

RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL

“Cranwellian Dambusters”



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

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GREAT BOMBING RAIDS FILMED!

DAY AND NIGHT

R.A.F. MAKES

NAZIS TAKE IT!

NEWS of the DAY

WWII Strategic Bombing - A Cranwellian Perspective

Autumn 1961 College Journal Extract
Regrettably Author Unknown

Summarising:

"History of the Second World War: The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany 1939-1945" (4 Volumes)

By Sir Charles Webster and Dr Noble Frankland (HMSO)

THE BOMBER IN PERSPECTIVE

bombing force in order to deter a possible enemy. That was clear enough. But what that force should bomb was another matter. Should it, like the other two services, attack its opposite number? Or should it attack the enemy's navy and army? Or would it be better employed in attacking the enemy's war industries and in this way weakening his armed forces? Or was it possible by bombing the enemy's homeland to weaken not only his power to resist but also his will to resist? There were those who believed that the war could be won solely by an air offensive against the enemy's homeland. This would be an offensive against the economy and morale of a nation, an offensive in which the navy and army played no part except to contain the enemy whilst the aerial onslaught was launched.

In 1939, there were those in high places who remembered the first world war with its Gothas and U-boats and who believed that Germany would be brought to her knees solely by an air offensive and a sea blockade. By 1945, they had been proved wrong on both counts. The air offensive and, to a lesser degree, the blockade were important and decisive factors but they were not the only factors. Germany had to be attacked and occupied by the army. The failure of Bomber Command was its failure to defeat Germany singlehanded; its success was to make Germany's defeat by the Allied armies possible and assured.

The authors trace this failure and success in detail. They divide the war years into four phases — the opening of the offensive and the transition to area bombing (Sep. 39 to Oct. 41), the mounting offensive (Nov. 41 to Dec. 42), the combined bomber offensive (Jan. 43 to Feb. 44), and the culmination of the offensive (Mar. 44 to May 45).

In such a complex story it is difficult to decide on the turning points. During the first phase, the most important turning point was the realisation that precision bombing by day was impossible without adequate fighter cover. The Spitfire and Hurricane, which had won the first great victory of the R.A.F., had insufficient range. There were two alternatives — to build fighters with a greater range or to bomb at night. When the Americans were faced with a similar dilemma in 1943 they chose to develop a long range fighter. In this way they were able to establish and keep the

day initiative which was so important during the last phase of the war. But in 1940 the British Air Staff chose to bomb at night, as did the Luftwaffe faced with the same problem in the same year. It was a choice of doubtful virtue. Air Commodore Coningham said in 1939 with remarkable foresight that there would be 'a never ending struggle to circumvent the law that one cannot see in the dark.'

Precision bombing at night was a failure. The crews could not navigate with any certainty in the dark and, if they reached the target, they could not bomb it accurately. It took some time for the Air Staff to realize how little damage was being done. This was the second turning point. Precision bombing was abandoned in favour of area bombing. This was a negative rather than a positive decision, but as Kitchener said, 'In war you must do what you can do, not what you would like.'

Navigational and bombing aids were essential; and so was a bomber with a greater range and bomb load. The new aids and the new bomber went into action in 1942, under Bomber Command's new C-in-C, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris. This was the third turning point. Under Harris the Command was to grow in authority and size. The bomber offensive was much criticised in 1942; Harris determined to assert the Command's authority by a demonstration of its growing power. This he did by the Thousand Bomber raid on Cologne. At that time the Command had 29 Lancasters; in 1945 it had 1087 — sufficient for a Thousand Bomber raid by Lancasters alone!

Harris was persuaded by personal conviction and by the situation in which he found himself that area bombing was the only strategy open to him. In his battle for the aids and the resources he so desperately needed, he overstated his case. 'Victory, speedy and complete,' he said 'awaits the side which first employs air power as it should be employed.' It was true, as his critics have conceded, that strategic bombing was the best, and, in fact the only, contribution that could be made at that time towards winning the war. But the claim that bombing alone could win the war was never tested by events. Harris was never given a free hand or the resources which he deemed necessary.

But the evidence contained in 'The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany' points to the conclusion that he would have been proved wrong. There are three reasons for believing this. First, although the Battles of the Ruhr and Hamburg in 1943 went to Bomber Command, the Battle of Berlin undoubtedly went to the Luftwaffe. The absence of a long range fighter to protect the night bomber force was the determining factor. In March 1944, Harris conceded the Battle of Berlin to the Germans. Whether the growth of the German night fighter force from 665 aircraft in 1943 to 1047 aircraft in 1944 could have been prevented by precision bombing or more intensive area bombing is a difficult question — and the crux of the problem which faced the Air Staff and Harris. The Air Staff were moving more and more towards precision bombing whilst Harris stoutly defended area bombing.

Second, the German war economy, as can be seen from the figures above, was far from exhausted by the continuous onslaught during 1943 and 1944. The production of armaments continued to rise until the last quarter of 1944. This increase took place in spite of, and almost as a result of, the attacks on the Ruhr and Hamburg. The British Ministry of Economic Warfare failed to appreciate the resilience of the German economy. The truth was that it was never fully extended; there was a great deal of slack which could be taken up to offset the effects of bombing and even to increase production. The idea that the German economy was under such strain that it would fall apart by the slightest pressure at any point was incorrect.

Third, there was a grave misconception that German morale would be affected by bombing. The citizens of Solingen and Berlin were just as heroic as those of Sheffield and London. Morale was not seriously affected until the spring of 1945 when, with Germany

caught between the advancing Allied armies, defeat and occupation faced the German population.

The final turning point came when Harris was persuaded, one might say forced, to switch his attention to precision bombing, first in preparation for the invasion of Europe and then in support of the Allied armies. To his surprise, he found that precision bombing at night was now possible and effective. Oil and communications, which had always been on his list of targets but which had always been studiously ignored in favour of the area bombing of city centres, proved sensitive target systems. Whether an earlier attack on these systems would have shortened the war is open to debate. The earlier attacks on the ball-bearing industry at Schweinfurt had proved difficult and ineffective; it was those failures which had encouraged Harris in his suspicion of 'panacea' targets.

Professor Medlicott has said in his book 'The Economic Blockade,' 'Thus in the last phase of the war the full range of economic weapons was at last being used with the deadly effect that the early economic planners had postulated; and the German fuel disaster had proved that there was after all an Achilles heel. But it had been struck by the bomber and not by the blockade.'

The authors conclude their history with a brilliant survey in which they say strategic bombing 'made a contribution to victory which was decisive. Those who claim that the Bomber Command contribution under different circumstances might have been yet more effective disagree with one another and often overlook basic facts.' In spite of this warning, the argument will doubtless continue. As Sir Charles Webster and Dr Noble Frankland say in their final paragraph, 'Hind-sight contributes powerfully to wisdom.'

The strategic air offensive against Germany has been the subject of argument since the day it was launched. There was ceaseless debate in the War Cabinet, in the Air Ministry and in the Ministry of Economic Warfare. When the U.S.A. entered the war, yet another dissident voice was added.

After the war the controversy continued, and today there is still considerable interest in the story of the bomber offensive, particularly among students of war. The official history by the late Sir Charles Webster and Dr Noble Frankland will not completely satisfy the protagonists, but it will provide them with enough material to continue the debate — almost indefinitely.

The official history is four volumes long. Its length is, in part, due to the controversial nature of the subject. Every twist and turn of the great debate is fully documented; every contention is ably argued. Much of the evidence is familiar; but much of it is new.

In a short, but important, first section the authors, after defining the terms used in describing the concept of a strategic air

offensive, outline the doctrines which influenced that concept as it was built up during the inter-war years. This section contains the framework on which the whole of the study is based. The second world war was the first in which air power played a decisive part. The principles of war at sea and on land were already fully established and generally accepted. The task of the navy was to achieve and maintain supremacy over the seas to facilitate the movement of men and materials. The task of the army was to engage the enemy on the land, and, in so doing, defeat him. Thus the navy fought the enemy's navy and the army fought the enemy's army. But the task of the air force was less clear. This was not only because of its novelty but also because of its flexibility.

The maxim that 'the bomber will always get through,' which was first formulated in the 1930's, was really as old as the R.A.F. itself. Indeed, it and the R.A.F. had both grown out of the Zeppelin and the Gotha raids on London in 1917. If there were no defence against the bomber, the R.A.F. ought to include a large and powerful

THE JOURNAL

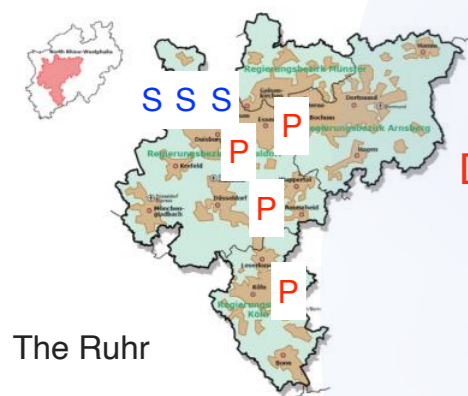
The Royal Air Force College Journal is published three times a year, at the end of the Spring, Summer and Autumn terms. Contributions are invited of articles, poems, photographs and drawings. These need not be confined to Royal Air Force and flying topics, but should be of general rather than technical interest. They should be addressed to 'The Managing Editor of The Journal, Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.' Unsuitable material will be returned. The Managing Editor, Editor and staff will be glad to advise intending contributors.

The Strategic Bomber Offensive - Timeline

PHASE ONE - The Opening Offensive (September 1939 - October 1941)

Turning Point - Night Ops (Absence of long range fighter cover for daytime raids)

The RAF realised that precision bombing by day was impossible without adequate fighter cover. Neither the Spitfire nor the Hurricane, who would be the victors of the Battle of Britain, possessed sufficient range. The two alternatives were to build fighters with greater range or to bomb at night. In 1943, the Americans chose the former option, but in 1940 both the RAF and the Luftwaffe were forced to adopt night operations.



Primary Targets

Duisburg Dusseldorf Essen Koln

Secondary Targets

Bremen Emden Wilhelmshaven

PHASE TWO - The Mounting Offensive (November 1941 - December 1942)

Turning Point - Area Bombing (Precision bombing at night ineffective)

Precision bombing at night was a failure. The crews could not navigate with any certainty in the dark and, if they reached the target, they could not bomb it accurately. It took some time for the Air Staff to appreciate how little damage was actually being achieved. The Butt Report of 18 August 1941 revealed the widespread failure. The second turning point, therefore was the abandonment of precision bombing for area bombing.

PHASE THREE - Combined Bomber Offensive (January 1943 - February 1944)

Turning Point - C-in-C Harris; Lancaster bomber; GEE/OBOE/H2S aids

Navigational and bombing aids were essential; so was a new platform with a greater range and a much increased payload. The new aids and bomber went into operation in 1942, under Bomber Command's new AOC-in-C, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris. Harris determined to assert Bomber Command's authority, initially with 1,000 bomber raids on Koln using all available aircraft; by 1945, he could launch 1,000 Lancasters alone.



PHASE FOUR - The Culmination (March 1944 - May 1945)

Turning Point - Precision Bombing (Harris persuaded; prep for D-Day)

In 1944, when preparations for D-day and tactical allied air operations were well under way, Harris was persuaded to switch his attention to precision bombing. With the evolution of his air power, precision bombing at night was now both achievable and effective. Area bombing gave way to precise attacks on Oil and Communications which had always been on the target priority list. The air war was being won; peace in sight.

Dambusters Raid - 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
First Wave							
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 Castricum aan Zee . All seven crew members lost their lives and are buried at the Bergen General Cemetery .
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.
Second Wave							
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.
Third Wave							
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. Frederick Tees 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.

No. 617 Squadron, based at RAF Scampton,



THE SQUADRON

617 Squadron is based at RAF Marham. The Squadron adopted its name and badge after the famous Dams Raid in 1943. Previous aircraft flown include the Avro Lancaster, Lincoln and Vulcan; English Electric Canberra; and Panavia Tornado. They are now flying the F-35B Lightning fifth-generation combat aircraft.



AFTER ME, THE FLOOD

History of Formation - Courtesy of Key.Aero

Never before had a squadron on its first operation delivered an attack of such precision and to such devastating effect. As well as causing huge damage to German industrial capacity, the raid had also been a great boost to national morale. Then in the 1950s, the publication of a classic book and release of an iconic film with its stirring soundtrack cemented the legend of the 'Dambusters' into the national psyche.

No.617 Squadron is unique in being formed to employ a single weapon on a specific operation. As the RAF turned its attention to which unit would employ Barnes Wallis' innovative weapon, the C-in-C of Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, indicated that he was loathe to remove an entire unit from his order of battle. He was planning for the opening rounds of the Battle of the Ruhr.

Instead, it was decided to form a brand-new unit comprising experienced, specially selected, crews from across 5 Group. On March 21, 1943, a body initially referred to as 'Squadron X' was formed at Scampton, Lincolnshire, commanded by one of the most experienced bomber pilots in the RAF - Wg Cdr Guy Gibson. He brought with him some crews from 106 Squadron that he had recently commanded, while more arrived from other units.

Flt Lt John Vere (Hoppy) Hopgood DFC*

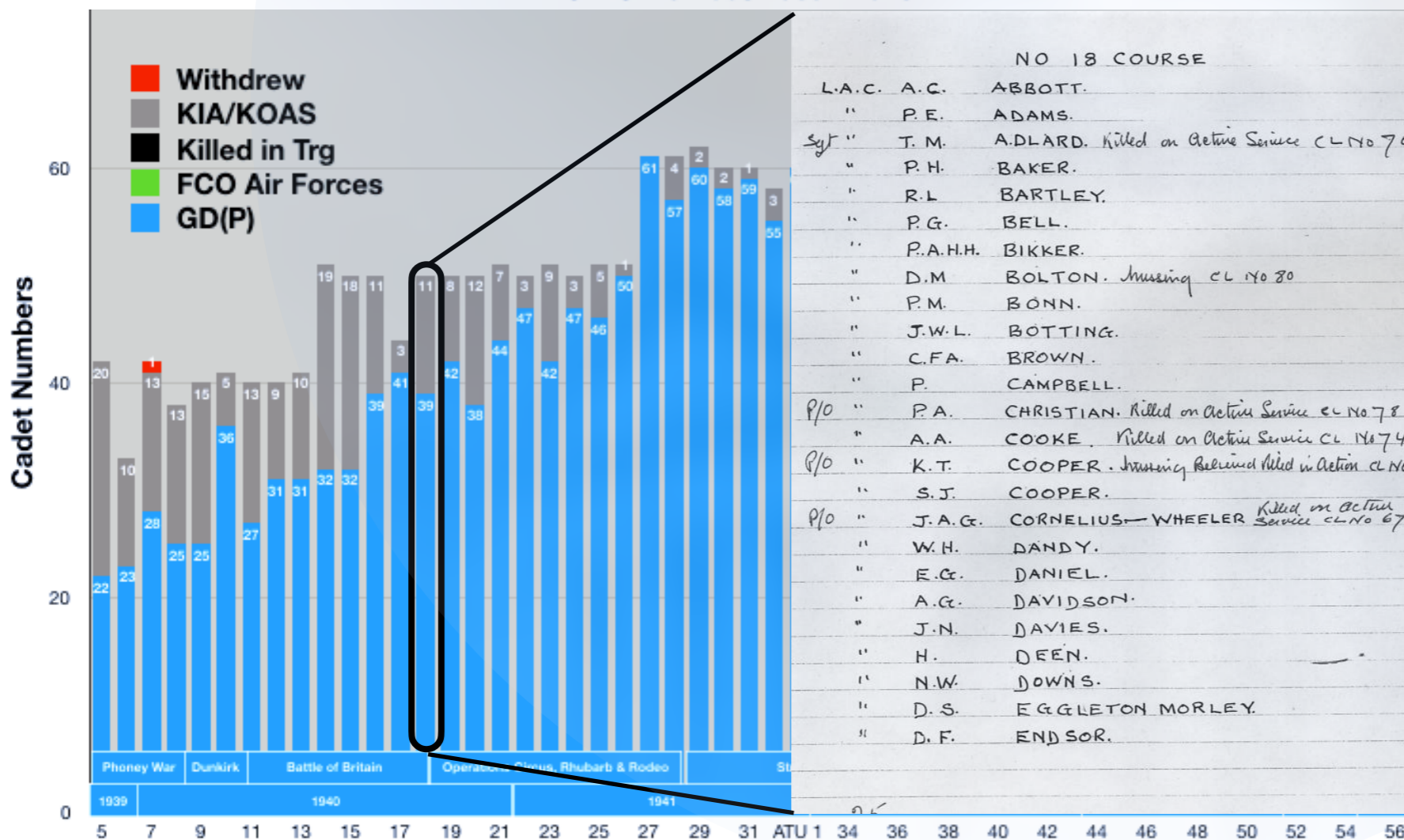


Having joined the Volunteer Reserve in 1940, John Vere Hopgood undertook flying training on No 18 Course, SFTS Cranwell in 1941 and was commissioned in 1942. As a Flight Lieutenant, 'Hoppy' was awarded a DFC in October 1942 after completing 47 missions; he was awarded a bar to the DFC in 1943. He served 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 Mohnese
"	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)

Hoppy and Crew of M-Mother



M-Mother crew for Operation Chastise

Pilot: Flt Lt J V Hopgood DFC & Bar - Killed
Flight Engineer: Sgt C C Brennan - Killed
Navigator: Fg Off K Earnshaw - Killed
Wireless Operator: Sgt J W Minchin - Killed
Bomb Aimer: Flt Sgt J W Fraser - PoW
Front Gunner: Plt Off G H F G Gregory DFM - Killed
Rear Gunner: Plt Off A F Burcher DFM - PoW

Clip of M-Mother's Run

Courtesy of Clip Cafe



Hello, M-Mother.
It's your turn, you can go in now.

HELLO, M-MOTHER.IT'S YOUR TURN, YOU CAN GO IN NOW. - GOOD LUCK.- OK, LEADER. ATTACKING!...
The Dam Busters • 1955

Hopgood's Flying Logbook - Final Entry

YEAR		AIRCRAFT		PILOT, OR 1ST PILOT	2ND PILOT, PUPIL OR PASSENGER	DUTY (INCLUDING RESULTS AND REMARKS)	MULTI-ENGINE AIRCRAFT						PASS- ENGBR	INSTR/CLOUD FLYING [Incl. in cols. (1) to (10)]				
MONTH	DATE	Type	No.				DAY	NIGHT	DEAL	1st PILOT	2ND PILOT	DEAL		1st PILOT	2ND PILOT	DEAL	PILOT	
								(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD																		
MAY	1	LANCASTER	437	SELF	PO BRENNAN PO STANSHAW PO GARDNER PO BURCHER	WINDS FOR VICTORY "BEAT UP" AT HORNCASTLE. FORMATION BOMBING - LOW-LEVEL												
MAY	2	LANCASTER	437	SELF	CREW	AIR TO AIR FIRING				1.50								
MAY	3	LANCASTER	925/G	SELF	PL HAY + CREW	BOMBING + TEST. - (A MONEY)				1.10								
MAY	4	LANCASTER	909	SELF	CREW	TEST.				.55								
MAY	4	LANCASTER	437	SELF	PO STANSHAW PO KNIGHT + CREW PO SPAFFORD + CREW	NIGHT LOW-LEVEL TACTICS.							1.50					
MAY	6	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	TO & FROM MANSTON. LOW-LEVEL FORMATION				2.00								
MAY	9	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	LOW-LEVEL X CRT. TACTICAL PRACTISE				1.10								
MAY	9	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	LOW-LEVEL X CRT. TACTICAL PRACTISE							1.50					
MAY	11	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	TO & FROM MANSTON. LOW-LEVEL FORMATION WITH WINGCO. V.H.F. 1000												
MAY	11	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	STORE DROPPING. 60'. 220 IAS.				.35								
MAY	13	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	BOMBING + TACTICAL PRACTISE				1.25								
MAY	13	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	X CRT. LOW-LEVEL (MOONLIGHT) PRACTISE							2.30					
MAY	14	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	NFT. + BOMBING				.50								
MAY	14	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	FORMATION EXERCISE. LOW-LEVEL (MOONLIGHT)							1.30					
MAY	16	LANCASTER	925	SELF	CREW	OPERATIONS - MOMENT MISSING												
		Summary for MAY 1943																
		UNIT B.F.T. 617 SADM																
		DATE 1.5.43																
		SIGNATURE																
		AIRCRAFT TYPES																
		1 LANCASTER																
		2																
		3																
		4																
		GRAND TOTAL [Cols. (1) to (10)]																
		1009																
		Mins. 25																
		TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD																
		617 SADM.																

Signed off by 'Micky' Martin (P-Popsie), B Flt Cdr, and by David Maltby (J-Johnny) for Wg Cdr Gibson (G-George).

Sqn Ldr David John Shannon DSO* DFC*

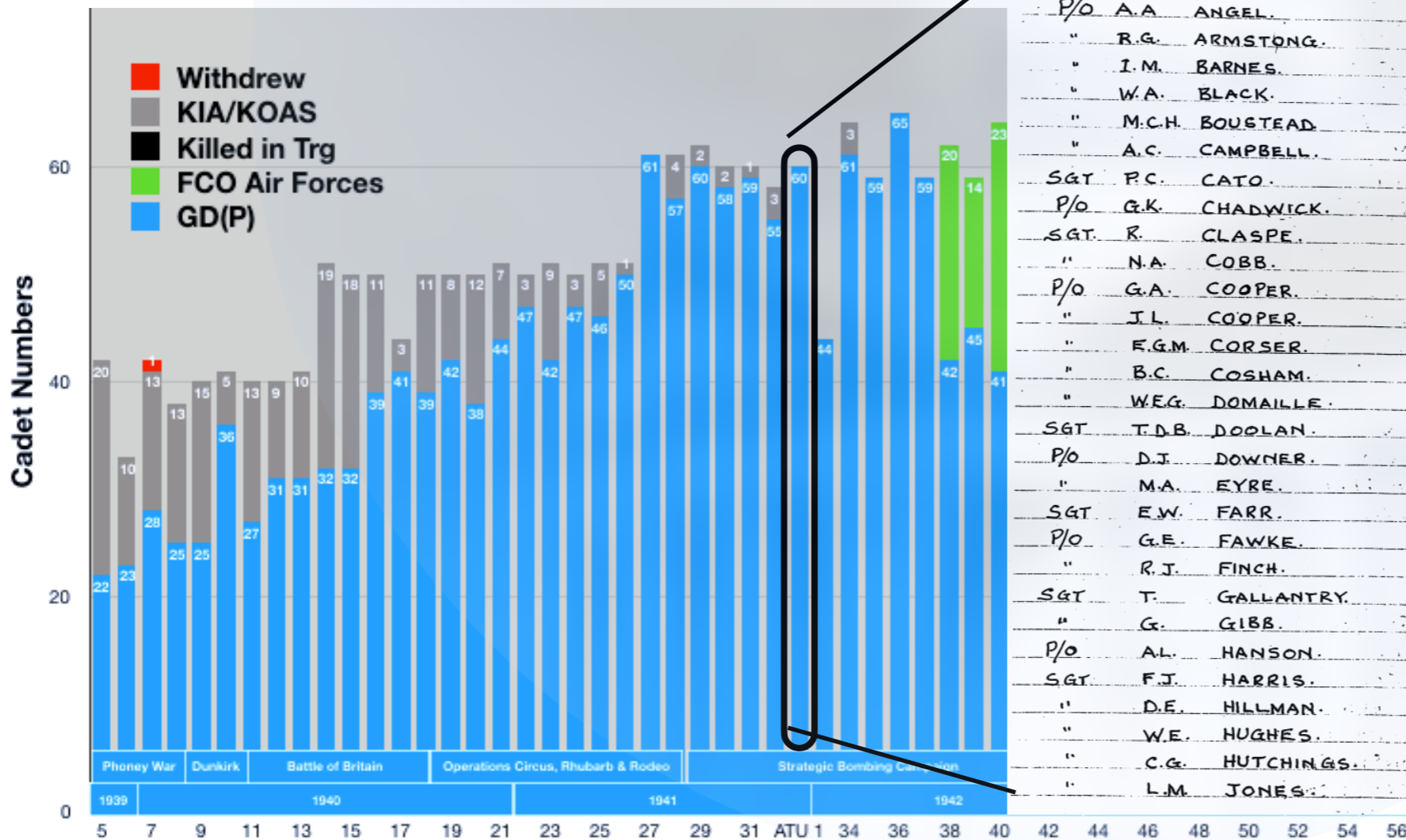
Courtesy of Australian War Memorial: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10684642>



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

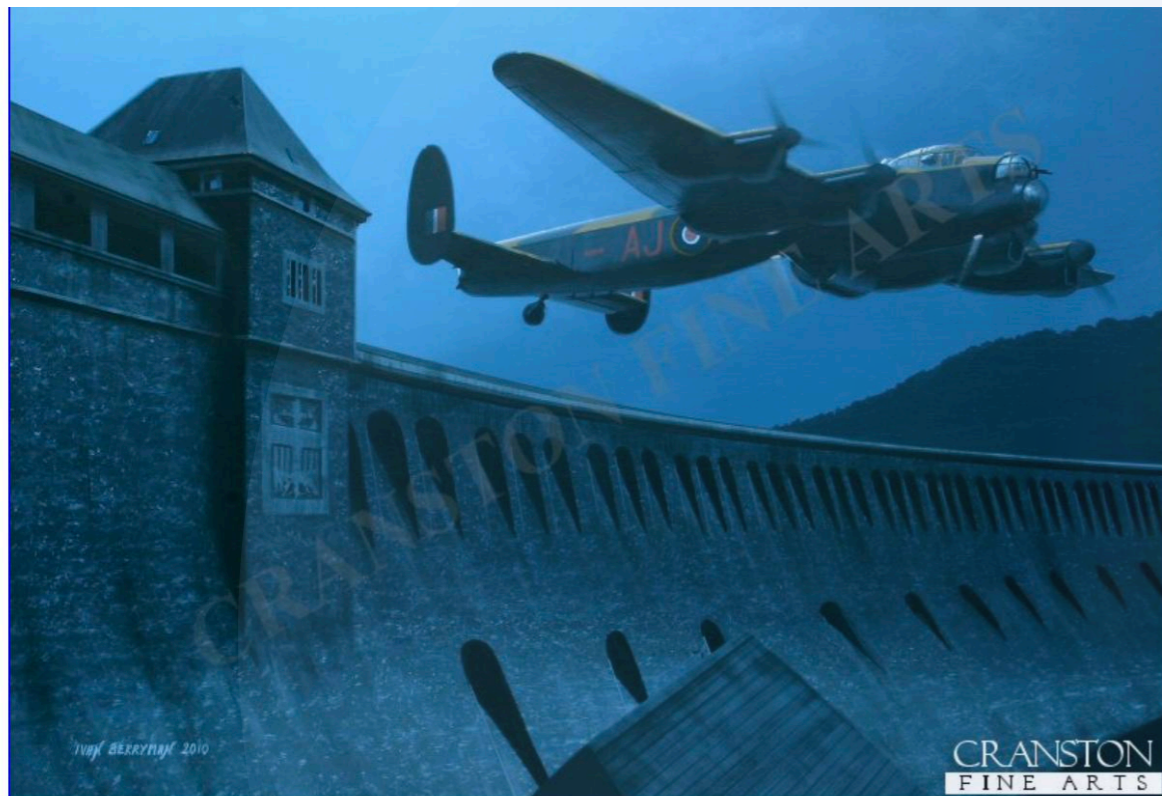


NO. 1 A.F.U. COURSE.		NO. 1 A.F.U. COURSE.	
P/O	A.A. ANGEL.	SGT.	R.A. JUNEAU.
"	R.G. ARMSTRONG.	"	R.S.D. KEARNS.
"	I.M. BARNES.	P/O	S.G. KING.
"	W.A. BLACK.	SGT.	I.I. KLIMAN.
"	M.C.H. BOUSTEAD.	"	G.P. LACE.
"	A.C. CAMPBELL.	"	A.L. LUSH.
SGT.	P.C. CATO.	"	F.M. MacDONALD.
P/O	G.K. CHADWICK.	P/O	J.R. McDONALD.
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 Möhne breached and hit Edersee

Summary of L-Leather's Ops

Courtesy of Cranston Fine Arts



Crew of L for Leather :

Pilot : Flt Lt D J Shannon

Flight Engineer : Sgt R J Henderson

Navigator : Flg Off D R Walker

Wireless Operator : Flg Off B Goodale

Bomb Aimer : Flt Sgt L J Sumpter

Front Gunner : Sgt B Jagger

Rear Gunner : Flg Off J Buckley.

Having arrived at the Eder dam, following the successful breaching of the Mohne on the night of 16th/17th May 1943, Wing Commander Guy Gibson put Flight Lieutenant D J Shannon, flying ED929G, to the task of making the first attack, but he had great difficulty achieving the correct height and approach and had to make a number of abortive runs before finally releasing his Upkeep bomb. AJ-L is shown here making his penultimate pass over the Eder wall, his mine still attached. This dam was eventually breached by Pilot Officer Les Knight, flying ED912(G) whose perfectly placed mine caused a massive breach in the south end of the dam.

Shannon's Flying Logbook

Date	Hour	Type and No	Pilot	Duty	(Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Day	Night
13.5.43	1530	LANC. L 929.	F/L SHANNON	B/A	X COUNTRY + BOMBING ^A	1	20
13.5.43	2105	LANC. L 929	F/L SHANNON.	B/A.	NIGHT X COUNTRY + BOMBING.	2	30
14.5.43.	1345	LANC D 763	F/L SHANNON	B/A	BASE - MANSTON - BASE	2	30
14.5.43	2140	LANC L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	NIGHT EXERCISE.	1	30.
16.5.43	2150	LANC L 929 (F)	F/L SHANNON	D.F.C. BOMB AIMER	OP. N° 14. VIA HOLLAND TO THE HUN. SATISFACTORY ATTACK ON EDER DAM 18. MILES WEST OF KASSEL. AVERAGE HT. 100 FEET.	6	30
			F/S SUMPTER				
			F/O WALKER (N)	D.F.C.			
			F/O GOODALE (W/O)	D.F.C.			
			F/O BUCKLEY (R/O)				
			SGT HENDERSON (FE).				
			SGT JAGGER (F/O) (KILLED OVER 4.5.44)				

SUMMARY FOR	MAY	1943	DAY.	1	14.40.	
UNIT	A. Fl.	617	SOPRN.	NIGHT.	2	15.15.
DATE	6.6.43.		TIME	3		
SIGNATURE		S/L	TOTAL.	4	29.55.	

o/c "A" Flight.

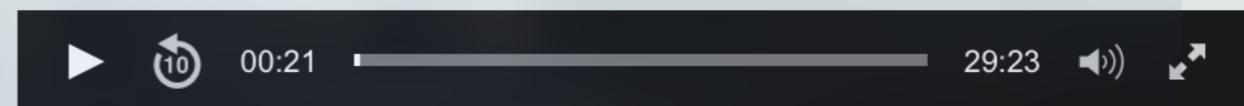
Shannon

IWM Recordings of Shannon's Recollections

Shannon, David John (Oral history)

Click on the URL below to reach the IWM page of Shannon's Recollections

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80007978>



Three half-hour reels.

Sound: © IWM (8177)

3/3



Summary of Participating Aircrew

Courtesy of Dambusters Association

Craft	Pilot	Flt Eng	Navi- gator	Wire- less	Bomber	Front gunner	Rear gunner	Craft	Pilot	Flt Eng	Navi- gator	Wire- less	Bomber	Front gunner	Rear gunner
First Wave								Second Wave							
AJ-G ED932/G	<u>W/Cdr G.P. Gibson (VC)</u>	<u>Sgt Pulford (DFM)</u>	<u>P/O T.H. Taerum (DFC)</u>	<u>Flt Lt R.E.G. Hutchison (bar DFC)</u>	<u>P/O F.M. Spafford (DFC)</u>	<u>F/Sgt G.A. Deering (DFC)</u>	<u>Flt Lt R.A.D. Trevor Roper (DFC)</u>	AJ-E ED927/G	<u>Flt Lt R.N.G. Barlow †</u>	<u>P/O S.L. Whillis †</u>	<u>F/O P.S. Burgess †</u>	<u>F/O C.R. Williams †</u>	<u>P/O A. Gillespie †</u>	<u>F/O H.S. Glinz †</u>	<u>Sgt J.R.G. Liddell †</u>
AJ-M ED925/G	<u>Flt Lt J.V. Hopgood †</u>	<u>Sgt C Brennan †</u>	<u>F/O K. Earnshaw †</u>	<u>Sgt J.W. Minchin †</u>	<u>P/O J.W. Fraser *</u>	<u>F/O G.H.F.G. Gregory †</u>	<u>P/O A.F. Burcher *</u>	AJ-W ED921/G	<u>Flt Lt J.L. Munro</u>	<u>Sgt F.E. Appleby</u>	<u>F/O F.G. Rumbles</u>	<u>Sgt P.E. Pigeon</u>	<u>Sgt J.H. Clay</u>	<u>Sgt W. Howarth</u>	<u>F/Sgt H.A. Weeks</u>
AJ-P ED909/G	<u>Flt Lt H.B.M. Martin (DSO)</u>	<u>P/O I. Whittaker</u>	<u>Flt Lt J.F. Leggo (Bar DFC)</u>	<u>F/O L. Chambers</u>	<u>Flt Lt R.C. Hay (Bar DFC)</u>	<u>P/O B.T. Foxlee</u>	<u>F/Sgt T.D. Simpson (DFM)</u>	AJ-K ED934/G	<u>P/O V.W. Byers †</u>	<u>Sgt A.J. Taylor †</u>	<u>F/O J.H. Warner †</u>	<u>Sgt J. Wilkinson †</u>	<u>P/O A.N. Whitaker †</u>	<u>Sgt C. McA. Jarvie †</u>	<u>F/Sgt J. McDowell</u>
AJ-A ED877/G	<u>Sqn Ldr H.M. Young †</u>	<u>Sgt D.T. Horsfall †</u>	<u>F/Sgt C.W. Roberts †</u>	<u>Sgt L.W. Nichols †</u>	<u>F/O V.S. Mac- Causland †</u>	<u>Sgt G.A Yeo †</u>	<u>Sgt W. Ibbotson †</u>	AJ-H ED936/G	<u>P/O G. Rice</u>	<u>Sgt E.C. Smith</u>	<u>F/O R. Mac- Farlane</u>	<u>Sgt C. B. Gowrie</u>	<u>F/Sgt J.W. Thrasher</u>	<u>Sgt T.W. Maynard</u>	<u>Sgt S.Burns</u>
AJ-J ED906/G	<u>Flt Lt D.J. Maltby (DSO)</u>	<u>Sgt W. Hatton</u>	<u>Sgt V. Nicholson (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt A.J.B. Stone</u>	<u>P/O J. Fort (DFC)</u>	<u>Sgt V. Hill</u>	<u>Sgt H.T. Simmonds</u>	AJ-T ED825/G	<u>Flt Lt J.C. McCarthy (DSO)</u>	<u>Sgt W. Radcliffe</u>	<u>F/Sgt D.A. McLean (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt L Eaton</u>	<u>Sgt G. L. Johnson (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt R. Batson</u>	<u>F/O D.Rodger</u>
AJ-L ED929/G	<u>Flt Lt D.J. Shannon (DSO)</u>	<u>Sgt R.J. Henderson</u>	<u>F/O D.R. Walker (Bar DFC)</u>	<u>F/O B. Goodale</u>	<u>F/Sgt L.J. Sumpter (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt B. Jagger</u>	<u>P/O J. Buckley (DFC)</u>	Third Wave							
AJ-Z ED937/G	<u>Sqn Ldr H.E. Maudsley †</u>	<u>Sgt J. Marriott †</u>	<u>F/O R.Q. Urquhart</u>	<u>WO2 A.P. Cottam †</u>	<u>P/O M.J.D. Fuller †</u>	<u>F/O W.J. Tyther- leigh †</u>	<u>Sgt N.R. Burrows †</u>	AJ-C ED910/G	<u>P/O W. Ottley †</u>	<u>Sgt R. Marsden †</u>	<u>F/O J.K. Barrett †</u>	<u>Sgt J Guterman †</u>	<u>F/Sgt T.B. Johnston †</u>	<u>Sgt F. Tees *</u>	<u>Sgt H.J. Strange †</u>
AJ-B ED864/G	<u>Flt Lt W. Astell †</u>	<u>Sgt J. Kinnear †</u>	<u>P/O F.A. Wile †</u>	<u>WO2 A. Garshowitz †</u>	<u>F/O D. Hopkinson †</u>	<u>F/Sgt F.A. Garbas †</u>	<u>Sgt R. Bolitho †</u>	AJ-S ED865/G	<u>P/O L.J. Burpee †</u>	<u>Sgt G. Pegler †</u>	<u>Sgt T. Faye †</u>	<u>P/O L.G. Weller †</u>	<u>WO2 J.L. Arthur †</u>	<u>Sgt W.C.A. Long †</u>	<u>WO2 J.G. Brady †</u>
AJ-N ED912/G	<u>P/O L.G. Knight (DSO)</u>	<u>Sgt R.E. Grayston</u>	<u>F/O H.S. Hobday (DFC)</u>	<u>F/Sgt R.G.T. Kellow</u>	<u>F/O E.C. Johnson (DFC)</u>	<u>Sgt F.E. Sutherland</u>	<u>Sgt H.E. O'Brien</u>	AJ-F ED918/G	<u>F/Sgt K.W. Brown (CGM)</u>	<u>Sgt H.B. Feneron</u>	<u>Sgt D.P. Heal (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt H.J. Hewstone</u>	<u>Sgt S. Oancia (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt D. Allaston</u>	<u>F/Sgt G.S. MacDonald</u>
								AJ-O ED886/G	<u>P/O W.C. Townsend (CGM)</u>	<u>Sgt D.J.D. Powell</u>	<u>P/O C.L. Howard (DFC)</u>	<u>F/Sgt G.A. Chalmers (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt C.E. Franklin (Bar DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt D.E. Webb (DFM)</u>	<u>Sgt R. Wilkinson (DFM)</u>
								AJ-Y ED924/G	<u>F/Sgt C.T. Anderson</u>	<u>Sgt R. C. Patterson</u>	<u>Sgt J.P. Nugent</u>	<u>Sgt W.D. Bickle</u>	<u>Sgt G.J. Green</u>	<u>Sgt E. Ewan</u>	<u>Sgt A.W. Buck</u>

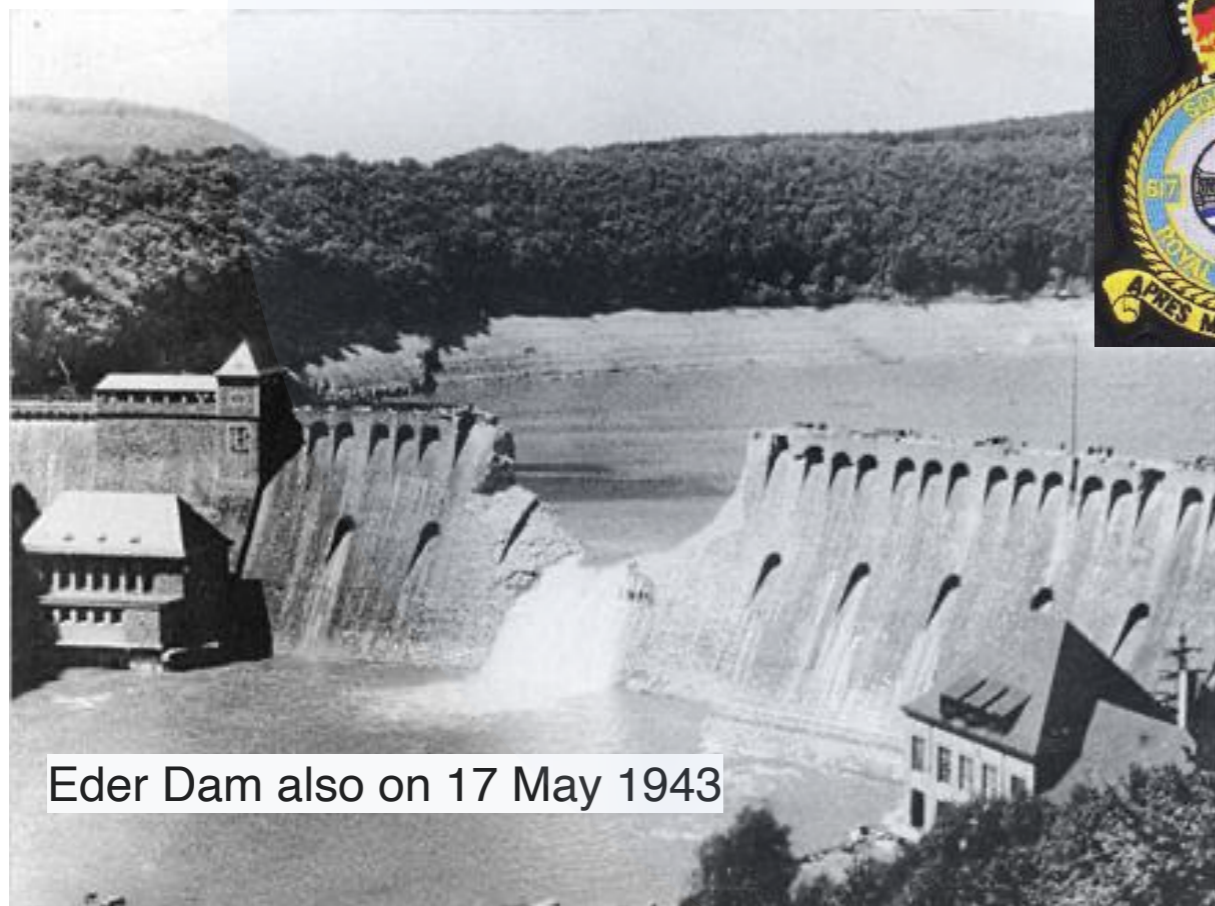
Damage to Dams Taken One Day Later



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

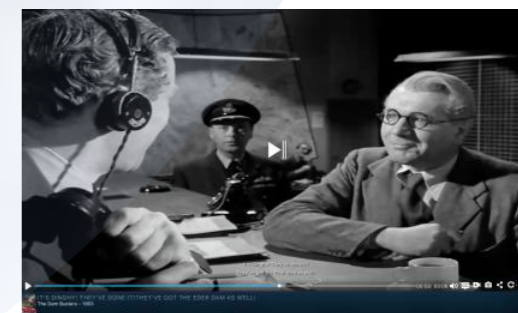
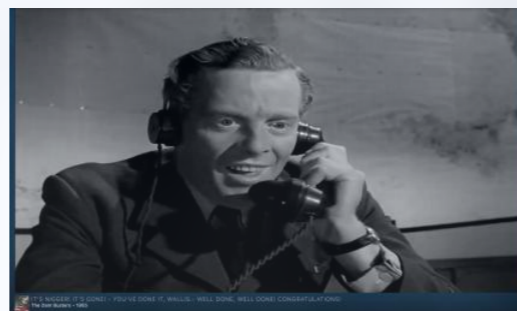


A practice release at 60 ft asl

The Dambuster Codewords



Wg Cdr Guy Gibson's 9-carat gold cigarette case, emblazoned with the codewords indicating the successful breaching of the Moehne & Eder Dams in 1943.



“Goner” - Bomb dropped “Nigger” - Möhne breached “Dinghy” - Eder breached

Dambusters Memorial - Woodhall Spa

Courtesy of IWM



A Cranwellian WWII Commander of 617 Sqn

Sinking of the Tirpitz - East Mezzanine James Brian Tait DSO*** DFC



Tait (fifth from left) standing with crew by the tail of their Lancaster at Woodhall Spa, the day after their successful sinking of the Tirpitz



On 12 November 1944, the Royal Air Force carried out one of the most successful precision bombing attacks of the Second World War, resulting in the sinking of the German battleship 'Admiral von Tirpitz'. The attack was made by 29 Lancasters of Nos 9 and 617 Squadrons.

No fewer than 10 attacks, by RAF and Royal Navy aircraft and by British and Russian submarines, had already been made on the Tirpitz since she had been completed in 1941; the German Navy bragged the ship as unsinkable - rather like her sister ship, the Bismark, sunk in 1941.

Two RAF bomber attacks preceded the successful one of 12 November:

- On 15 September, Nos 9 and 617 Squadrons, operating from Yagodnik near Archangel in Russia, attacked the Tirpitz, but were prevented from making accurate bombing runs by a smoke screen which surrounded the vessel. However, the Tirpitz was hit by one of thirteen 12,000lb Tallboy bombs and was unable to put to sea, a fact not known to the Allies at the time. The ship was towed to an anchorage 4 miles from Tromso.
- On 29 October, the two squadrons made another attack, flying direct from Lossiemouth, with Lancasters fitted with more powerful Merlin 24 engines, lightened by the removal of the mid-upper gun turret, some of the armour plating and other equipment, and fitted with overload fuel tanks. Each Lancaster carried a 'Tallboy' bomb, but again the attack was a disappointment as low cloud interfered with bombing runs. The ship did, however, sustain some damage on this occasion.

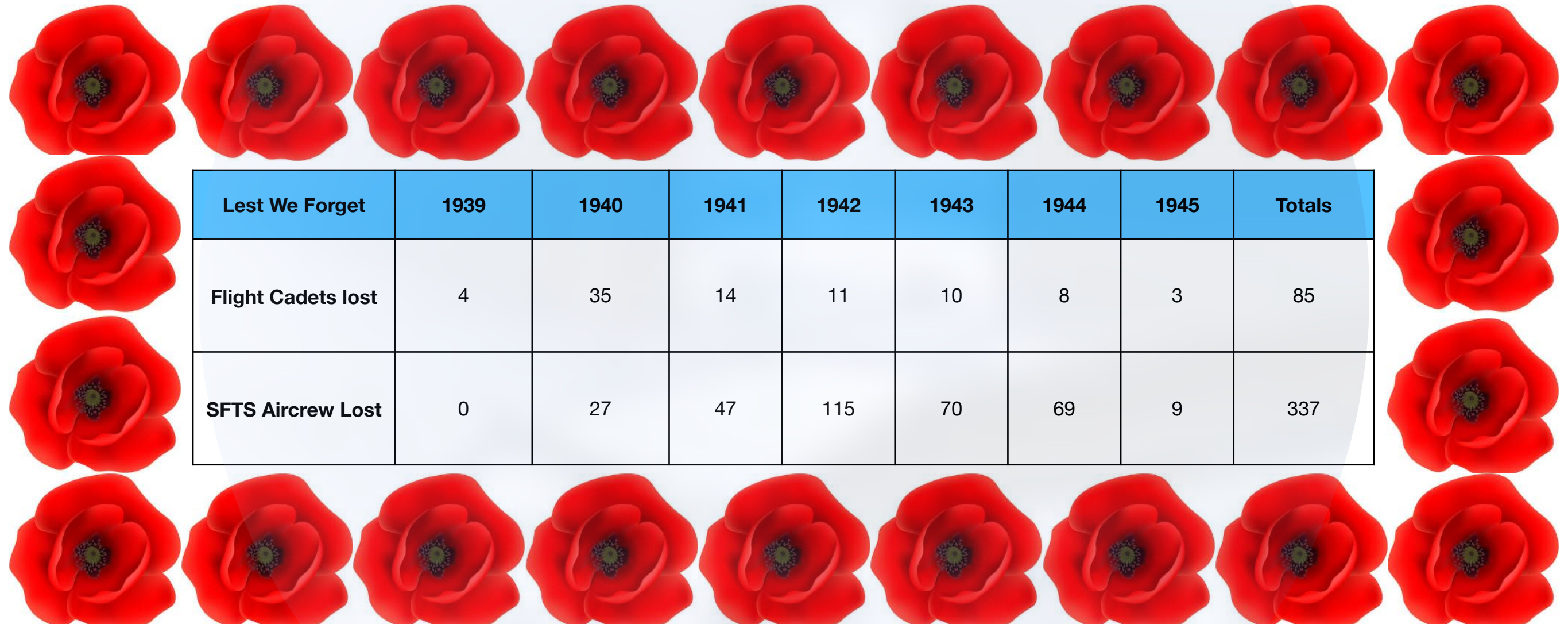
But on 12 November, Lancasters of Nos 9 and 617 Squadrons, led respectively by Squadron Leader AG Williams DFC and Wing Commander JB Tait DSO DFC, took off from Lossiemouth at about 3 a.m. They flew to a rendezvous point, a lake 100 miles south-east of Tromso, at 1,000 feet to avoid early detection by enemy radar.

Climbing to bombing height - between 12,000 and 16,000 feet - they spotted the warship about 20 miles away. This time the smoke screen was out of action and their were no defending fighters.

When the bombers were about 13 miles away, the main guns of the Tirpitz opened fire and were shortly joined by shore batteries and two flak ships. One Lancaster was shot down.

The first Tallboy bombs narrowly missed the target, but then, in rapid succession, came three direct hits. A column of steam and smoke shot up to about 300 feet and within a few minutes the ship had started to list badly. About 10 minutes after the first bomb struck, the Tirpitz had completely turned turtle with only the hull visible from the air.

The Cost of the Strategic Bombing Campaign to Cranwellians



Lest We Forget	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Totals
Flight Cadets lost	4	35	14	11	10	8	3	85
SFTS Aircrew Lost	0	27	47	115	70	69	9	337

Bomber Command - "Cranwellians' Squadrons"

Our analysis suggests that Cranwellian Bomber Command pilots flew with the following Squadrons



227 Squadron

7	9	10	12	15	18	21	23	35	37	38	40	44	46	49	50	51	57	
58	61	75	76	77	78	82	83			85	88	90	97	99	100	101	102	
103	104	105	106	107	108	110	114			115	138	139	141	142	144	149	150	
153	156	157	158	161	162	166					169	170	180	192	196	199	207	
214	218	226	227	239	305	405	408	418	419	420	424	425	427	428	429	432	434	
455	460	464	466	487	514	515	550	576	578	617	620	622	625	626	630	635	640	692