

# F/L C. T. Wilson DFC

Pilot



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References: 97 Squadron Operational Record Books 1939-1943

*Achieve Your Aim* by *Kevin Bending*

Mark Howard

2026

Approved  
George R.I.



J.D. Helm-Armstrong  
Chester Herald  
and Inspector of Royal  
Air Force Badges

College of Arms,  
January, 1939.

**Commanding Officers:**

Wg Cdr D.F.Balsdon

Wg Cdr J.H.Kynoch

Wg Cdr J.H.H.Collier DSO DFC

Wg Cdr G.D.Jones DSO DFC

Gp Capt N.H.Fresson DFC

Wg Cdr E.J.Carter DFC\*

Wg Cdr A.W.Heward DFC\* AFC

Gp Capt P.W.Johnson DSO DFC AFC

(\* denotes Bar)

Early in 1941, a large donation was made to the British Government by the Malay Straits Settlements for the purchase of some Avro Manchester bomber aircraft. In appreciation of this, 97 Squadron was authorized to assume the title of "97 (Straits Settlements) Squadron", and it was reformed in February 1941, at Waddington.

25th February 1941 97 Squadron was scheduled to operate from RAF Coningsby as part of 5 Group. The Squadron began to convert to using Lancasters in January 1942 and, in March of that year, 97 Squadron re-located to Woodhall Spa.

re-formed 25.2.41 as No.97 (B) Sqdn from nucleus provided by No.207 (B) Sqdn at: Waddington Feb 1941-Mar 1941

Coningsby : Mar 1941-Mar 1942

Woodhall Spa : Mar 1942-Apr 1943

Bourn : Apr 1943-Apr 1944

"A", "B" & "C" Flts detached to Gransden Lodge, Graveley & Oakington, respectively during Aug/Sep 1943.

Coningsby : Apr 1944 onwards

Aircraft flown by 97 Squadron

Avro Manchester : Feb 1941-Feb 1942

Avro Lancaster B.I and B.III : Jan 1942 onwards



## List of Operations

- Wilson, C.T. (Pilot)
- F/O 1. 3/4 Sept 43 Berlin,
  2. 5/6 Sept 43 Mannheim,
  3. 15/16 Sept 43 Montlucon,
  4. 16/17 Sept 43 Modane,
  5. 22/23 Sept 43 Hanover,
  6. 27/28 Sept 43 Brunswick,
  7. 7/8 Oct 43 Friedrichshaven,
  8. 8/9 Oct 43 Hanover,
  9. 18/19 Oct 43 Hanover,
  10. 20/21 Oct 43 Leipzig,
  11. 22/23 Oct 43 Kassel,
  12. 3/4 Nov 43 Dusseldorf,
  13. 17/18 Nov 43 Mannheim,
  14. 18/19 Nov 43 Berlin,
  15. 22/23 Nov 43 Berlin,
  16. 23/24 Nov 43 Berlin,
  17. 25/26 Nov 43 Frankfurt,
  18. 26/27 Nov 43 Berlin,
  19. 2/3 Dec 43 Berlin,
  20. 3/4 Dec 43 Leipzig,
  - F/L 21. 16/17 Dec 43 Berlin,
  22. 29/30 Dec 43 Berlin,
  23. 5/6 Jan 44 Stettin,
  24. 14/15 Jan 44 Brunswick,
  25. 27/28 Jan 44 Berlin,
  26. 28/29 Jan 44 Berlin kia.

## From Operational Record Books

### 3/4 September 1943 - Berlin

Runways at Bourn now serviceable – all detachments returned this morning to base from Oakington, Graveley and Gransden. Twenty aircraft detailed for operations against Berlin. All aircraft took off and 18 aircraft attacked the target. Weather was cloudy en route – target area was only clear gap. Early aircraft could see red TIs in good cluster and some fires already taking hold. The attack is considered well concentrated and fires were seen by crews homeward bound from 200 miles away. Defences were moderate and quickly died away and then many searchlights were operating in conjunction with fighters. Two aircraft returned early, one with oxygen supply u/s and another due to rear gunner's oxygen supply failing, rendering him unconscious. After jettisoning bombs, a TI exploded, causing fire in bomb bay which was eventually put out and the aircraft landed safely. Sgt Nordhoff, the rear gunner of F/O Riches crew, was killed by cannon fire from an enemy fighter when over the target. Rear turret and hydraulic system were rendered u/s through damage caused by the fighter. All aircraft returned safely to base. Sgt Nordhoff's body is resting at Oakington and will be conveyed by rail to Liverpool for private funeral.

**EE168B** S/L K.J.Foster (Capt), F/O C.T.Wilson (Pilot), Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O G.G.Watling, Sgts L.C.Jones, G.Harper, H.Pleydell. Up 2003 Down 0357. 1 x 4000lb, 7 x 500lb. Primary target Berlin attacked. 18,000'. No moon. 3/10ths cloud. Bombed on centre of concentration of red and green TI markers not actually in bomb sight. Good concentration of large fires going well.

### 5/6 September 1943 - Mannheim

19 aircraft detailed to attack Mannheim – 15 of which successfully attacked the primary target and 4 returned early due to various technical failures. Weather – clear sky, visibility good, some haze. Bombing was concentrated and well placed. Fires seen to be taking hold and were visible for 100 miles on route home. The raid is considered to be well placed and effective. Defence, heavy flak moderate and some searchlight cones over town. Many enemy aircraft seen and several aircraft seen to fall in flames. All aircraft returned safely to base.

**ED168D** S/L K.J.Foster (Capt), P/O C.T.Wilson (Pilot), Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.C.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1943 Down 0144. 1 x 4000lb, 9 x 500lb. Mannheim attacked. 19,000'. No cloud, vis good. Long bend in river seen. One yellow TI marker in bomb sight at time of bombing. Many bursts but not own seen.

### 15/16 September 1943 – Montlucon

Training programme cancelled for today owing to 16 aircraft being detailed for operations tonight. 16 aircraft took off to raid the rubber works at Montlucon, France. Visibility was good, quite a large amount of cloud over target. Bombing rather scattered, bursts seen between oil tanks and gasometers. Factory chimneys were identified and fires were soon starting and increasing in volume during first 10 minutes and later a major fire giving out flame and dense smoke. The raid was considered very successful from reports. Defences less than negligible. All aircraft returned to base.

**EE107L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.S.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.C.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 2056 Down 0225. 1 x 4000lb, 4 x 1000lb, 5 x 500lb. Montlucon bombed. 6,500'. 9/10ths cloud above. Target identified visually. Bombed on one red TI – in bomb sight. Good fires burning with smoke up to 10,000'.

### **16/17 September 1943 - Modane**

15 aircraft detailed for ops later being reduced to 4 non-markers. Training flights during the afternoon. The four aircraft attacked the marshalling yards at Modane in the Alps. The raid was carried out very successfully in good weather with no flak or searchlights reported. All aircraft identified visually the TIs as being well placed and concentrated. Bomb flashes lit up valley and target details could be identified. All aircraft returned safely to base.

**EE107L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.C.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 2001 Down 0315. 1 x 4000lb, 10 x 500lb. Target Modane attacked. Moonlight, clear sky, vis good. 14,000'. Target identified by red markers and marshalling yards visually. Red TIs in bomb sight when bombs released. Many bursts and one large fire seen.

### **22/23 September 1943 - Hanover**

"Y" cross countries, SBA, fighter affiliation and bombing training. 20 aircraft detailed to attack a target at Hanover and three aircraft to attack Oldenburg. Three aircraft failed to attack Hanover, F/O Moodie dropping bombs on Emden, having oxygen failure. G/C Fresson jettisoned bombs owing to electrical failure, bombs were forced off by hand; and F/S Roberts jettisoned, port inner being u/s also bomb sight u/s. The attacks were made in good visibility. Very little flak reported but many enemy fighters about. Attacks reported scattered but all in built up area. Numerous fires developing. All aircraft and crews returned safely to base.

**EE107L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1920 down 0012. 3 x 2000lb. Primary objective Hanover attacked. 19,000'. Visibility. Target well lit up by fires and flares. Bombed centre of three green TI markers. Carpet of fire was visible 100 miles away from target.

### **23/24 September 1943 – Mannheim**

F/O Wilson on NFT had trouble with undercarriage when coming in to land. Aircraft was circled round the airfield for some while trying to lock the undercarriage. Owing to operations taking place the aircraft was diverted to Newmarket where F/O Wilson carried out a successful landing without damage to aircraft. Sixteen aircraft detailed to attack Mannheim and five aircraft on Darmstadt. Both targets were successfully bombed – flak was negligible but many searchlights were operating with fighters. Visibility was good. Two crews are missing from the attack on Mannheim. F/L Fletcher and crew and W/O Stevenson and crew. S/L Foster and the Gunnery Leader S/L McKinna were with F/L Fletcher. No news has been received since leaving base. All other crews returned safely.

**EE117L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O G.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1918 Down 0038. 1 x 4000lb, 108 incs. Target Brunswick bombed. 18,000'. Clear sky, vis good. Visually identified target – river and centre of town seen. Bombed on red and green TIs – in sight. Too early on target for results.

### 7/8 October 1943 – Friedrichshaven

16 aircraft attacked Stuttgart and four aircraft Friedrichshaven. The target at the former had bad cloud conditions which prevented observation of TIs with any certainty. Glow of fires was seen which were probably from scattered incendiaries. Heavy flak varied from slight to moderate. No searchlights seen and fighter activity was negligible. F/O Cameron's aircraft had damage from incendiaries dropped from above. One incendiary hitting the armour plating behind the Pilot nearly causing disastrous results. At Friedrichshaven there was 10/10ths cloud and no results observed. Defences – heavy H/F, no S/Ls seen, little fighter activity.

**EE107L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 2051 Down 0302. 4 x TI, 4 x 2000lb. Target Friedrichshaven attacked. 19,000'. 6/10ths cloud. Bombed on one red TI marker – in bomb sight. Own TIs seen to cascade. Nothing observed.

### 8/9 October 1943 – Hanover

21 Lancasters detailed for operations with one aircraft reserve. One aircraft was withdrawn, the navigator being sick, another returned early due to oxygen supply being u/s. 19 aircraft attacked the target at Hanover in clear sky and some haze. Good concentration of fires seen. Generally the raid would appear promising but later smoke and haze prevented observations. Slight to moderate H/F and fighters not so active. 17 photos attempted. P/O Nicolls and crew failed to return from this operation. No news has been received.

**JB176K** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt S.A.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 2259 Down 0405. 5 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 4 x 1000lb. Hanover bombed. Clear sky, vis good. 19,000'. Centre of red TIs in bomb sight at time of bombing. Great concentration of TIs seen. Fires, bomb bursts and explosions observed in marked area.

### 18/19 October 1943 – Hanover

Training as per schedule in the morning and NFTs. 15 aircraft detailed for operations. Briefing at 1500 hours. 15 aircraft attacked Hanover. One aircraft – F/L Moodie and crew is reported missing. Weather 9/10ths cloud tops 15,000', vis good. Defences moderate, H/F predicted up to 22,000', heavy at 12,000', searchlights mainly ineffective, fighter opposition reported great. Generally, owing to cloud, success of raid cannot be assessed. Crews reported glow of fires on cloud and fires were seen as crews were leaving target under cloud.

**JB238A** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt S.A.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1734 Down 2240. 4 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 6 x 1000lb. Target Hanover bombed. 20,000'. 9/10ths cloud. Bombed between two green TI markers – in bomb sight. Large bright explosion seen as aircraft left target, also glow from fires could be seen ½ an hour away.

### 20/21 October 1943 – Leipzig

16 aircraft detailed for operations against Leipzig. 14 bombed the primary, one returned early and one aircraft, P/O Painter and crew, are reported missing. Owing to weather, reports are conflicting, some fires were seen and scattered incendiaries. It is doubtful whether all aircraft actually attacked the primary, the raid being scattered. Defence was reported as moderate. S/Ls seemed to assist fighters – one aircraft had three combats.

**JB353L** P/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt S.A.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1759 Down 0054 7 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 3 x 500lb. Primary objective attacked. No moon. 10/10ths cloud. Bombs released on one green TI marker cascading through cloud – in bomb sight. Nothing seen except scattered incendiaries.

### 22/23 October 1943 – Kassel

16 aircraft detailed to attack Kassel and two aircraft detailed to attack Frankfurt as spoof target, one of which returned early. The raid on Kassel was highly successful, 4/10ths cloud, tops 10,000', vis good, some haze. Marshalling yards were visually identified and many fires were seen. H/F was encountered, S/L cones – some scattered. Fighter opposition did not seem so active. 16 photos attempted. Fires were seen to start at Frankfurt. All aircraft returned safely.

**JB238A** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt S.A.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1838 Down 0005. 6 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 4 x 1000lb. Kassel. No moon, no cloud, vis good. One red TI among concentration of greens in bomb sight at time of bombing. Aiming point visually identified. Many fires were burning splendidly with smoke pall up to 9,000'.

### 3/4 November 1943 Dusseldorf

NFTs and flying training in the morning. 16 aircraft detailed for operations tonight. P/O J.K.McAvoy DFM and Act W/O R.J.Williams reported POW (were missing with W/C Burns crew 31<sup>st</sup> Aug). F/Sgt T.Lancashire and F/Sgt S.Powell reported POW (were missing with F/L Covington's crew 10<sup>th</sup> Aug). Operations : 7 aircraft to attack Dusseldorf, 9 aircraft to attack Cologne. At Dusseldorf 6 aircraft bombed the primary target, 1 aircraft returned early due to turrets being u/s. The attack was made in good weather – clear sky, vis good, ground haze with slight to moderate H/F and L/F. S/Ls ineffective. Fighters not reported over target. Fires reported but generally the attack is considered scattered. At Cologne (spoof target) the attack was made in good weather. Defences – desultory, H/F and S/Ls mainly ineffective – no fighters reported. Ground detail was not seen owing to haze or smoke. 14 photos were attempted in all. All crews returned safely.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, P/O V.S.Flack (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot), Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O E.G.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1745 Down 2118. 4 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 6 x 1000lb. Target Dusseldorf bombed. Moonlight, no cloud, ground haze. Bombed on red and green star sky markers – in bomb sight. Good concentration of fires in marked area and smaller scattered ones.

### 17/18 November 1943 – Mannheim

P/O Fairlie, Sgt Ball and S/L Parrott reported by IRCC as killed. W/C Alabaster DFC, S/L Rodley DFC and S/L Sauvage DFC awarded the immediate DSO. Y bombing training, SBA and fighter affiliation. 15 aircraft detailed for operations tonight, target being Mannheim. The attack was carried out in 2/10<sup>th</sup> cloud, vis good, hazy. PFF Group operated with blind bombing, no markers being used. Explosions were seen and fires started and seen on return 30 miles away. From reports of fires and explosions generally it would appear that a fairly good margin of success had been achieved. Defences slight. H/F inaccurate and many S/Ls ineffective. Many fighter flares but no fighter activity seen otherwise. All aircraft returned safely to base. G/C Fresson DFC carried out night training.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1718 Down 2215. 5 x 2000lb. Mannheim attacked. 17,800'. 2/10ths cloud. Ground haze. Target found by Nav aids "Y". Aiming point identified. Bombed on other bomb explosions. Fires started up after bombing. Huge red explosions seen at 2009 hours.

### 18/19 November 1943 – Berlin

17 Lancasters detailed for tonight's ops. Berlin was attacked in 10/10ths cloud tops 18,000'. Vis good – hazy. Explosions were reported but raid was scattered and no good concentration achieved. Owing to cloud, crews saw little or nothing. Defences weak to moderate, slight H/F – S/Ls ineffective. 16 photos attempted. One aircraft and crew failed to return – F/Sgt Johnson and crew. No news received at base, all other aircraft returned safely with little damage.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1730 Down 0040. 6 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 6 x 500lb. Berlin bombed from 18,000'. Bombed on yellow TIs seen cascading on run up to target. No moon but vis good. Two large explosions seen lasting about 1 1/2 and 3 seconds respectively. Starboard inner engine believed hit by flak.

### 22/23 November 1943 – Berlin

20 Lancasters detailed to attack targets in Berlin. Weather 9/10 – 10/10ths cloud at 7,000' – visibility good. Bombs were released from approximately 10,000'. All TIs were reported as fairly well concentrated and a good and continuous marking was kept up during the attack. Some fires were reported but bomb bursts could not generally be seen. Observation was hampered by clouds but the attack is considered scattered. Defences – heavy and light barrage over target with box barrage at 16,000'. No fighter flares. Two aircraft and crews have failed to return from this operation – they are JB227J F/L Munro DFC (Can) and crew and JB238A P/O McEgan (Aus) and crew. All remaining aircraft returned to base, a few of them with minor flak damage.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1725 Down 2330. 7 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 3 x 1000lb. Berlin bombed from 19,000'. Target indicated by Wanganui flare and red and green starts. Large orange/red explosion seen at 2027 hours.

### 23/24 November 1943 – Berlin

16 Lancasters detailed to again operate against Berlin. Weather was better although 10/10ths cloud, there were patches of visibility. Markers reported to be well concentrated – owing to cloud no details were possible but the attack is considered very scattered. Some incendiaries were seen through clouds. A good red glow could be seen for 20 minutes on route home. Fires were still believed to be burning from the previous raid. H/F moderate and barrage light. Many fighter flares and fighter activity. F/Sgt Penny and crew failed to return. All other aircraft returned safely to base encountering bad weather and gales. Minor damage was sustained by some aircraft – F/L Riches had two engines shot up over the target but the aircraft was brought back to base safely in the remaining two engines, the third one cutting while still on the runway.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, P/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1725 Down 2350. 1 x 4000lb, 5 x 1000lb. Bombs released on target from 19,000'. Target located by "Y". Fires reflected on clouds could be seen 20 minutes before bombing.

### 25/26 November 1943 – Frankfurt

19 aircraft detailed for ops and night training cross countries which were carried out. The following signal has been received from AOC-in-C – "I have received the following message from the Secretary of State which please convey together with my reply to all ranks"....."My warmest congratulations to you and to all ranks serving under your command on two crushing attacks on the Nazi citadel. Berlin is not only the home of Prussian militarism and the capital of the Nazi government, but it is also the greatest single centre of war industry in Germany. Often before, your squadrons have hit it hard. The most convincing measure of this success has been the huge deployment of the enemy's resources for its defence. Nevertheless your attacks these last two nights have reached a new level of power and concentration and have proved that however much he may marshal his guns, searchlights and fighters, the enemy cannot match your skill and determination of your crews." AOC-in-C's reply "On behalf of all ranks of Bomber Command I thank you for your encouraging message. The Battle of Berlin progresses. It will continue as opportunity serves and circumstances dictate until the heart of Nazi Germany ceases to beat.

Out of the 19 aircraft detailed for operations, which were to attack Frankfurt, three aircraft were withdrawn. Remainder bombed in 9/10ths cloud top about 1,800' in thin layer – vis good. Defence – H/F moderate – barrage bursting 16-18,000'. S/Ls ineffective, some enemy aircraft fighter activity. First TIs were fairly well concentrated, later flares were seen wide of target and scattered bombing followed. Fires were scattered over an area of some 8 miles radius. Fires were seen reflected in the clouds from 40 miles away but a good concentrated attack was not achieved. F/L Brown (Can/USA) and crew failed to return. This crew was operating for the first time with this Squadron.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 0135 Down 0555. 4 x 2000lb. Target bombed from 18,000'. 9/10ths cloud tops at 15,000'. On approaching target a large green flash and explosion was seen under cloud in target area.

### 26/27 November 1943 – Berlin

19 aircraft detailed for operations. 9 of them to attack a target in Berlin and 10 to the secondary target at Stuttgart. 8 aircraft attacked Berlin, 1 aircraft having been withdrawn due to bomb trouble. Weather clear and vis good. Defences – moderate H/F, inaccurate, S/L cones. Some 150 S/L to south-east in outskirts. Much fighter activity. Attack opened up well on time, but for some scattered markers, a good concentration was maintained. Glow of large fires seen 100 miles away on homeward route. Attack considered to have been very scattered. All crews returned safely to base. 9 aircraft attacked Stuttgart, one aircraft returned early, the mid upper gunner being sick. Vis good but 7/10ths cloud up to 10,000'. Defences slight, H/F inaccurate owing to cloud – fighters not conspicuous. Fires were seen to glow beneath clouds which were visible 60 miles on route home. Crews report much activity at Frankfurt of flak and fighter flares. The attack is considered successful, all returned safely to base.

**JB299W** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1740 Down 0045. 1 x 4000lb, 3 x 1000lb, 4 x 500lb. Berlin bombed in good visibility. Bombs dropped on target visually and on slavo of red and green TIs. Bombing appeared to be well centred on TIs.

### 2/3 December 1943 - Berlin

17 aircraft detailed for tonight's operations, the target being Berlin. One aircraft was withdrawn, another P/O Billing and crew returned early, the captain having collapsed but recovered sufficiently to land back at base. The remaining aircraft raided the target in quarter moon – 7/10ths cloud top 5,000' – vis good. Defences H/F predicted moderate, about 200 S/Ls around the city forming cones when cloud breaks permitted. Many fighter flares and activity. TIs fairly well concentrated and many incendiary bombs and bombs burst in area. Later the markers appeared to be scattered. Reports vary considerably, some saw no fires, others saw fires and much smoke in three columns to 10,000'. No good concentration was maintained and results are difficult to assess. S/L Garlick DFC B Flight Commander and his crew failed to return. No news has since been received. The remaining 14 aircraft returned safely to base in the early hours of the morning. F/L Riches' aircraft was peppered by flak, the pilot himself having a knock on the head which rendered him unconscious – on coming to, the aircraft was in a vertical dive but he managed to bring it under control.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1710 Down 2315. 5 x 2000lb. Berlin bombed in good visibility, broken cloud and quarter moon. One red TI cascaded in bomb sight. A large yellow-red explosion observed lasting for about 5 seconds.

### 3/4 December 1943 - Leipzig

16 aircraft have been again detailed for operations tonight. The crews have been briefed to attack targets at Leipzig. The attack took place 7-9/10ths cloud tops 5,000'. Vis good. Defences – moderate predicted H/F, S/Ls about 50 mainly illuminating cloud base. Considerable fighter activity. Owing to cloud, no definite results were seen. P/O Coleman and crew failed to return, no news having been since received. One aircraft returned early due to rear gunner being sick. The remaining aircraft returned safely to base.

**JB353L** F/O C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1720 Down 0010. 1 x 4000lb, 4 x 1000lb, 1 x 500lb. Target attacked from 19,000'. Vis good. 10/10ths thin cumulo stratus at 5-6,000'. Explosion seen at target giving an orange/red glow turning to vivid white. Approximately a minute later a second one was seen giving green/blue reflection.

### 16/17 December 1943 – Berlin

#### +++++++ BLACK THURSDAY +++++++

21 aircraft detailed to attack Berlin. Good concentration of bombing in early stages falling off later. No results seen only reddish glow. 10/10ths cloud tops 3/5000', vis good. Defences H/F moderate to 22,000' and moderate L/F 14,000' – S/Ls ineffective. Many fighter flares and scarecrow flares. F/L Pelletier in Lanc JA960 was attacked by an enemy fighter JU88 and claims it damaged. One aircraft, F/L Brill and crew failed to return – no news heard since. On returning to base aircraft encountered bad visibility over England and the Squadron had a disastrous night in aircraft losses and 28 aircrew being killed. The following is a brief summary of the return. 8 aircraft landed safely at Bourn and 3 at Graveley. One aircraft landed at Wyton. F/Sgt Coates after being hit by another aircraft's incendiaries and having two engines put out of action on the same side by flak, put out a ditching signal when not far from the Danish coast. With great skill he flew the aircraft back on the two engines and landed safely without further damage at Downham Market. Two crews, P/O Smith and F/O Mooney the captains, baled out safely over Ely and Wyton. All the crews were uninjured but one aircraft is missing and untraced. S/L Mackenzie DFC crashed at Bourn on the edge of the airfield. Three were killed – S/L Mackenzie, F/O Colson, P/O Pratt, the remainder are either in hospital or sick quarters. F/O Thckway and crew crashed near Bourn airfield, killing all except Sgt Mack who is in hospital and Sgt Laver who escaped uninjured. S/L Deverill DFC DFM and crew crashed at Graveley, all being killed except for W/O Benbow who is in Ely hospital. F/Sgt Scott and crew crashed at Graveley, all being killed. P/O Kirkwood and crew crashed near Gransden, all being killed. Total loss of aircraft – 8. Aircrew killed – 28, injured 7.

**JB312Z** F/L C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/O G.W.Borthwick, F/O G.A.Watling, Sgts L.G.Jones, G.Harper, H.J.Pleydell. Up 1655 Down 2350. 4 flares red/green, 2LBTI Green, 2 x TI green, 1 x 4000lb, 3 x 1000lb, 1 x 500lb. Berlin attacked from 19,500'. 10/10ths cloud, vis good. Early markers very accurate but pattern spread north to south. Starboard fin and rudder damaged on landing.

### 29/30 December 1943 - Berlin

"Y" training, bombing on range and air firing during day. 18 aircraft detailed to attack Berlin. Two aircraft were withdrawn, one of which had a tyre burst just before the take off which blocked the dispersal of the other. One aircraft returned early, oxygen being unserviceable for rear gunner. 15 aircraft attacked the primary target. Weather 10/10ths vis good. Defences moderate H/F barrage predicted. S/Ls nil, slight fighter activity. Crews report good concentrated attack. Two were shot up by flak, F/L Steven returning on three engines. F/L Roberts damaged his wing tip over target, another four engined aircraft hitting him. All aircraft returned safely to base.

**JB353L** F/L C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/L G.W.Borthwick, F/L G.A.Watling, F/Sgt L.G.Jones, F/Sgt G.Harper, F/Sgt H.J.Pleydell. Up 1710 Down 2330. 3LBTI Red, 3 x TI Red, 1 x 5 flares red/green, 1 x 4000lb, 3 x 1000lb. Berlin bombed from 19,500'. 10/10ths cloud, vis good. No results of bombing seen owing to cloud but glow observed from 60 miles on route home. Bomb hung up and dropped off rack in flight.

### 5/6 January 1943 – Stettin

No flying training as detailed due to poor visibility. 20 aircraft have been detailed for tonight's operations. Two aircraft did not take off owing to a burst tyre on perimeter track and gyro instruments u/s. The remainder attacked Stettin in good visibility and clear sky. Defences were moderate H/F to L/F, S/Ls ineffective – some fighter activity. Four engined bombers seen over target laying flares. TIs were concentrated and bombing good. Ground detail could be seen. Fires started early and one crew claim to have seen direct hits on the railway station. Large areas of fire could be seen by crews leaving the target 150 miles en route home. The raid is regarded as being a great success. F/O Anstee and crew and P/O Flack and crew failed to return from this operation. Nothing heard since.

**JB300D** F/L C.T.Wilson, P/O C.A.Wakley (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot), Sgt T.W.Smith, F/L G.W.Borthwick, F/L G.A.Watling, F/Sgt L.G.Jones, F/Sgt G.Harper, Sgt H.J.Pleydell. Up 0004 Down 0823. 12 flares, 3 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 2 x 1000lb. Stettin bombed. Vis good, clear sky. TIs well placed and good concentration. Fires were seen burning which showed up streets in pattern.

### 14/15 January 1944 – Brunswick

Training programme for today has been cancelled in lieu of tonight's operations for which 21 aircraft have been detailed, the target being Brunswick. The weather was 10/10ths cloud with tops from 5,000/8,000', visibility good. Defences slight H/F inaccurate and below, S/Ls ineffective. Fighters were very active from coast to target and on the return. No bombing results were seen but some scattered fires were reported. Markers were however scattered and no continuous concentration was achieved. F/Lt Stevens and crew, P/O Hodgson and crew are missing, nothing heard since.

**JB353L** F/L C.T.Wilson, P/O C.A.Wakley (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot), Sgt T.W.Smith, F/L G.W.Borthwick, F/L R.M.Nelson, F/Sgt L.G.Jones, F/Sgt G.Harper, F/Sgt H.J.Pleydell. Up 1701 Down 2213. 4 flares, 4 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 6 x 1000lb. Brunswick bombed from 19,500'. Target identified by Wanganui flares and bombs dropped in center of concentration. Green TIs seen through cloud.

### 27/28 January 1944 – Berlin

21 aircraft are detailed for tonight's operations, the target being Berlin. 20 aircraft attacked the primary, one returned early due to intercom trouble. Weather was 10/10ths cloud tops about 8,000', visibility good. Attack opened early and the target was kept well marked with flares and effective concentration resulted, with only slight spread. Bombing results were not visible but glows of fires were seen hundred miles from target. There was slight to moderate H/F with continuous L/F below 3,000'. Considerable fighter activity was encountered over the target.

**JB312Z** F/L C.T.Wilson, P/O Ellesmere (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot), F/Sgt T.W.Smith, F/L G.Borthwick, F/L G.Watling, Sgt G.Ridley, F/Sgt G.Harper, F/Sgt H.J.Pleydell. Up 1720 down 0050. 4 x T1, 1 x 4000lb, 4 x 1000lb. Berlin attacked successfully – concentration very good. 10/10ths cloud over target which obscured any results being observed.

### 28/29 January 1944 – Berlin

21 aircraft detailed to attack Berlin, 2 aircraft were withdrawn, 1 aircraft returned early due to "icing" conditions and one bombed Kiel owing to flak damage. Remaining aircraft attacked primary. Weather again 9/10<sup>th</sup> to 10/10<sup>th</sup> cloud with tops about 8,000'. And good visibility. There was continuous marking of the target, bombing was extremely concentrated and two violent explosions were observed. All indications point out to this attack being the most successful yet on the "Big City". Defences slight H/F focussed on marker flares, within increased fighter activity over target area, S/Ls were ineffective. P/O Van Raalte met considerable flak opposition over Kiel, aircraft sustained severe damage. F/Sgt Laurie, his rear gunner, was killed and aircraft returned to base on 3 engines. F/Lt Wilson and crew, P/O Allison and crew failed to return – nothing heard since.

**JB312L** F/L C.T.Wilson, Sgt T.W.Smith, F/L G.W.Borthwick, F/L G.Watling, F/Sgt L.G.Jones, F/Sgt G.Harper, F/Sgt H.J.Pleydell. Up 0035 – missing.

The following officers were reported missing from operations on the dates shown:-

130614 A/F/L C.T.Wilson GD 28/29.1.44

### Extract from Bomber Command Losses – 28/29.1.44

**Lancaster III JB353 OF – L.** Op Berlin. T/O 0035 Bourn. Lost without trace. All are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

F/L C.T.Wilson DFC(+), F/S T.W.Smith(+), F/L G.W.S.Borthwick DFC(+), F/L G.A.Watling(+), F/S L.G.Jones(+), F/S G.K.Harper(+), F/S H.J.Pleydell(+).



**Date of Death**

Died 29 January 1944

Age 33 years old

**Buried or commemorated at**

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL

Panel 204.

United Kingdom

Awards

Distinguished Flying Cross

DFC



In Memory Of  
Flight Lieutenant

## CHARLES THOMAS WILSON

Distinguished Flying Cross

Service Number: 130614

97 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on 29 January 1944 Age 33

Son of Charles Thomas Wilson and Alice Maude Wilson, of Kingsbury, Middlesex husband of Katherine Wilson, of Osgodby,  
Lincolnshire.

Remembered with Honour

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL

Panel 204.



|||  
COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES  
|||

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH  
WARGRAVES COMMISSION



**WWII - R.A.F. PATHFINDER FORCE BADGE.**

(Air Ministry Order No. A. 1244/42).

Worn on left hand pocket flap underneath Pilot's Wing or  
Aircrew Brevet. This coveted wing was permitted to be  
worn only by personnel holding the Pathfinder Certificate.

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