gave good illumination and were well concentrated. Controller assessed some Green T.I.'s 100 yards South of M/P. Controller seemed well pleased with attack. Fires seen burning when we were over 90 miles on the way home.

Lancaster 111 "O" PB408 F/O J W Greening

Time Up 18.15 Time Down 03.02

Load 5 x R/P Flares Green/Red  
5 x 1,000 M.C. (Delay)  
2 x 1,000lb T.I. Green

9/10ths strato-cu. Target located on H2S. Dropped our Green T.I.'s and bombs as briefed, but distributor arm did not move when bomb teat was pressed until tapped, causing a five secs. Delay in actual release. Early in the attack, about "H" 17, Controller said no more flares needed: Probably did not need F.F.3 Red T.I. assessed as being within 200yds. Main Force told to bomb glow from Reds as planned.

Lancaster 111 "H" PB700 F/L B J Hines

Time Up 18.14 Time Down 03.12

Load 5 x R/P Flares Green/Red  
5 x 1,000 M.C. (Delay)  
2 x 1,000lb T.I. Green

8-9/10ths cloud. Target located on H2S. Went through the target dropping load as briefed, as P.B.M. Turned to port ready to line myself up for emergency, as I was unable to see T.I.'s for quite a while. On the second run over the target, glow of Reds could be seen through gaps in cloud, also slight

ground detail. Controller instructed Main Force to bomb Red T.I.'s as planned. After the first five minutes he said bombing was getting a bit wild. At "H"-6 Controller ordered no more Flares.

Lancaster 111 "B" PB157 F/O W P Ryan

Time Up 18.11 Time Down 03.23

Load 12 x C.P. No.1

5 x R/P Flares Green/Red

9/10ths thin cloud. Target identified on H2S. Dropped flares as briefed. Green T.I. seen cascading at "H"-11. Glow from T.I.'s and faint detail seen.

Lancaster 111 "J" PB410 W/C R Baker

Time Up 18.17 Time Down 03.13

Load 12 x C.P. No.1

5 x R/P Flares Green/Red

Medium cloud approx. 1 mile East of target. Target covered by 10/10ths strato cu. Tops 5,000ft. Identification by H2S (Mk3) Glow of one or Two Green T.I.'s throughout. Our flares first to go down and so there were no flares released before time. Starboard outer engine lost power and after showing signs of catching fire was feathered near Base on return.

Lancaster 111 "S" PB376 F/O T W Noon

Time Up 18.24 Time Down 03.18

Load 12 x C.P. No.1

5 x R/P Flares Green/Red

8-9/10ths cloud, slight breaks. Target identified on H2S. Dropped flares blind as briefed. Green T.I. a little early. One Red T.I. cascaded at about 8,000ft, before P.B.M. went down.

Controller told LINK 1 to tell Main Force to come below medium cloud at 15,000ft and bomb Red T.I. glow according to plan. One stick of bombs apparently went wide.

Lancaster 111 "P" PB422 F/O F M Negus

Time Up 18.20 Time Down 02.54

Load 12 x C.P. No.1

5 x R/P Flares Green/Red

9-10/10ths cloud, thin layer of medium above. Target identified on H2S. Dropped flares as ordered. One Green T.I. seen cascading at 22.05<sup>1</sup>/2hrs.

Lancaster 111 "F" PB473 F/L N McConnell

Time Up 18.18 Time Down 03.35

Load 14 x C.P. No. 3

10/10ths cloud approx. 6,000ft Controller ordered no more flare at 22.08hrs precisely, as we were running up to release. Jettisoned flares at position 48.30N 08.05E at 00.22hrs. At 15,000ft aircraft started to ice up. As LINK 1 we passed the following messages:- 22.08 'No more flares' to Flare Force. 22.11 'Attack Red T.I. as planned to Main Force. 22.13 'Come below cloud'. 22.19 'Attack red glow'. 22.20 'Complete bombing and return to Base'. 22.23 'Return to Base'. 22.28 'Target Attacked'.

Lancaster 1 "L" PB811 F/L R B Sexton

Time Up 18.19 Time Down 03.22

Load 14 x C.P. No.3

9/10ths thin cloud below, 10/10ths above. Target located on Green T.I.'s which were seen quite clearly through the cloud and were very concentrated. Red T.I.'s not seen until after

leaving target; assessment of 100 yards East of M/P was heard at 22.06hrs. Controller ordered Main Force to bomb concentration of Reds as planned! C.P. No. 3 hung up, and was brought back to Base.

Lancaster 111 "M" PB895 F/O A E May

Time Up 18.19 Time Down 03.22

Load 14 x C.P. No.3

9/10ths thin cloud below 10/10ths above. Target identified by Green T.I., and flares. As our last flares dropped at 22.08<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>hrs, Controller said 'No more flares' Mosquitos had dropped and assessed their Red T.I.

Lancaster 111 "Q" PB521 P/O A M Dow

Time Up 18.21 Time Down 03.29

Load 12 x C.P. No.33

2 x 1,000 M.C. (delay)

7/10ths cloud, tops 6,000ft. Target identified by Green T.I., Red T.I. and flares. We were about to make blind flare run when Controller said he wanted no more flares – about "H"-5. We were CHECK 3, and he called on three occasions for information about Red and Green T.I., Replied they were visible from our height. Meanwhile we continued our run to drop bombs, but they did not go owing to faulty manipulation. Controller said marking was good; bombing improved as it went on.

Lancaster 111 "T" ND589 Lt P J H Addison

Time Up 18.10 Time Down 03.19

Load 12 x C.P. No.33

2 x 1,000 M.C. (delay)

9/10ths cloud at approx. 5,000ft. Target located on H2S (Mk3) Controller ordered no more flares at 22.09. Bombs released on box. Good Picture. Good Red glow also seen. Fires observed for 30 mins after leaving target.

Lancaster 111 "D" PB706 F/O K G Robertson

Time Up 18.30 Time Down 03.03

Load 5 x R/P Flares Green/Red

6 x 1,000 M.C. (delay)

1 x 500 M.C.

9-10/10ths thin cloud. Target located on H2S. Dropped bombs blind as briefed. Markers seemed very concentrated and could be seen quite plainly through the cloud.

Lancaster 111 "C" PA973 F/O J D Cottman

Time Up 18.31 Time Down 03.39

Load 5 x R/P Flares Green/Red

6 x 1,000 M.C. (delay)

1 x 500 M.C.

Layer of cloud at 15,000ft. Strato-cu at 2,000ft 8/10. Identification of target on H2S. We arrived and were preparing our run to drop flares when we realised that ground marking was being carried out. At 22.09hrs 'No more flares', and at 22.12 Main Force were called in to bomb below cloud. Good spread of fires seen inside bend of river. Rear Gunner reported at 22.45 that the fires could still be seen.



Lancaster 111 "E" PB588 F/L C W Eaton

Time Up 18.29 Time Down 03.08

Load 5 x R/P Flares Green/Red  
6 x 1,000 M.C. (delay)  
1 x 500 M.C.

7/10ths cloud: thin. Target located by Red T.I. and river check on H2S. Red T.I. assessed as 200 yards North of M/P. Controller appeared satisfied with marking. Order 'No more flares' came early in the attack. Main Force told to come below medium cloud (at 15,000ft) LINK 1 passed message 'Return to Base'. Many incendiaries seen in built up area and around river.

Lancaster 111 "G" ME623 F/O J Vallance

Time Up 18.13 Time Down 03.48

Load 6 x 1,000 M.C.  
1 x 500 M.C. (delay)

10/10ths thin cloud. Target located visually. LORAN equipment U/S; unable to locate ourselves on H2S. No response on Ruhr Gee Chain. We did locate ourselves but were forty miles North East of target. Saw flares and T.I.'s on Dresden and returned to attack. Dropped load on Red glow beneath the cloud. After leaving the target and passing over layer cloud it was seen that the target was well alight.

## **SECRET** **FORM 540** **OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

### **No.627 Squadron RAF**



Woodhall Spa  
13 February 1945

8 aircraft were detailed and took off on operations against Dresden. Primary Blind Markers and flares were on time and accurate. The illumination was excellent. The Marker Leader was the first to identify and his T.I.'s were assessed by Marker 2 as one hundred yards east. Backing up was ordered and was completed quickly and accurately, the resulting concentration being some three hundred and fifty to four hundred yards east to west and centred approximately one hundred yards south east of the M.P. The remaining Mosquito was too late to attack. Main force appeared accurate. Fires took a good hold and several explosions were observed.

## APPENDIX "G"

### to F540 of No.627 Squadron for 13 February 1945

No.627 Squadron Summary of Operations  
Night of 13/14 February 1945

#### Target Dresden

Woodhall Spa

Mosquito "W" DZ631 F/L W W Topper Marker Leader  
F/O V W Davies

Time Up 19.57 Time Down 01.53

Load 1 x 1,000lb Red T.I. returned to Base not required. Primary Greens fell on time and also flares marking the M.P. immediately visible. A/C dropped T.I. which was assessed by MARKER 2 at 100 yards east. This was passed to the Controller who requested backing up by all Markers. This was well carried out – the resulting concentration was 400 yards east to west across the M.P. Markers were visible through cloud. The MARKERS were called off and the Main Force told to bomb the Red T.I.'s. MARKERS were ordered home and the MARKER LEADER stayed to watch the bombing which was very good. There was a large explosion in the S.E. of the target followed by an electric blue flash of 3 seconds duration.

Mosquito "F" DZ599 F/O J Walker Marker 2  
W/O K R Oatley

Time Up 20.00 Time Down 01.42

Target as above. Load 1 x 1,000lb Red T.I. Identification visually by flares which were on time. Marker Leader marked first, T.I. assessed as 150 yards east of M.P. This A/C backed up next. T.I. falling on S.E. corner of target. Concentration was very good.

Mosquito "P" KB416 F/L Armstrong Marker 3  
(RAAF 416199)  
F/O E G Patterson

Time Up 19.56 Time Down 01.37

Target as above. Load 1 x 1,000lb Red T.I. Primary Blind Markers and flares on time and accurate. A/C fourth was fourth in and backed up accurately.

Mosquito "Q" DZ650 F/O J W Buckley Marker 4  
(RNZAF)  
F/L J C Crosbie

Time Up 19.56 Time Down 01.44

Target as above. Load 1 x 1,000lb Red T.I. and 1 Wanganui Flare. A/C overshot the target and was approximately 10 minutes late by which time marking had been completed.

Mosquito "H" DZ606 F/O J O Rolland Marker 5  
F/O J Holling

Time Up 19.55 Time Down 01.34

Target as above. Load 2 x 1,000lb Red T.I.'s. Arrived north of target 2 Green T.I.'s were seen on each side of the river. Flares were on time and right over the target centre. Approximately 10 seconds after flares went down Marker Leader "Tally Ho'd". Marker 2 assessed 150 yards east. A/C backed up.

Mosquito "G" DZ611 F/L J W L Alford Marker 6  
(RAAF)  
F/S J Murphy

Time Up 20.05 Time Down 01.36

Target as above. Load 2 x 1,000lb Red T.I.'s. Primary Blind Markers and flares were on time and accurate. Our T.I.'s fell approximately 100 yards north east of M.P.

Mosquito "J" KB345 F/O A Mclelland Marker 7  
(RAAF)  
P/O M A Phillips  
(RAAF)

Time Up 20.01 Time Down 01.46

Target as above. Primary Blind Markers and flares were accurate and on time. A/C was third in backing up. T.I.'s falling in concentration.

## **SECRET** **APPENDIX 150 OF FORM 541** **OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

### **No.625 Squadron RAF**

Kelstern  
13 February 1945

### **Operations**

23 aircraft took off to attack this virgin target Dresden. Two aircraft "K" and "B" were abortive. Weather on route was poor, aircraft climbing over the tops of frontal cloud. Over the target 3/10ths Alto-Stratus kept the aircraft below 19,000ft. The fires at the target were visible 100 miles before our aircraft got there, due to the bombing of the previous attack two hours earlier. Large sticks of flares, mixed Red and Green T.I.'s clearly identified the target. The Master Bomber's instructions were very good and the town was seen burning profusely. Defences were negligible. All our aircraft returned safely to Base.

### **Weather**

Continuous rain with moderate visibility during the morning. Fair to good visibility in the afternoon.

# **SECRET**

## **FORM 540 APPENDIX "H"**

### **OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

#### **No.635 Squadron RAF**

Downham Market  
13 February 1945

5 A/C detailed to attack Bohlen (3 Blind Illuminators, 1 Visual Centre aircraft and 1 Supporter. One A/C withheld its all marker load ("X" F/O Ed Harper) Bombs dropped by other aircraft 1 x 4,000lb H.C., 4 x 2,000lb H.C., 4 x 500lb Mk64, 10 x CP No.3 White, 1 CP No.1 R/G stars, 4 x 250 T.I. Green between 21.57.48 and 22.03.24 hours from 17,600/18,000ft. Weather 10/10ths st.cu. tops 4/6,000ft. Visibility poor. On approach to target no T.I.'s visible. One A/C observed and bombed on H2S. Slight flak.

"C" F/O Lewis

"L" F/L R W Toothill

"X" F/O E D Harper

"J" J D F Cowden

"E" F/L D B Jarvis

11 A/C were detailed to attack Dresden. (Master Bomber, Deputy Master Bomber, 2 Blind Illuminators, 3 Blind Markers, 2 Blind Spare Markers and 2 Visual Center-ers) All attacked Primary. Bombs dropped:- 4 x 4,000 H.C. 17 x 1,000 M59, 31 x 500 M64, 26 x CP No.3 White Flares, 1 x CP No. R/G Stars, 8 x 250 T.I. Green, between 01.2354 and 01.45.30hrs from 7/8,000ft. Weather clear. Vis. Good. Smoke from earlier attack obscured the A/P despite flares dropped at 01.20hrs. Master

Bomber therefore called to Blind Markers to drop their T.I.'s Green at 01.26.30hrs. First T.I. Green went down at 01.28.30hrs and appeared to fall about 1,000 yards South West of where the A/P was judged to be. Master Bomber instructed Main Force to overshoot this Green by 2 seconds. Deputy Master Bomber observed a Red T.I. burning on the South Bank of the river and Master Bomber instructed Main Force from 01.33 to 01.35hrs to bomb on this. Later instructions from the Master Bomber were to "Bomb centre of fires". None of the 'Visuals' dropped their mixed T.I.'s. Main Force bombing appeared to be well concentrated and the centre of the town should be completely gutted. It is felt that the marshalling yards and the South East area of the town escaped major damage. Slight heavy flak and some fighter activity.

"M" F/O R S Bishop

"F" F/O W H Jackson

"N" S/L E A O Mange

"B" W/C H P Connolly

"A" F/O K A Beattie

"K" F/L Boyde

"Z" F/O C L Ottaway

"U" S/L C P C DeWesselow

"T" W/C H J F LeGood

"Y" F/L P E Cawthorne

"S" F/L G C Hitchcock

**SECRET**  
**FORM 541 APPENDIX "H"**  
**OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

**No.635 Squadron RAF**

Downham Market  
13 February 1945

Lancaster 111 NE 180 "U" S/L DeWesselow

Time Up 22.02 Time Down 06.51

Dresden

Master Bomber. On arrival target was well ablaze and fires made it impossible to identify the Aiming Point. 01.20hrs called on Blind Illuminators for flares and at 01.26.30 and 01.27.30hrs called on Blind Markers for T.I.'s. First Green T.I. at 01.28.30hrs fell about 1,000 yards South West of estimated position of Aiming Point. 01.29hrs Main Force were instructed to overshoot Green T.I.'s by two seconds. In the next minute one Green T.I. fell slightly North West and another 1,200 yards South East of estimated Aiming Point. At 01.32.54hrs Deputy Master Bomber reported Red T.I. on South Bend of riverbank. At 01.33, 01.34 and 01.35hrs Main Force instructed to bomb centre of fires. Centre of town gutted but thought Marshalling Yards South East of the town escaped damage.

Lancaster 111 PB287 "T" W/C H J F LeGood

Time Up 21.05 Time Down 06.48

Dresden

Deputy Master Bomber. On run up fires and smoke observed. Aiming Point Green T.I.'s at 01.26.30 and 01.28hrs were quickly bombed out. Bombed centre of fires. 01.30.30hrs Red T.I. seen 01.30.35hrs and Master Bomber informed. Smoke up to 13,000ft when leaving the target.

# SECRET OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK

## No. 100 (Bomber Support) Group

Bylaugh Hall  
14 February 1945

### 100 Group Activity

#### Mandrel Patrol

12 Halifaxes took off      9 Completed Patrol Nil Missing  
8 Stirlings took off      8 Completed Patrol Nil Missing

#### Window Patrol

11 Halifaxes took off      9 Completed Patrol Nil Missing  
11 Liberators took off    11 Completed Patrol Nil Missing

#### Jostle & Piperack

8 Fortresses took off      7 Completed Patrol Nil Missing  
1 Mosquito took off      1 Completed Patrol Nil Missing

#### Special Investigation Patrol

2 Mosquitos took off      2 Completed Patrol  
5 Halifaxes took off      3 Completed Patrol

#### High Level Intruders

63 Mosquitos took off    56 Completed Patrol

Claims:— 2 Me. 110's destroyed by Bomber Support  
Development Squadron  
F/L Howard and F/O Clay  
21 Chases.

#### Low Level Intruders

3 Mosquitos took off      3 Completed Patrol

#### Fighter Command Intruders

3 out of 5 Mosquitos completed low level intruder patrols of the following airfields:— Dortmund and Werle, Kassel/Rotherweston, Gutersloh.

2 Mosquitos returned early due to weather.

Weather:—      Bohlen 8–10ths cloud at target, tops about 8,000ft

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Dresden   | 1st attack 9–10/10ths medium cloud in 3 layers at approx. 3–5,000ft, 6–8,000ft and 15–16,000ft. Visibility good between layers |
| Dresden   | 2nd attack clear to 3/10ths patchy cloud tops 4–5,000ft. Visibility good with some haze and smoke from previous attack         |
| Magdeburg | 1st and 2nd attack 10/10ths St.Cu. tops about 10,000ft   |
| Bonn      | 10/10ths layered St.Cu tops 20,000ft   |
| Dortmund  | 10/10ths St.Cu. tops 20,000ft  |
| Misburg   | 6–10/10ths low St.Cu. tops 10,000ft  |
| Nuremburg | 4–10ths St.Cu. tops 15,000ft Visibility good   |

**Enemy Raid Reaction**

The Bomber Support problem was to deploy the available Bomber Support Force to the best advantage to cover two distinct phases, separated by about three hours. The time gap was too long to allow the same forces to be used with each phase. It was, therefore, not possible to cover completely each phase. The solution of the problem was aided by Bomber Command's appreciation of the weather in the approach area; and Bomber Support plan was based on this operation.

**1st Phase**

Bomber Command timed the approach of the 5 Group force over the Ruhr when it was considered the enemy fighters in that area could not take off. At this time however, it was thought possible that fighters in the Southern approach area could fly, so it was consequently decided to attempt to confuse these southern fighters while 4 and 6 Group Main Force crossed the Front Line in the Luxembourg area. The first Mandrel screen was placed opposite the area during the approach across France and the first Window force broke away from the Main Force in a South Easterly direction as the latter crossed the Front Line. The Window force fanned out to cover a frontage of about 35 miles covering the Frankfurt/Mannheim area. This had the effect of drawing off all the fighters airborne in the Southern area whilst the Main Force passed the danger area further North.

The weather appreciation proved correct and the 5 Group force crossed the dangerous Ruhr without being molested.

Meanwhile the Mandrel screen moved up to a more Northerly position to cover the Ruhr to confuse any fighters in that area that might later have become airborne as a result of the weather improving further North. The screen then ceased jamming before a second screen took up position.

**2nd Phase**

In this phase it was anticipated that the Ruhr would be clear, consequently a second Window force was used to the North of the approach line of the 1 Group Main Force breaking away from the latter as it crossed the Front Line and proceeded towards Bonn. The second Mandrel screen was used to cover the approach of the Main Force and was moved up North to cover the Ruhr and add plausibility to the Bonn feint.

**Operation**

The night's operation will undoubtedly be recorded as one of the major successes over the enemy night fighter defences, for accurate appreciation of the weather, the intricate routing of the Bomber Forces and the record Bomber Support effort so entangled the enemy controllers that none of the main raids were seriously opposed by the night fighters and, with two possible exceptions all the Fighter Gruppen airborne were diverted against the Window feint raids and were landed when the enemy controllers realised that they had been misled and that their position for intercepting the Main Force was hopeless.



## **1st Phase**

No plots on the Forces were broadcast until the Formations were East of the Mandrel screen and plotting on the 5 Group raid commenced North of Aachen and continued intensively over the Ruhr area. From that position through to the target and along the route home as far as Stuttgart the Force was continuously tracked but not with the same intensity as in the early stages. It was, however, the plotting of the Window feint force which proved the undoing of the enemy night fighter defences. Plotting of this Force started soon after emerging from the Mandrel screen and continued with growing intensity through to an area just West of Frankfurt/Mannheim. The Force continually being reported as strong four-engined formations and the area covered by the plots fitted most accurately with the planned routes of the aircraft. For some 80 miles East of the Battle Front this feint force held all the plotting and in consequence the Bohlen raiders escaped unnoticed during this time. The full degree to which the enemy controllers were deceived by this raid was shown by the deployment of the night fighters. As stated above, the aim of the feint was to draw off all the fighters that could fly from the Southern areas and it succeeded in copy book fashion. Immediately following the first plot on the Window force, aircraft of 11 NG.6 were sent to Karlsruhe and then to Beacon Dachs. This Gruppe was immediately followed by IV NJG.6 from Kitzingen who, instead of being held over a Beacon, were vectored direct into the approaching Window aircraft. A little later a third Gruppe were ordered well into the Window track (Beacon Kaus) and another unidentified unit was assembled over Beacon Otto. Thus it appears that all the night fighters airborne in the Frankfurt/Stuttgart area were all employed against the Window force while the Main raid proceeded on its

course unmolested, although fairly well tracked from North of Koblenz, to the target and along the route home as far as 20 miles West of the Battle Front.

After the Window aircraft had commenced their return flight, instructions were passed to the fighters to proceed to Beacon Otto and a mention of Intruders over Beacon Nachtigal made it appear that the controllers contemplated a long stern chase after the bombers who at that time were approaching Erfurt but they quickly appreciated the hopelessness of the situation and landing orders followed immediately. This ended all the known night fighter activity against these two strong raids of very deep penetration. The Special Ruhr defence (Geschwader Units of NJG.1) broadcast plots on the returning bombers from two Beacons in the Ruhr but no night fighter instructions were given and so far there is no evidence that the aircraft of this Geschwader actually flew.

## **2nd Phase**

The second Phase also went according to plan for while the Window feint force in the Koblenz/Cologne area was being reported as a strong bomber formation, the 560 aircraft en route to Dresden were being reported as 8 four engined aircraft. It was not until this force was some 100 miles East of the Battle Front that its strength was appreciated and then back tracking on it gave a few plots North East of Luxembourg and West of Mannheim. From the South of Frankfurt regular tracking operated and continued along the route and as far home as Strasbourg, but at no time with the same intensity as the raids in the First phase. The plan position of the plots broadcast indicated that the bomber force was considerably strung out both as regards front and depth. No organised fighter defence was made up by the

enemy but a few aircraft from the Finow area were given plots in the target area and these being given in a somewhat desultory manner combined with the lack of fighter instructions, indicated that it was a half hearted effort.

### ***Intruders***

The intruder plan for the night appeared to have been successful for in the first phase the concentration of those aircraft in the Southern area undoubtedly impressed enemy controllers with the reality of the Window feint attack and strengthened the impression that the Target was well South. Some 20 chases on aircraft which were most probably hostile resulted and 2 Me.110's were destroyed. It is of interest to note that the initial contacts on these two aircraft were achieved by Serrate Mk.IV (a 100 Group produced homer on SN2).

## **COUNTERMEASURES**

### Special Mandrel

On Stand By

20.05–21.10/21.50–23.00/23.35–00.30/01.00–02.30hrs

32 to 34.5 Mc/s covered 20.50–21.10hrs

34.5 Mc/s covered 21.50 23.00hrs and 23.35–00.30hrs

34.2 to 34.7 Mc/s covered 01.00–02.30hrs

### Airborne Mandrel – 100 Group

There were two Mandrel screens in operation, the first being composed of 9 aircraft of 171 Squadron, which were in position between 50.38N 05.40E and 49.44N 05.43E from 20.05 to 21.10hrs At 21.10hrs these aircraft moved into new position between 51.32N 05.30E and 50.51N 05.34E and remained in these positions until 22.50hrs.

Jammers were operating from 20.05 to 21.10hrs and from 21.50 to 23.00hrs. In addition to the above 9 aircraft one of 171 Squadron jammed from 21.50 to 23.00hrs, being late, due to late take off.

The second Mandrel screen was comprised of one aircraft of 171 Squadron and 8 of 199 Squadron. The position of these aircraft were the same as for the aircraft of the first screen between 50.38N 05.40E and 49.44N 05.43E from 23.35 to 00.30hrs, and between 51.32N 05.30E and 50.51N 05.34E from approximately 01.00 to 02.30hrs.

Jammers were operated from 23.35 to 00.30hrs and from 01.00 to 02.30hrs.

### ***Window Feint Force***

The northern Window Feint Force comprising of 9 aircraft of 223 Squadron and 1 aircraft of 462 Squadron released Window at the rates detailed from 05.30E on track from 49.50N 04.00E to position "A" approx. 49.52N 05.50E (00.40hrs at this point) thence position "B" approx. 50.24N 06.33E and to position "C" between 50.55N 06.46E and 50.22N 07.08E and from "C" to 06.30E on track towards position "D" 50.10N 05.00E.

The southern Window Feint Force comprised of 2 aircraft of 192 Squadron, 2 of 223 Squadron and 6 of 462 Squadron. Window was released from 05.30E on track (from 50.00N 04.00E) to position "A" 50.00N 06.00E (20.52hrs) thence position "B" between 49.58N 08.10E and 49.25N 07.59E thence on track towards position "C" 49.25N 07.48E.

Incendiaries were dropped on Kaiserlauten by aircraft of 192 and 462 Squadrons between 21.15 and 21.27hrs.

# AIRBORNE RADIO COUNTERMEASURES 100 GROUP

Aircraft of 192, 214 and 223 Squadrons supported the Main Forces which attacked Dresden and Bohlen and aircraft of the Window Feint Force also employed Radio Countermeasures. Full details are as follows:—

A Dresden (1st attack) 2 aircraft of 214 Squadron operated Jostle on VHF and H.F. also Carpet and Piperack on several frequencies. 1 Mosquito aircraft of 192 Squadron operated Piperack from 21.45 until 22.28hrs.

B Dresden (2nd attack) 3 aircraft of 214 Squadron operated Jostle on VHF and H.F. (3390, 3487 and 4485Mc/S) and Carpet on several frequencies. Also Piperack.

C Bohlen 2 aircraft of 214 Squadron operated VHF Jostle, Carpet and Piperack.

D Window Force (Northern) Aircraft of 223 Squadron operated VHF and H.F. Jostle, Carpet between 495 and 590 Kc/s and Piperack.

E Window Force (Southern) Aircraft of 223 Squadron operated VHF Jostle, Carpet between 455 and 575 Kc/s and Piperack.

## Night Fighter Support

### 1st Phase

#### *Plan*

Patrol (a) 24 Mk.X. a/c to patrol given Beacons which might be used by hostile a/c as assembly points. Patrols to commence at various times between 21.00 and 22.00hrs.

Patrol (b) 4 A.S.H. aircraft to patrol Dresden and 4 A.S.H. aircraft to patrol Bohlen. Aircraft to escort bombers on their 1st leg home. Patrols to commence at 21.40hrs.

Patrol (c) 1 Mk.1V and 1 Mk.X aircraft to patrol; given Beacons. Patrol to commence at 20.35hrs.

Patrol (d) 3 A.S.H a/c to patrol Dortmund area. Patrols to commence at 21.13hrs.

Patrol (e) 13 A.S.H. aircraft to patrol airfields. Patrol to commence at 21.58hrs.

53 aircraft took off. 2 Me.110's were claimed destroyed (F/L Howard and F/O Clay)

### 2nd Phase

Patrol (f) 4 A.S.H. a/c to escort bombers to target area and back as far as possible Patrol to commence at 01.20hrs.

Patrol (g) 7 Mk.X. a/c to patrol given Beacons. Patrol to commence at various times between 00.20 and 02.10hrs.

12 aircraft took off.

Claims:— Nil

## 1st Phase (Operation)

### Patrol (a) *Beacons*

24 a/c took off, 21 completed their patrols, 2 returned early and 1 landed at Brussels, cause unknown at present and no report received. 4 A.I. contacts were obtained leading to chases but later lost, and one fleeting visual on 2 a/c believed to be hostile fighters.

### Patrol (b) *Target Areas 7 Escort Bombers*

8 a/c took off and completed their patrols. 1 a/c got three backward A.I. warnings at the same time which lead to a dog fight which eventually was broken off. 10 minutes after breaking off this dog fight three more backward contacts were obtained in the same place, but these were lost.

### Patrol (c) *Beacons*

2 a/c took off and completed their patrols. One A.I. contact was obtained leading to a chase but the target a/c drew away and was lost.

### Patrol (d) *Dortmund*

3 a/c took off, 2 completed their patrols. One Monica contact was obtained and was lost.

### Patrol (e) *Airfields*

13 a/c took off, 11 completed their patrols. 4 A.S.H. contacts were obtained all leading to chases. On one a fleeting visual was obtained on an unidentified a/c.

## Night Fighter Support

F/L Howard and F/O Clay flew a very successful patrol. At 20.24hrs an A.I. contact was obtained leading to a chase, visual contact, and a combat in which an Me.110 was destroyed. Almost at once another contact was obtained leading to a chase on which a visual was obtained which was attacked and destroyed. Yet another contact was obtained leading to a chase of 25 minutes which this time, unfortunately, could not be overhauled. 2 Freshmen patrols were completed uneventfully.

## 2nd Phase (Operation)

### Patrol (f) *Escort Bombers*

4 aircraft took off and completed patrol. One a/c got several contacts at once and selected one, gave chase. At the same time three backward contacts were obtained, these were ignored for a short time but as they rapidly overhauled him, chase had to be abandoned.

### Patrol (g) *Beacons*

7 a/c took off, 5 completed patrols. One suspicious A.I. contact was obtained and lost.

# APPRECIATION

## 1st Phase

A preliminary analysis of the first phase of the night's activity shows that the long range night fighter operation was carefully planned and executed and that the object to confuse the enemy Controllers that their target was situated in the South was completely successful. Enemy night fighters from the Kitzingen/Ober Olm and Schwabish Hall area reacted as anticipated and the number of chases, about twenty in all, indicates that our fighters were in the right place at the right time. There were many instances of enemy Controllers broadcasting plots on our Intruder aircraft; one in particular, at 22.02hrs, reported a Mosquito over the Beacon Natchtigel – proof positive that our pilots had actually reached their patrol position. It is most encouraging that the preliminary contacts on the Me.110's destroyed by an aircraft of Bomber Support Development Unit were obtained by means of Serrate Mk.1V particularly as this equipment was invented, designed and manufactured in the Group itself. There is little evidence of enemy night fighters flying apart from the ones mentioned and consequently our Intruders operating over a wider field had no opportunity of destroying aircraft but their presence was a continual source of annoyance to the Raid Reporting Organisation.

## 2nd Phase

As will be seen in The Group Preliminary Narrative practically no night fighters opposed the second raid on Dresden; the only ones believed to have operated came from Finow and this was a belated and feeble effort. They were given no fighter instructions but merely plots on bombers in the target area.

Note:–

Since writing the above, confirmation has been received from Bomber Groups that hardly any night fighters were seen and practically no combats took place.

## 192 SQUADRON SPECIAL DUTY PATROL

- A. 1 Mosquito a/c carried out a Big Ben signals investigation patrol. No significant signals were intercepted.
- B. Mosquito "J" completed a combined W/T, R/T Piperack patrol (Dresden 1st attack) recordings were made of W/T on 41.1 Mc/s and R/T on 40.3 and 38.2 Mc/s.
- C. One Mosquito completed a patrol in conjunction with the attack on Bohlen and searched for evidence of Wurzburg transmissions in the band 400–450 Mc/s. There were no Wurzburg type signals intercepted below 450 Mc/s.
- D. One Halifax accompanied the Main Force to Bohlen, and searched the band of 30–70 Mc/s for evidence of enemy long range plotting signals. A preliminary examination of the results of the flight shows that no unusual enemy signals were intercepted.
- E. Halifax "T" (Bohlen) completed a Fidget investigation flight. Recordings were made of enemy M.F. beacon transmissions and 80 Wing Jamming Signals on the same frequency. A complete analysis of the results will be carried out at H.Q. No.100 Group and H.Q. No.80 Wing.
- F. One Halifax (Bohlen) investigated the 65–110 Mc/s band for A.I. signals. No signals of this type were intercepted.



# MOST SECRET SWANNINGTON 21 FEBRUARY

## Interception/Tactics

Night of 13/14 February 1945

| Target              | Group   | Target A/C | Target Sorties | 000ft attacked | Missing | Height                             | T.O.T.      |
|---------------------|---------|------------|----------------|----------------|---------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>First Phase</i>  |         |            |                |                |         |                                    |             |
| Bohlen              | 4, 6, 8 |            | 368            | 334            | 1 (.3%) | 14-24 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  | 21.54-22.12 |
|                     | 4       | Halifax    | 211            | 188            | 1       | 15-19                              | 21.54-22.12 |
|                     | 6       | Halifax    | 115            | 108            | -       | 14-20                              | 21.57-22.11 |
|                     | 8       | Lancaster  | 34             | 21             | -       | 14-18                              | 21.54-22.06 |
|                     | 8       | Mosquito   | 8              | 7              | -       | 18-24 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  | 21.56-22.02 |
| Dresden             | 5       |            | 254            | 244            | 1 (.4%) | 1-16                               | 22.03-22.28 |
| 1st Raid            |         | Lancaster  | 245            | 235            | 1       | 10-16                              | 22.03-22.28 |
|                     |         | Mosquito   | 9              | 9              | -       | 800ft                              | 22.05-22.08 |
| Magdeburg           |         | Mosquito   | 62             | 61             | -       | 11-26                              | 21.30-21.41 |
| <i>1st Raid</i>     |         |            |                |                |         |                                    |             |
| Nuremburg           |         | Mosquito   | 8              | 7              | -       | 33                                 | 21.59-22.15 |
| Dortmund            |         | Mosquito   | 6              | 5              | -       | 28-33                              | 21.01-21.06 |
| <i>Second Phase</i> |         |            |                |                |         |                                    |             |
| Dresden             | 1,3,6,8 |            | 551            | 524            | 4 (.7%) | 7-21                               | 01.21-01.55 |
|                     | 1       | Lancaster  | 261            | 248            | 2       | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> -20 | 01.23-01.52 |
|                     | 3       | Lancaster  | 162            | 151            | 1       | 15-21                              | 01.25-01.55 |
|                     | 6       | Lancaster  | 67             | 65             | -       | 17-19                              | 01.27-01.45 |
|                     | 8       | Lancaster  | 61             | 60             | 1       | 7-19                               | 01.21-01.45 |
| Bonn Feint          | 8       | Mosquito   | 16             | 16             | -       | 18-22                              | 00.14-00.24 |

| Target   | Group | A/C      | Sorties | Target attacked | Target Missing | 000ft Height | T.O.T.      |
|--|-------|----------|---------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Magdeburg  |       | Mosquito | 9       | 9               | -              | 25-2         | 00.56-01.12 |
| <i>2nd Raid</i>                                  |       |          |         |                 |                |              |             |
| Misburg  | 8     | Mosquito | 8       | 7               | -              | 27-3         | 01.30-01.47 |
| Other Activity.                                  |       |          |         |                 |                |              |             |
| Mosquito, Halifax, Stirling, Liberator, Fortress |       |          |         |                 |                |              |             |
| Bomber Support                                   |       | 100      | 117     | 107             |                |              |             |
| Signals  |       | 100      | 7       | 5               |                |              |             |
| Patrols  |       |          |         |                 |                |              |             |
| Met. Recce                                       |       | 8        | 1       |                 |                |              |             |
| Total  |       |          | 1,407   | 1,310           | 6 (.4%)        |              |             |

**BOMBER SUPPORT AND SECURITY**

Bohlen, Dresden (1st) Mandrel Screen

10 Halifax, 20.05–21.17hrs, 50.38N 05.40E–49.44N 05.43E, moving at 21.10hrs to 51.32N 05.30E–50.38E, jamming 21.50–23.00hrs.

**Window**

8 Halifax and 12 Liberators, made a feint against Mainz/Manneim area, 20.43–21.44hrs mean positions 50.00N 06.00E to points from 49.58N 08.10E to 49.25N 07.59E, thence to 49.25N 07.48E.

**Intruders**

High Level 56 Mosquitos; claimed 2 Me.110's destroyed North of Frankfurt, 19 other chases unsuccessful owing to interference.

Low Level 3 Mosquitos

Fighter Command Intruders. 21 Mosquitos High Level and 3 Mosquitos Low Level.

Jostle and Piperack, 7 Fortress and 1 Mosquito.

**Security**

Radar and Signals Silence to 06.00E.

Dresden (2nd) Mandrel Screen.

2 Halifax and 8 Stirlings positions as for 1st Screen. Jamming 23.50–00.30hrs and 01.00–02.30hrs.

**Window**

9 Liberators and 1 Halifax made a feint against Koln/Koblenz area 00.01–0.35hrs mean position 49.52N 05.50E–50.24N 06.33E jamming out to 50.50N 06.50E, 50.40N 06.56E and 50.27N 07.05E thence to 50.10N 05.00E ABC Lancasters were in the Main Force.

**Weather**

Bohlen and Dresden (1st)

9–10/10ths Sc. Tops 9,000ft some medium cloud at 15,000ft. Wind at 18,000ft 260/70mph. Route from French Coast 10/10ths cloud rising to 15,000ft in the frontal belt. 02.00–04.00E lowering eastward Icing in frontal belt. Return similar with little cloud west of 05.00E.

Dresden (2nd)

3–7/10ths variable drifting patches, tops 6,000ft. Wind at 20,000ft 265/85mph. Route clear to 04.00E then frontal belt with cloud to 17,000ft with rime and static breaking East of 09.00E to 3–6/10ths, tops 6,000ft.



## ***Other Targets***

Magdeburg

1st 9–10/10ths, tops 10–12,000ft.

2nd 10/10ths, Ci. tops 26,000ft.

Bonn

10/10ths Alt St. tops 12–15,000ft.

Dortmund

9–10/10ths St Cu tops 10/12,000ft and a St Cu layer tops 22,000ft.

Nuremburg

3–6/10ths tops 10–15,000ft.

Hannover

10/10ths tops 10,000ft.

## ***Enemy Airfields***

Mainly Fit, but rain and thick cloud in the Frontal Belt.

## ***Enemy Fighter Reaction***

Bohlen and Window feint 20.22–20.46hrs. 3JD control active 20.22hrs. 3JD plotted a/c SW of Vogelsang and W of Koblenz flying East. 20.31hrs 3JD plotted a/c NE of Limburg flying East. 20.45hrs 11 NJG 6 sent to a position between Karsruhr and Heilbronn. 20.53hrs 11 NJG 6 to Beacon Dachs (N of Mannheim). 20.55hrs 1V NJG 6 to Beacon Otto (Near Hannau). 21.02hrs 11 NJG 6 to Dachs at top speed. 21.05hrs 1V NJG 6 to a point 10 miles W of Mainz. 21.08 large formation plotted over a broad front W of a line Koblenz/Bingen. 21.08–22.13hrs Bohlen force plotted to the target area. 21.15hrs 11 NJG 6 told the Main Force was

probably flying East along the Latitude of Frankfurt.

Further plots on the Window feint 21.24–21.29hrs NJG

6 a/c to Beacon Otto. 21.35hrs 1V NJG 6 sent to the

Kassel area but did not do so and at 21.37hrs were told to land at Kitzingen, as were 11 NJG 6 at Schwabish Hall. 2

recce a/c of 11 NJG 6 stayed up near Nuremburg till

02.45hrs. 22.04hrs plotting on the Bohlen raid between Jenna

and NE Leipzig 22.13–22.29hrs plots on the homeward route

and a route WNW to Kassel area.

Dresden 1st

20.26–20.28hrs 3JD gave plots in the Cologne area on a/c flying NE 21.02–22.31hrs plots as far N of Leipzig followed by

a gap till 22.32hrs when bombers were reported leaving the

target. 22.38–23.10hrs. 1JD plotted the return past Chemnitz

to near Nuremburg. 23.15–00.25hrs heavy plotting from E of

Nuremburg to Strasburg.

Dresden 2nd

00.22–00.57hrs Jafue Middle Rhine gave plots W of Koblenz on a/c flying East. 00.25hrs plot on eight four engined a/c

40 miles W of Mainz. 00.25–03.37hrs plotting on the Dresden route assessed at 00.52hrs at 300 a/c. 01.10 01.20hrs.

Probably 1 NJG 6 made a second sortie and were given plots S of Weimar. 01.11hrs NJG 6 told the main attack was on

Magdeburg. 01.23hrs all reported a/c flying towards Dresden.

01.48hrs NJG 10 given the target. 01.49–02.20hrs Jafue

Middle Rhine gave plots between Chemnitz and Schweinfurt.

02.05–02.16hrs NJG 10 to land at Finow.

## **Attacks and Combats**

### Bohlen

Outward and at the target there were no combats. Homeward leaving Bohlen 22.00hrs 1 a/c attacked by unidentified a/c and 1 combat with a single engined enemy aircraft east of Bonn. 23.35hrs 1 twin engined aircraft attacked, and over Belgium 00.35hrs 1 unidentified aircraft was fired on.

### Dresden 1st

Outward east of Dusseldorf 21.03 and 21.10hrs 2 combats south of Magdeburg 21.45 and 21.50hrs one attacked by twin engined a/c and 1 combat with a suspect jet a/c. 8 a/c reported seeing 4 jet a/c between 10.00E and the target but none attacked. A few twin engined a/c were seen near Leipzig and at the target. 22.09–22.19hrs 10 single engine and twin engined a/c were reported but there was no fire. Homeward no incidents.

### Dresden 2nd

Outward approaching and crossing the Rhine 00.33 00.59hrs 3 attacks and 1 combat. South of Schweinfurt 01.03hrs 1 attack and on the next leg there was 1 combat with a JU.88 at 01.12hrs. Target area 01.34hrs 1 combat with a single engine a/c and 01.42hrs 1 twin engined a/c attacked. Homeward SE of Nuremburg 02.38–02.45hrs 2 U.88's attacked. S of Stuttgart 03.13hrs 1 combat with a JU.88 and W of Strasbourg 04.13hrs 1 combat with a twin engined enemy a/c.

## **Ground Defence**

### Bohlen 9–10/10ths

A few searchlights attempted to find cloud gaps. Heavy Flak was moderate at first, mainly predictor control unseen, and decreased during the attack. Guns from Zietz were in action. Few a/c were damaged.

Route:– Heavy Flak slight from Koblenz and Fulda.

### Dresden 1st. 9–10/10

Markers at 800ft No Flak, No searchlights and Heavy Flak was negligible. 3 a/c were damaged.

Route:– Heavy Flak slight from Cologne when crossing the Rhine and Heavy Flak negligible N of Bittefeld.

### Dresden 2nd. 3–7/10ths

No searchlights. Heavy Flak negligible. Barrage mainly below average bombing height.

Route:– Little opposition but a few a/c were engaged at Darmstadt, Zeitz, Chemnitz, Brux and Augsburg.



**BAe/Boeing GR. Mk 7 Harrier, as deployed by the UK and USA (AV-8B Harrier II). Royal Air Force Harriers now regularly deploy aboard Royal Navy carriers in support of UN missions.**

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