



The life of Michael Stuart Layton-Smith  
25/02/1922 - 19/08/1944





This book documents the life of Michael Stuart Layton-Smith during the Second World War.

The information within this book has been obtained from many sources and compiled to create a summary of key events.

Sources include Air Ministry records held by the National Archives, wartime letters written between Norah May Seager and Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, diary entries made by Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, various RAF records, published research from various war historians, copies of German and Dutch records, informal interviews and the advice and research of Jan Nieuwenhuis ([www.airwar4045.nl](http://www.airwar4045.nl)), Hans Nauta (a local war historian and lecturer in North Holland), Nicolas (runs ZZairwar) and Dr Theo Boiten.

Written by: Ian Michael Layton-Smith  
Last updated: February 2025



## Saturday 25th February 1922

Michael Stewart Layton-Smith was born the only son of Archibald John Layton Smith and Ivey Gladys Turner. They lived at 35 Cope Street, Coventry.

*He would always be referred to as Michael Stuart despite his birth certificate stating Michael Stewart.*

## 1925

The family moved to 8 Tension Road, Cambridge.

## 1929

Michael Stuart's maternal Grandmother Sarah Greenman, died in January aged 77.

The family moved to 146 Vinery Road, Cambridge

## 1931

The family moved to 218 Milton Road, Cambridge where they stayed for five years.

## Thursday 12th March 1936

Michael Stuart's paternal Grandfather Edward Willey Smith of Iona Cottage, 8 Gresham Road, Cambridge, died today at Addenbrooks Hospital, Cambridge aged 70. He was laid to rest at Mill Road Cemetery.

## Tuesday 24th November 1937

It was the custom, at this time, for teenagers to walk into the town in the evenings and walk around the square of shops in the centre several times before returning home. An opportunity for independence perhaps. Today, Michael Stuart was walking his dog Bob with his friends when they made the acquaintance of a young girl in a green mac walking through the town with her friends.

The "girl in the green mac" was Norah May Seager, born on 23 May 1923 in Pontypool, Monmouthshire, to father, James Seager, and mother, Norah Rosina Ayers. They lived at 48a Eden Street, Cambridge.

## 1938

The Layton-Smith family moved to 59 Cottenham Road, Histon in 1938

Over the next few years, Michael Stuart and Norah May spend most of their free time together. Michael Stuart would treat 48a Eden Street as a second home spending more time there than his own home in Histon.



*Michael Stuart with his dog Bob. Unknown Location and Date.*



*Michael Stuart and Norah May in the front garden of 48a Eden Street. Unknown Date.*



*Michael Stuart with Norah May. Taken in the rear garden of 48a Eden Street. Unknown Date.*

Thursday 24th July 1941

Michael Stuart Travelled to Oxford and enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve No 1322671 Air Craftsman Class 2 Aircraft hand/Pilot aged 19.

VOLUNTEER

Service Trade... *Aer. Pilot*.....

R.A.F. Form 2150

**ROYAL AIR FORCE VOLUNTEER RESERVE**

ENLISTMENT FOR DURATION OF THE PRESENT  
EMERGENCY

POSTPONEMENT OF CALLING UP FOR SERVICE

To **1322671**

No..... Name *LAYTON-SMITH, M.S.*

Address *59, Lutterham Road,*  
*Histon, Cambs.*

Nearest Rly. Stn..... *Histon*

In connection with your enlistment in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve for service during the present emergency, you will be required to report for permanent service in accordance with the instructions contained in a notice to be issued to you by the Officer in Charge Records, Royal Air Force.

In the meantime you will remain on the Reserve and no pay or allowances will be issuable to you for the period during which you are not called up for permanent service. It is important therefore that you should not leave your present civil employment until you are required to report for service. Where practicable you will be notified ten days before the date on which you will be required to report.

The Officer in Charge Records, Royal Air Force, Ruislip, Middlesex, must be informed of any change of address, and any correspondence must quote your R.A.F. No., rank and name.

Station..... *Oxford*.....

Date..... *24/7/41*.....

*R. H. Harnden*  
*2/4/41*

For Officer i/c Records,  
Royal Air Force.

6/40 (52291) (53630) Wt. 31900/2247 150m 11/40 Hw. G.371

Friday 25th July 1941

Michael Stuart was transferred to the reserve



Saturday 20th September 1941

Michael Stuart & Norah May on Christ's Pieces, Cambridge.



Monday 20th October 1941

After a 3 month wait, he [Michael Stuart] was embodied for service and was posted to No. 1 Air Crew Reception Centre (A.C.R.C.), UK to start his journey in the RAF.

Volunteers received letters telling them to report to Lord's where they were assembled into flights, each under the command of a corporal, kitted out and given accommodation in flats to the north of Regents Park. Most arrived at St Pancras station and transport took them to Abbey Lodge at Regents Park. This was Air Crew Receiving Centre's Sick Quarters, with a Hospital status, there were beds for recruits who had been X-rayed during the intensive medical examination given to prospective Aircrew before they could be accepted. The 2 - 3 week course enabled them to receive basic instruction, go through rigorous medical checks and take a series of tests to identify suitable roles for those who passed. The men were then posted to Initial Training Wings round the country.

"Last day at home before reporting for duty with R.A.F. Feel both excited and depressed. Norah's sweet." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 21st October 1941

"London & the RAF. Waiting about all day. Tired & Hungry. Getting settled down is a hard job. I miss Norah a hell of a lot." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

TEMPORARY PASS FORM SUB: FORM 295

UNIT: ROYAL AIR FORCE.  
A.C.R.C. Abbey Lodge, Park Road, London N.W.8.

OFFICIAL NUMBER 1322671 RANK: AC2 NAME: LAYTON-SMITH MS

has permission to be absent from his quarters daily  
from 18.00 hours to 22.30 hours from 29.9.41 to 29.10.41  
within a five mile radius, except Saturdays when the  
time is extended from 18.00 hours to 23.59 hours, and the  
five mile radius may be extended.

ORDERLY ROOM  
12 OCT 1941  
AIR CREW REC. CENTRE

F/LT. Adjut.  
for Group Captain Commanding, A.C.R.C.

Date:- 29.9.41.

RAF Temporary Pass whilst at the A.C.R.C.

## Wednesday 22nd October 1941

Letter from Michael Stuart to Norah May confirming he was part of intake Flight 17/17, No. 1 Squadron Receiving Wing, Viceroy Court, Prince Albert Road, London, NW8, one of the blocks of flats requisitioned by the RAF and lived in by aircrew training at Lord's Cricket Ground in the Second World War.

"Kitted, marched and drilled all day & a maths lecture. Stayed in to write home. Wish N. were here." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 23rd October 1941

"Photographed and tailored this morning, hope to get kit by tomorrow. Still longing for N. she's the best girl in the world. Due for maths again this afternoon & an exam Friday or Saturday." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Friday 24th October 1941

"Breakfast and then drill. Then a visit to the tailors just before dinner. After dinner a night vision test. Passed (I think!!). Uniform tomorrow. Maths exam tomorrow." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Saturday 25th October 1941

"Tailors this morning, then drill for an hour. Maths exam this afternoon. Pretty easy & I'm sure I passed it. Geraldo in evening. Wish N. were here I do miss her." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Sunday 26th October 1941

"Sent off civvies in morning then 1hr drill. Flicks and Tea in West End afternoon, supper in Camden Town." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Monday 27th October 1941

"Church parade 1st thing. If only N. was here I'd give her a lovely time. Walk to Westminster in afternoon. Bath and bed early as my feet are damned sore through the new boots. Love to N." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 28th October 1941

"Nothing special to report. A lecture by our C.O. on I.T.W. training. I miss N. more each day. Who in the hell is Peter anyway? Drat him!!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*



**Wednesday 29th October 1941**

Posted to No. 7 Initial Training Wing (ITW) for cadet induction to RAF service.

ITW was expected to take 8 weeks, it would include ground instruction, mathematics, navigation, and the principles of flying. If successful, then it was onto Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) and finally Service Flying Training School (SFTS) before earning your wings. Once you had your wings you would be sent to an Operational Training Unit for 4-6 weeks to prepare for front line duties.

**3rd November 1941**

"Moved on the 1st. Billets are terrible. Nothing to do all day. Tried to get home Sunday, turned back. To think I missed seeing N. drove me mad. Scrap with D. He stole my cig case & threw N's photo away. Found both photo and case. He stayed in bed Monday morning. Oh for Norah." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**8th November 1941**

"Boredom & nothing but boredom." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**9th November 1941**

"Nornie & Family up for day. Nornie is sweeter than ever. Wish today could have lasted forever. Will try for Cambridge next Sat." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**14th November 1941**

"More boredom." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**15th November 1941**

"Am trying for Cambridge today. Arrive 11:35. Dodged SP's. Now on train with 5 mins to go. All tense and excited. I love a chase such as this. Those SP's sure look mad! Got home O.K. best 8hrs of my life. N. better & sweeter than ever. (N. may come Sunday 23)." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**24th November 1941**

"4th yr with N." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**Sunday 30th November 1941**

Michael would be based in Newquay as part of Flight II, 'C' Squadron at the Penolver Hotel for most of his time with the ITW.

**Thursday 1st January 1942**

"New years resolution. 'Succeed'. Speech by AOC in morning. Rifle range afternoon. Signed for flying helmet!!! Looking forward to leave & Norni, bless her." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Friday 2nd January 1942

"Pay Day. New NCO today. Not sorry Hebdon getting a bit too uppish. Little else to report. Wrote to Norni in the evening. I miss her & guess she feels the same. Thus the days go by." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Saturday 3rd January 1942

"Invasion exercises today. Little else doing. Had tea out. Wish N. were here. Leave a bit nearer now so we can cheer up a bit. On guard tonight. Brr!!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Sunday 4th January 1942

"Lazy day. A bit of swotting and a letter to Norni in answer to her long and enjoyable one of Friday. I do miss her." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Monday 5th January 1942

"Inoculations today. I feel too damned ill to make any comments. Bed early & hope for less pain." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Tuesday 6th January 1942

"A lousy night last night, no sleep with the arm and a timetable to keep to today." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Wednesday 7th January 1942

"Guard tonight. Not very pleasant with the arm. Wrote to N. mum and dad. Hurry up leave!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Thursday 8th January 1942

"Interesting day. Clay Pigeon shooting in morning. Basketball in afternoon. Am still stiff but a lot better. Love to N." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Friday 9th January 1942

"4 weeks. No mail since Mon. Hope to get some tomorrow. Still day & Hebby upset. Norah and leave a bit nearer." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

### Saturday 10th January 1942

"Still no mail up to lunchtime. I hope N is OK. Guess she's been working late. Nothing doing today. I hope mail comes at teatime, it gets very lonely with no letters. No mail." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Sunday 11th January 1942

Still suffering a sore arm after the inoculations. Letter from Michael talks about how he has started to play basketball and try clay pigeon shooting. A new room mate tried to take his bed because it was close to the radiator but Michael was having none of it! "Church parade as usual. Hazy morning. Writing letters this afternoon. Cold unhappy day. I hope to heaven I get some mail tomorrow. Only 3 weeks and 5 days to go." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Monday 12th January 1942

"Still no mail. Getting rather worried. Its unusual for N not to write. Hope she hasn't given me up. Its hell without any mail." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 13th January 1942

Talks in his letter to Norah about being captain of the rugby, soccer and basketball teams for his flight and that he is leading by a few points in the clay pigeon shooting competition. "Still no mail from N. Letter from Mum. N saw her Sat. I wonder why she hasn't written. Wrote to her tonight and posted it. Shall go crazy if I don't get one from N. tomorrow." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 14th January 1942

3 weeks until leave. Letter to Norah talks about how long training could take and that he has been together with Norah 4 years. "Guard last night and I feel dreadfully tired. Looking forward to a letter from N. today. I do want one so much. 2 letter from N. Cheers. Answering them tonight. I love her the darling." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 15th January 1942

"Nothing interesting today. Played soccer in afternoon. Won 2-1. Had to scrub rooms in evening. What a life! Leave gets nearer. " *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Friday 16th January 1942

"Pay day. 3 weeks. Practice for drill competition all day. Spit & Polish tonight. Also write 2 letters N & Mum. Put a bit more cash away!! Flicks tonight. St v Tig." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 17th January 1942

"Drill comp today. We won!! Otherwise quiet day. Guard tonight. Must write N. tomorrow, I do miss her & I know she loves me. I love her." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 18th January 1942

"Guard all day. I was glad to get to bed. Wrote to Norni and Mum & Dat. Wish the next 3 weeks could "double it". I miss N so much I shall be so happy Feb 7." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 19th January 1942

"Wrote to N. this evening. I miss her so much but leave is much nearer now. Soccer in afternoon. Won. Exams getting nearer, shall have to work hard to pass." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 20th January 1942

"Busy day. Work is getting harder as we get nearer exams. I'm very confident of my howi exam. No mail yet hope to hear from N. tomorrow. Posted N's letter this morning. Wish she were here." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 21st January 1942

"Letter from N. Wrote to her and Don. 94% for armaments." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 22nd January 1942

"Write N. today if not last night. Cold and wet today. Lessons went well. Played basketball v 'D' Squadron in afternoon. Won. Leave in a couple of weeks. I'm longing for N." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 23rd January 1942

"Likely date for 7 days leave. (cancelled Feb 6.) Maybe signals exam 2 weeks. Hospital today. Get out Monday. Fell pretty bad." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 24th January 1942

It is nearing the end of ITW, exams coming up and thoughts turn to the future and a letter to Norah says how they are expecting to get their wings around September time.

Saturday 24th January 1942

"Everything O.K. today. P&D came to see me. I had letter from N which I replied to tonight. I love her and worship her she's wonderful." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 25th January 1942

"Write home to as many other people as possible." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*



*Drill competition 17th January 1942*



*Drill competition 17th January 1942*



## Monday 26th January 1942

"Out today. Face OK. Letters from Mum & Dad. Hope N. writes soon, also Don. St Merryn airfield. Flew plane for 1st time. That's some news for N. when I write. I love her the darling." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 27th January 1942

"Flicks!! This is last bit of fun before exams" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 28th January 1942

Letter to Norah talks about exams starting next Monday and they will last all week. Surprise trip today for the top 12 in the flight to a nearby aerodrome where there were a dozen training planes with instructors waiting for us to take part in a "grading test"! It went very well and the chief instructor told me I was a natural flier!"

"Wrote N. in morning. Told her about St M. Hope to hear from her today.

I usually do. No mail from N. Due from Don. Am writing some letters and then SWOT. Hope N. isn't angry about my scrap, I love her so much." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 29th January 1942

Michael tells Norah in his letter today that flying test results are in and a score of 98% with commanding officer recommendation for fighter pilot.

"Finish letter to N. Hope to hear from her today. Games this afternoon. No games extra signals instead. No mail from N. yet hope she is all right, the darling." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Friday 30th January 1942

"Pay day. Heard from N. (1 week). I am forgiven. Feel very confident about finals. 7 days now! Scrub room tonight!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Saturday 31st January 1942

"Write N. Extra signals today. Tea out. Bad news, no pay before leave! Heard from Mum. Swotting tonight. All work for present!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Sunday 1st February 1942

"Finish letter to N. and wrote to Mum. Rest of day SWOT. Weather still blowy but not so cold. 5 days and then home and N. she's the best." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Monday 2nd February 1942

"Exams. Buzzer (S&R) Passed. Getting really excited about leave. Only 4 days. Hope N will like me. Duty NCO tonight!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 3rd February 1942

Michael tells Norah in his letter today that he was accepted as a fighter pilot and also passed final signals exam with a score of 100% and final armaments exam with a score of 98%. 3 more exams to go on Thursday and Friday, the most important Navigators exam is Friday.

"ALDIS (S&R) Passed. Wrote N tonight. Hope she writes again before I leave. Tons of swotting. But not long to go now thank heavens." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 4th February 1942

"Full flying kit issued also battle dress. All swotting today. Try to write Mum & Dad tonight." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 5th February 1942

"Pack kit tonight. Final signal exam & a/c. Law & Hygiene air/c.r." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Friday 6th February 1942

"Navigation and armaments exam (ait/c rec). Maybe leave. If so trains are 12:50, 16:47, 20:00." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Saturday 7th February 1942

Michael was reclassified as Leading Aircraftsman L.A.C. under training Pilot II

"On leave for 7 days and back to Cambridge. All being well I shall arrive in Cambridge about 9am and then - Norah! Love her. Tea and flicks with all the kids. Lovely time." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Sunday 8th February 1942

"leave. went to the central." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Monday 9th February 1942

"leave. Went to Grantchester walked through the meadows in the snow. Stayed at the red lion." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 10th February 1942

"leave. Went to London for the day had the loveliest time and snowing in Cambridge." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 11th February 1942

"leave. Had a party. Bought some music for N. Enjoyed party but it is so near end of leave." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 12th February 1942

"leave. Lunch with N. Went over home for party in evening." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 13th February 1942

"leave. Pay day. [Norah wrote: God bless and keep you safe and have a good journey darling all my love xxxx.] Wrote N. and Mum & Dad. (thankyou dearest xx)." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 14th February 1942

"Newquay. Old grind. Guard tonight. I miss N. more than ever. Wish I'd asked her to marry me. Hope J doesn't get ideas about her." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 15th February 1942

"I'm writing dearest. I love you. Roll on next leave, I got some work to do." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 16th February 1942

"Flight photo today" No. 7 Initial Training Wing. "Funny sort of a day. Not bad and not good. Feels damn lonely not to have N. with me in evening. Wonder what lucky devil is taking her out tonight." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*





## Tuesday 17th February 1942

"I found out my average for all the exams was 93%." *(source: letter to Norah from Michael Stuart)*

"'Nother funny day. I miss N a devil of a lot. Hope she says yes to me. Should hear from her soon. Will write her tonight also Mum & Dad. 'Nother day gone. Oh for N. I love her so." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 18th February 1942

"Final interviews today! Quite satisfactory. Hope to hear from N. tomorrow. Miss her so much." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 19th February 1942

"Oh happy day! Two lovely long letters from N. bless her. She loves me and boy, do I love her, not half. I'm finishing a long letter to her now. I'm also on guard..Brr!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Friday 20th February 1942

"Route march 1st thing otherwise a quiet day. Its freezing cold at present. I wish N. were here, guess it would be warmer then. She's a swell kid and I love her. I week gone now. Only 5 more, only! Squadron 'do.'" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Saturday 21st February 1942

"A drill day with no mail." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Sunday 22nd February 1942

"Nothing doing except stag party. Fairly successful. Wish N. were here." "4 weeks and 5 days until leave." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Monday 23rd February 1942

"Route march and cross country otherwise dull and very boring. Broke as well. Still no mail." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 24th February 1942

"Letter from Mum & Dad for birthday no mail from N. Dull day and very cold." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 25th February 1942

"20 today. Card from N." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Thursday 26th February 1942

"exams officially confirmed, and I am now a Leading Aircraftsman (L.A.C.) complete with props on my arm! Also, a letter from HQ has come through recommending six of us in this flight for a commission. I'm having my photo taken next Thursday! Currently having a course on advanced navigation and aircraft recognition, the rest of the time is route marches, drill, P.T. and cross country running." *(source: letter to Norah from Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 5th March 1942

"I had my photo taken today for Norah." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*



Friday 27th February 1942

"Pay day. Squadron do. Wish N. had been there. Gas chamber and well what a stink!"  
(source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Sunday 1st March 1942

"Lazy day. Wrote N. and stayed in because I'm broke. Oh for N. 3 and half weeks now. New intake" (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

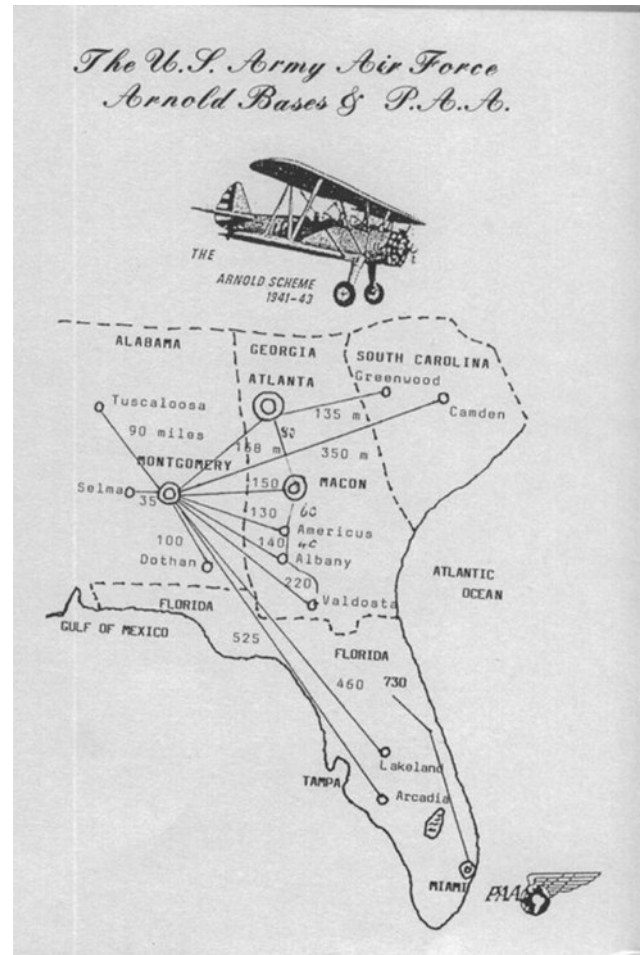
Monday 2nd March 1942

"Mixed sort of day with very cold weather. These cross countries and the PT are tiring. Posted N. a letter. Hope to hear from her soon." (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Sunday 15th March 1942

Letter home to Norah, happy that she likes his photo. Talks about sending photo's of the PT competition in January. Elementary Flying Training School is next and looks like it will be Canada under the Arnold Scheme not England which could mean 6 months away from home. They have been posted so will leave Newquay on Tuesday. "It will mean a 3 week grading test before we get a weeks leave!"

The Arnold Scheme was established to train British RAF pilots in the United States of America during World War II since there was an acute need to train pilots for the Royal Air Force. The United Kingdom was considered largely unsuitable due to a combination of enemy action, high operational traffic at airfields, unpredictable weather and a shortage of training instructors. Several overseas training schemes were therefore established, the Arnold Scheme being one of them. Training took place in three separate flying stages; Primary, Basic and Advanced, all within the huge area of South East Air Corps Training Command.



Monday 16th March 1942

"Posted nearer home for a short time then not sure where." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 21st March 1942

"48hrs leave." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 26th March 1942

Time to start grading for Elementary Flying Training School. Michael has been posted to No. 5 Grading Course, No. 3 Elementary Flying Training School, RAF Shellingford, Near Faringdon, Oxfordshire where he will stay for around 3 weeks.

"on the go from 05:45 to 19:30 seven days a week!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 27th March 1942

"Started aerobatics today!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 8th April 1942

"Embarkation leave. N. on holiday. Met me at station. She's beautiful and I love her so much." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 10th April 1942

"London today. N's furcoat came back with us but no ring. I'll get it before I go back or know why." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 14th April 1942

"The greatest day of my life. N. said yes and now I'm engaged to the most wonderful girl in the world. How happy I am, what an end to my leave!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 15th April 1942

"Manchester." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 24th April 1942

"48hrs leave. My last before sailing. Just managed the fare!" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 25th April 1942

"N. was sure pleased to see me and I her. We had a good day but it went far too fast." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 26th April 1942

"Cycled over to Histon in morning. Had lunch there and then Cambridge all alone what heaven! I love N. like nothing on earth so back to Manchester and (soon) USA. N. saw me off she was pretty near crying so was I." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*



Friday 1st May 1942

"Set sail [from Gourock, Scotland] for U.S.A. at 19:30. So au revoir England and Norni for a while. I'll soon be back. How I long to be with her. I do love her so much." (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Saturday 2nd May 1942

"1st day at sea. Uneventful and boring. There's a hell of a lot of water out here! I wish N. were here. I love her more and more as time goes by. I'm not a good sailor!!" (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Tuesday 5th May 1942

"Sea, Sea, Sea, SEA!" (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Saturday 9th May 1942

"Dock today. They have fruit with yellow skin here that you peel off!" (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Sunday 10th May 1942

No. 2 Squadron, No. 31 RAF Personnel Depot, Class 43a, RAF Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Letter home confirms safe arrival and how good the accommodation, and food are!

Monday 1st June 1942

Posted to Turner Field, Albany, Georgia for Primary training.

Wednesday 3rd June 1942

"Moncton remains a forwarding address but the flight have now left Canada and are not allowed to say where." (source: diary of Michael Stuart)

Michael was posted to Class 43a, Souther Field, Americus, Georgia

IDENTIFY AND LICENSE	
Name	M.S. Layton-Smith. L.A.C.
Address	SOUTHER FIELD GA.
Signature	M.S. Layton-Smith.
Birth Date	25.2.22.
Height	5'5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
Color Hair	DARK BROWN
Color Eyes	BLUE
Weight	140
Remarks	RAF.

PASTE COPY OF LICENSE PHOTO HERE

Michael's Pilot Flight Record and Log book captures all the training flights he completed.

Wednesday 8th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork various" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 9th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork various" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 10th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork various" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 11th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork various" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 13th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 15th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*



Boeing PT-17 Stearman. Picture courtesy of Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum.

Thursday 16th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 17th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 20th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 21st July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 22nd July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 25th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 27th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 30th July 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing. First solo." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 1st August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 4th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork takeoff and landing" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 5th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 6th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork tand stages (90°) Passed OK. *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 7th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. First check ride. Passed OK. *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 10th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork stalls, spins, lazy 8's and chandelles." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 11th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork, chandelles and lazy 8's." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 12th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork, chandelles, 180° side and lazy 8's." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 13th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. circuits" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Telegram home to say everything OK from Americus.

Friday 14th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. 180° sides. Passed OK." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 15th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Chandelles, lazy 8's, take off and landing, 180° side" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 16th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 17th August 1942

Letter confirms in Class 43a, Souther Field, Americus, Georgia and just a few weeks from graduating.

Tuesday 18th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*



Friday 21st August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Saturday 22nd August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork and circuits" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Sunday 23rd August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Monday 24th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. 360. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Wednesday 26th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Thursday 27th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Friday 28th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Saturday 29th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Sunday 30th August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Monday 31st August 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Check" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Tuesday 1st September 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork and circuits" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Wednesday 2nd September 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Thursday 3rd September 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Friday 4th September 1942

"Souther fields. Local flight. Stearman PT-17. Airwork" *[source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart]*

Monday 7th September 1942

Posted to Class 43A, B Squadron, Cochran Field, Macon, Georgia, USA to start Basic training in the Vultee BT-13. This was the basic trainer flown by most American pilots during World War II. It was the second phase of the three-phase training program for pilots. After primary training in PT-13, PT-17, or PT-19 trainers, the student pilot moved to the more complex Vultee for basic flight training.

The BT-13 had a more powerful engine and was faster and heavier than the primary trainer. It required the student pilot to use two-way radio communications with the ground and to operate landing flaps and a two-position Hamilton Standard controllable pitch propeller. It did not, however, have retractable landing gear nor a hydraulic system. The large flaps are operated by a crank-and-cable system. Its pilots nicknamed it the "Vultee Vibrator".



BT-13 "Vultee"

Wednesday 9th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 10th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 11th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 12th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 13th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 14th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Airwork." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 17th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Stages." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 18th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Chandelles and lazy 8's." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 19th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Chandelles and lazy 8's." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Sunday 20th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Chandelles and lazy 8's." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 21st September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Chandelles and lazy 8's." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 22nd September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Cross country." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Wednesday 23rd September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Cross country." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 24th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Aerobatics. Hit by another plane when landing. Landed plane which caught fire as I left it." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 25th September 1942

"Local flight. Vultee BT13A. Aerobatics." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 9th October 1942

Letter to Norah confirms that Michael is now in Class 43a, 'B' Squadron, Cochran Field, Macon, Georgia, USA and in hospital with a cracked bone in his left leg.

Monday 21st October 1942

"1 hr flying. Airwork. Left foot weak." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 25th October 1942

"Check. Left foot no good." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

Saturday 26th October 1942

"FINAL CHECK. (Nearly grounded on solo can't hold left rudder) I've had it! Damn!!!.....Total flying time as pilot 111hrs 45mins." *(source: Pilot Flight Record of Michael Stuart)*

There was not time to recover and complete the course and since joining the next course would have meant staying in Canada for up to another year, Michael had to make a decision on an alternative course. His commanding officer suggested the bombardier course as it would use many of the skills he had already gained.



Cochran Airfield, Macon, Georgia

**Saturday 31st October 1942**

Remustered under training to Air Bomber.

**Tuesday 10th November 1942**

Assigned to No. 67 Course., No. 31 Bombing & Gunnery School, RAF Picton, Ontario, Canada.

**Tuesday 24th November 1942**

*"5 years with N." (source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

**Monday 11th January 1943**

Michael James Layton-Smith born today, first son of Michael Stuart and Norah May.

**Tuesday 12th January 1943**

Letter to Norah confirms Michael is now on Course 69 at No. 33 Air Navigation School based at the RCAF Aerodrome - Hamilton (Mount Hope) Ontario and flying the Avro Anson. He included a photo of "the gang".



**Friday 19th February 1943**

Michael was Promoted to Sergeant/Air Bomber.

**Thursday 25th February 1943**

21st birthday spent in Canada.

**Sunday 28th February 1943**

Letter to Norah confirms Michael is now at RAF Picton, Ontario, Canada.

**Tuesday 23rd March 1943**

Posted to No 31 Personnel Depot to be processed for returning to England.



## Saturday 27th March 1943

Home Establishment was granted and Michael reassigned to the UK for allocation to a reception centre in the UK.

## Monday 5th April 1943

Posted to No. 7 Personnel Reception Centre (PRC) which processed aircrew returning from overseas during the Second World War (especially after training courses). Michael was billeted in Grants Hotel, one of the hotels in the centre of Harrogate. The hotels were requisitioned by the Air Ministry in anticipation of London being bombed in the early days of the war. This cluster of Hotels were also commonly referred to as RAF Harrogate by the aircrew and local people.

## Saturday 10th April 1943

"Home from Canada on the 07:18 train. Saw baby Michael for the first time." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Wednesday 14th April 1943

Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, now 21 years old, married Norah May Seager at 10:00 at Shire Hall, Cambridgeshire. Back to Histon afterwards with family.



from left Michael James (baby), Michael Stuart and Norah May



From left Comfort Turner (LuLu), Rowena Turner (Rowie), Ivey Gladys, Norah May, Michael James (baby), Michael Stuart, Norah Rosina Seager (nee Ayers) and James Seager

Saturday 24th April 1943

"train to Harrogate".*(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Friday 14th May 1943

"Back home for leave. Met Norni about 9pm at the station." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Monday 17th May 1943

"Leave over, back to the station." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 18th May 1943

Posted to No. 3 ( Operational) Air Force Unit.

Sunday 23rd May 1943

Letter home confirms Michael now at RAF Milton, Cumberland.

Tuesday 15th June 1943

Posted to No. 26 Operational Training Unit.

Thursday 17th June 1943

"Mike home again."

Saturday 3rd July 1943

"48hrs leave." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Tuesday 3rd August 1943

Letter from Michael confirming he is at Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, England.

Friday 13th August 1943

Letter from Michael confirming he is now in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.

Friday 20th August 1943

"48hrs leave." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

Thursday 16th September 1943

Posted to No. 1651 Conversion Unit to convert to flying the Sterling III bomber in readiness for operational flying.

Friday 15th October 1943

Posted to No. 90 Squadron to begin operational flying.



*Michael Stuart with son Michael James on Christ's Pieces whilst on leave, Cambridge. Exact date unknown but believe to be late 1943 or early 1944*



## Monday 22nd November 1943

First operational flight, one of six Stirling that was detailed for Berlin, KF147 MG-J took off at 17:00 with the following crew aboard.

- Sergeant Patrick George MCCARTHY (Pilot)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid Gunner)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Sergeant R S CASS (Flight Engineer)

One of the aircraft returned early having jettisoned its bombs.

The remaining 5 bombed their target between 20:12 and 20:22 dropping 5 x 1000, 1800 x 4lb and 200 x 30lb incendiaries. Several large explosions were reported but visibility was poor so results difficult to observe. There was little flak and no fighters were encountered.

## Tuesday 23rd November 1943

KF147 returned to base at 00:05.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK						APPENDIX 'M' 1515	FORM 541.
DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT						SECRET	
By NO. 90. SQUADRON.						PAGE No. 2.	
FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER,						19 43.	
DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				Up	Down		
22/23.11.43.	SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT AGAINST BERLIN ON THE NIGHT OF 22nd/23rd NOVEMBER, 1943 (Continued).						
	STIRLING III	SGT. MCCARTHY, P.G.	PILOT.	1700	0005.	Attacked BERLIN.	
	*J* KF.147.	SGT. HARGRAVE, A.	NAVIGATOR.			At 2019 hours from 13000 feet.	
		SGT. SMITH, H.B.L.	ATR BOMBER.			With 1 x 1000 MG, 360 x 4lb and 400 x 30lb incendi.	
		SGT. ALLFORD, F.C.	R/O OPERATOR.			Identified by 10 Green T.I's and Red Flares with Green Stars.	
		SGT. BLATCHFORD, B.	MID-GUNNER.			Result: Not observed until leaving when a glow under	
		SGT. BATTERBEE, E.A.	REAR GUNNER.			clouds was seen.	
		SGT. CASS, R.S.	T/ENGINEER.				

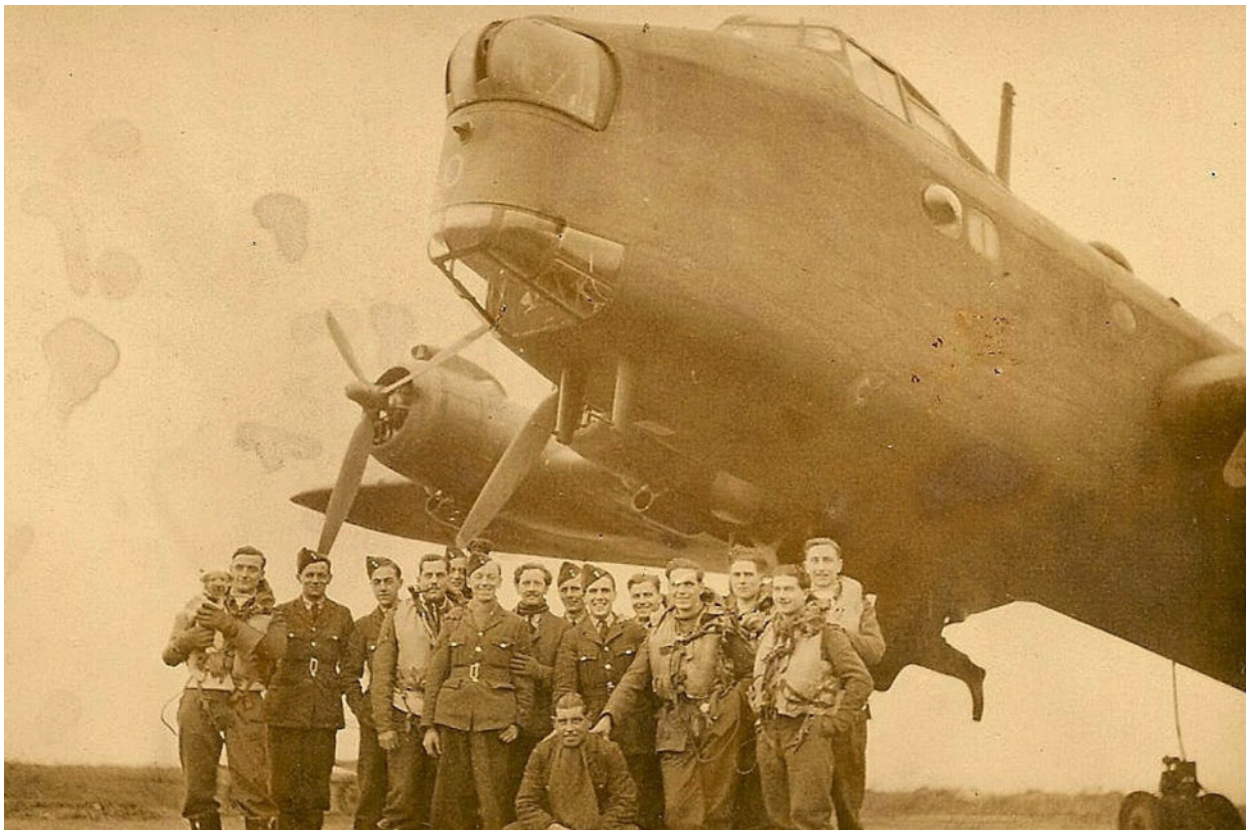
Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 90 Squadron Detailing activity during November 1943

22.11.43.	6 aircraft were detailed to attack BERLIN but one aircraft returned early having jettisoned its bombs. 5 aircraft attacked primary between 2012 and 2022 hours from 18000/13000ft dropping 5 x 1000, 1800 x 4lb and 200 x 30lb incendiaries. One aircraft saw the Green route markers on the way in. All aircraft saw the Green T.I's and Red Flares with Green Stars. A big explosion was reported by two aircraft at 2023 hours and another big explosion was reported by one aircraft at 2016 hours, otherwise results were difficult to observe. There was little flak and no fighters were seen. 4 aircraft attempted photographs.	GVI
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 90 Squadron Summarising all activity during November 1943



*Unknown date and location. Aircraft is a Short Sterling so assumption is this was taken in late 1943 whilst posted to No. 90 Squadron*



*Unknown date and location. Aircraft is a Short Sterling so assumption is this was taken in late 1943 whilst posted to No. 90 Squadron*

## Wednesday 12th January 1944

The RAF Operations Record Book confirms Michael, Mac, Alan, Fred, Basil, John and Ernie being posted out of No. 90 Squadron RAF Tuddenham to No. 7 Squadron on the 12th January 1944.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Pilot)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid Gunner)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Flight Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

H.H. BETTY /L

R.A.F. Form 540 <small>See instructions for use of this form in K.R. and A.C.I., para. 1343 and War Manual Pt. II, chapter XX., and notes in R.A.F. Pocket Book.</small>				OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK		Page No. <u>5</u>
				of (Unit or Formation) <u>NO. 90, SQUADRON.</u>		No. of pages used for <u>exp</u> <u>6</u>
Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events	<b>SECRET.</b>	References to Appendices	
R.A.F. STATION.	JAN		<u>AIR CREW POSTED OUT (OTHER THAN OFFICERS). Continued.</u>			
TUDDENHAM.	12.1.44		1591820. SGT. SWIGGELL.G. A/G. to No. 7. Squadron.			
	"		1624824. SGT. LYELL.G.W. A/G. do.			
	"		1639796. SGT. HALL.W.F. P/E. do.			
	"		756139. SGT. HARGRAVE.A. NAV. do.			
	"		1126167. SGT. ALLFORD.F.G. WO/AIR. do.			
	"		1189794. P/G. BLATCHFORD.B. A/G. do.			
	"		1322671. SGT. LAYTONSMITH.M.S.A/B. do.			
	"		1436052. SGT. GAY.J.C. P/E. do.			
	"		1873692. SGT. BATTERBEE.E.R. A/G. do.			
	"		1318114. W/G. MCCARTHY.E.G. Pilot. do.			
	18.1.44		1315581. SGT. GEECH.J. NAV. to No. 214 Squadron.			
	"		1555581. SGT. CHAMBERS.F.WO/AIR do.			
	"		1813345. SGT. EDWARDS.D.J. A/G. do.			
	"		1851397. SGT. CARTER.G.R. P/E. do.			
	"		1869981. SGT. BAILEY.P.G. A/G. do.			
	25.1.44		1587275. SGT. STOCKER.G.I. P/E. to No. 32 Base (N.E.S.).			
	26.1.44		977828. SGT. KEEFING.I.G. A/G. C.R.S.C. Pastonburgh.			
	28.1.44		R.134249. SGT. CEAR.D.C. A/B to 214 Squadron.			
	29.1.44		R.188834. P/S. MCNEVIN.G.G. A/B. to 32 Base (N.E.S.).			
	12.1.44		AUS.414746. P/S. MCCARTHY CA. WO/AIR. to No. 7, Squadron.			
	"		AUS.414746. P/S. MCCARTHY CA. WO/AIR. to No. 7, Squadron.			
	31.1.44		658833. P/S. LEWIS.C. NAV. to 1678 Conversion Flight.			
	"		1238964. P/S. DUNLIFFE.DA. Pilot. do.			
	"		1516127. SGT. HOLLIS.J. WO/AIR. do.			
	"		1586150. SGT. BOURNE.H.J. A/B. do.			
	"		1820355. SGT. GAY.G.W. P/E. do.			
	"		1852412. SGT. BAKER.K.R. A/G. do.			
	"		2209357. SGT. SAKUN.W. A/G. do.			
	29.1.44		1425737. SGT. BARBER.A. A/G. to 32 Base (N.E.S.).			

Extract taken from the Operations Record Book of No. 90 Squadron showing the summary of key events for the month of January 1944

## Thursday 13th January 1944

Posted to No. 7 Squadron Pathfinder Force, based at Oakington, Cambridge. One of nineteen officially recognised elite Pathfinder squadrons that formed No. 8 Group Bomber Command during the second half of WWII.



## The Pathfinder Force

The Pathfinder Force was established in an effort to improve bombing accuracy. Crews were trained to accurately follow the agreed Navigational Route, first marking the "Turning Points" with coloured flares (Target Indicators) then having reached the Target area, they marked the start of the Bombing Run and Target. Bombers in the following main bomber stream were able to use these Indicators to more accurately identify their Turning Points & Bombing Targets.

Crews found their way into the Force via varied routes; they could volunteer at any time while serving with Main Force Squadrons, while Aircrew who showed exceptional promise in their Training could also find themselves seconded into the Force.

Recruits were given a 2-week Course in Marking Techniques at RAF Warboys before Posting to a Squadron. Don Bennett led the force and would address each intake personally. Crews came to have an intense sense of loyalty, pride & professionalism in their Membership of 8 Group. The PFF Crews were also granted a step up in rank, and increase in pay, upon joining but had to do a 45 (originally 60) Trip Tour rather than the usual 30 Trips, for as long as they were serving in PFF. As your number of Operations increased, your odds of surviving were radically reduced and without any doubt, regardless of their skills or professionalism, the key factor to surviving was simply luck! The coveted PFF Badge allowed to be worn on their uniforms was genuinely a sought-after achievement amongst crews.



Later in the war, Pathfinder Force often had a crew of 8 instead of the usual 7. This was because they needed 2 Navigators (the second often recorded a Visual A/B) in each Aircraft due to the advances in technology and additional equipment that was used, 1 would be termed the Observer in charge of the radar equipment, the other the Plotter.

- Pilot (Captain)
- Bomb Aimer
- Flight Engineer
- Wireless Operator
- Navigator (Plotter)
- Mid Upper Gunner
- Rear Gunner
- Visual A/B (Observer)

Their Bomb Loads were mission specific and, depending on their role in the raid, contained a mixture of Bombs, Flares & Target Indicators.

Target Indicators were specially adapted 250lb Bomb Casings containing 60 coloured pyrotechnic candles (red, green, yellow). At the designated height, the casing would explode, releasing the ignited coloured candles which would float down to the Ground. These would burn for about 3-mins, providing a coloured "Aiming Point" for the Main Bomber Stream.

Sky Markers consisted of an encased candle flare attached to a large parachute. When released it would float down to the Ground, igniting at a designated height; pieces of the candle would fall off, creating a vertical chain of light. Although spectacular, Sky Marking was probably even less effective than Bombing with radar because the Parachutes drifted with the Wind and seldom used on Operations.

Each Pathfinder Aircraft was assigned a specific Role for each Mission, based on their skills & experience. These Roles were dependent on the method(s) being utilised for the Mission which would be determined based on the likely visibility over the Target Area.

**Visual Marker** - utilised visual contact through the Bombsight to drop coloured Target Indicators (TI's) to identify the Aiming Point.

**Backer-up or Visual Centerer** - spread throughout the Main Bomber Stream to repeat the marking process throughout the attack with Target Indicator Green

**Blind Illuminator** - drop Flares to light up the Target Area

**Blind Marker** - utilised Navigational Aids to drop coloured Target Indicators (TI's) or Coloured Parachute Flares (Sky-Markers) to identify the Aiming Point.

**Master Bomber** - coordinated a Raid by circling above the Target for the duration of the attack. He would broadcast instructions to Crews advising them on where to drop their Flares, Target Indicators & Bombs based on his view of where the Target was in relation to the Coloured Indicators on the Ground. Bomber going down to 3500-ft to see which TI's were closest to the Aiming Point, and calling the Main Force to 'Bomb on Red' or 'Bomb on Green'

Methods of bombing were given codenames, derived from the Hometown of 3 Members of Bennett's HQ Staff. The code words were initially chosen by asking 3 Bomber Command Personnel in the Operations Room where they came from. One was from Newhaven, England, one from Parramatta, New South Wales, & one from Wanganui, New Zealand.

**Parramatta** was a ground marking method, used when visibility was good and required "Blind Markers" and/or "Visual Markers".

**Newhaven** was a ground marking method, used when visibility was average to good and required "Blind Illuminators" and/or "Visual Illuminators" followed by "Visual Markers".

**Wanganui** was a sky marking method, used when visibility was poor and required "Blind Markers". As well as being a standard method, it was used in an emergency if Cloud Cover, Smoke Screens etc obscured the Target on Arrival.

Group made a wireless broadcast to air crews on the hour and half-hour, the wireless operator would listen out for Messages. Sometimes if Pathfinder Force, who were ahead of the Main-force, discovered that winds were significantly different to those that were Forecast, this information would be sent back to Group who would relay it to the participating Aircraft.

The proportion of Pathfinder Aircraft to Main Force Bombers varied enormously according to the difficulty and location of the assigned Target; 1 to 15 was common, though it could be as low as 1 to 3. By the start of 1944 the bulk of Bomber Command was now Bombing within 3-miles of the PFF Indicators; a huge improvement in accuracy. The success or failure of a Raid depended overwhelmingly on the Pathfinder's Marker Placement and how successfully further marking was corrected.



## The Lancaster bomber

By 1944, No. 7 Squadron had moved to flying Lancaster bombers.

From 1942 until the end of the war, Lancasters flew an estimated 156,000 operations and dropped 608,612 tons of bombs. 3,249 Lancasters were lost in action with only 35 completing more than 100 successful operations. The greatest survivor completed 139 operations and survived the war, to be scrapped in 1947. Each Lancaster cost around £42k which (at the time of writing) in today's money would be close to £2M. A long, unobstructed bomb bay meant that the Lancaster could take the largest bombs used by the RAF, including the 4,000 lb (1,800 kg), 8,000 lb (3,600 kg) and 12,000 lb (5,400 kg) blockbusters, loads often supplemented with smaller bombs or incendiaries.

These are the key roles and responsibilities of a heavy bomber crew during WWII.



### Pilot

The Pilot of a bomber crew flew the aircraft throughout the operation and coordinated the actions of the other crew members. He was the captain of the aircraft regardless of his rank (in relation to other crew members) and the most important crew member. He was responsible for the lives of all the crew and the aircraft whilst in the air. If an emergency evacuation of the aircraft was necessary, the pilot had to stay at the controls and be the last to leave.

Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023

### Flight Engineer

The role of the flight engineer was introduced in 1942 as the new heavy bombers required larger crews. The flight engineer controlled the aircraft's mechanical, hydraulic, electrical and fuel systems. During take-off and landing, he was seated on a fold down seat next to the pilot, thereby enabling him to assist the pilot with some of the controls. In an emergency, the flight engineer would also be needed to give accurate fuel calculations. He was also the reserve bomb-aimer and helped to look out for enemy fighters. On the ground, he also liaised with the ground crew, who were responsible for servicing and maintaining the aircraft.



Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023



Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023

## Navigator

The Navigator was responsible for keeping the aircraft on course at all times, reaching the target and then the home base. He had to maintain a high level of concentration for virtually the whole of the flight. They operated in a completely blacked out compartment, the only illumination was a small lamp and dim glow from the navigation equipment.

## Air Bomber

The role of Air Bomber or Bomb Aimer took control of the aircraft when it was on its bombing run. He would lie flat in the nose of the aircraft, directing the pilot until the bombs were released and the bombing photograph was taken. The photograph was the proof that the operation had been completed, which meant the crew could count it towards their total number of operations carried out. The bomb-aimer could act as a reserve pilot in an emergency as he would have received some flying training.



Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023

### Wireless Operator

The Wireless Operator transmitted all messages to and from the aircraft to their base. He had fewer duties than the other crew members as operations were generally conducted in wireless silence. However, he also served as the reserve gunner and addressed any minor emergencies in any part of the aircraft. If the aircraft got into difficulties, he had to send out positional signals. If the aircraft had to ditch into the sea, he had to remain at his post to send out a distress signal to improve the crew's chance of being located and rescued.



Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023



Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023

### Navigator/Radar Operator

When the Pathfinder Force was established, a second navigator role (sometimes referred to as Visual Air Bomber) was needed and when would either sit side by side with the Navigator on a narrow bench or they would operate special equipment such as the H2S radar set mounted behind the Wireless Operator.





### Mid Upper Gunner

The mid upper gunner was physically separated from the other crew members. They were confined to their turret for the whole flight. Their main duty was to advise the pilot of enemy aircraft movements to allow him to take evasive action and to defend the aircraft against enemy fighters.

### Rear Gunner

The rear gunner position, like the mid upper gunner, was physically separated from the other crew members. They were confined to their turret for the whole flight. Their main duty was to advise the pilot of enemy aircraft movements to allow him to take evasive action and to defend the aircraft against enemy fighters.



Image taken inside Avro Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane'. NX611 at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre July 2023

Friday 25th February 1944

Mike was 22 today! After several weeks of initial training on pathfinder methods and aircraft familiarisation, today was the first operational flight as a pathfinder, taking off at 18:45 in JB155 MG-L with the following crew aboard destined for Augsburg.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

One of twenty-one Lancaster's from No. 7 Squadron and 6 Mosquitos from No. 627 Squadron. The attack on this important target was a heavy one which followed a USAAF offensive effort earlier in the day.

Saturday 26th February 1944

JB155 returned to base at 02:10

The weather over the target was reported as being clear, with snow on the ground and in consequence the bomb aimers were able to obtain a good view of the target and several large fires were reported by most crews, some reporting visibility up to 150 miles. This was the first major raid on the town with a total of 594 aircraft taking part.

OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK							REFUGEE	FORM 241
DETAIL OF WORK CARRIED OUT							SECRET	PAGE No. 359
By <u>No. 7 Squadron.</u>								
FOR THE MONTH OF <u>FEBRUARY</u> <u>1944.</u>								
DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFUGEE	
				Up	Down			
25/26.2.44.	LANCASTER III JB.155	W/O P.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE SGT. M.C. LAYTON-SMITH SGT. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.G. GAY P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	18.45	02.10	AUGSBURG. 9 x 1000 H.C. Very good concentration of Red and Green T.I.'s seen and own bombs released on centre.  Bomb bursts seen in target area. Glow of fires seen from distance of 65 miles on homeward journey.		

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during February 1944

Place	Date	Time		
	25/26.2.44.		Twenty-one aircraft, in two separate waves, made AUGSBURG their target. Weather over the target was clear and with snow on the ground a good view of the target was obtained. Several large fires were reported giving off a pall of smoke. In the first wave, one aircraft (H/L. Patrick) was attacked by a fighter on the outward journey. A fierce fire broke out in the fuselage and the Captain gave the order to abandon aircraft which was carried out by the Rear and Mid-Upper Gunners. The front exit, however, could not be opened and after several minutes the fire had slightly subsided and the Captain cancelled the order to abandon. The aircraft was subsequently brought safely back to Base. Numerous fighter flares were reported in the target area with slight to moderate flak and about 50 - 60 searchlights.	356 - 359.

Extract taken form the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron summarising activity during February 1944

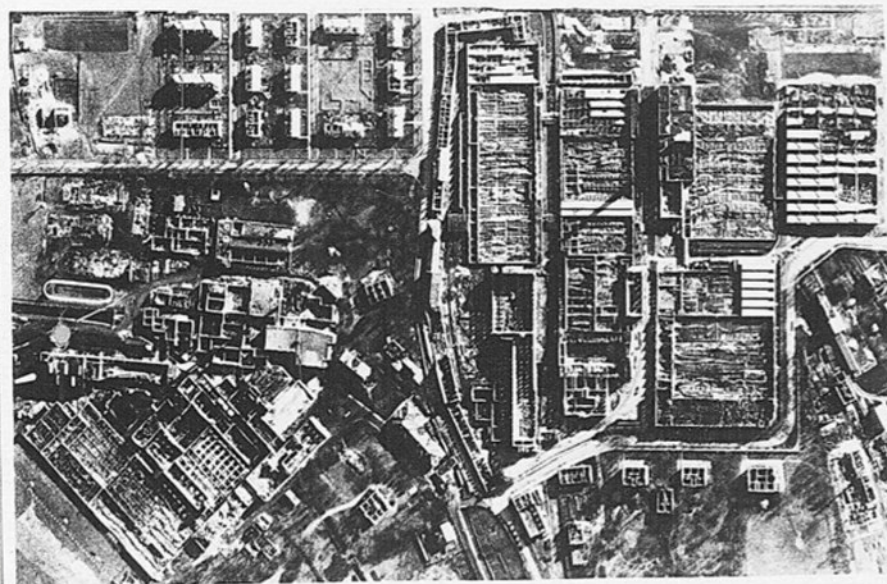




AMSTERDAM. Photograph taken after the attack on 25th/26th. February, 1944, shows the wholesale destruction by fire in the commercial and administrative centre of the town.

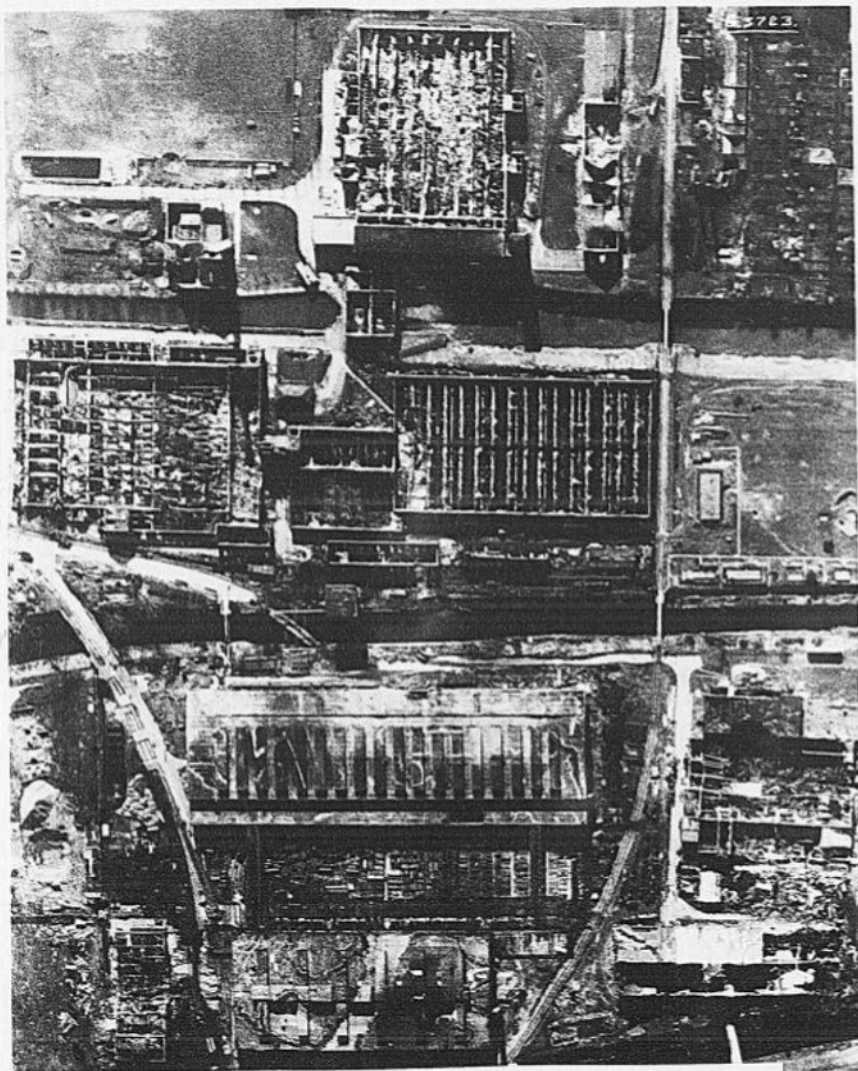
3.11

170



138  
AMSTERDAM. Photograph taken after the attack on 25th/26th. February, 1944, shows practically entire devastation by fire of this industrial area. On the left is the gutted factory of MERTENS C.M.B.N. (Bleaching & Dyeing). On the right the large cotton mill of AMSTERDAM N.V. almost completely gutted.

172



AUGSBURG. Photograph taken after the attack on  
25th/26th. February, 1944, shows tremendous devastation  
by fire. In the top half, factory buildings taken over  
by M.A.N. looks entirely devastated. In the lower half,  
part of the M.A.N. showing considerable fire and blast  
damage.

*Ex. 12*

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## Wednesday 1st March 1944

Twenty-one aircraft from No. 7 Squadron were detailed to attack Stuttgart, the important engineering centre in the black forest. ND592 MG-J took off at 23:48 with the following crew aboard.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant S N ETRIDGE (Rear Gunner)

## Wednesday 2nd March 1944

All aircraft completed the mission and returned to base successfully. Heavy cloud cover was encountered over the target and T.I's quickly disappeared into the clouds. Several large explosions were reported, and the glow of large fires seen on the homeward journey.

They finally returned to base at 07:00.

NZ.422711.						
*	ND.592	"J"	W/O P.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE SGT. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH SGT. P.G. ALLFORD SGT. J.G. GAY F/S. B.P. BLATCHFORD F/S. S.N. ETRIDGE (REAR) NZ.422697	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	23.48	07.00
			STUTTGART. 5 x 2000 H.C. Fairly good concentration of Green T.I. and Green/Red flares seen on approach. Bombs released on three Green T.I's but at time of release, two of these had disappeared into cloud. Good fires developing as aircraft left target area.			

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during March 1944

		OPERATIONS.	Forms 541
1/2.3.44		Twenty-one aircraft were detailed to attack STUTTGART, the important Engineering centre in the Black Forest. All aircraft completed the mission and returned to base successfully. 9/10th cloud was encountered over the target and T.I's quickly disappeared into cloud tops. Markers were reported as somewhat spasmodic and scattered in the early stages though some improvements was achieved later. Bombing, however, continued to be widespread. Two or three large explosions were reported and the glow of fires was visible when 150 miles on homeward journey.	360 - 362.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron summarising activity during March 1944



Saturday 18th March 1944

Today they were detailed to attack Frankfurt, the centre of the German explosive industry. ND443 MG-L took off at 19:33 with the following crew aboard.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

32 aircraft took off from Oakington, part of one the largest main forces totalling 846 aircraft. Over 600 of these were Lancaster's. This was one of many raids on Frankfurt, this time concentrating on the explosives industry. There was no cloud in the target area but heavy haze prevented definite observations of results. Several enemy encounters were reported by no losses recorded.

Sunday 19th March 1944

ND443 returned to base shortly after midnight.

Michael was promoted to Temporary Flight Sergeant today.

"	ND,443	"L"	W/O. P.G. MCCARTHY	CAPTAIN	19.33.	00.17	FRANKFURT, 6 x 2000 H.C. Bombed blindly on H2S. Green
			SGT. A. HARGRAVE	NAVIGATOR			
			SGT. H.S. LAYTON-SMITH	AIR BOMBER			T.I's seen to cascade after bombing but no results observed.
			SGT. F.C. ALLFORD	WIRELESS OPV.			
			SGT. J.C. GAY	ENGINEER			
			F/S. B.P. BLATCHFORD	MID-UPPER			
			SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	REAR GUNNER			

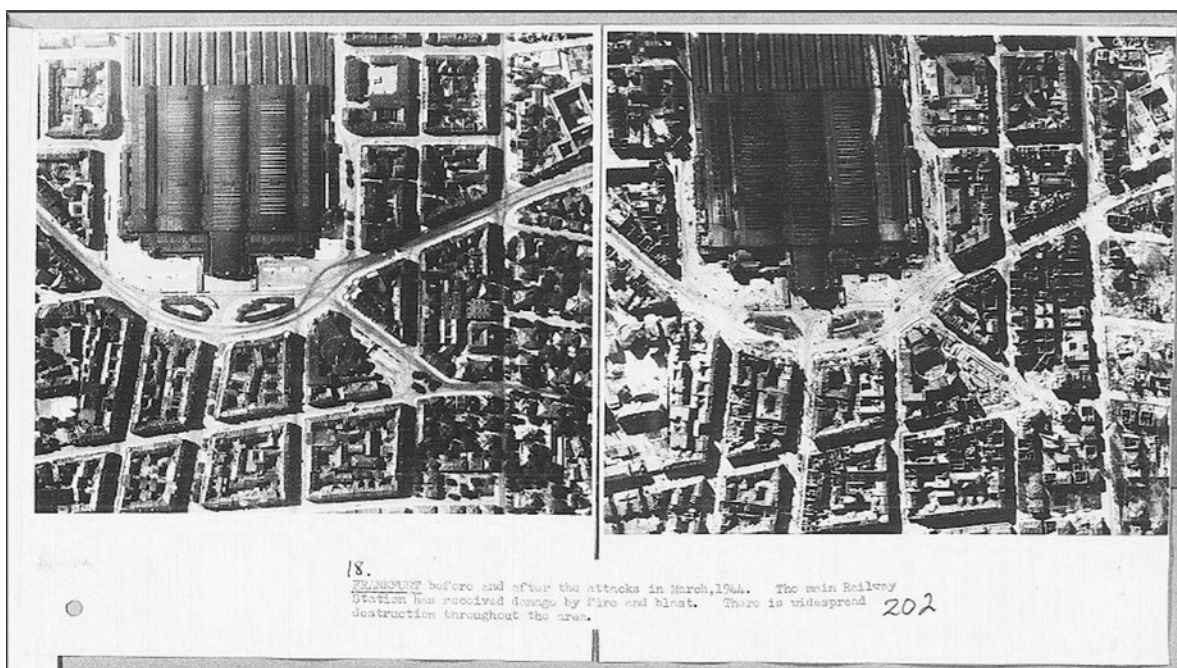
Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during March 1944

18/19.3.44.	A force of 23 Lancasters took off to attack FRANKFURT, the centre of the German explosive industry. All aircraft attacked successfully and returned safely. Thick haze in the target area prevented assessment of results but many bomb flashes were seen and the glow of fires was visible for a considerable distance. Markers appeared to be in fair concentration but H.E's and Incendiaries scattered over wide area 5 - 7 miles from town centre. Flak was described as slight to moderate and searchlights were ineffective owing to haze. Aircraft "O" (F/L. Evans) had an encounter with an enemy fighter near the target. Hits on the enemy aircraft were observed and it is claimed as probably destroyed.	365 - 368
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Extract taken form the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron summarising activity during March 1944



Vertical photographic-reconnaissance aerial, taken from 29,000 feet, of the devastated centre of Frankfurt-am-Main following major raids by Bomber Command on the nights of 18/19 and 22/23 March 1944. The area shown is the Altstadt on the north bank of the River Main, from the cathedral and the Altmarkt (lower left) westwards to Gallusanlage (upper right), and northwards to the Rossmarkt, Goetheplatz and An der Hauptwache (bottom centre). Extensive destruction was caused to the city by the attacks, each of which involved the use of over 800 aircraft. Housing, industrial firms, businesses and public buildings were all hit, as were many historic buildings, cultural centres, churches and hospitals. 1,369 civilians were killed and over 175,000 were made homeless.





## Wednesday 22nd March 1944

Further attacks on Frankfurt were ordered, JB155 MG-F took off at 18:45 with the following crew aboard.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

This time 816 aircraft would attack, 31 from Oakington. The marking and bombing was reported as being very accurate, making a more successful raid than the last. It should considerable reduce the output of explosives, precision engineering and aircraft propellers, as well as creating havoc in the distribution centres for which the city was important. Two sorties of No. 7 Squadron failed to return.

Visibility was good during this attack and it appeared certain from crews reports that a well concentrated attack had been achieved. Estimated at 3,249 tons, the bomb tonnage dropped was the largest yet delivered against a single target. Day photographs taken on the following day only covered part of the city, the remainder being obscured by cloud and smoke from many large fires still burning, but it was evident that very heavy damage had been caused.

## Thursday 23rd March 1944

The crew returned safely shortly after midnight. Photographs taken in the days following showed extremely heavy damage throughout and almost devastation of the old moated city which lies in the centre of the town just north of the river. There are many large areas devastated by fire also North of the river. The suburb of Offenbach almost entirely destroyed.

						seen.
"	JB.155	"F"	W/O. P.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE SGT. H.W. LAYTON-SMITH SGT. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY F/S. D.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	18.45 00.19	FRANKFURT. 6 x 2000 H.C. Attack opened with 2 Green T.I's quickly backed up by other. Green and Red T.I's on which two bombs released. Attack spread over whole town later. Incendiaries, H.E.'s and T.I's all together. Big fire observed in centre of old town.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during March 1944

## Friday 24th March 1944

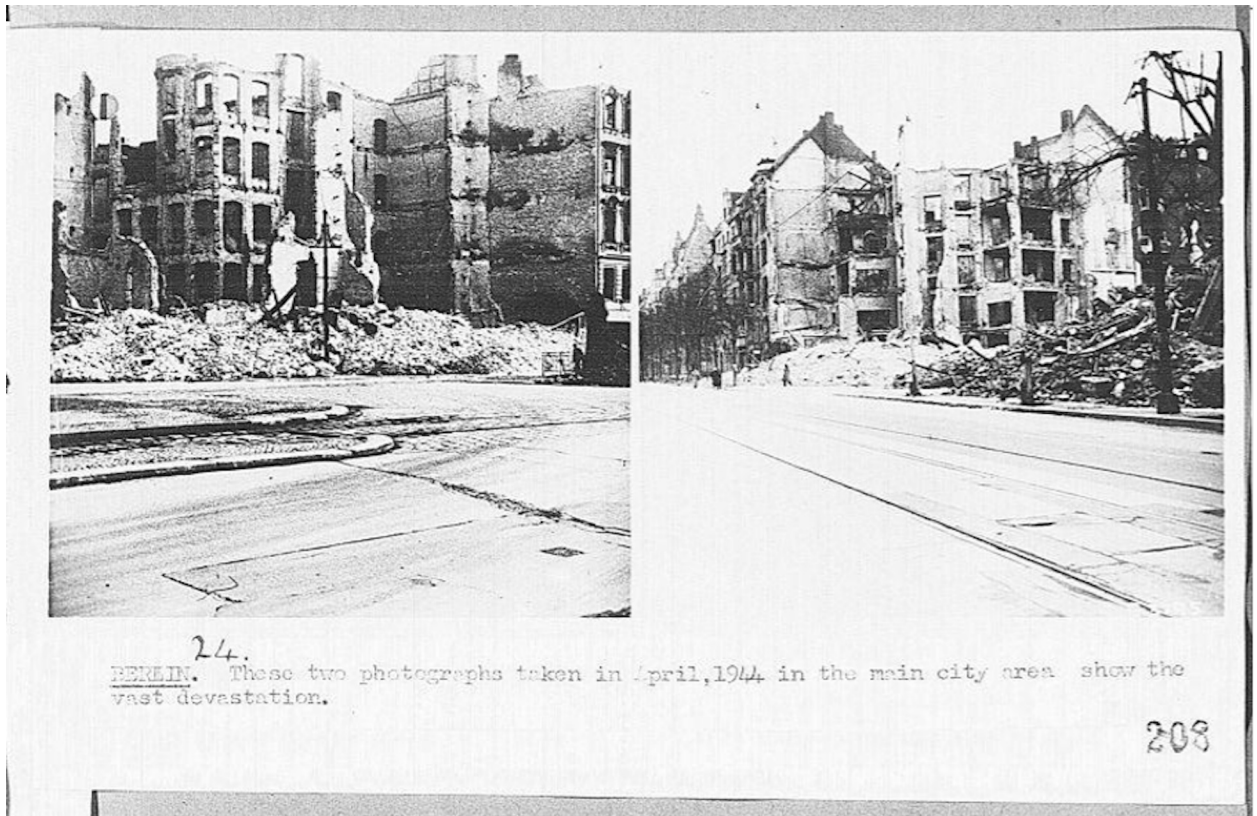
The battle of Berlin was resumed, a force of twenty-one aircraft being detailed from No. 7 Squadron. JA693 MG-A left Oakington at 18:50 with the following crew aboard.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Cloud prevailed over the target and TI's rapidly disappeared. Reports were conflicted, some reporting large widespread fires and others reporting concentrated fires. There was intense flak badly damaging three aircraft and moderate fighter activity, but searchlights were ineffective due to the cloud.

## Saturday 25th March 1944

JA693 landed back at Oakington at 01:33. 2 aircraft didn't return.



## Tuesday 11th April 1944

341 Lancaster's and 11 Mosquitos were dispatched to Aachen. ND590 MG-G took off at 20:52 with the following crew aboard.

- Warrant Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Lieutenant A J L Craig (2nd Pilot)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Frederick Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

This Raid was accurate and caused widespread damage and fires in the centre of Aachen and in the Southern part of the Town, particularly in the suburb of Burtscheid. This was Aachen's most serious Raid of the War. Control of the Air-Raid Services was quickly lost when one of the 1st Salvo's or Bombs cut Communications between the Main Operations Centre & Outlying Posts.

## Wednesday 12th April 1944

Mike returned with his crew at 00:19. 9 Lancaster's were lost during this raid.



Thursday 20th April 1944

Cologne was tonight's target, 357 Lancaster's and 22 Mosquitos. ND845 MG-C took off at 00:17 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

This concentrated attack fell into areas of Cologne which were North & West of the City Centre and partly Industrial in nature. 192 Industrial Premises suffered various degrees of damage, together with 725 buildings described as 'dwelling-houses with Commercial Premises attached'. 7 Railway Stations or Yards were also severely damaged. 4 Lancasters lost.

ND845 returned at 04:03.

ND.845	"C"	P/O. P.J. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE SGT. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/S. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR-BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	00.17	04.03	COLOGNE. 1 x T.I. Green. 1 x 4000 H.C. 6 x 1000 M.C. Attack opened with Green/Yellow flares followed by Red/ Yellow flares, a fair concentration was achieved. Bombs were released on H2S. 10/10ths cloud, T.I.'s Green retained.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during April 1944

Place	Date	Time	Summary of Activity	Appendix
OAKINGTON.	20/21.4.44.		COLOGNE was the target for a force of 14 aircraft all of which bombed the target and returned safely. 10/10th cloud prevented many observations and most of the aircraft bombed by H2S as the markers quickly disappeared into cloud. Several crews reported an impressive explosion when 60 miles on the homeward journey. Some enemy aircraft operated over the target. Flak was moderate but searchlights were ineffective owing to cloud.	382 - 384.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during April 1944

Saturday 22nd April 1944

ND845 MG-C was part of a small force of seven aircraft from No. 7 Squadron sent out to attack the Laon Marshalling Yards. The crew (below) took off at 21:23.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Visibility was clear and most were able to bomb visually. Ground defences were negligible but several enemy fighters were seen. The whole attack was well concentrated and all over crews reported a large explosion in the target area. One aircraft was lost on this mission and one twin engine enemy fighter was destroyed by aircraft "Q".

Sunday 23rd April 1944

ND845 landed back at Oakington at 01:19.

"	ND.845	"C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY	CAPTAIN	21.23	01.19	LAON MARSHALLING YARDS. 12 x 1000 M.C. Own bombs released on aiming point and seen to burst in Marshalling Yards. One large red explosion seen from aiming point just before bombing, also a blue explosion caused by own bombs.
			SGT. A. HARGRAVE	NAVIGATOR			
			F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH	AIR-BOMBER			
			F/S. F.C. ALLFORD	WIRELESS OP.			
			SGT. J.C. GAY	ENGINEER			
			F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD	MID-UPPER			
			SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	REAR GUNNER			

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during April 1944

22/23.4.44.	A small force of seven aircraft set out to attack LAON Marshalling Yards where visibility was clear and most were able to bomb visually. Ground defences were negligible but several enemy fighters were seen. The whole attack was well concentrated and all crews reported a large explosion in the target area. One aircraft was lost on this mission and one twin engine enemy fighter was destroyed by aircraft "Q" (Captain: F/L. Smith, Rear Gunner: W/O. Miles). Two hours later a larger force of ten aircraft took off to attack DISSELDORF. Again visibility was clear. There was intense fighter activity over the target, slight to moderate heavy flak and very many searchlights operating in cones. Fires were seen burning punctuated by several large explosions. One aircraft was also missing from this operation.	384 - 386.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during April 1944



## Thursday 27th April 1944

Fourteen aircraft from No. 7 Squadron were detailed, eight to attack Friedrichshafen and the other six took off 3 hours later with Aulmoye Marshalling Yards as their objective.

ND845 MG-C was one of these six and took off at 01:29 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

The attack on Aulmoye seems to have not been too successful, although the weather was clear apart from slight haze and defences were negligible. All six aircraft bombed and returned safely from this attack.

"	ND.845	"C"	P/O. R.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/S. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	01.29	01.27	AULMOYE MARSHALLING YARDS. 20 Flares, 9 x 1000 M.C. Own load released on Red Spot Fire with unseen results. Some fires were seen afterwards but unable to pin point them.	
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during April 1944

27/28.4.44.	Fourteen aircraft were detailed, eight to attack FRIEDRICHSHAFEN and the other six took off three hours later with AULMOYE Marshalling Yards as their objective. In the raid on FRIEDRICHSHAFEN the weather was clear and moderate heavy and light flak was encountered with numerous searchlights. Marking and bombing was generally good and much thick smoke was rising. One aircraft was lost on this mission. The attack on AULMOYE Marshalling Yards appears to have been not too successful, although the weather was clear apart from slight haze and defences were negligible. All six aircraft bombed and returned safely from this attack.	390
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during April 1944

## Monday 1st May 1944

Chambly, France was tonight's target. Chambly, to the North of Paris was the Main Railway Stores & Repair Depot for the Northern French System which the Allied Bombers were trying to put out of action. ND906 MG-K was one of fourteen aircraft from No. 7 Squadron and part of a force of 120 Aircraft. They took off at 22:42 from Oakington with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

## Tuesday 2nd May 1944

The Local Report (provided by the Office of the present Chief Engineer at Chambly) shows that the Raid was extremely successful. Approximately 500 high-explosive Bombs fell inside the Railway Depot Area and serious damage was caused to all Departments. The Depot was completely out of action for 10-days. 3 Lancasters & 2 Stirlings were lost.



## Wednesday 10th May 1944

Fourteen aircraft from No. 7 Squadron were sent to attack Courtrai Marshalling. ND845 MG-C took off from Oakington at 21:48 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Accuracy of bombs was good and the main weight of the attack fell on the Marshalling Yards. One large fire was seen burning but smoke obscured the target in the latter stages and a final estimation of the value of the raid was difficult. Defences were negligible and all our [No. 7 Squadron] aircraft completed their mission successfully.

## Friday 26th May 1944

*"Twins born today. Both boys!." (source: diary of Michael Stuart)*



*Adrian Barry and Stuart John*

Saturday 27th May 1944

Tonight's target was Rennes. ND897 MG-C was one of sixteen aircraft from No. 7 Squadron and took off at 23:14 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Sunday 28th May 1944

A total of 78 Lancasters and 5 Mosquitos of No. 8 Group attacked the Airfield at Rennes in good visibility. The Marking was good and the Bombing was very accurate. Early arrivals over the target were able to see the hangers but dust and smoke obscured ground visibility as the attack developed. Much damage to the Airfield Installations was caused and there was a large Explosion, probably in the Bomb Dump.

ND897 returned safely at 03:33.

AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE
			Up	Down		
ND.897 "C"	P/O.R.G. McCarthy Sgt. A. Hargrave F/S.M.S. Layton-Smith F/S. F.C. Allford Sgt. J.C. Gay F/S. B.F. Blatchford Sgt. E.A. Batterbee	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	23.14	03.33	RENNES. 18 x 500 G.P. Attack opened at 01.31 hrs. with Green T.I's going down. Own bombs released with Green T.I's in sight. Red glow seen from target area from distance of 60 miles on return. Visibility clear.	

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during May 1944

27.5.44	Sixteen aircraft successfully attacked RENNES Airfield. Early arrivals over the target were able to see the hangers but smoke and dust obscured ground detail as the attack developed. Defences were very slight and although reports on the bombing varied, one large explosion was seen and fires were visible for 60 miles on return.	407 - 409
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during May 1944



Later that day after a few hours rest it was time to prepare for an attack on Angers Marshalling Yards. This time in ND460 MG-W the crew (below) took off at 18:58.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Visibility was excellent and early arrivals saw the markers fall on railway tracks. Bombing was well concentrated. One large explosion was reported and good fires were developing as the aircraft left.

## Monday 29th May 1944

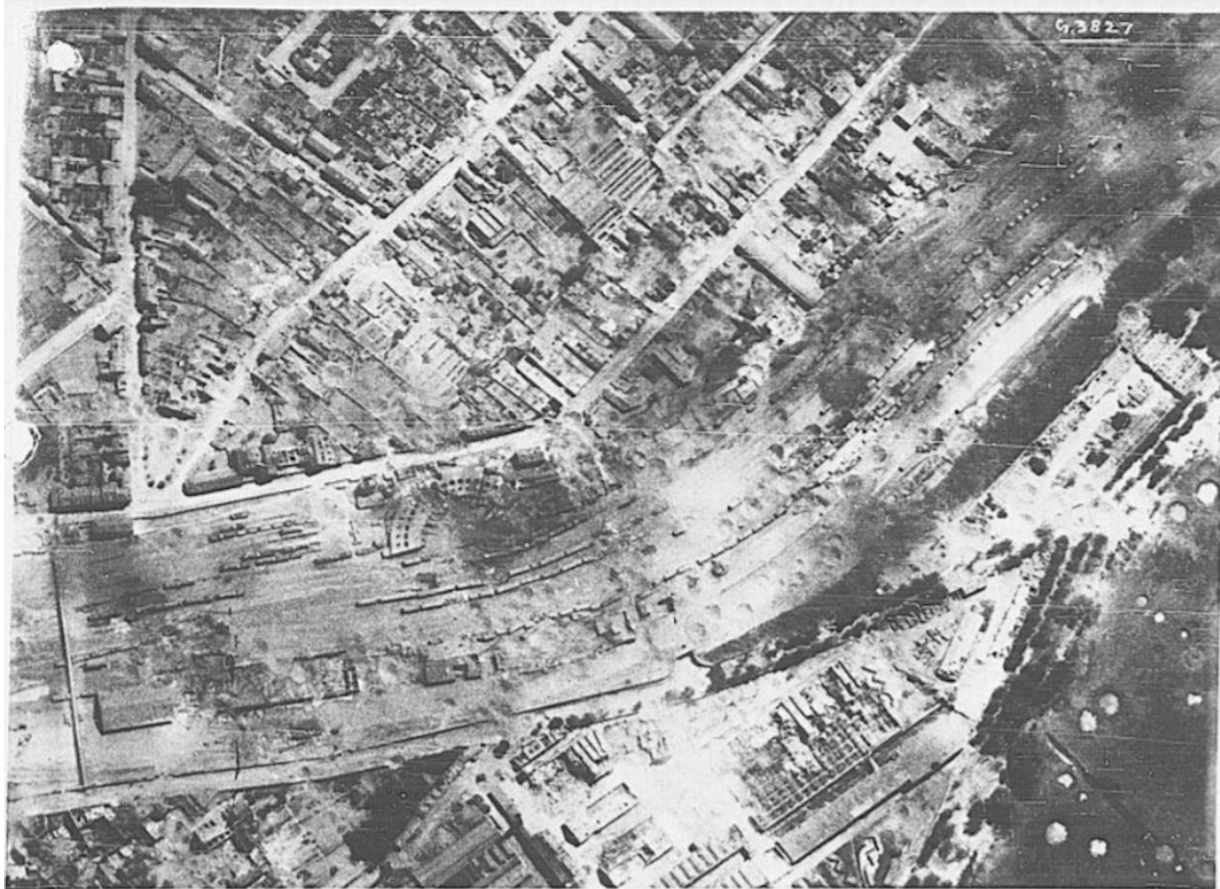
The crew arrived back at Oakington at 01:41

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE
				Up	Down		
28/29.5.44.	ND.460	"W"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY Sgt. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/S. F.C. ALLFORD Sgt. J.C. GAY P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD Sgt. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	18.58 01.41	ANGERS MARSHALLING YARDS. 5 x 500 G.P.I., 9 x 500 G.P. 4 x 500 G.P.I., D. Visibility clear. On approach Red p.I. seen to cascade, followed by white flares. At 23.57 hrs. a white flare cascaded and on instructions this was bombed. target obscured by smoke and dust. All Markers well con- sidered and raid appeared successful.	

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during May 1944

28.5.44	Fourteen aircraft took-off to bomb ANGERS Marshalling Yards, one, however, returned early owing to W/T failure. Visibility was excellent and early arrivals saw the markers fall on railway tracks. Bombing was very well concentrated. One large explosion was reported and good fires were developing as the aircraft left. Defences were negligible.	409 - 411
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during May 1944



8. ANGERS MARSHALLING YARD. Photographed after the attack on the night of 28th/29th. May, 1944 shows very severe damage to Railway facilities, tracks and rolling stock and industrial buildings adjoining. The engine round-house is severely damaged and the transhipment sheds are almost entirely destroyed.

154

Wednesday 31st May 1944

Today, eleven aircraft from No. 7 Squadron set out to attack the radar jammer at Mount Couple, followed 90 minutes later by a small force of four aircraft with Trappes Marshalling Yards as their target.

ND897 MG-C was one of the eleven aircraft heading for Mount Couple and took off at 22:28 from Oakington with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Thursday 1st June 1944

All completed their missions successfully. The only opposition at Mount Couple was slight flak. A very good concentration of bomb flashes was observed on the markers. ND897 arrived back at 00:42.

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	
				Up	Down		
31.5.44.	ND.897	"C"	F/O. R.S. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH F/S. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. G. GAY F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	22.28       	00.42       	MOUNT COUPLE. 1 x 5000 H.O. 6 x 500 G.P.M.I. 6 x 500 G.P. E.I. 4 x 500 G.P. L.D. Red T.I.'s cascaded at 23.52 hrs. followed by flares and Green T.I. Master Bomber said Red T.I. was 100 yards West of aiming point and so own bombs released 100 yards West of Red T.I. Bombing appeared well concentrated. Observed much flak and smoke.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during May 1944

Eleven aircraft set out to attack the Radar Jammer at MOUNT COUPLE, followed 1½ hours later by a small force of four aircraft with TRAPPES Marshalling Yards as their target. All completed their missions successfully. The only opposition at Mount Couple was slight flak. A very good concentration of bomb flashes was observed on the markers. Visibility over Trappes Marshalling Yards was clear and the target identified visually. Bombing was well concentrated on the aiming point and one large explosion seen in the target area.	41
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during May 1944





Top Left: Michael Stuart (Air Bomber), Top Right: Jackie (Engineer), Top Middle: Basil (Mid Upper Gunner), 3rd Row Left: Alan (Navigator), 3rd Row Middle: 'Mac' (Pilot), 3rd Row Right: Jimmy (Tail Gunner), Bottom Centre: Fred (Wireless Operator). Date and Location unknown. The image is taken at the crew door of a Lancaster believed to be Lancaster JB661 which was based at Oakington and used for both operational flights and also extensively by No. 7 Squadron during 1944 for training flights.



Sunday 4th June 1944

A force of 127 aircraft continued the deception raids on Coastal batteries at Calais and Wimereux, ND897 MG-C was one of nine aircraft from No. 7 Squadron detailed for Calais and took off at 00:17 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Visibility was good although did deteriorate as a result of smoke from fires. Two explosions were reported. Only light flak was encountered. The bombing overall was considered accurate with no aircraft lost. ND897 returned at 02:18.

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE
				Up	Down		
V/A. 44.	ND. 897	"C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH F/S. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	00.17	02.18	CALAIS HEAVY COASTAL BATTERY. First markers of 2 lots of Green T.I's seen at 01.27 hrs. One Red T.I. fell practically on Target at 01.28 hrs. and own bombs released on this. Bombing well concentrated and much smoke and dust observed. Clear, visibility good. 1 x 1000 H.C. 16 x 500 G.P.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

<u>OPERATIONS.</u>	
Nine aircraft successfully attacked the Heavy Coastal Battery at CALAIS. Good weather prevailed and visibility over the target was clear though deteriorating with smoke as the raid progressed. Red and Green T.I's were well placed round the aiming point and crews agreed that bombing was well concentrated, chiefly round Red T.I's. Two explosions in the target area were reported with an orange fire which could be seen for some time after aircraft left. A pall of black smoke covered the target area. The only defence encountered was very slight flak	41

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944

Monday 5th June 1944

1,012 Aircraft (551 Lancasters, 412 Halifaxes, 49 Mosquitos) were ordered to Bomb Coastal Batteries at Fontenay, Houlgate, La Pernelle, Longues, Maisy, Merville-Franceville, Mont Fleury, Pointe du Hoc, Ouisterham & St Martin de Varreville.

This airborne assault preceded an amphibious assault involving more than 5,000 vessels and nearly 160,000 troops, it would be known as the D-Day Landings and was to be the largest seaborne invasion in history.

ND897 MG-C took off, with four other aircraft from No. 7 Squadron, at 22:57 (crew listed below) and was assigned to Merville-Franceville which was a coastal fortification in Normandy, France and was one of the first places to be attacked.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE
				Up	Down		
16.6.44	ND.897	*C P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH F/S. P.O. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER	22.57	03.03	MERVILLE-FRANCEVILLE COASTAL BATTERY. 4 T.I. Green.  1000 lb. 10 x 1000 G.P.T.D. 10/10ths cloud. 1 Red and 1 Green T.I. fell at 00.25 hrs. and 00.25.30. disappearing into cloud. Smoke released, flashes of bombs well concen- trated round flares. No other results seen.	

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

		followed approximately 3½ hours later by a larger force of eleven aircraft with a similar target at LONGUES. There was 10/10ths cloud over MERVILLE-FRANCEVILLE and all except one aircraft bombed on Gee/H2S method. Both visual backers-up and two of the emergency markers retained their Green T.I's owing to weather conditions. Many bomb bursts were observed on leaving target. No enemy defences were met. Thick cloud up to a height of 6/7000 feet also prevailed over LONGUES and Red and Green T.I's quickly disappeared. Most crews bombed by Gee/H2S although two saw T.I's burning on ground through a gap in the cloud and bombed on these. Bomb flashes were concentrated near the glow of markers. Defences were negligible. On the return flight several of the crews met evidence which forced their first intimation that 6th June, 1944, marked the opening of the land attack on Western Europe.	417 - 419
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during 1944

**Tuesday 6th June 1944**

Only two of the Targets; La Pernelle & Ouisterham, were free of Cloud; all other Bombing was entirely based on Oboe Marking. At least 5,000 Tonnes of Bombs were dropped, the greatest Tonnage in one Night so far in the War.

Merville-Franceville was part of the German Defences known as the Atlantic Wall built to defend Western European Coasts from Invasion by the Allies. The 640M x 460M Battery Site was located just Inland of the Coast with the forward Observation Bunker on the Beach on the East side of the Orne Estuary and they were Linked by an underground armoured Telephone Cable. Together they controlled Maritime Access to Caen some 15km up the River Orne and the adjacent Canal de Caen a la Mer. The Allied Commanders had designated the Battery as a priority target on D-Day because it directly threatened the Sword Beaches (one of five main landing areas) beyond the Orne Estuary to the West. The Batteries Fire-power consisted of WW1-vintage Czech M.14/19 100mm Guns inside massive concrete Casemates covered with Soil & Grass to blend in. There was also a Command Bunker, a Personnel Bunker, Machine Gun Emplacements, various Outbuildings & Shelters surrounded by rows of barbed wire and an Anti-Tank Ditch on the Coast facing side.

There was heavy cloud cover over Merville-Franceville forcing all but one to bomb blind using GEE/H2S. Many bomb bursts were observed on leaving the target. No entry defences were met.

ND897 returned at 03:03.



*Merville Gun Battery Bombardment*

Wednesday 7th June 1944

In support of the invading armies, thirteen aircraft from No. 7 Squadron attacked Foret De Cerisy, ND897 MG-C taking off from Oakington at 23:33 with the following crew.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Thursday 8th June 1944

The Master Bomber instructed crews to bomb on Green. Some crews reported the target area as being almost dead with no observed results other than bomb flashes. Others reported large explosions and mushroom of smoke. No defences were offered.

ND897 returned to Oakington at 03:19.

FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 1944.							
DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE
				Up	Down		
7/6.44.	ND.897 "C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY SGT. A. HARGRAVE P/S.M. LAYTON-SMITH P/S.P.G. ALLFORD P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD SGT. J.C. GAY SGT. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. MID-UPPER ENGINEER REAR GUNNER	23.33	03.19	FORET DE CERISY. 13 x 500 G.P.M.I. Two Red T.I.'s seen at 01.40 hrs. followed by other Red T.I.'s. Master Bomber instructed us to bomb Green T.I. which was only seen on run up to be in middle of Red T.I.'s. Bombing well concentrated round markers. Large amount of black smoke	118

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

Date	Time	Summary of Events	Appendices
7.6.44.		In support of the invading armies, thirteen aircraft attacked the FORET DE CERISY. The Master Bomber directed crews to bomb on Green T.I.'s. Some crews reported the target area as being almost dead with no observed results except bomb flashes. Others, however, reported large explosions and a large mushroom of smoke. No defences were offered. A small force of three aircraft set out an hour later to bomb MASSY-PALAISEAU R/C. The Master Bomber instructed the Main Force to descend below cloud which was 10/10ths between 6000 feet and 8000feet. Accurate concentrated bombing followed the directions of the Master Bomber and the attack was considered successful. One big explosion was seen and thick black smoke	419 - 421

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944



## Friday 9th June 1944

ND845 MG-C took off from Oakington at 00:02 as one of sixteen aircraft from No. 7 Squadron to attack Rennes Airfield, the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

The Master Bomber instructed all aircraft to descend below cloud on approaching target where visibility was clear below 7,000 ft. The Master Bomber dropped yellow T.I. which appeared to be right on the aiming point and instructed other crews to bomb this. Some fires were starting as aircraft left. The enemy put up intense light flak and two searchlights and two H/F guns were active. All aircraft returned.

released with unobserved results.					
* ND.845	"C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY Sgt. A. HARGRAVE F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH F/S. F.C. ALLFORD Sgt. J.C. GAY F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD Sgt. E.A. BATTERBEE	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR-GUNNER	00.02	00.40
RENNES AIRFIELD. 18 x 500 G.P. Green T.I. observed at 02.42 hrs. followed by one Red T.I. at 02.43 hrs. No instructions from Master Bomber were heard and so bombs were released visually. Smoking well concentrated with much smoke arising to 7000 feet.					

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity on 9th June 1944

Sixteen aircraft successfully attacked RENNES Airfield and returned safely. The Master Bomber A24 - instructed all aircraft to descend below cloud on approaching target where visibility was clear below 7000 feet. The Master Bomber dropped Yellow T.I. which appeared to be right on the aiming point and instructed other crews to bomb this. Some fires were starting as aircraft left. The enemy put up intense light flak and two searchlights and two H/F Gns were active. One aircraft landed at Woodbridge on return owing to lack of brake pressure.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity on 9th June 1944

Monday 12th June 1944

ND897 MG-C was one of three aircraft from No. 7 Squadron that took off at 22:43 to attack the German city of Gelsenkirchen. The following crew, now joined by F/O CARR making them an eight man crew, This was likely due to the new radar equipment in the aircraft they were flying.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer Kenneth Stanway CARR (Visual A/B)

Tuesday 13th June 1944

Weather was good at the target and the area identified. Good fires were reported and one large explosion with much black smoke to 15,000 ft was reported. Many searchlights and moderate/intense flak was encountered but no enemy aircraft was seen. ND897 returned to base to land at 02:50.

For the Month of JUNE 1944									
DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCE		
				Up	Down				
12/13.6.44.	ND.897	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/S. A. HARGRAVE P/O. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/S. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	22.43	02.50	GELSENKIRCHEN. 1 x 4000 H.C. 12 x 500 G.P. 2 T.I. Green L.N. 2 T.I. Green. Visibility clear but hazy. First 2nd T.I. seen at 00.55 hrs. several miles to S.E. One minute later another fell on correct spot and was followed by more 2nd and these were backed up by G.P. One more explosion and	127		

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

12.6.44.	Three aircraft set out first, to bomb GELSENKIRCHEN, followed an hour later by a force of eight aircraft with AMIENS R/C. as their target. Weather was good over GELSENKIRCHEN and the built-up area was identified. Good fires were reported and one large explosion with much black smoke to 15,000 feet. Many searchlights and moderate/intense flak was encountered but no enemy aircraft were seen. Over AMIENS visibility was good and the target was clearly identified by the light of illuminator flares. The Master Bomber and his Deputy marked the target and instructed all aircraft to bomb two white spot fires which were well positioned on the yards. Much smoke developed and crews were instructed to bomb centre of fires which were developing round aiming point. Defences were practically nil although some enemy fighters were seen. All aircraft completed their missions and returned safely.	427 - 429
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944



(9. GULSTADKIRCHEN (HUGSTEDT) SYNTHETIC OIL PLANT. These photographs show left, the plant in 1943 and right, on the 20th June, 1944. The latter was taken after the night attack on 12th/13th June, 1944. In spite of the heavy netting camouflage, very great damage can be seen throughout the entire plant - many vital units are destroyed or severely damaged. Among them are the following:- 1. Cooling Towers, 2. Engine House, 3. Gas Holders, 4. Oxygen Holder, 5. Storage Tanks, 6. Main Compressor House, 7. Gas Generator, 8. Water Gas Generator, 9. The Coal Mine, 10. Distillation Plant and Oil Treatment.

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(9. GULSTADKIRCHEN (HUGSTEDT) SYNTHETIC OIL PLANT. These photographs show left, the plant in 1943 and right, on the 20th June, 1944. The latter was taken after the night attack on 12th/13th June, 1944. In spite of the heavy netting camouflage, very great damage can be seen throughout the entire plant - many vital units are destroyed or severely damaged. Among them are the following:- 1. Cooling Towers, 2. Engine House, 3. Gas Holders, 4. Oxygen Holder, 5. Storage Tanks, 6. Main Compressor House, 7. Gas Generator, 8. Water Gas Generator, 9. The Coal Mine, 10. Distillation Plant and Oil Treatment.

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Wednesday 14th June 1944

Tonight's target was the major port of Le Havre on the Atlantic coast in North-west France. One of eleven aircraft from No. 7 Squadron, ND387 MG-0 took off from Oakington at 23:41 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Sergeant K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Thursday 15th June 1944

Visibility was good and smoke from earlier attacks could be seen soon after leaving the English coast. Markers were well positions and bombing considered generally accurate. There were no enemy fighters encountered and flak was slight. Crews reported explosions as they left the target. ND387 landed at 02:22.

ND.387	'O'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY	CAPTAIN	23.41	02.22	LE HAVRE PORT AREA. 10 T.I. white, 8 x 500 G.P. Attack
		P/S. A. HARGRAVE	NAVIGATOR			opened at 01.09 hrs. with Green T.I. followed by Red T.I.
		P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH	AIR BOMBER			
		P/S. F.C. ALLFORD	WIRELESS OP.			Instructions received to bomb these T.I. as they were
		Sgt. J.C. GAY	ENGINEER			accurately placed. Bombs released with T.I's in sights.
		P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD	MID-UPPER			Some bombing observed in Town to N.E. Several explosions
		P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE	REAR GUNNER			seen after leaving target area at 01.32 hrs. Clear,
		P/S. K.S. CARR	VISUAL A/B.			

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

44.	The Port Area of LE HAVRE was the target for a force of eleven aircraft. Weather was clear and fires from an earlier attack were visible soon after leaving the English Coast on the outward trip. Markers were well positioned and bombing generally accurate. R/T reception was not uniform, Deputy Master Bomber did not hear Master Bomber and gave different instructions. A cone of five searchlights operated from N. of the target with slight flak but no fighter opposition. Explosions were reported and good fires were burning as aircraft left target.	429 -
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944



After debriefing and a short rest it was time to get ready again, tonight sixteen aircraft set out from No. 7 Squadron, nine to attack the Marshalling Yards at Valenciennes and the rest for a similar target at Lens. ND387 MG-0 took off from Oakington at 23:02 assigned to the Valenciennes raid, the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## Friday 16th June 1944

ND387 dropped their bombs at 00:31 and were instructed to remark with yellow T.I's which they did. Visibility was perfect below cloud and excellent results were achieved, large explosions and thick smoke being reported. Defences at Valenciennes were negligible but fighter flares were seen on the return from Lens. ND387 returned at 02:06. One aircraft was lost from each target.

ND.387	"G"	F/O. P.G. MCCARTHY	CAPTAIN	23.02	02.06	VALENCIENNES
		F/S. A. HARGRAVE	NAVIGATOR			yellow L.B. & T.I. yellow. 8 x 500 G.P. at 00.31 hrs. a
		F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH	AIR BOMBER			Green and Red T.I. were seen 200 yards S.W. of aiming point
		F/S. F.C. ALLFORD	WIRELESS OP.			and Master Bomber instructed Main Force to aim at these 2
		Sgt. J.C. GAY	ENGINEER			Markers. Master Bomber instructed us to remark with yellow
		F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD	MID-UPPER			T.I., our markers fell W. of Red and Green T.I's. Bombing
		F/S. E.A. BATTERBEE	REAR GUNNER			somewhat scattered but a fair concentration fell on Mar-
		F/O. K.S. CARR	VISUAL A/B.			

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

Date	Time	Summary of Events	References to Appendices
15.6.44.		Sixteen aircraft set out, nine to attack the Marshalling Yards at VALENCIENNES, and the remaining seven with a similar target at LENS. In both cases visibility was perfect below cloud and excellent results were achieved, large explosions and thick smoke being reported on both targets. Defences at VALENCIENNES were negligible but fighter flares were seen on the return from LENS. Two aircraft were lost on the night's work, one from each target.	431 - 435

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944

The same again, a short break before prepping this time for the Constructional Works at Renescore. Mike and his crew (listed below) were one of fourteen aircraft from No. 7. They took off in ND897 MG-C at 23:56.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

Saturday 17th June 1944

The target was covered by cloud but the glow of the TI's was visible and the bombs were dropped on these. and H2S and Gee used to check for accuracy. Results were hard to see and only one crew reported a large explosion. The crew landed at 02:04.

FOR THE MONTH OF <u>JUNE</u> 1944.						PAGE No. 43
AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REMARKS
			Up	Down		
ND.897	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/S. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/S. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER	23.56	02.04	RENSCORE CONSTRUCTIONAL WORKS. 18 x 500 G.P. No T.I's seen to fall but at 00.54 hrs. 3 T.I's Red seen on ground in good concentration, though small gap in cloud and bombs	13

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

16.6.44.	Constructional Works at RENESCORE was the target for a force of fourteen aircraft but two were abortive, one being unable to double-check his position and another releasing his bombs "safe" in error. The target was covered by 10/10ths cloud to a height of 8/9000 feet and the first T.I's disappeared very rapidly. The glow of these was clearly visible, however, and bombs were dropped on the glow with H2S and Gee checks on accuracy of position. Results were generally unobserved but one crew reported a very large explosion. Enemy defences were negligible.	435 - 435
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944

## Friday 23rd June 1944

Two aircraft set off first to attack Constructional Works at L'Hey. A force of fourteen aircraft set out shortly after with a similar target at Coubronne. ND897 "C" took off at 23:55 with Coubronne as their target, the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)

## Saturday 24th June 1944

There was heavy cloud cover but markers were well placed. There was some interference with the radio transmissions of the Master Bomber but most crews heard his instructions to bomb on GEE. Results were generally unobserved but two large explosions were reported. Slight flak was met but there was considerable enemy fighter activity between the coast and the target. Two aircraft were lost during the attack. One enemy aircraft was claimed destroyed and another damaged. The crew of ND897 arrived back at Oakington at 01:54.

Later in the day, the crew would again take ND897 MG-C but this time their target was the Constructional Works at Novelle-en-Chaussee. They took off at 16:05 now with an eighth crew member and in the capacity of Deputy Master Bomber.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

The Master and Deputy Bombers both identified their target visually. Bombing was well concentrated and there was a good amount of smoke. The only opposition was slight heavy flak. ND897 returned at 18:29.

## Sunday 25th June 1944

Today, two aircraft from No. 7 carried out an early daylight attack on Gorenflos Constructional Works near Abbeville, France. ND897 MG-C took off at 07:31 with the following crew aboard and again in the capacity of Deputy Master Bomber.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Visibility was good and upon arrival it was seen that the target had been well plastered in previous attacks. Master Bomber warning main force to be prepared for bombing without markers and released own bombs visually on aiming point, followed shortly afterwards by those of his deputy. A red T.I afterwards fell on southern end of target and Main Force were instructed to bomb on this. All bombing was well concentrated and clouds of smoke were rising. No enemy opposition was encountered.

ND897 returned at 10:11.

DATE	TYPE & NUMBER	CODE	CREW		Up	Down	DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
			NAME	RANK				
25.6.44.	ND.897	"C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY	CAPTAIN	07.31	10.11	CONSTRUCTIONAL WORKS, GORENFLOS. 5 T.I. Yellow L.B. 5 T.I.	138
			F/S. A. HARGRAVE	NAVIGATOR				
			F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH	AIR BOMBER			Yellow. 6 x 500 G.P. 025. 2 x 500 G.P.L.D. Arrived 08.57 hrs.	
			F/S. F.C. ALLFORD	WIRELESS OP.			and bombed visually. Master Bomber at 08.59 hrs. instructed	
			F/S. B.M. J.C. GAY	ENGINEER				
			F/S. B.P. BLATCHFORD	MID-UPPER			Main Force to bomb Reds which fell at 08.58 about 150 yds.	
			F/S. E.A. BATTERBEE	REAR GUNNER			to E. of aiming point. We had previously told Master Bomber	
			F/O. K.S. CARR	VISUAL A/B.			that these T.I's Red were well placed. At 09.02 hrs. own	

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944



## Tuesday 27th June 1944

A return to night bombing, two aircraft from No. 7 were given Mont Clandon as their target. a further thirteen were sent to Oisemont, ND897 MG-C was assigned to the Constructional Works at Mont Clandon and left Oakington at 22:50 with the following crew.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Weather was clear over Mont Clandon and although early bombing was undershooting the markers, it was well concentrated later in the attack.

## Wednesday 28th June 1944

All crews were successful and returned safely. ND897 landed at 01:15.

ND.897	"C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY F/S. A. HARGRAVE F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH F/S. F.C. ALLFORD Sgt. J.C. GAY F/S. B.F. BLATCHFORD F/S. B.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	22.50	01.15	CONSTRUCTIONAL WORKS, MONT CLANDON. 4 T.I. Green L.B. & T.I. Green. 8 x 500 G.P. 025. 2 x 500 G.P.L.D. Attack opened with Red T.I's at 00.13 hrs. followed by other Reds at half minute and minute intervals in good concentration. Centre of concentration in sights when own T.I's and bombs released. Seen to burst along side and touching Reds on N.W. side. Some bombing seen round T.I's Red, but some
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during June 1944

6.44.		Our aircraft again returned to night bombing, two aircraft setting out to attack MONT CLANDON followed an hour later by a force of <del>xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx</del> thirteen with OISEMONT/NEUVILLE-au-BOIS as their target. All were successful and returned safely. Wather was clear over MONT CLANDON and though early bombing was undershooting the markers, it was well concentrated later in the attack. No outstanding results were seen. OISEMONT/NEUVILLE-au-BOIS was covered by thin cloud but all aircraft identified the target by Red T.I's and checked with H2S and GEE. The markers were well concentrated and bombing well aimed round the markers. Defences comprised slight flak and fighter activity and many searchlights.					440 - 441
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during June 1944

## Sunday 9th July 1944

"the twins were christened today. Pleasant little ceremony and tea party." *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Tuesday 11th July 1944

"Last day of leave" *(source: diary of Michael Stuart)*

## Friday 21st July 1944

Letter home from Horwood.

## Sunday 23rd July 1944

Tonight would see the first major raid on a German city for around 2 months. There would be a main force of 629 Aircraft dispatched for Kiel. PB148 MG-C took off from Oakington at 22:33 with the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## Monday 24th July 1944

The elaborate Deception & Radio Counter Measure Operations used on this raid, combined with the surprise return to a German Target completely confused the German Fighter Force with the Bombing Force appearing suddenly from behind a Mandrel Jamming Screen and the local Radio Warning System only reported it as being a Force of Minelaying Aircraft.

Bombing lasted only 25-mins.

All parts of Kiel were hit but the Bombing was particularly heavy in the Port Areas and all of the important U-boat Yards & Naval Facilities were hit.

The presence of around 500 Delayed-action Bombs or unexploded Duds caused severe problems for the Rescue & Repair Services. There was no water for 3-days; Trains & Buses did not run for 8-days and there was no Gas for cooking for 3-weeks.

Heavy Flak in Barrage form was encountered between 12,000 & 22,000ft. One Aircraft was Shot Down by a Flak Ship and another 3 seen Shot Down in the Target Area. One Dornier 217 was seen. The Operation was considered a success and the Flight Plan good. 4 aircraft were lost in the raid. PB148 returned at 03:36.

Later that day, the crew would be sent to Stuttgart as part of a force of 461 aircraft. PB148 MG-C took off at 21:59 taking on the role of Visual Centerer. This was to be the first of three heavy raids on Stuttgart in five Nights.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## **Tuesday 25th July 1944**

The only report available is a composite one for the 3-Raids. It states the 3-Raids caused the most serious damage of the War in the Central Districts of Stuttgart which, being situated in a Series of narrow Valleys, had eluded Bomber Command for several years. They were now devastated and most of Stuttgart's Public & Cultural buildings were destroyed.

PB148 returned at 05:16.

The 2nd of the 3-Raids on Stuttgart was ordered for tonight. Mike and his crew would take off at 21:45 in PB148 MG-C as Primary Visual Marker.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## **Wednesday 26th July 1944**

This second attack was considered the most successful but losses were high.

PB148 returned at 05:36.

## Friday 28th July 1944

A total of 14 Lancasters left from Oakington, their target Stuttgart as part of a force of 494 Lancasters & 2 Mosquitos of No.s 1, 3, 5 & 8 Groups in the last Raid of the current series on Stuttgart.

PB180 took off at 22:25 with PA975, ND912, ND852, ND849, NE123, NE122, JB661 (Crew list below, role of Visual Centerer), ND387 and JA677 (Piloted by Alan Craig, role of Master Bomber & Primary Visual Marker) all following a minute apart, others followed shortly afterwards.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## Saturday 29th July 1944

German Fighters were waiting and intercepted the Bomber Stream while over France on the Outward Flight; there was a bright Moon & 39 Lancasters were Shot Down, 19% of the Force.

The first TI's were dropped by PB180 from 01:41 and Master Bomber was heard at 01:43 instructing the main force that the red glow was to be bombed.

Crews on subsequent aircraft confirm on approach a red glow was seen through cloud and that bombs were dropped. Yellow TI's were shot down by flak or unseen. Due to heavy cloud cover no results of bombing were seen.

NE122 was attacked by two fighters, damaging the bomb bay and causing cookies to explode forcing an emergency landing. They reported shooting down one of the fighters.

PB661 Managed to escape the attention of a Luftwaffe night fighter, McCarthy wrote in his combat report: 'At about 01:50 hrs, while on the run in to Stuttgart, I heard the rear gunner say "port-go" immediately after and just as I started my dive I observed four or five streams of tracer rounds (tracer ammunition are bullets or cannon-calibre projectiles that are built with a small pyrotechnic charge in their base.) passing about 2 feet over the cockpit. I could hear guns firing back at the enemy aircraft, which was a Ju 88.'



*German WWII Luftwaffe Junkers Ju 88 twin-engine multi role combat aircraft*



I lost about 1,000 feet in my initial dive and then pulled up to starboard, banking steeply. During this time I observed no more fire from the enemy aircraft.

The enemy aircraft must have broken away to starboard, since we apparently followed him round at about 50 yards, during which time the two gunners reported a large amount of hits on the enemy aircraft, both on the fuselage and the port engine, which later caught fire. The gunners then reported that the enemy aircraft dived away very sharply into the cloud.

Shortly after we saw the glow of an explosion through the cloud in the direction the enemy aircraft had taken. The whole combat lasted about half a minute, during which both gunners gave very clear and concise directions. There were no further incidents on the trip.

Lancaster MG-U JA677 reported leaving the target at 02:00, the pilots logbook notes they arrived at the target four minutes late but with no damage sustained.

The Navigator, Gordon Graham, reporting "10/10 Cloud. Attacked by a Ju.88 50-miles homeward from the Target, Squadron Gunnery Leader S/L 'Dickie' Dixon acting as Rear Gunner stand-in Shot it Down & they evaded 2 others..."

He recalls in an interview several years later *"...we went to Stuttgart on the night of July 28th in MG-U, and we had the task of Master Bomber. The gunnery leader, Squadron Leader Dixon or "Dickie" as he was known, stood in for us as rear gunner. He was first class at his job and flew with us on about six occasions. I had a faith in him just born out of intuition, and from watching the way he went about his job. After being over the target area from beginning to end of the raid, I gave Alan [Craig] a course for home, and we left as planned. Within 15 minutes, Dickie called up in the approved manner, 'rear gunner to pilot, there's fighters about'. Back came 'OK rear gunner'. Then 'rear gunner to pilot, fighter starboard quarter, prepare to corkscrew starboard'. Just then the mid-upper gunner said 'I think he's coming over to port'. Then Dickie called out, 'Starboard, Go'. Alan, in his best top drawer voice said, 'Now what do you want? Port or Starboard'. Back came the prompt reply from Dickie, 'Starboard, you -, down starboard, rolling back up port'. The dull rattle of the Brownings crept over the intercom. Then the terminating punchline from Dickie, 'got the bastard!'. Confirmed by the mid-upper gunner. Such was the intercom discipline that there was no more comment about that fighter, or any related discussion until we reached Oakington...."*

PB180 returned later that morning.

Sunday 30th July 1944

692 Aircraft (462 Lancasters, 200 Halifax's, 30 Mosquitoes) were sent in a daylight attack to Bomb 6 German positions in front of a mainly American Ground Attack in the Villers Bocage & Caumont Area. PB148 Lancaster MG-C took off at 06:03 with the following crew in the capacity of backer-up

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Sergeant Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Flight Sergeant Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

The presence of Cloud caused many difficulties and only 377 Aircraft were able to Bomb, on to Oboe Markers, and only 2 of the 6 Targets were effectively hit. 4 Lancasters were lost. 2 Mosquitos carried out uneventful Ranger Patrols. PB148 returned safely at 08:43.

			T/O. A.J. HARGREAVE				
30.7.44.	PB.148	"C"	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/O. A. HARGRAVE F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESSOP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	06.03	06.43	BATTLE AREA, AIMING POINT 'G'. Backer-Up. 4 T.I. Yellow L.B. 4 T.I. Yellow. 10 x 500 G.P. T. Inst. When about 5 miles from target, Master Bomber ordered "Abandon Mission", so aircraft with-held all bombs and returned to base. Brought back 4 T.I. Yellow L.B. & P.I. Yellow. 10 x 500 G.P. T. Inst.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during July 1944

30.7.44.	Twelve aircraft set out to attack in daylight Aiming point 'B', 'E' and 'G' of the Normandy Battle Front. The attack on Aiming Point 'G' was abandoned on the instructions of the Master Bomber owing to cloud. The six aircraft on Aiming point "E" found layered cloud over the target and one returned with his bombs as instructed by the Master Bomber. Red T.I's were well placed on the Aiming Point. Bombing was well concentrated on the markers which were afterwards almost obliterated. One Lancaster was seen to overshoot the aiming point and bomb along a column of motor vehicles moving towards the target area. 10/10ths cloud covered Aiming Point 'B'. The Master Bomber released his Red T.I's which were later found to be 1000 yards N.N.E. of aiming point, but accurately placed T.I's Red were seen to fall immediately afterwards and instructions were given to bomb these. The Deputy Master Bomber then dropped Yellow T.I's accurately on aiming point and very concentrated and accurate bombing followed. No enemy defences were met at any of the targets.	473 - 474
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during July 1944

## Tuesday 1st August 1944

Today, PB148 MG-C took off at 15:31 (crew below) for a target in Ferme De Forestel as Deputy Master Bomber. Part of a force of 777 Aircraft of Bomber Command sent to Bomb numerous V-Weapon Sites and a Depot in the Forest of Nieppe in daylight raids.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Officer D F MILLER (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer E W STONE (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant E O DENNETT (Mid-upper)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Only 79 Aircraft were able to Bomb; Bomber Command Records do not state why the remaining Sorties were abortive but poor weather conditions were the probable cause. No Aircraft lost. PB148 states Master Bomber broadcast at 17:13 to abandon mission. PB148 returned safely at 18:17.

148	'C'	P/O. P.G. McCarthy	CAPTAIN	15.31	18.17	FERME DE FORESTEL. Deputy Master Bomber. 4
		P/O. D.F. MILLER	NAVIGATOR			
		P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH	AIR BOMBER			4 x T.I. Yellow L.B. 6 x 1000 U.S.A. M.65 G
		P/O. E.W. STONE	WIRELESS OP.			
		Sgt. J.C. GAY	ENGINEER			Bomber broadcast from 17.13 - 17.20 hours ab
		P/S. E.O. DENNETT	MID-UPPER			
		P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE	REAR GUNNER			Orders obeyed and load brought back.
		P/O. K.S. CARR	VISUAL A/B.			

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

CAUTION.			COMPLAINE OFFICER: P/L. A.E. HILTON.	
			OPERATIONS.	
	1.8.44.	15.30	Two aircraft, Master Bomber and Deputy Master Bomber set out on a daylight attack on Construction Works at FERME DE FORESTEL. The mission was completed but owing to 10/10ths cloud orders were given to abandon attempt and T.I.'s and bombs were brought back. Slight heavy flak only was experienced.	475
		15.45	Two further aircraft, also Master Bomber and Deputy set out on a daylight attack on Construction Works at ACONET. but here also the mission was completed and attempt abandoned owing to 10/10ths cloud and no T.I.'s being seen. Defences were negligible.	475
		16.00	Finally, two further aircraft, Master Bomber and Deputy, set out on a daylight attack on Construction Works at NOYELLE-en-CHAUSSEES with similar results to the two other attempts. Defences, here too, were negligible.	475

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944

## Thursday 3rd August 1944

1,114 Aircraft (601 Lancasters, 492 Halifax's, 21 Mosquitos) carried out major raids on the Bois de Cassan, Forêt de Nieppe & Trossy St Maximin V1 Flying-Bomb Stores. PB148 MG-C took off at 18:30 as Deputy Master Bomber (crew below) assigned to Forêt de Nieppe.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

The Weather was clear and all Raids were considered successful. 6 Lancasters were lost; 5 from the Trossy St Maximin Raid & 1 from the Bois de Cassan raid. 1 Lightning & 1 Radar Counter Measures Aircraft accompanied the Raids. The Unit's role was Radar Countermeasures (RCM) and this entailed the identification of Enemy Radar patterns & wavelengths. PB148 returned at 21:01.



*Aerial Attack on V-1 Storage Depot, in Quarries at Trossy St Maximin, North of Paris. Lancaster, over River Oise & Target Area*



## Friday 4th August 1944

Four aircraft were despatched on a daylight raid from No. 7 Squadron to attack a supply dump at L'Isle D'Adam. PB148 MG-C left at 11:00 as backer up, the crew below aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Some cloud cover was experienced as well as haze. The Master Bomber, his Deputy and two backers up clearly identified the target visually and bombed on red and yellow T.I's. All were well concentrtrted. Moderate heavy flak and some light flak at 15,000 feet was experienced, but no enemy fighters were seen.

11.00	11.25	L'ISLE D'ADAM. Backer Up. 4 T.I. Yellow L.B. & T.I. Yellow.
PB.148	'C'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY CAPTAIN
		P/O. A. HARGRAVE NAVIGATOR
		F/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH AIR BOMBER
		P/O. F.C. ALLFORD WIRELESS OP.
		SGT. J.C. GAY ENGINEER
		P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD MID-UPPER
		F/S. E.A. BATTERBEE REAR GUNNER
		P/O. K.S. CARR VISUAL A/B.
		6 x 1000 M.C.T.D.025. Master Bomber instructed to bomb 100 yards to right of T.I's. Yellow and this appeared to coincide with relative position of aiming point. Own bomb load released on this visually. Bombing was well concentrated.

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

		visually, and bombed on Red and Yellow T.I's. All T.I's and bombs were well concentrated.
		heavy flak and some light flak at 15,000 feet was experienced, but no enemy fighters were seen.
11.05		Another dump, at TROSTY St. MAXIMIN was attacked by 9 aircraft of this Squadron in good visibility, with 2-3/10ths cloud in patches. All aircraft bombed on markers as ordered, visual or H2S check being made in all cases. Bombing was well concentrated around markers and masses of yellow smoke soon obscured the target. No opposition was met from enemy fighters and only moderate heavy flak.
13.15		Finally, at this time, four aircraft:- Master Bomber, Deputy and two supporters took off on a long trip to attack an oil Refinery at ENNUIAC with exceptional results. Clear weather was met with slight haze and all the aircraft were able to identify the target visually and without any difficulty. The Master Bomber's T.I. Yellow was confirmed by the other aircraft to fall right on aiming point. The dump was hit with three bombs, which burst at 10,000 feet with deep red flames rising

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944

Saturday 5th August 1944

The target today was a daylight attack on an oil plant in Blaye near Bordeaux. PB148 MG-C took off at 14:21 (crew below) acting as Deputy Master Bomber joining seven other aircraft from No. 7 Squadron to be assigned to this target.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

All aircraft were able to identify visually, seeing town and oil tanks. The Master Bomber left the target at 19:10 reporting that bombing had been generally good Defences were nil and weather was clear.

"	PB.148	'C'	P/O. P.C. MCCARTHY P/O. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR-GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	14.21	21.57	BLAYE. Deputy Master Bomber. 4 F.I. Yellow L.B. & F.I. Yellow. 6 x 1000 M.C.T.D.025. Own Yellows released visually as instructed by Master Bomber, but overshoot by about 150 yards. Bombs were also released visually. As aircraft left target, a large fire was seen raging and one large explosion was seen.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

5.8.44.	14.10	The attack on the enemy's oil installations was carried a step further, and eight aircraft set off to attack a plant at BLAYE, near BORDEAUX. The Squadron's force consisted of Master Bomber, Deputy, two back-ups and four supporters. All aircraft were able to identify visually, seeing town and oil tanks. The Deputy Master Bomber's T.I.'s fell in the North East corner of the aiming point, and Main Force were/ instructed to underhoot this by three widths. Master Bomber was reported by all crews as clearly audible throughout. At 19.01 hrs. however, when target was almost obscured by smoke and no markers were visible, he gave instructions to stop bombing as a slight counter was developing. Bombing, in spite of these instructions continued, but the target was within a minute remarked by Master Bomber. When he left the target at 19.10 hrs. one tank was seen to be holed and one still burning with smoke covering the rest of the area. Bombing had generally been good, with only a few sticks in the river. Defences were nil and weather was clear.	479 - 481
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944

## Sunday 6th August 1944

The crew were sent on a Reconnaissance flight of an experimental target in the Cabourg area. PB148 took off at 21:30

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Flight Lieutenant D F MILLER (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer E W STONE (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Mid Upper)
- Flight Lieutenant E WARTON (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## Monday 7th August 1944

No bombs were carried, the crew returned just after midnight and the experiment was considered successful.

Later in the day, the crew (below) would join a force of 1,019 Aircraft (614 Lancasters, 392 Halifax's, 13 Mosquitoes) sent to attack several aiming points in front of Allied ground troops in Normandy.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

The Attacks were carefully controlled – only 660 Aircraft Bombed German Strong Points and the Roads around them were well Cratered. 10 Aircraft – all Lancasters – were lost, 7 to German Fighters, 2 to Flak & 1 to an unknown cause.

Unfortunately, Heavy Bomber Missions could cause serious problems. The 1st two strikes on Caen resulted in numerous “Collateral” Casualties to French Civilians. Sometimes Friendly Troops were Victims of misplaced Bomb Strikes. In the Normandy Campaign, as in other Campaigns, Air & Land Forces had to get used to working together. Friendly Troops experienced Attacks from Allied Fighter-bombers.

To minimise this Danger, Air & Ground Commanders arranged for Friendly Forces to pull back in anticipation of an Airstrike against German Positions. If Communication failed and the Strike did not come off, Troops found themselves fighting twice for the same piece of Real Estate as German Forces moved back into the Gap.

Soon Commanders learned to follow-up Airstrikes with Artillery Barrages so that Friendly Infantry & Armour Forces could close with the Demoralised Enemy before he recovered & redeployed. Within 6-weeks after the Normandy Landing, Air & Land Forces were so confident of working together that Fighter-Bombers routinely Operated as close as 300-yds to American Forces.

Tuesday 8th August 1944  
PB148 safely returned at 00:30

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				Up	Down		
6.8.44.	LANCASTER III PB.148 'C'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/L. D.F. MILLER P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. B.W. STONE SGT. J.O. GAY P/S. E.A. BATTERS P/L. K. WILSON P/O. K.S. GARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	21.30	00.14	Experimental target, CABOURG Area. Reconnaissance flight. No bombs carried. Experiment considered successful.	196

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

SECRET							
By NO. 7 SQUADRON.				PAGE No. 483.			
FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 1944.							
DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME		DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT	REFERENCES
				Up	Down		
4.8.	LANCASTER III PB.148 'C'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/O. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. AILFORD SGT. J.O. GAY P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD P/S. E.A. BATTERS P/O. K.S. GARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	21.42	00.30	BATTLE AREA NO.1. NORMANDY. Deputy Master Bomber. Master Bomber's T.I's were well placed on Green stars and own T.I's fell in same place. Master Bomber heard repeatedly asking for backer-up, but no markers were dropped. Bombing appeared concentrated and much smoke and dust was seen to a height of 2000 feet.	197

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

## Wednesday 9th August 1944

160 Aircraft (147 Halifaxes, 8 Lancasters, 5 Mosquitos) of 4 & 8 Groups attacked an Oil & Fuel-storage Dump at Forêt De Mormal in daylight. PB148 MG-C was in the role of Backer Up and took from Oakington at 11:36 the following crew aboard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

The attack was considered good. A large column of thick smoke was rising from the Target at the end of the Raid. PB148 returned at 14:12.

9.8.44.	FB.148	'C'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/O. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	11.36	14.12	FORÊT DE MORIAL. Backer Up. 4 T.I. Yellow L.B. 4 T.I. Yellow. 6 x 1000 M.C.T.D.025. The relative position of aiming point to Yellow T.I. was clearly visible and also the wood. Bombed on this. Much black smoke soon built up and one large fire and several smaller ones were seen.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

9.8.44.	11.30	The Squadron reverted to daylight operations again, when at this time they despatched eight aircraft to attack a target at FORÊT DE MORIAL. The force consisted of Master Bomber, Deputy, 4 Backers up and 2 supporters. There was 3/10ths cloud (thin cumulus) with tops about 5000 feet. The attack opened well on time with Red T.I's which were seen by Master Bomber to be very slightly to South-West of aiming point. Master Bomber's own T.I's fell very close together, covering aiming point. Main Force were instructed to bomb mixture of Reds and Yellows, and later, to bomb Yellow T.I's in middle of area of blasted trees. Bombing was very well concentrated and accurate. A large number of explosions were seen, giving red flames and black smoke rising to 10,000 feet and mushrooming at top. At the end of the raid the W.N.W. end of the target area, which had suffered only lightly earlier, became ablaze with fire and smoke from this was seen to go to 11,000 feet and was still in view when aircraft were half way across the North Sea. Defences were nil.	4.8 - 4.55
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944



Thursday 10th August 1944

Eleven aircraft from No. 7 Squadron were called upon for an attack on another oil installation, this time at La Pallice. PB148 left Oakington at 19:50 as Backer Up for the attack.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Weather was clear with good visibility. Master bomber was not heard so markers dropped on own initiative and they fell right across the target and later heard that main force instructed to bomb on red. Several large fires were seen and concentration of bombing was considered good.

Friday 11th August 1944

PB148 returned to Oakington at 01:15.

10.8.44.	PB.148	'C'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY P/O. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR-GUNNER VISUAL A/B.	19.50	01.15	LA PALLICE. Backer Up. 8 T.I. Red L.B. 6 x 1000 M.C.T.D. 025. Three lots of Reds seen, one slightly overshooting and two others slightly to S.E. Master Bomber not heard and Reds dropped on own initiative. They fell right across target and Master Bomber then instructed "bomb nearest Reds". Many bomb bursts seen around T.I. Reds and as aircraft left dense clouds of smoke already rising from vicinity of aiming point.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

10.8.44.	19.50	The Squadron was again called upon for a big effort, when eleven aircraft, consisting of Master Bomber, Deputy, 6 Illuminators and 3 Backers up set off to attack yet another oil installation, this time at LA PALLICE. The weather for the attack was clear, with good visibility. Flares satisfactorily illuminated the area from 22.52 hrs. onwards and first Red T.I.'s were dropped well on the aiming point by the Master Bomber. Shortly after this, two further lots of T.I.'s Red fell to East of aiming point, so Master Bomber ordered Main Force to bomb first T.I.'s. However, further Red T.I.'s then fell accurately and remained clearly visible for three minutes, during which Main Force were directed to bomb on these. Later, smoke from large oil fire obscured T.I.'s, so Main Force were ordered to bomb main concentration of smoke and fires. Bombing was well concentrated around correct T.I.'s throughout the attack. One steady red light seen on ground 1000 yds. north of target, and as it was thought to be a decoy, Main Force were told to ignore it. Fires were not so large as expected	485 - 487
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944

## Saturday 12th August 1944

Another daylight attack, PB148 took off at 11:36 (crew below) from oakington, part of a force of 117 Aircraft (95 Halifax's, 16 Lancasters, 6 Mosquitoes) of 6 & 8 Groups sent to attack an Oil Fuel Dump & Explosive Stores at Forêt De Mont Richard.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Op)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

	TYPE & NUMBER		Up	Down		202
12.8.44.	LANCASTER III PB.148 'C'	P/O. P.G. MCCARTHY E/O. A. HARGRAVE E/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD F/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER REAR GUNNER VISUAL A/B	11.36	15.38	MONT-RICHARD. Backer Up. 4 T.I. Yellow L.B. 4 T.I. Yellow. 3 x 1000 M.C. T. Inst. 3 x 1000 M.C.T.D.025. Master Bomber warned crew to bomb T.I.'s only and not fires burning in the woods of which there were several. Master Bomber requested "backing up" and own Yellows were released visually and they appeared to fall accurately. Master Bomber then instructed Main Force to bomb these. A good fire, emitting dense smoke, was seen. Bombing was accurate with some undershooting

Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

12.8.44.	22.00	At this time FIVE aircraft began the first of two night attacks. BUSKESBEE was the target and the Squadron supplied two Blind Marker Illuminators, one Blind Backer Illuminator and two Blind Backers Up. Clear, but hazy weather was met over the target at the beginning of the attack, but surrounding cloud moved in before the attack was ended. The Squadron Blind Illuminator dropped bombs on Red and Green T.I.'s but brought back his white flares as he considered haze too thick for visual identification. Both Blind Bakers Up aimed at T.I.'s, one Red and Green and the other on Red only. The Illuminators identified on H23. Master Bomber could not be heard clearly, but he did instruct Main Force to bomb Reds and Greens in centre of attack. The attack was well concentrated at one period, but unfortunately, T.I.'s in general were scattered over a wide area. Bombing, accordingly, was also scattered. Incendiaries and flares lighting up the base made assessment of results difficult but fires were visible up to 60/70 miles distant. Very good imitation, dummy T.I.'s Red, and one Green were reported, cascading into cloud. These were reported to the South and South-West some 10-12 miles from aiming point. There was slight heavy flak and many searchlights, but these were ineffective.	487 489
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944

## Monday 14th August 1944

805 Aircraft (411 Lancasters, 352 Halifax's, 42 Mosquitoes) were to Attack 7 German Troop Positions facing the 3rd Canadian Division, which was advancing on Falaise.

PB148 MG-C left Oakington at 12:51 as Deputy Master Bomber, one of eight aircraft detailed to attack aiming point No.22 just North of Falaise in the Normandy battle area.

- Pilot Officer Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

A careful Plan was prepared with Oboe & Visual Marking, and with a Master Bomber & Deputy at each of the 7 Targets. Most of the Bombing was accurate & effective but, about half-way through the Raids, some Aircraft started to Bomb a Large Quarry in which parts of the 12th Canadian Field Regiment were positioned.

This mistake may have been caused by the yellow identification flares which were ignited by the Canadians. It was unfortunate that the Target Indicators being used by the Pathfinders were also Yellow. Bomber Command Crews claimed that the Canadians used the Yellow Flares before any Bombs fell in the Quarry; the History of the Canadian Units says the Bombs fell 1st.

The Master Bombers tried hard to stop further Crews Bombing in the wrong Area but approximately 70 Aircraft Bombed the Quarry and other nearby Allied Positions over a 70-minute Period. The Canadians took Shelter in their slit Trenches and most emerged unscathed though shaken, but 13 men were killed & 53 were injured and a large number of Vehicles & Guns were hit. This was believed to have been the 1st occasion on which Bomber Command Aircraft had hit Friendly Troops during the Battle of Normandy. The Canadian Artillery Regiment was Machine-gunned by RAF Spitfires & USAAF Mustangs the following day! 2 Lancasters were lost during the attacks.

PB148 returned later that afternoon.

## Tuesday 15th August 1944

1,004 Aircraft (599 Lancasters, 385 Halifax's, 19 Mosquitoes, 1 Lightning) attacked 9 Airfields in Holland & Belgium in preparation for a renewed Night Offensive against Germany.

PB148 MG-C took off at 10:18 as Deputy Master Bomber (crew below) their target, Volkel Airfield, Holland.

- Flight Lieutenant Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Visibility was perfect and all Raids were considered successful. PB148 returned. 3 Lancasters lost.



*Volkel Airfield after attacks*

Wednesday 16th August 1944

Back to night raids and twelve aircraft from No. 7 Squadron were detailed as part of 348 Aircraft (195 Lancasters, 144 Halifax's, 9 Mosquitoes) to attack Kiel. PB148 was Visual Centerer tonight and took off (crew below) from Oakington at 21:19.

- Flight Lieutenant Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

Thursday 17th August 1944

They found clear weather above the target. Attack opened well and on time. Moderate to heavy flak was encountered. 3 Halifax's & 2 Lancasters were lost. PB148 returned at 02:27.

16.8.44	PB.148	'C'	P/L. P.G. MCCARTHY P/O. A. HARGRAVE P/S. M.S. LAYTON-SMITH P/O. F.C. ALLFORD SGT. J.C. GAY P/S. E.A. BATTERBEE P/O. K.S. CARR P/O. B.F. BLATCHFORD	CAPTAIN NAVIGATOR AIR BOMBER WIRELESS OP. ENGINEER MID-UPPER VISUAL A/B. REAR GUNNER	21.19	02.27	KIEL. Visual Centerer. 4 x 1000 Red T.I. & x 2000 H.C. Attack opened with Green T.I.'s and flares by which no ground detail visible owing to haze. Main Force was instructed to bomb centre of Greens. Own T.I.'s and bombs released on these, and by light of own T.I.'s cascading saw south end of fjord, and T.I.'s believed to fall on E. bank opposite railway station. One large fire, apart from other smaller ones, seen, S.E. of aiming point. Many decoys seen 15/20 miles to S.W. of target.
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Detailing activity during August 1944

		21.10	The remainder of the 7 Squadron attacking force, 12 aircraft, consisting of Master Bomber, Deputy, 6 Blind Marker Illuminators, 2 Visual Centres and 2 Blind Backers up <del>was</del> <sup>now</sup> left to attack KIEL. They found clear weather above the target with 10/20 thin cloud above 15000 feet. Attack opened well on time with illuminator flares and green T.I.s. Master Bomber withheld his T.I.s. because, although he could clearly identify the target his bomb sight was w/s. No visual markers T.I.s were dropped in the attack. Green T.I.s. were, however, seen in a semi-circle round the western half of the town with some greens in centre and reds 200 yards to North of railway station with others at Southern end of KIELHAFEN. Main force were ordered to bomb greens, reds, greens in this order and finally, an attack was inclined to undershoot, the most southerly reds. It is estimated that 75% of the attack fell on target area, incendiaries forming a circle of 3000 yards diameter to North of aiming point. Remainder of attack spread 10 miles to North West. Some fires were seen in target area. Moderate to intense heavy flak was encountered, with light flak up to 24000 feet with red tracer.	
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Extract taken from the RAF Operations Record Book of No. 7 Squadron Summarising activity during August 1944



## Friday 18th August 1944

Today, Michael was granted a commission as a Pilot Officer 183715 in the general duties branch of the RAF.

Night attacks on Germany were ordered for No. 7 Squadron again tonight, targets were Bremen and Sterkrade.

Aircraft destined for Bremen took off from Oakington at around 21:20 consisting of 13 Lancasters from No. 7 Squadron with 4 Mosquitoes from No. 571 Squadron forming part of a task force of 288 Aircraft consisting of 216 Lancasters, 65 Halifaxes and 7 Mosquitos.

The Mosquitos initiated the attack by dropping Window or Chaff (this was the dropping large volumes of thin strips of aluminium with the aim of cluttering the enemy radar, and so to make it difficult for their operators to distinguish real aircraft responses from the spurious pieces of "Window") and minutes later around midnight No. 7 Squadron marked the target. The weather was clear, and the Visual Marker was able to identify the aiming point. Bombing was reported as very well concentrated on markers.

23:00 would see the Mosquitos of No. 105 and No. 109 Squadrons and the Lancasters from No. 405 and No. 7 Squadrons commence take off for their attack against Sterkrade, part of a force of 234 aircraft that were sent to a synthetic oil plant, just north of Duisburg, Germany.

PB148 MG-C took off at 23:04 with the following crew aboard.

- Flight Lieutenant Patrick George MCCARTHY (Captain)
- Pilot Officer Alan Bright HARGRAVE (Navigator)
- Pilot Officer Michael Stuart LAYTON-SMITH (Air Bomber)
- Pilot Officer Fred Charles ALLFORD (Wireless Operator)
- Flight Sergeant John Charles GAY (Engineer)
- Pilot Officer Basil Farrel BLATCHFORD (Mid-upper)
- Flight Sergeant Ernest Arthur BATTERBEE (Rear Gunner)
- Flight Officer K S CARR (Visual A/B)

## Saturday 19th August 1944

The Luftwaffe had already started plotting of the force by the time the bomber stream was flying west of The Hague. All four groups of the Nachtjagdgeschwader 1 (NJG1 / Night Hunter Squadron 1) based in The Netherlands and Belgium were sent up to intercept the bomber stream.

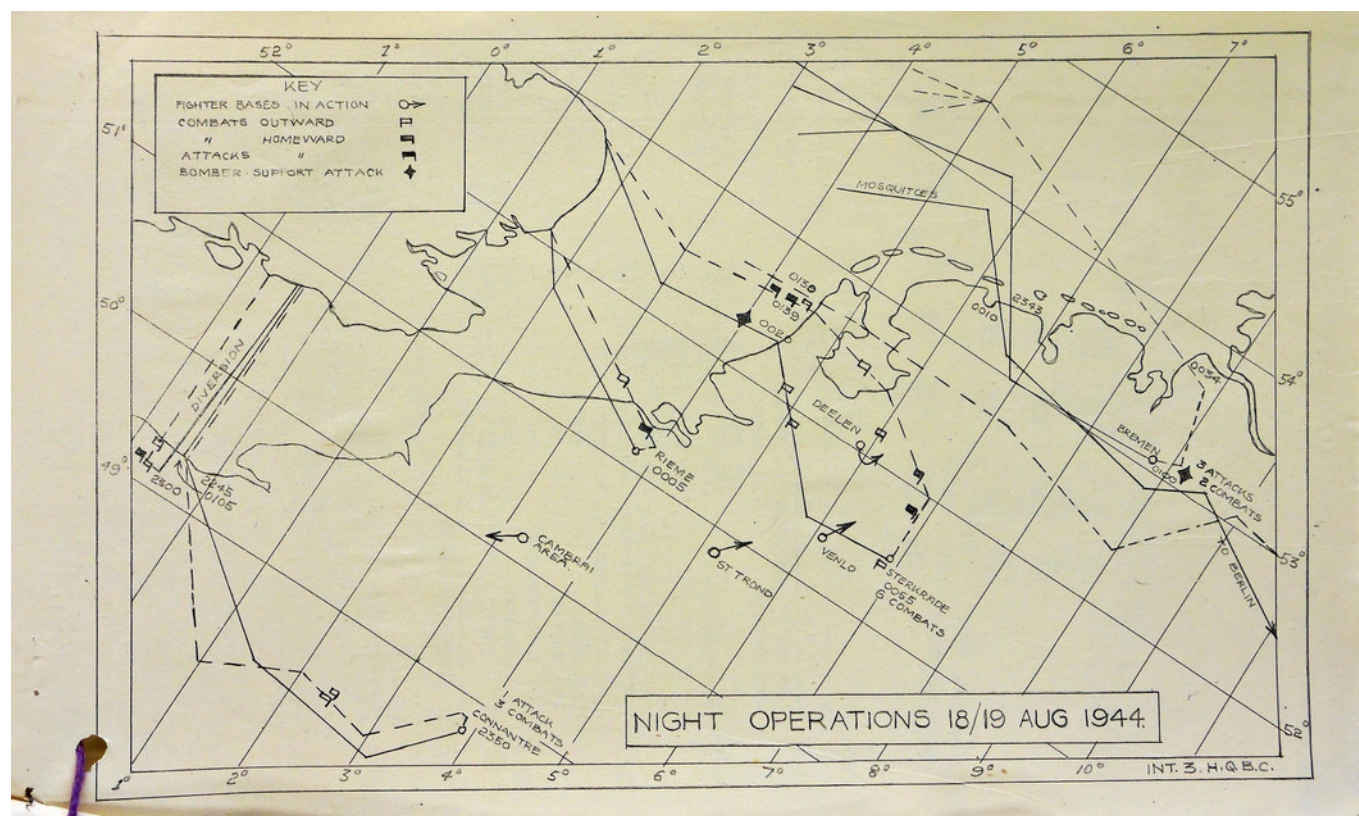
14 Heinkel He 219 Uhu crews of I./NJG1 were scrambled from Vento, IV./NJG1 from St. Trond was heard at 00:11 contacting its ground control on radio transmission.

Elements of III./NJG1, operating from Twente, were given the position of the incoming bombers at 00:35, and 16 Messerschmitt Bf 110 crews of II./NJG1 started taking off from Deelen at 00:43. The crews were given plots shortly before and after the expected execution of the bombing attack.

Mosquitos of No. 105 and No. 109 Squadron dropped markers around 00:50 with No. 7 and No. 405 Squadrons reporting bombing of the target at 00:53, 00:55 and 01:00 where a good concentration of bombing was achieved. Large explosions were seen rising some 8,000 ft with big flares believed to be oil fires, giving off much black smoke. There was moderate to heavy flak barrage reported both on the run up and on the return as well as many searchlights. PB133 of No. 405 Squadron reported heavy flak and sustained minor fuel tank damage whilst over Sterkrade.

Some 746 tons of HE and 40 X250 lb marker bombs were dropped from 14,000 ft to 32,000 ft during the attack. One unidentified single-engine enemy aircraft was reported destroyed, one ME109 and one unidentified twin-engine aircraft damaged.

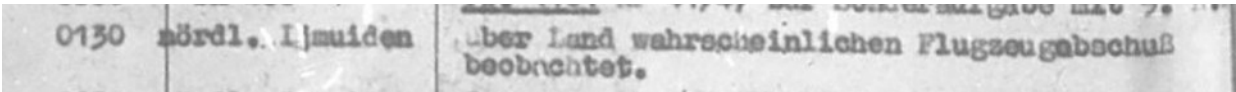
During the homeward trip, several night fighter attacks were carried out, the Raid Plot (which would have been updated as a result of combat reports from returning crews) shows that several attacks took place just off the coast of Holland between Egmond (to the north) and Ijmuiden (to the South).



The RAF Raid Plot for 18/08/1944 which would have been created by intelligence staff of Bomber Command. The information about the route would have originated from planning staff, as the route (in co-ordinates) was also part of the Operations Order. The marked combats would be added later and form part of a summary compiled from the "Z Reports" of returning crews.

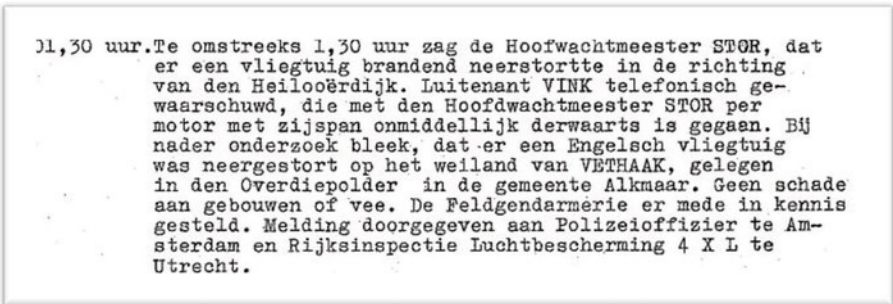
German patrol boats called Vorpostenboote would operate from most german naval ports and vulnerable coastal areas. These were auxiliary naval vessels, often converted civilian craft for use as harbor patrol and sentry vessels.

One of those patrol boats was 14. Vorpostenflottille based near IJmuiden who reported at 01.30 hrs. "North of IJmuiden. Over land a probable shooting down of an aircraft was observed."



Extract taken from Vorpostenboote records

Around the same time, Dutch police reports of the city of Alkmaar state (translated)  
*"...the Chief Watchman STOR saw that an airplane crashed on fire in the direction of the Heilooerdijk. Lieutenant VINK was warned by telephone, who immediately went there with the Chief Watchmaster STOR by motorcycle with sidecar. Upon further investigation it appeared that an English plane had crashed on the pasture of VETHAAK, located in the Overdiepolder in the municipality of Alkmaar. No damage to buildings or livestock. The Feldgendarmerie (German Field Police) was also informed. Report passed on to Police Officers in Amsterdam and the National Air Protection Inspectorate 4 X L in Utrecht."*



Extract taken from Dutch police reports of the city of Alkmaar

Only one successful combat was claimed by the Luftwaffe in the same area that night, which was made by Oberleutnant Hans-Peter Schickling of NJG1 who claimed a 4-engine aircraft over the North Sea 5-20km west of IJmuiden at 01:34. Based on the timing it is likely this would be one of the early bomber command from the Sterkrade raid so possible it might be PB148 despite the very slight discrepancy on times.

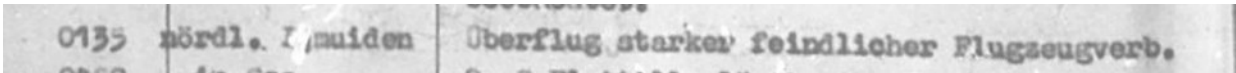
1./NJG100	Ofw Helmut Dahms	Lancaster	Krakow	02.27	1	W
<b>18-19 August 1944</b>						
7./NJG1	Oblt Hanspeter Schickling	Lancaster	GJ-3	01.34	1	W
1./NJG1	Hptm E-W Modrow	Lancaster	Zoutkamp	02.09	28	W
<b>20-21 August 1944</b>						
				02.05	40	W

Extract taken from Luftwaffe Night Fighter Claims 1942-45

This night fighter attack was possibly observed by a Mosquito crew of No. 571 Squadron who stated in their combat report, they 'saw an aircraft shot down IJmuiden' but no time was stated.



14. Vorpostenflottille further reported at 01.35 hrs. "North of IJmuiden. Strong enemy aircraft formations passing over." Which would likely be the main bomber stream returning from Sterkrade.



Extract taken from Vorpostenboote records

A statement of Mr Piet de Jong of Alkmaar, Piersonstraat 27 (taken some years later in October 2009) recalls an incident during the early hours of the morning.

*"My mother comes to my and my brother's bed, turns off the light and removes the plywood panels which were used for darkening. We are fully awake meanwhile. Mother points to outside, where a burning aircraft over the roofs at the opposite side of the street was flying straight towards us. The pilot was apparently doing his best to keep the aircraft as long as possible in the air to avoid it would crash on the buildings. Our house is at the Piersonstraat. A bit further are the meadows and Heilooërdijk which is not a built-up area between Kennemerstraatweg and Van Houtenkade up to the Noordhollands Kanaal. The pilot succeeded to reach the meadows and the aircraft crashed near the Heilooërdijk. There are no survivors of the 8 men crew. It has always been a mystery to me how my mother in the middle of the night at the right moment removed the plywood panels to show us the burning aircraft. It points to some clairvoyance, otherwise it cannot be explained. As far as I know there was no moment of fear or panic. It was just a special event which we had to see."*

Other eyewitnesses are said to have reported that a bomber crashed near the farms of Mr Leek and Mr Klaas Berger. Two crew members were seen with unopened parachutes on the land of Mr Leek, two others a bit further. However, there are no formal records that have confirmed the exact location of either of these farms.

Another, that after the crash, a youth reportedly managed to demount one of the machine guns from a turret and hid it in a ditch while the German sentries were in a nearby farm.

Lancaster MG-C PB148 from No. 7 Squadron was reported as missing having not returned from its mission later that morning. The Operations Record Book entry stating that nothing was heard after take-off. The crews next of kin were informed by telegram and letter.

No. 190  
Office Stamp  
19 AUG 1944  
For free repetition of documents, "Telegrams Enquiry" or call, with this form, at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form and, if possible, the envelope.  
Originating Subr.  
Sent  
At  
To  
By  
Charges to pay  
PRIORITY-CC MRS N M LEYTON-SMITH 48A EDEN STREET CAMBRIDGE  
DEEPLY REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR HUSBAND F/SGT N M LEYTON-SMITH 1322671 IS MISSING FROM AIR OPERATIONS NIGHT 18/19 TH AUGUST 1944 ANY FURTHER INFORMATION RECEIVED WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO YOU IMMEDIATELY STOP PENDING RECEIPT OF  
Prefix C If CDE Handed In 11.8 Office of Origin and Service Instructions or Nature of Service, if other than telegram. CB/T OHMS Words 64 Received From At By WA  
CHARGES on Imperial and Foreign Telegrams and Radioteograms.



No. 7 Squadron,  
Royal Air Force,  
Oakington,  
Cambridge.

7S/C.3260/30/P.1.

19th August, 1944.

Dear Mrs. Leyton-Smith,

I am unfortunately the bearer of bad tidings in that I have to confirm the telegram which my Adjutant sent you this morning to the effect that your husband, Flight Sergeant M. S. Leyton-Smith last night failed to return from an attack on the enemy, and that he has therefore been posted missing.

Your husband was the Air Bomber of an aircraft which was detailed to attack a target in Germany called Sterkrade, and I am unfortunately unable to give you further details as nothing was heard from the crew after they had taken off from this station. Strict wireless silence is always kept on operational flying, so this is not unusual.

Your husband was flying in a crew captained by one of my most experienced officers, and, because of their capabilities and cheerfulness they endeared themselves to all who came into contact with them. The fact that they had a great many times operated against the enemy, and had always acquitted themselves with coolness leads one to hope that they may have abandoned their aircraft and landed safely.

May I again ask you, as my Adjutant did in his telegram, not to make any announcement to the press. This is a precaution we like to take in case they were able to bale out, and any undue publicity might hinder any chance of escape they may have if this is indeed the case.

In conclusion, I should like to say that we shall very much miss your husband's crew, and our sympathy goes out to you in this very anxious moment. It is our sincere hope that you may have some better news in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Wing Commander.

Mrs. N. M. Leyton-Smith,  
48a Eden Street,  
Cambridge.



## Monday 21st August 1944

German records (copies provided to the International Red Cross several months later) show the crew were buried at the Bergen Parish Cemetery. This was likely done by German salvage personnel.

The Bergen Parish Cemetery was the designated cemetery for this area where war dead were taken, both allied and German. Since early in the war, the Bergen civil (Parish) cemetery had a military plot where war dead from the region were concentrated. German salvage teams who cleared wrecks, arranged that the human remains found during salvage were properly buried in this military plot.



Headstone reads: "Rest in Peace L Smith Flight Sergeant detection mark 22671 RAF fallen on 19.8.1944"

All but Pilot Officer Blatchford (mid upper gunner) could be identified at that time and grave records also list that the aircraft they were recovered from crashed at 01.30 hrs, 2 kilometres South of Alkmaar which although impossible to prove supports the belief the crashed aircraft in the Police report was indeed PB148.

Kp. Nr.	Stabs-angehöriger	Nr. der Verleumdungs-merkmale	Name	Vorname	Geburts-ort	Geburts-zeit	Beruf	Familien-namen der Eltern	Name und Vorkennzeichen der zu beschreibenden Personen	Todes-zeit	Truppenteil (in Kp. u. Nr.)	Matrikel-Nummer	Ort und Tag der Gefangennahme	Verwundungen, Verletzungen, Tod (Beschreibungsfähig)	Bemerkungen (z. B. Begräbnis von anderen Lagern)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
59	Eng-land		Ronche	G.B.	gehört zur Besatzung in	Liste 234/85 - 86				Sergt.	Maschine Lancaster	N Z 413219 R N Z A F		Abschuss 21.7.44	Grablage: Gemeindefriedhof Heijthuyzen (links an der Mauer Reihe 1, Grab 3.
60	"		Callow	H.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	N Z 427 185 R N Z A F		"	Grab 4
61	"		Unbekannt		"	"	"	"	"	Sergt. Engineer	"			"	Grab 5
62-63	"		2 Unbekannte		bei einem Unbekannten wurde ein Photo einer weiblichen Person gefunden, auf welchen der Name: F/Sgt. G.H. REDWOOD stand.					Flieger	"			"	Grablage: Kath. Gemeindefriedhof Niederweert (an der Mauer rechts der Kirche) Grab 1 und 2.
64	"		Smith	Layton						F.Sgt.	"	1322671 R.A.F.		19.8.44	Beerdigt: 21.8.44 Grablage: Gemeindefriedhof Bergen N.H. Reihe X, Grab 264.
65	"		Mc Carthy	P.C.						F.Ltn.	"	173522 R.A.F.		"	Grab No. 265
66	"		Carr	K.S.						F.O./	"	145 812 R.A.F.		"	Grab No. 266
67	"		Gay	J.C.						F.Sgt.	"	1436052 R.A.F.		"	Grab No. 267

Copy of German burial records provided via the International Red Cross.

## Tuesday 22nd August 1944

Based on information transcribed from German records, the wreckage was recovered by a salvaging team of six men on the 22nd August 1944. It took four days where all four engines were recovered, and a wing had to be cut through so that it could be loaded onto one of the three railway trucks used to transport the wreck.

As there was a shortage of metals, the aircraft would have been transported to the iron foundries in Germany. If a wreckage was more or less in one piece it would have been transported to Utrecht or Vught where disassembly parties would have stripped the wreckage for reusable parts.

From the information recorded by the salvage team it appears that the Lancaster did not hit the ground with a huge impact since they could recover all four engines and had to cut a wing, so it is likely the Lancaster was at a low altitude before the crash. Maybe attempting a crash landing as 7 out of 8 crew members could be identified at that time, some still with unopened parachutes. This would be consistent with witness reports.

Recovery number:	:	
Location of recovery	:	<u>Alkmaar</u>
Transport	:	(crossed out) and (crossed out), Alkmaar.
Number of engines	:	4.
Loading station	:	Alkmaar.
Recovered at	:	22, 23, 24 and 25 Aug. 1944
Transport number	:	06313595
Truck numbers	:	NS. 61332, NS 62266, NS 57613.
Remarks:		
The lorry which we would receive from <u>Rondhouthandje van Vulpen</u> from Zeist, over the A.B.D. did not materialize. The tools were brought to Alkmaar with <u>"De Baron"</u> which went over the <u>Afsluitdijk</u> to Leeuwarden.		
<u>Cost accounting:</u>		
Rewarded	hourly wage	22/8 23/8 24/8 25/8
(name crossed out)	0,70	14 15% 16 14% 46,55
(name crossed out)	0,70	14 15% 16 14% 46,55
(name crossed out)	0,70	14 15% 16 14% 46,55
(name crossed out)	0,70 14	15% 16 14% 46,55
(name crossed out)	0,70	14 15% 16 14% 46,55
(name crossed out)	0,70 14	15% 16 14% 46,55
	Total	269,88
Social charges 30 %.....		
Accommodation 6 men 4 days.....		
Telephone.....		
Miscellaneous.....		
Bike rental.....		
Travel money 5 people.....		
Horse and wagon.....		
Torch cutting of a wing.....		
Tip for driver.....		
Car costs of La Salle		
estimated at.....		
Car company Mijts, 36 hours at 12,- rate		
Total costs.....		

Transcription of recovery record. The report of the salvage team is a restricted document, as the company and people involved were sentenced after the war.. Maze in the law is that transcriptions are not prohibited, which has enabled this transcription to be taken (almost identical in both words and lay-out to Dutch original)



Letter received from the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund regarding a temporary allowance.

PATRON : H.M. THE KING.  
PRESIDENT . H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT.  
CHAIRMAN : THE RT. HON. LORD RIVERDALE, G.B.E.

V. P. Kane - Sindoor  
Squadron Leader,  
~~Joint Secretary.~~

**Tuesday 12th September 1944**

Areal photo of Alkmaar taken on the 12th September 1944 is one of a whole photo run, made by a Photo Reconnaissance Spitfire of 541 Squadron. The red circle, mid bottom, indicates some ground disturbance, it even seems a shallow irregular dent in the normally flat Dutch meadows. It would fit with the assumption that the Lancaster PB148 crashed from low altitude. Other crater-like irregularities close to, or at ditches are ordinary drinking ponds for cattle..





Tuesday 26th September 1944

Letter from the Air Ministry confirming Michael Stuart was appointed a commission as Pilot Officer.

Tel. No. :  
GERRARD 9234, Ext.  
Correspondence on the subject of  
this letter should be addressed to  
THE UNDER-SECRETARY  
OF STATE.

AIR MINISTRY (P.4(Cas.)),  
and should quote the reference  
P.421927/3/44/P.4.Cas.B.1./Comm.

Your Ref.

AIR MINISTRY,  
73-77, OXFORD STREET,  
LONDON, W.1.

26<sup>th</sup> September, 1944.

Madam,

I am directed to inform you that your husband, 1322671 Flight Sergeant Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, who is missing as the result of air operations on the night of 18th/19th August, 1944, has been appointed to a commission in the Royal Air Force as Pilot Officer on probation with effect from 18th August, 1944.

His number is now recorded as 183715.

I am, Madam,  
Your obedient Servant,



for Director of Personal Services.

Mrs. M.S. Layton-Smith,  
48A, Eden Street,  
Cambridge.



Tuesday 1st November 1944

All personal effects of Michael Stuart are being sent to his next of kin, Norah May.

Telephone No:-  
Colnbrook 231/232/233

Central Depository,  
Royal Air Force,  
Colnbrook,  
Slough, Bucks.

In reply please quote  
reference:-  
**BW 23833**

**1. 11.44**

**162715 P/O LAYTON-SMITH**

Dear *Madam*,

In accordance with Air Ministry instructions the personal effects of the above named, as enumerated on the enclosed inventory, have been despatched to you by passenger train.

When the effects reach you kindly sign and return the inventory, for which purpose a prepaid addressed label is enclosed herewith.

I should like to point out that in the event of the consignment being received by you showing signs of damage in transit, you should, in your own interests, mention the fact on any receipt that you give to the railway company and at the same time perhaps you will be good enough to notify me in order that the necessary action can be taken. Similarly please let me know if the consignment does not arrive within 14 days from the date of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

*A. G. S. Smith*  
Wing Commander, Commanding,  
R.A.F. Central Depository.

**MRS N.M. LAYTON-SMITH**  
**48A EDEN STREET**  
**CAMBRIDGE**

FP56714 PERSONAL EFFECTS OF 1322671 P/SGT. LAYTON/SMITH, M.S.

1 carton contg:

1 bundle correspondence & photos	1 nail file
2 cases with 4 hair brushes	1 Watermans fountain pen
1 wallet of sundry papers	1 F.F.F. badge
1 diary	2 brevets "B"
1 mouth organ	1 repair outfit
1 pr. pumps	1 1939-43 Star ribbon
1 electric iron & flex	2 lipsticks
1 dog coat	1 compass
1 pr. gloves -leather	1 U.S.A. compact
1 balaclava	2 keys on ring
1 scarf	
1 towel	
1 metal cigarette case marked M.S.L-S (less lighter)	
1 wrist watch (broken)	
1 pack cards	
1 pack domino cards	
1 set of 3 darts in box	
1 Crucifix in box (broken)	
1 pocket torch -unserviceable	
1 shaving brush	
2 razors	
1 toothbrush	

Thursday 21st December 1944

A telegram sent by the Air Ministry confirms that Michael Stuart lost his life as a result of air operations on the 19th August.

48 A ONE 73 W 1 PC 52 ONE 20 DEC ONE  
RECEIVED 19/9/44 1831 A ONE  
PRIORITY  
Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.  
AM 4 09 99  
11.10 LDN TELEX OHMS  
From TSCA PRIORITY CC D MRS MS LAYTONSMITH 48 A EDEN ST  
CAMBRIDGE  
= FROM AIRMINISTRY 73 OXFORD ST W 1 PC 52  
20 DEC DEEPLY REGRET TO ADVISE YOU THAT ACCORDIN  
TO INFORMATION RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL  
RED CROSS COMMITTEE YOUR HUSBAND F/SGT MICHAEL  
STUART LAYTONSMITH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE LOST HIS  
LIFE AS THE RESULT OF AIR OPERATIONS ON 19/8/44  
STOP THE AIR COUNCIL EXPRES THEIR PROFOUND SYMPATHY

Wednesday 27th December 1944

Confirmation from the Air Ministry that, further to information provided by the International Red Cross, Michael Stuart is now believed dead.

Telephone No.: GERRARD 9234  
Trunk Calls and Telegraphic Address: "AIR MINISTRY," LONDON  
P.421927/3/P.4.A.2.  
AIR MINISTRY,  
(Casualty Branch),  
73-77 OXFORD STREET,  
LONDON, W.1.  
27 December, 1944.  
Madam,  
I am commanded by the Air Council to inform you that they have with great regret to confirm the telegram in which you were notified that, in view of information now received from the International Red Cross Committee, your husband, Pilot Officer Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, Royal Air Force, is believed to have lost his life as the result of the air operations on the night of 18th/19th August, 1944.  
The Committee's telegram, quoting official German information states that your husband was killed on 19th August. It contains no information regarding the place of his burial.  
Although there is unhappily little reason to doubt the accuracy of this report, the casualty will be recorded as "missing believed killed" until confirmed by further evidence, or until, in the absence of such evidence, it becomes necessary, owing to  
Mrs. M. S. Layton-Smith,  
48a, Eden Street,  
Cambridge.  
/lapse

lapse of time to presume, for official purposes, that death has occurred. In the absence of confirmatory evidence death would not be presumed until at least six months from the date when your husband was reported missing.  
The Air Council desire me to express their deep sympathy with you in your grave anxiety.  
I am, Madam,  
Your obedient Servant,  
Charles Evans




Day 13th February 1945

A letter from the Air Ministry confirming Michael Stuart was buried on the 21st August 1944 and providing the location of the grave.

TELEPHONE : GERRARD 9234  
Extn.....

Any communications on the subject of this letter should be addressed to :—  
THE  
UNDER SECRETARY  
OF STATE,  
and the following number  
quoted :— P.421927/3/P.4.B.4.  
Your Ref. ....



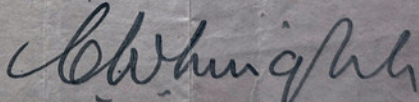
AIR MINISTRY  
(Casualty Branch),  
73-77, OXFORD STREET,  
W.1.  
13 February, 1945.

Madam,


I am directed to refer to a letter from this Department dated 27th December, 1944, and to inform you with regret that a further report has now been received from the International Red Cross Committee, Geneva, which unhappily confirms that your husband, Pilot Officer Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, Royal Air Force, lost his life on 19th August, 1944, and was buried two days later in grave number 264, Row 10, in the Parish Cemetery, Bergen, approximately five miles north west of Alkmaar, North Holland.

In order that the Department may be in a position to close your husband's service estate, action to presume his death for official purposes will now proceed, and you will be informed when this is completed.

In conveying this information, I am to express the deep sympathy of the Department with you in your bereavement.

I am, Madam,  
Your obedient Servant,  
  
for Director of Personal Services.

Mrs. M.S. Layton-Smith,  
48a, Eden Street,  
Cambridge.



Friday 30th March 1945

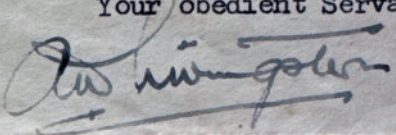
A further letter from the Air Ministry confirming that for official purposes, the death of Michael Stuart would now be presumed.

<p>Tel. No.: GERRARD 9234, Ext. _____</p> <p>Correspondence on the subject of this letter should be addressed to THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE, AIR MINISTRY (P.4 (Cas.)), and should quote the reference <u>P. 421927/44/P.4.B.8.</u></p> <p>Your Ref. _____</p> <p>Madam,</p>	<p>AIR MINISTRY, 73-77, OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.1.</p> <p style="color: red;">30 MAR 1945</p>
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With reference to the letter from  
this Department of the 13th February, 1945,  
I am directed to inform you that action has  
now been taken to presume, for official  
purposes, that your husband, Pilot Officer  
M.S. Layton-Smith, lost his life on the 19th  
August, 1944.

I am to express the sympathy of the  
Department with you in your great loss.

I am, Madam,  
Your obedient Servant,



for Director of Personal Services.

Mrs. M.S. Layton-Smith,  
48A, Eden Street,  
Cambridge.



**Sunday 2nd September 1945**

Six years and 1 day after it started, the Second World War was declared over.

Bergen Parish Cemetery was renamed after the war as Bergen General Cemetery.

The Imperial War Graves Commission were entrusted with permanently commemorating those who died in the service of the Allied cause.

They placed temporary headstones in English and consulted with family members to agree the inscription for a permanent headstone.



*Temporary headstone of Michael Stuart Layton-Smith*



*Permanent headstone of Michael Stuart Layton-Smith, the grave now identified as Plot 2, Row A, Grave 10 at Bergen Cemetery, Kerkedijk*





RECORD OF SERVICE

OF

PILOT OFFICER MICHAEL STUART LAYTON-SMITH (183715)

DATE OF BIRTH: 25 February 1922

PREVIOUS SERVICE:

Enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve as	24 Jul 41
No 1322671 Aircraftman Class 2. Aircrafthand/Pilot	25 Jul 41
Transferred to the Reserve	20 Oct 41
Embodied for service	7 Feb 42
Reclassified Leading Aircraftman under training Pilot II	31 Oct 42
Remustered under training Air Bomber	19 Mar 43
Promoted Sergeant/Air Bomber	19 Mar 44
Promoted Temporary Flight Sergeant	17 Aug 44
Discharged on appointment to a Temporary Commission	

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS:

Granted a commission for the emergency as a Pilot Officer	
(on probation) in the General Duties Branch of the	
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve	18 Aug 44
Death Presumed on	19 Aug 44

POSTINGS AND ATTACHMENTS:

Recruit Centre Oxford	To Enlist	24 Jul 41
No 1 Aircrew Reception Centre	United Kingdom	20 Oct 41
No 7 Initial Training Wing		29 Nov 41
No 50 Group Pool		18 Mar 42
No 31 Personnel Depot	North American Continent	23 Mar 42
Moncton	"	29 Apr 42
31 Personnel Depot		4 May 42
Turner Field (attachment)	"	1 Jun 42
Cockerton Field	"	7 Sep 42
Komposite Training School Trenton	"	28 Oct 42
No 31 (Bombing and Gunnery)		
Picton	"	7 Nov 42
No 33 Air Navigation School	"	5 Feb 43
No 31 Personnel Depot Moncton	"	23 Mar 43
Home Establishment	United Kingdom	27 Mar 43
Harrogate	"	5 Apr 43
No 3 (Operational) Air Force	"	18 May 43
Unit		
No 26 Operational Training Unit	"	15 Jun 43
No 1651 Conversion Unit	"	16 Sep 43
No 90 Squadron	"	15 Oct 43
No 7 Squadron	"	13 Jan 44
	Flying	
	operationally	





AWARDS:

Air Observers Badge	19 Mar 43
Temporary Award	
Pathfinder Force Badge	30 Aug 44
Permanent Award	
Pathfinder Force Badge	18 Aug 44

CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS:

1939/45 Star  
Aircrew Europe Star with Clasp "France and Germany"  
War Medal 1939/45

I D BLACKWOOD  
for Air Secretary







