

# RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL

## “Cranwellian Dambusters”



Two Cranwellian Pilots of 617 Sqn  
'Hoppy' Hopgood & 'Dave' Shannon

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# Context

Everybody knows about the Dambusters' Raid of 16/17 May 1943, well, nearly everybody.

The raid is well documented, not least in the autobiography '*Enemy Coast Ahead*' of 617 Sqn Cdr, Wg Cdr Guy Gibson VC, and the 1955 film '*Dambusters*'. Having planned to send 20 specially adapted Lancaster aircraft to bomb the Mohne, Edersee and Sorpe dams of the industrial Ruhr heartland, 19 set out under Operation *Chastise* on the night of 16 May 1943, each armed with the 'Upkeep' bouncing bomb designed by Sir **Barnes Neville Wallis**. Two dams, the Mohne and Edersee were breached, but at a cost; 53 aircrew were killed and 3 captured, with 8 aircraft destroyed.

Aircraft call sign	Commander	Target	Attacked target?	Hit target?	Breached target?	Returned?	Notes
<b>First Wave</b>							
G George	Gibson	Möhne Dam	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	Raid leader. Mine exploded short of dam. Used aircraft to draw anti-aircraft fire away from other crews.
M Mother	Hopgood		Yes	No	N/A	No	Hit by anti-aircraft fire outbound. Mine bounced over dam. Shot down over the target while attacking. (P/O Fraser and P/O Burcher survived)
P Peter (Popsie)	Martin		Yes	No	N/A	Yes	Mine missed the target.
A Apple	Young		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Mine hit dam and caused small breach. On the homeward flight Lancaster AJ-A was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed along the shoreline 2 km south of the Dutch coastal resort of <a href="#">Castricum aan Zee</a> . All seven crew members lost their lives and are buried at the <a href="#">Bergen General Cemetery</a> .
J Johnny	Maltby		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mine hit dam and caused a large breach.
L Leather	Shannon	Eder Dam	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Mine hit target—no effect.
Z Zebra	Maudslay		Yes	No	N/A	No	Mine overshot target and damaged the bomber, which was shot down over Germany while trying to return.
N Nancy (Nan)	Knight		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mine hit the dam and caused a large breach.
B Baker	Astell	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	Crashed after hitting large-scale power lines outbound.
<b>Second Wave</b>							
T Tommy	McCarthy	Sorpe Dam	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Mine hit the target – no apparent effect.
E Easy	Barlow	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	Crashed after hitting power lines outbound.
K King	Byers		No	N/A	N/A	No	Shot down over the Dutch coast outbound.
H Harry	Rice		No	N/A	N/A	Yes	Lost the mine after clipping the sea outbound. Returned without attacking a target.
W Willie	Munro		No	N/A	N/A	Yes	Damaged by anti-aircraft fire over the Dutch coast. Returned without attacking a target.
<b>Third Wave</b>							
Y York	Anderson	Sorpe Dam	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	Could not find the target due to mist. Landed at Scampton with an armed mine.
F Freddy	Brown	Sorpe Dam	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Mine hit the target – no apparent effect.
O Orange	Townsend	Ennepe or Bever Dam	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Mine hit the target – no apparent effect.
S Sugar	Burpee	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	Shot down over the Netherlands outbound.
C Charlie	Ottley		No	N/A	N/A	No	Shot down over Germany outbound. <a href="#">Frederick Tees</a> was the sole survivor
Totals	19 aircraft	4 dams	11 of 19	7 of 11	3 of 7	11 of 19	2 hit power lines outbound; 3 shot down outbound; 3 returned without attacking; 11 attacked; 1 shot down over target; 2 shot down homebound; 8 attacked target and returned.

Historians may debate the tactical effectiveness of the raid, but the strategic boost of this epic operation to the morale of our nation at that time remains undisputed.

But did you know that there were two pilots from that raid who had been trained at the RAF College? This album attempts to pay tribute to them, John Vere 'Hoppy' Hopgood and David 'Dave' John Shannon. Both underwent advanced flying training at the College SFTS before operational tours.

Whilst at 106 Sqn, 'Hoppy' Hopgood had impressed Guy Gibson who remarked in his own autobiography that Hoppy was the finest pilot with whom he had flown. He was a natural choice as his deputy for the raid.

'Dave' Shannon was the youngest pilot on the raid and was to be awarded a DSO on his 21st birthday by HM the King.

# Flt Lt John Vere (Hoppy) Hopgood DFC\*

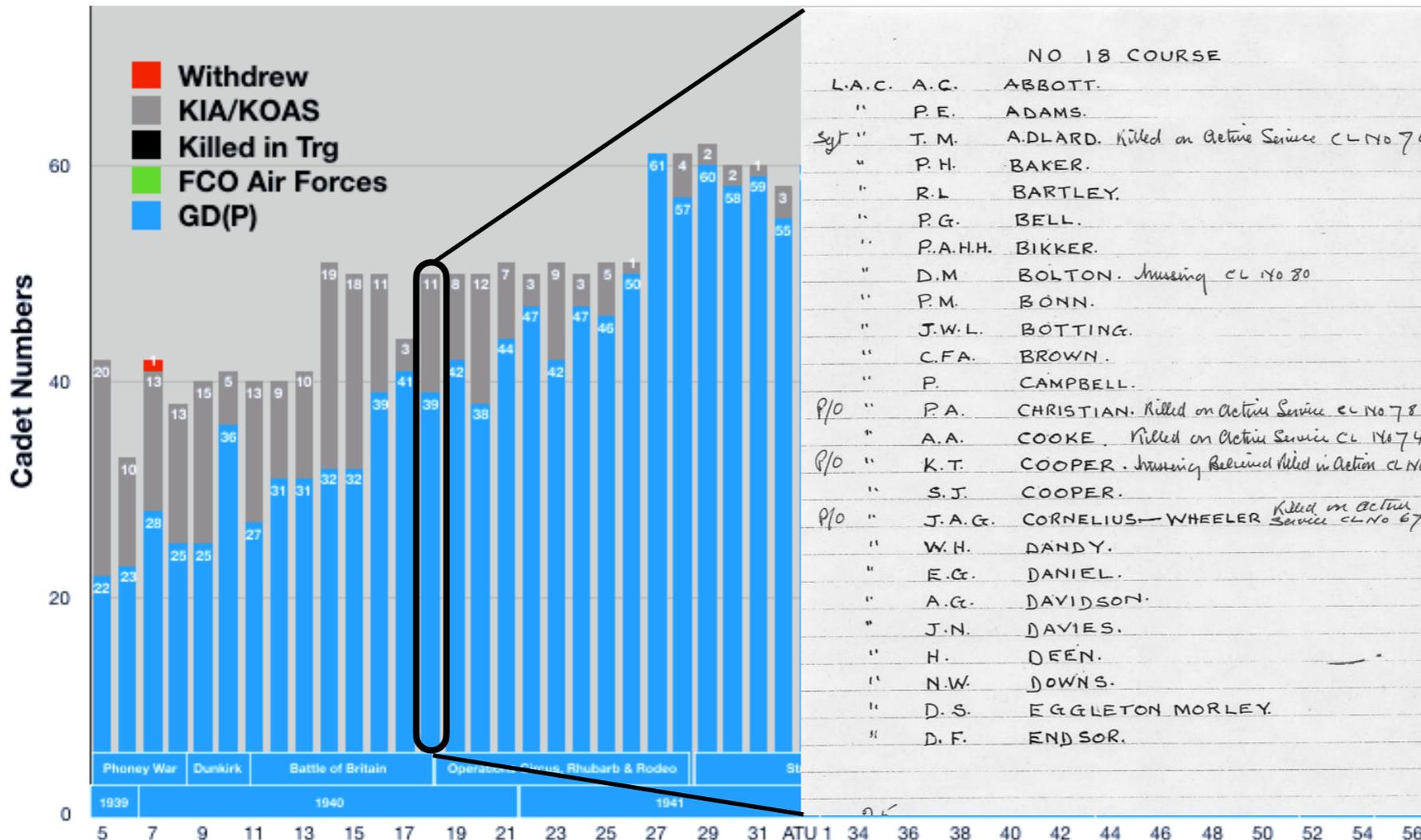


Having joined the Volunteer Reserve in 1940, John Vere Hopgood undertook flying training on No 18 Course, SFTS Cranwell in 1941 and was commissioned in 1942. As a Flight Lieutenant, 'Hoppy' was awarded a DFC in October 1942 after completing 47 missions; he was awarded a bar to the DFC in 1943. He served on 50 Sqn, 106 Sqn and the immortalised 617 (Dambusters) Sqn. Then the newly appointed OC 106 Sqn in 1942, Wg Cdr Guy Gibson recorded his first impressions:

*He was a fair-haired chap about medium height, rather good looking, except for one prominent tooth. .... He was a serious fellow at heart..... As soon as I saw him I thought, "What an ideal squadron type. I like that chap"*

Unsurprisingly, Gibson was to select Hoppy as his Deputy on the Mohne Dam attack. Outbound to the Mohne, his aircraft AJ-M (M for Mother) was hit by flak, injuring Hoppy, his gunners Burcher and Gregory (possibly fatally). The damaged aircraft reached the dam where they attacked at 00:32, ten minutes after Gibson. However, they were struck again by anti-aircraft fire and their bomb was released too late. It bounced over the dam and exploded on a power station on the other side. The aircraft was fatally damaged at this point and Hopgood remained at the controls, gaining height to allow his crew to bail out. AJ-M crashed in a field near Ostönnen, 6 kilometres (3.72 miles) from the dam. Hopgood's body rests in the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at Rheinberg War Cemetery (Coll. grave 17. E. 2-6).

SFTS Trainees 1939 - 1945



NO 18 COURSE

L.A.C.	A.C.	ABBOTT.
"	P.E.	ADAMS.
Sgt	T.M.	ADLARD. Killed on Active Service CL No 70
"	P.H.	BAKER.
"	R.L.	BARTLEY.
"	P.G.	BELL.
"	P.A.H.H.	BIKKER.
"	D.M.	BOLTON. Missing CL No 80
"	P.M.	BONN.
"	J.W.L.	BOTTING.
"	C.F.A.	BROWN.
"	P.	CAMPBELL.
P/O	P.A.	CHRISTIAN. Killed on Active Service CL No 78
"	A.A.	COOKE. Killed on Active Service CL No 74
P/O	K.T.	COOPER. Missing Returned Killed in Action CL No 96
"	S.J.	COOPER.
P/O	J.A.G.	CORNELIUS-WHEELER. Killed on Active Service CL No 67
"	W.H.	DANDY.
"	E.G.	DANIEL.
"	A.G.	DAVIDSON.
"	J.N.	DAVIES.
"	H.	DEEN.
"	N.W.	DOWNS.
"	D.S.	EGGLETON MORLEY.
"	D.F.	ENDSOR.

NO. 18. COURSE

L.A.C.	R.	GEE.
"	G.G.	GOODALE.
"	W.S.P.	GRIFFITHS. Missing CL No 90
Sgt	S.F.	HODSMAN.
L.A.C.	J.C.I.	HOOPER.
"	J.V.	HOPGOOD. 'Hoppy' Hopgood; 617 Sqn; Dambusters 1st wave; killed NW Mohnesee
"	M.J.	HORSEY.
"	T.R.	JENKINS.
"	G.	KERR.
"	D.T.	LEE.
"	I.F.	LIVINGSTONE.
"	D.H.S.	LONSDALE.
"	T.A.	LAMB.
"	F.W.R.	NEWCOMB.
"	P.R.	OWEN. Killed on Active Service CL No 89
"	T.	PRESCOTT-DECIE.
"	R.W.	READ.
"	J.L.	ROWE.
"	G.E.C.	SEALE. Killed on Active Service CL No 159
"	R.M.	SPENCER. Killed on Active Service 4/12/40 CL No
"	R.N.	TAIT. Killed on Active Service 23/12/40 CL No
"	C.F.	UPTON.
"	R.F.	WARTON.
"	F.H.	WILKINSON.
"	S.	WILKINSON.

Cadet Entries (superimposed by Graduation Timeline)

# Sqn Ldr David John Shannon DSO\* DFC\*

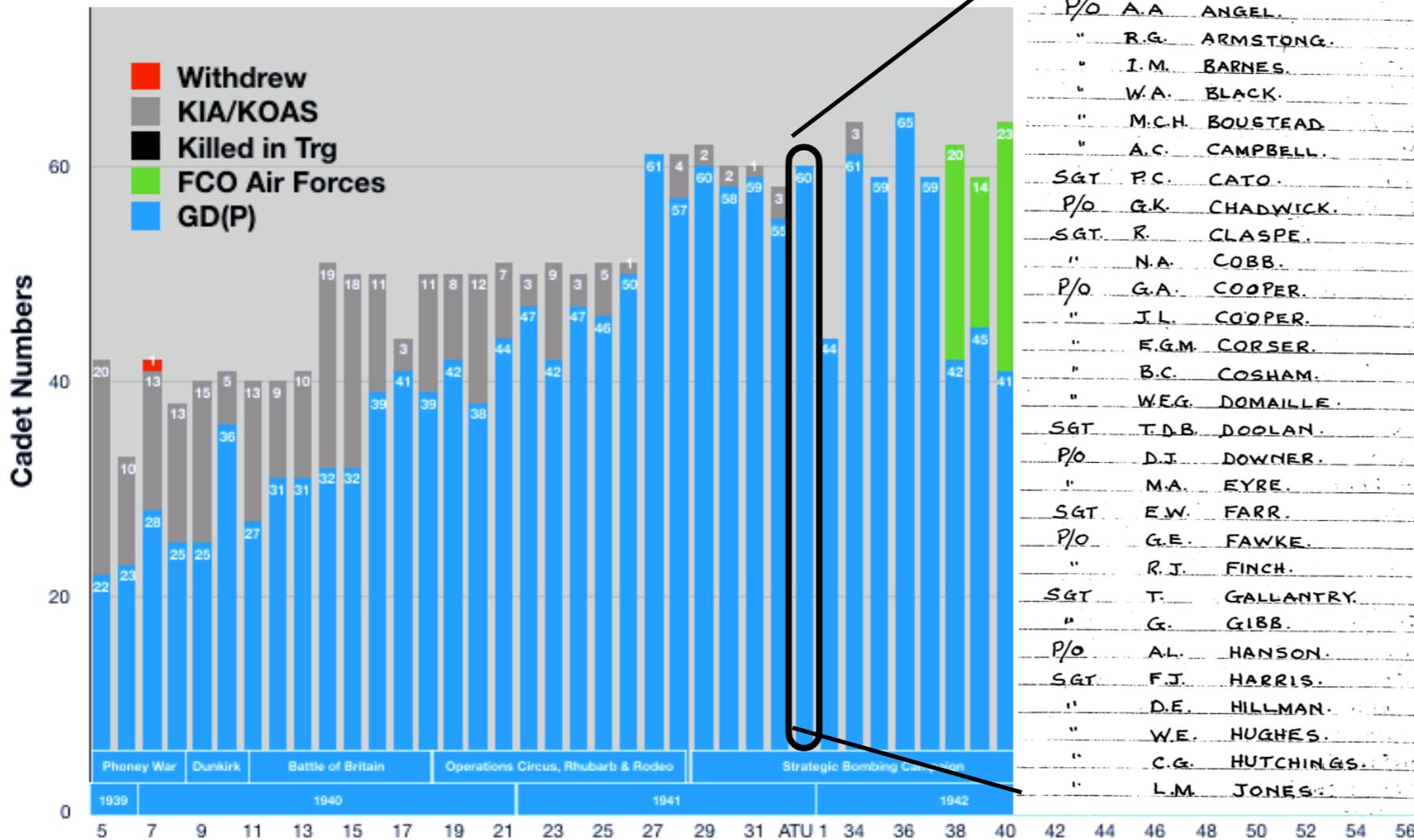
Courtesy of Australian War Memorial: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10684642>



The son of a South Australian member of parliament, Shannon enlisted in the RAAF as soon as he was old enough. After completing his flying training under the Empire Air Training Scheme, he was sent to England for further training at the College SFTS (on 1 AFU) and 19 OTU RAF Kinloss (Whitley bombers,) before being posted to 106 Squadron, where his commanding officer was Guy Gibson. Gibson left to form No. 617 Sqn for special flying operations and asked Shannon, already a young decorated veteran, to join him.

After five of the Sqn's aircraft had dropped their bouncing bombs on the Möhne, Shannon was preparing to make his attack on the dam when it gave way, so he carried on to the Eder with Gibson and three other Lancasters, captained by "Dinghy" Young, Henry Maudsley, and Les Knight. Detailed for the first bombing run at the Eder, Shannon took several attempts to familiarise himself with the area and line up his aircraft, so in the meantime Gibson ordered Maudsley to make his attack. Shannon went in next, delivering his bomb on target. Knight then dropped his bomb, and the dam broke. Shannon landed back at RAF Scampton feeling "terribly elated". His bomb was believed to have caused a crack in the dam's wall, while Knight's completed the breach. Awarded the DSO following the raid, Shannon continued to fly with No. 617 Squadron until October 1944, during which time he earned bars to his DSO and DFC.

SFTS Trainees 1939 - 1945



NO. 1 A.F.U. COURSE.		NO. 1 A.F.U. COURSE.	
P/O	A.A. ANGEL.	SGT.	R.A. JUNEAU.
"	R.G. ARMSTRONG.	"	R.S.D. KEARNS.
"	I.M. BARNES.	P/O	S.G. KING.
"	W.A. BLACK.	SGT.	I.I. KLIMAN.
"	M.C.H. BOUSTEAD.	"	G.P. LACE.
"	A.C. CAMPBELL.	"	A.L. LUSH.
SGT.	P.C. CATO.	"	F.M. MacDONALD.
P/O	G.K. CHADWICK.	P/O	J.R. McDONALD.
SGT.	R. CLASPE.	"	J.T. McINTYRE.
"	N.A. COBB.	"	D.B. McLEOD.
P/O	G.A. COOPER.	SGT.	W.D. MacMANAGLE.
"	J.L. COOPER.	P/O	J.L. MEREDITH.
"	E.G.M. CORSER.	SGT.	W.B. MORGAN.
"	B.C. COSHAM.	"	A.J. MULLIGAN.
"	W.E.G. DOMAILLE.	P/O	K. MUNRO.
SGT.	T.D.B. DOOLAN.	SGT.	N.M. OULSTER.
P/O	D.J. DOWNER.	P/O	D.N. POTTS.
"	M.A. EYRE.	"	R.G. ROWLANDS.
SGT.	E.W. FARR.	SGT.	C.C. SCOTT.
P/O	G.E. FAWKE.	P/O	D.J. SHANNON.
"	R.J. FINCH.	"	H.G. SHOCKLEY.
SGT.	T. GALLANTRY.	SGT.	G. SPADULE.
"	G. GIBB.	P/O	A.J. STEPHEN.
P/O	A.L. HANSON.	"	J.H. STICKELL.
SGT.	F.J. HARRIS.	SGT.	B. STRACHAN.
"	D.E. HILLMAN.	"	J.L. SWIFT.
"	W.E. HUGHES.	"	C. WEAVER.
"	C.G. HUTCHINGS.	P/O	E.F. WHITE.
"	L.M. JONES.	SGT.	J.H.F. WHYTE.
		P/O	F. WIHAK.
		SGT.	R.J. YOUNG.

'Dave' Shannon; 617 Sqn; Dambusters 1st wave; Witnessed Mohne breached and hit Edersee

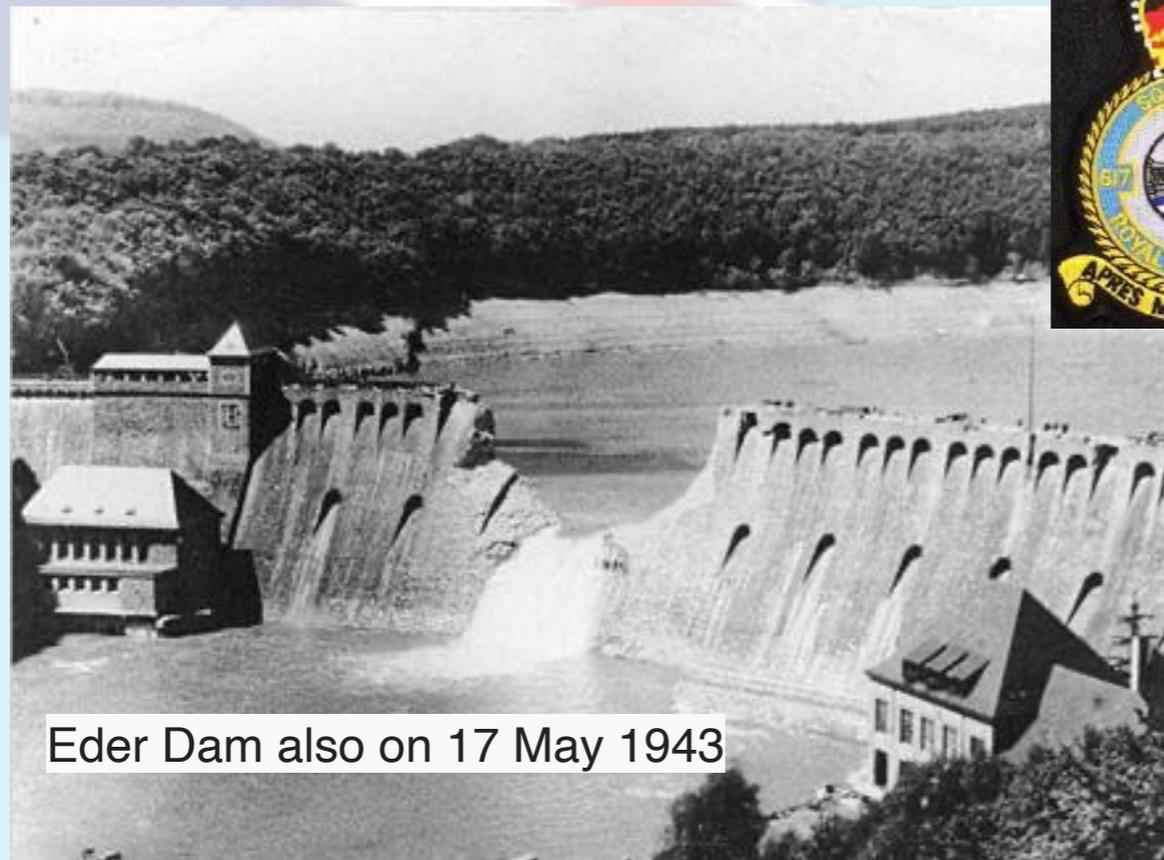
Cadet Entries (superimposed by Graduation Timeline)



The Möhne dam the day following the attacks



"Upkeep" bouncing bomb mounted under Gibson's Lancaster B III (Special)



Eder Dam also on 17 May 1943



A practice release at 60 ft asl