

# F/Sgt. H.Wilson DFM

Observer



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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.W. Hulme-Amstrong  
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, H. (B/Aim) F/Sgt

1. 22/23 April 44 Brunswick (P/O Lasham),
2. 24/25 April 44 Munich (P/O Lasham),
3. 26/27 April 44 Schweinfurt (P/O Lasham),
4. 29/30 April 44 Clermont-Ferrand (P/O Lasham),
  5. 1/2 May 44 Toulouse (P/O Lasham),
  6. 6/7 May 44 Louailles (P/O Lasham),
  7. 9/10 May 44 Annecy (P/O Lasham),
  8. 19/20 May 44 Amiens (F/O Lasham),
9. 31 May/1 Jun 44 Maisy (P/O Lasham) attack cancelled by Controller at target,
  10. 5/6 June 44 St Pierre du Mont (F/O Lasham),
  11. 6/7 June 44 Argentan (F/O Lasham),
  12. 8/9 June 44 Rennes (F/O Lasham),
  13. 12/13 June 44 Poitiers (F/L Lasham),
  14. 4/5 July 44 St Leu D'Esserent (F/O Lasham),
15. 12/13 July 44 Culmont Chalindrey (F/O Lasham),
  16. 15/16 July 44 Nevers (F/O Lasham),
  17. 20/21 July 44 Courtrai (F/O Lasham),
  18. 24/25 July 44 Longes (F/O Lasham),
  19. 25/26 July 44 Stuttgart (F/O Lasham),
20. 11 Aug 44 Bacalan Submarine Base (F/L Lasham),
  21. 11/12 Aug 44 Givors (F/L Lasham),
  22. 12/13 Aug 44 Brunswick (F/L Lasham),
  23. 14 Aug 44 Brest (F/L Lasham),
  24. 15 Aug 44 Deelan (F/L Lasham),
25. 16/17 Aug 44 Stettin Bay Mining (F/L Lasham),
  26. 18 Aug 44 Bordeaux (F/L Lasham),
  27. 25/26 Aug 44 Darmstadt (F/O Lasham),
  28. 26/27 Aug 44 Konigsberg (F/L Lasham)

### **AWARDS**

#### **Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM)**

WILSON, Harold F/Sgt 1342819 LG 17.11.44

## From Operational Record Books

### 22/23 April 1944 - Brunswick

The rear party from Bourn arrived today. The movement is now complete and the Squadron is now temporarily detached to Coningsby until further orders. 15 aircraft have been detailed for tonight's operations against Brunswick. The attack was carried out in moderate visibility, very thick haze. Flak negligible, no searchlights. Success of attack was prejudiced by failure of VHF. Flare Leader, in absence of weather reports, decided (when cloud cleared 20 mins from target) on visual marking. As target was approached, 10/10<sup>th</sup> high cirrus and very poor visibility encountered. Flare Leader therefore decided on emergency Wanganui, but orders were not generally received by VHF and either not received in time by W/T or misunderstood, and some slight confusion in illumination resulted. Two concentrations of bombing seen approximately 3 miles apart, one in the old town area, and the other more dispersed South or South West. "J" type incendiaries seen to be very effective. It is believed that a sufficient portion of main force bombs fell in town to ensure success. One aircraft landed at Foulsham on return – the remainder at base.

**ND815M** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2319 Down 0517. 1 x 2000lb HC, 12 clusters "J" (30lb) no 4 incs. Target Brunswick. Weather hazy below 7-8,000'. Bombed on flares, RSFs, green TIs and fires. Estimated position of RSF which had been obliterated by fire. Two RSFs seen about half a mile apart with green TI between. Cluster of fires around each RSF. Instructions to bomb R/T and W/T 0157 hours. Bombing seemed scattered.

### 24/25 April 1944 – Munich

Training during day. 15 aircraft detailed for operations. The attack was made against Munich in clear sky and good visibility. Fighter activity between Augsburg and Munich, also later in attack. First yellow TI seen to cascade Datum point at 01.32 hours. Flares generally went down to time and straddled the town. B/U markers rather wide on East bank of river. Leader broadcast to bomb RSF but later when he saw slight tendency to seep back, dropped green TI to indicate correct marker and broadcast later in attack. Attack believed very successful. Good fires seen and well concentrated. Large explosion seen. Photographs confirm accuracy of marker. P/O Lasham landed on return at Tangmere, aircraft being damaged by flak, and short of petrol. Damage also caused by incendiaries from another aircraft. F/Lt Waugh and crew failed to return from this operation – no news having been received since take-off. Average time of sortie – 10 hours.

**ND815N** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt G.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/O W.E.Clayfield, Sgt R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2057 Down 0530. 6 x "J" clusters, 104 x 30 incs. Bombed on H2S, RSFs and visually on town. Flares dropped right over middle of the town and a concentrated mass of fires was burning round well placed markers as aircraft left area. Seven holes to wings believed to be due to incendiaries falling through over target. At 0153 hours fuel pipe to port outer severed – engine being feathered. Return was made on 3 engines due to above damage, and landing made at Tangmere.

### 26/27 April 1944 – Schweinfurt

14 Lancasters detailed to operate against Schweinfurt tonight. Attack was carried out in good visibility – much fighter opposition and many aircraft seen to fall. Owing to change of wind the attack was late. First illumination unsatisfactory. Reserve flares better. First RSF fell too far south, second RSF assessed as accurate and backed up by initial B/U. Owing to smoke screen, red spot fires barely visible. All backers up and reserves called in to concentrate markers. Bombing believed accurately concentrated around the target area. Leader assessed Main Force as very good. All aircraft returned safely.

**ND815M** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2131 Down 0601 14 x 500 AN/M 76. No cloud, visibility good. Bombed on RSFs and flares. Two RSFs were down but Marker Bomber instructed aircraft to ignore one to south-east. Good concentration of fires and incendiaries around red spot but on leaving target area, this appeared to disappear rather quickly, possibly due to smoke screen.

### 29/30 April 1944 – Clermont-Ferrand

**15 Lancasters detailed to attack a factory at Clermont-Ferrant near Paris. The attack was made in good visibility from about 7,500 to 9,000 feet. First red spot fire seen in light of flares to be very accurate. Marking carried out promptly. Raid went according to plan and was well backed by Main Force, both 4000s and incendiaries. Operation was successful and good photos obtained. All returned safely to base.**

**ND451R** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2205 Down 0447. 6 clusters 7" flares, 6 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5" flares. Target located by H2S. Confirmed datum point as accurately marked. Ran in and released flares on box as ordered. Stood off until ordered in to bomb. Main Force bombing seemed accurate on markers. Attack carried out smoothly.

### **1/2 May 1944 – Toulouse**

Some training was carried out in the morning. That night 15 Lancaster aircraft were detailed for an attack on an explosives works at Toulouse. Our aircraft opened the raid by illuminating the target with 7" flares. Mosquito aircraft then located the actual aiming point, and marked it with Red Spot Fires, which were backed up by 97 Squadron aircraft. The Red Spot Fires were, unfortunately, at times obscured by smoke, but the great majority of aircraft managed to bomb the markers, and the raid was subsequently proved by PRU photographs to have been satisfactory. Three very violent explosions were observed during the raid. The weather was very good and opposition negligible. All our aircraft returned safely.

**ND452S** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2145 Down 0518. 6 clusters 7" flares, 3 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 1000lb MC (LD), 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Target located visually on factory. H2S went u/s 50 miles before reaching target, also Fishpond. Illumination of target not very good – some flares seen well over town area. First RSFs were well off aiming point but second marker was very accurate. New markers well backed up and bombed. Markers obliterated by smoke and we were instructed to bomb fires only to north. Raid big success, many explosions.

### **6/7 May 1944 – Louailles**

Some training this morning. Operations tonight were detailed against an ammunition dump at Louailles, France. The raid was effected in brilliant moonlight, and no additional illumination was necessary. Mosquito aircraft located the target visually and marked it with Red Spot Fires, which were later backed up by Lancaster aircraft from this Squadron. The marking and backing up were very accurate and the target was soon well hit, explosions occurring regularly throughout the attack. The defences were only moderate with about four to six flak guns hose-piping red and green tracer up to about 6,000 ft. The weather was very good. All our aircraft returned safely.

**ND452S** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 0041 Down 0521. 6 x 7" flares yellow No 16, 6 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5" flares clusters, 2 x TI. Visibility excellent, target soon identified visually. Heard on VHF that RSF were down about 0237 hours and they were assessed on 50 yards 12 o'clock. Second cluster was heard assessed completely accurate. Backers up were ordered to drop their RSF at 0238 hours and no flares or datum markers were called for. Aircraft came in to bomb when instructed, when a good concentration was down and our bombs thought to be 100 yards undershot. After bombing, fires had started, but wind was blowing smoke away. Many powerful explosions, two particularly large, approximately 0249 and 0250 hours. Main Force leader ordered to bomb near centre of fires. Attack appeared to be going smoothly.

### **9/10 May 1944 – Annecy (Ball Bearing Factory)**

No training today. Operations this evening were directed against a ball bearing factory at Annecy – a small target in the centre of a town lying in a mountain valley – a target demanding the utmost skill to hit it. The attack was carried out in brilliant moonlight. Mosquito aircraft from 627 Squadron identified the factory and dropped Red Spot Fires a pre-determined distance away from it. The raid controller, S/Ldr Simpson of this Squadron, then assessed their proximity to the aiming point and passed a false wind speed and direction to the bombing aircraft for them to put on their bombsights. This allowed the Main Force to aim at the Red Spots and yet have the bombs fall on the aiming point. The whole of this procedure was necessary because the target was so small that if the Red Spots had been put directly on the aiming point they would have soon been extinguished by own bombs. However, everything went according to plan, and the factory was so quickly demolished that the controller gave the order to cease bombing in order that the risk to the French civilian population may be minimised. Subsequent photographic cover showed the target to be absolutely gutted and the raid a complete success. There was no fighter opposition and no flak. The weather was good, and all of our aircraft returned safely.

**ND451R** P/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2120 Down 0607. 6 x 7" cluster flares, 1 x 4000lb MC, 3 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. No cloud below 6/10ths thick cumulus above, tops 10,000'. Target identified visually. Fires already burning on arrival of aircraft, late owing to failure of H2S and uncertainty of position. By the time we had identified and seen photoflashes etc at target, RSF was not visible. No alternative but to bomb fires using true wind (unvectored). Two very large fires seen, large one in factory which we bombed; the other thought to be burning in town.

### **19/20 May 1944 – Amiens**

A small training programme this morning. The target for the night's operation was the marshalling yard at Amiens. When our aircraft arrived at Amiens, they found the target covered by 10/10ths cloud. Flares were dropped by means of special equipment and a yellow TI was dropped on the aiming point by an Oboe Mosquito, but bombing was made impossible by cloud conditions, and our aircraft brought their bomb load back to base. All of our aircraft returned safely to base.

**ND452S** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2322 Down 0257. 11 x 7" cluster, 3 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Target identified on H2S; 10/10ths cloud. Ordered to release flare when running up; released one stick. Went down to 6,000' to await instructions. More flares required so climbed to 10,000' but before releasing received order to return to base.

### **31 May/1 June 1944 - Maisy**

Practice bombing and other flying training was carried out this morning. The night's target was a battery of German camps at Maisy. An oboe marker was seen to cascade but generally the cloud was so thick as to make accurate bombing impossible. The controller cancelled the attack immediately. No flares were dropped and enough bombs were jettisoned to make an all up weight safe for landing. All of our planes returned safely to base.

ND452S F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2305 Down 0237. 6 x 7 x 4.5" clusters, 8 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. 5/10ths thin stratus at approx 1,000'. Target located by Oboe markers, confirmed by H2S. Arrived 0051 but had already received instructions not to release flares. After dummy run received instructions from Controller at 0052 hours to return to base. Landed at Chipping Warden.

### **5/6 June 1944 – St Pierre du Mont**

Further training took place today. F/O Perkins and crew paid a visit to the USAAF at Alconbury and were impressed by the high quality of the navigational radar aids. Today must be recorded as one of the most eventful days in the Squadron's history. The target had been given us at about 1pm. It was a battery of coastal heavy guns on the French coast at a point called St Pierre du Mont, which is situated just on the south eastern base of the Chernourg Peninsula, also La Peanelle. It seemed quite a normal target until various other things came trickling in – things such as convoys to be avoided – keeping strictly on track, news of impending naval actions to the East, and many other things, until one became aware of the obvious that the invasion of Europe was about to commence. The Squadron Commander was heard to say "Thank God I'm still on ops and not at an O.T.U." Everyone was delighted and excitement was at fever pitch; 18 of our aircraft were detailed. The attack started at 4.50am – about 30 minutes before dawn – with a red TI which was accurately dropped by an Oboe Mosquito on the target. It was instantly backed up by green TI dropped visually by Mosquito aircraft of 627 Squadron. These TI were not so accurate as those dropped on Oboe. However by the time Main Force came in to bomb, the target was well marked. The Main Force bombing was extremely accurate and the whole point was flattened. Crossing the Channel on the return journey thousands of landing craft were seen proceeding towards the French coast. Two of our crews failed to return. One was captained by the Squadron Commander, W/Cdr E.J.Carter DFC who was flying in "Z" and the other was a Norwegian crew captained by Lt. Jespersen. W/Cdr Carter had with him S/Ldr M.Bryan-Smith DFC, Gunnery Leader and F/L A.Chambers DFC, the Signals Leader. It is believed that they encountered some JU88s.

**ND452S** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 0318 Down 0655. 11 x 1000lb MC, 4 x 500lb GP. 10/10ths cloud at 9,000'. Clear below. Red and green TI indicated target. Wind received 310/31 at 0452 hours. Bombing already started. Markers rather scattered. Order received to "Carry on bombing" 0453 hours. Bombs fell across green TI. Other bombing concentrated markers.

### 6/7 June 1944 – Argentan

The target was illuminated by flares and marked visually by TI greens dropped from Mosquito aircraft of 627 Squadron. Main Force bombing was very good and all three targets were well hit. The success of the raid was proved later by photographic cover. Visibility was good and all of our aircraft returned safely.

**ND452S** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2330 Down 0323. 9 x 7 x 4.5" clusters, 8 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5" rec flares. Target Argentan southern aiming point. 10/10ths cloud tops 9,000', base 6000'. Identification by green TI. On first run, bombs hung up and only photoflash went. Flares not needed. 0115 – delay of 5 minutes then descended through cloud and bombed. Attack very concentrated round TIs.

### 8/9 June 1944 – Rennes

Blind bombing practice bombing this morning. 7 of our aircraft were detailed for operations tonight against a railway crossover bridge just outside Rennes. The first Oboe marker fell on time at 0127 about 100 yards north of aiming point. The Squadron dropped their flares in a stick across it – illuminating the target area. The target was identified visually and marked with a green TI by a Mosquito aircraft of 627 Squadron. There was considerable light flak but Main Force bombing was extremely good and the bridge was destroyed, there was no sign of fighters. All our aircraft returned safely.

**ND452S** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2304 Down 0400. 9 x 7 x 4.5" clusters, 9 x 500lb MC/GP, 3 x 4.5" reco flares. Cloud 10/10ths, base 9,000', 7/10ths below. Identified target by yellow Oboe and H2S. Dropped flares and then asked if we could bomb 0135 hours. Flare Force instructed to bomb. Flares and markers seemed very good. Controller instructed to overshoot the RSF by 5 seconds. One RSF was cancelled by yellow TI.

### 12/13 June 1944 – Poitiers

*(Controller W/C Tait in NE165Y with 83 Sqn crew)*

A large day training programme was carried out consisting of practice bombing, blind bombing and fighter affiliation. Operations tonight were against a railway junction at Poitiers. 9 aircraft were detailed. Flares were dropped to time and very accurately by blind bombing methods over the target area. At 0149 the first RSF was down. It was assessed by the Controller and backed up by a 1000lb red TI dropped by S.A.B.S. by F/L Van Raalte and crew. A concentrated and accurate attack followed. The raid was very successful. Large petrol explosions were seen. Opposition was very slight. All of our aircraft returned safely. Further operations tonight were against bridges at Caen which the Army had not been able to destroy without inflicting severe casualties on the French population. Owing to technical difficulties the first flares were dropped rather wide. However an Oboe proximity marker was dropped and further flares were dropped visually over it. By 0220 the target was marked with RSFs and Main Force went into bomb. So accurate was this attack upon a pinpoint target that the O.C. the British Field Forces who was watching the attack from nearby sent a congratulatory message of thanks. A further message of congratulations was received from AOC 5 Group. 9 aircraft took part in this raid.

#### **4/5 July 1944 – St Leu D’Esserent**

A large training programme consisting of blind bombing and cross countries was effected this morning. Tonight 11 aircraft were detailed for an attack against flying bomb bases at St Leu D’Esserent (Creil). At 01.28/32 three waves of our aircraft ran across the target area and illuminated it clusters of flares. The marker aircraft then dropped two RSFs on the aiming point. These were assessed by the Controller as being accurate and were backed up by red TIs. The Main Force were then brought in and some accurate bombing ensued. The whole attack went smoothly and according to plan. No spectacular results were seen. W/C Ingham and crew in “D” were attacked by a fighter and a large portion of the port wing was shot away; F/L Gee and crew in “L” shot down a Me410. Flak was much less than anticipated, but fighter activity was intense the whole way.

**ND452S** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2340 Down 0325. 9 x 7” clusters, 4 x 1000lb MC, 1 x 1000lb MC LD, 3 reco flares. Identified target by Oboe marker. Only two clusters of green and one of red seen with approx 100 yards between red and green. Intense fighter activity and many aircraft seen shot down.

#### **12/13 July 1944 – Culmont-Chalindrey**

This morning’s training programme consisted of blind bombing practice and cross countries. Tonight 13 aircraft were detailed for an attack on an important railway crossing at Culmont Chalindrey. At 0140 hours we dropped our flares on our blind bombing equipment very accurately over the target area. Mosquito aircraft instantly found the aiming point and marked it with RSFs. The Controller not having been heard from by now, the raid was taken over by the Deputy Controller who ordered the RSFs to be backed up and passed a vector wind to the main force to bomb with. At 0145 the Controller was heard from on VHF and he then assumed control of the raid. The operation is believed to have been very successful. There was no flak – only a few searchlights – and fighter opposition was negligible. All of our aircraft returned safely, but owing to cloud base being so low at base the majority were diverted to Metherringham and two to Winthorpe.

**PB157Q** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2200 Down 0559. 9 x 4.5” clusters, 4 x 1000lb MC, 1 x 1000lb MC LD (6 hours), 2 reco flares. Weather clear, target identified by RSF on time, assessed as 40 yards 6 o’clock – backed up by green TI which we were told to ignore. Backed up again with red TI – message received to bomb these. After bombing we were told to return to base. Nitrogen used – satisfactory. Landed at Metherringham.

### 15/16 July 1944 – Nevers

This morning some aircraft took off for blind bombing practice at Lincoln and Nottingham. Operations tonight were directed against a marshalling yard at Nevers. 10 aircraft were detailed. The attack opened with this Squadron dropping flares, by means of its blind equipment, accurately over the aiming point at 0145 hours. The Mosquitos immediately went in and dropped a RSF which fell about 400 yards from the aiming point and was immediately cancelled by a yellow TI marker. Another RSF was soon put down, this time accurately. The Controller then broadcast a bombing wind and main force went in and bombed. The target was well hit though the accuracy of the bombing was rather disappointing. A terrific explosion was seen at 0209 hours. There was no flak of any kind and no fighters were seen. All of our aircraft returned safely.

**PB157Q** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2212 Down 0516. 9 x 7" clusters, 4 x 1000lb MC, 1 x 1000lb MC LD (72 hrs), 2 rec flares. No cloud, vis good. Located target (Nevers) by markers confirmed by H2X. No troubles with bombing or flare runs. As the attack progressed more and more sticks seemed to fall on RSF cancelled by yellow 500 yards NW of target. Estimated at 75% in all. Aiming point marker somewhat obscured by smoke and a small pinpoint compared with yellow splodge. Large explosion 0208 hours.

### 20/21 July 1944 – Courtrai

NFTs and blind bombing runs this morning. 15 aircraft were detailed to participate in and attack on the marshalling yards at Courtrai. The Squadron arrived punctually at 0044 hours and dropped flares by means of their blind bombing equipment across the target area. Mosquitos of 627 Sqn immediately marked the target with red TIs. These were very accurate and were soon backed up by Lancaster aircraft with green TIs. The Main Force bombing was extremely accurate and the target was obliterated. F/O Edwards and crew did not return from this mission. There was slight heavy flak and some enemy fighters were seen on the return route. There was no cloud but some haze.

**PB156O** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt K.Randle, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2317 Down 0210. 9 x 7" clusters, 5 x 1000lb MC/GP, 3 rec flares. Clear sky, good vis. Identified target by Oboe markers and H2S. Oboe marker dropped 0047 followed by flares which fell across the target area. Green TI followed, assessed by Mosquitos as on aiming point. Bombing wind received 150/8 just before bombing run on W/T. Bombing appeared to be well concentrated around markers.

### 24/25 July 1944 – Longes

Blind bombing practice, NFTs and practice bombing constituted this morning's flying. Tonight's target was at Longes near St Nazaire. It was an oil storage centre. 10 aircraft were detailed. The attack opened at 0135 with an Oboe TI on the target. This Squadron illuminated the target blindly – the Oboe was assessed, backed up, and Main Force came in and bombed. Photographic cover has since proved the attack to have been quite accurate. There was quite a lot of flak and searchlights. The weather was good with no cloud and slight haze.

**ND589R** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt K.Randle, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.S.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2249 Down 0345. 9 x 7" clusters, 4 x 1000lb MC, 1 x 1000lb LD (72 hours). Weather clear with slight haze. Target identified by H2S and Oboe marker. First Oboe two minutes early at H-6. Flares went approx one minute earlier. Wind received 245/16 at 0124.5 hours. Green markers down 0136 hours assessed as covering aiming point. Order to bomb given at 0141 hours. Flares and bombs all very concentrated. No explosions or fires seen.

### 25/26 July 1944 – Stuttgart

This morning 13 of our aircraft proceeded to Wyton to participate with 8 Group in an attack on Stuttgart. The attack was on the usual area target lines – a Newhaven with emergency Wanganui. Our TIs were dropped blindly on a GPI run from Sforzheim. Cloud was 8/10ths and the attack soon developed into a Paramatta with some crews dropping Wanganui flares. The marking was continuous and generally well concentrated and crews reported markers on built up area. The defences consisted of heavy flak in barrage form with no searchlights. The raid was generally considered quite successful. All of our aircraft returned safely, the supporters at Coningsby.

**ND452S** F/O R.L.C.Lasham, Sgt D.E.Lacey, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, Sgts D.Nicholls, R.F.Powell, F/Sgt E.W.Cope. Up 2202 Down 0539. 5 x 2000lb HC. Very thick cloud at 18,000', otherwise clear. Target confirmed on H2S. Town came up on box but very indistinctly. At 0148 hours flares and red and green TIs seen. Flares seen either side of track; red and green TI to port. Unable to estimate result of attack.



### 11 August 1944 – Bordeaux (Bacalan Submarine Base)

Quite a lot of flying was carried out this morning. In addition to the usual day training, four of our aircraft and one aircraft with 54 Base Controller crew, were detailed to lead a main force formation to Bordeaux and attack the submarine pens. 2000lb armour piercing bombs were carried. The formation flying on this raid was fairly good. The Controller marked the pens with a yellow TI which fell slightly south of the aiming point. The main force bombing was accurate and successful although results were not spectacular due probably to the thickness of concrete. The flak opposition consisted of moderate H/F up to 19,000 feet visually aimed. The weather was clear and good. Tonight's operation was against a vital rail junction at Givors. 12 of our aircraft took part in this attack, north and south. The flares were dropped blindly and went down dead on time. The southern attack went according to plan, the target was marked and bombing soon started. The Controller for northern aiming point had unfortunately been shot up and Deputy I took over control. This delayed the attack for 10 minutes but eventually the target was marked and a successful attack ensued. Bombing on both aiming points was reported very good. Opposition consisted of slight heavy flak entirely. All of our aircraft returned safely. Visibility was clear.

**ND452S** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt C.Bosley, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 1223 Down 1433. 6 x 2000lb AP. Mission abandoned 5212N 0110W at 1257 hours - 6000' – because of u/s bomb sight, and on instructions from Controller, who asked us to return to base. Bombs jettisoned at 1348 hours and two brought back to base.

### 11/12 August 1944 - Givors

**ND452S** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 2054 Down 0434. 7 x 1000lb, 3 x 500lb, 1 x 1000lb LD. Weather very clear. Target found by red TI. On arrival red TI had fallen but was assessed as 500 yards south of aiming point. Aircraft had to wait and orbit. Marker put another red TI down on aiming point at 0011 hours which aircraft was instructed to bomb at 0113 hours. Backing up was not very good. Vector wind cancelled; told to bomb centre of reds at 0113 hours with zero wind. Illuminating flares good in early stage while aircraft was orbiting. Large explosion at 0110.5 hours – clouds of smoke.



#### **12/13 August 1944 - Brunswick**

Day training consisting of bombing, fighter affiliation and blind bombing runs were carried out today. Another mining expedition was carried out tonight, this time in a narrow channel between Isle de Rhe and La Pallice. 4 of our aircraft took part. The sorties were carried out at a height of 15,000 feet with the aid of the blind bombing apparatus. All mines were laid within 300 yards of the required aiming point and this would appear to have been an exceptionally good mining expedition. Opposition consisted of moderate heavy flak and about 6 searchlights. There was no cloud. All of our aircraft returned safely. 10 aircraft were also detailed to attack Brunswick. Cloud over target area. 8 aircraft bombed and 2 returned early due to technical failures. All returned to base safely.

**ND740F** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 2109 Down 0230. 1 x 2000lb HC, 12 x J Clusters. 10/10ths cloud at 10,000'. Horizontal visibility excellent. Target identified on H2X. GPI run checked by "Y". At least two aircraft bombed before H-hour – one at H-5, one at H-4 – their bombs were about 10 miles short of the target. Route was good. Due to cloud it was impossible to assess results of attack.

#### **14 August 1944 – Brest (Shipping)**

This morning the squadron simulated a Wanganui attack on Lincoln. The attack would not have been too successful. Later in the day 11 of our aircraft were detailed for an attack on the German shipping in Brest harbour. The targets were a cruiser, a hulk and a supply ship. The attack opened at 2020 hours, and an amazing exhibition of precision bombing ensued. All 3 ships received direct hits and time again. Photographic evidence later showed no sign of the vessels on the surface. Nearly all of our crews returned with aiming point photos. None was missing.

**PB157Q** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 1755 Down 2214. 11 x 1000lb ANM 65, 4 x 500lb MC. Weather clear. Targets found visually. At 2010 received winds 150/6 knots on 010 degrees T. 2016 hours told to attack. 2027 hours smoke was seen rising to 2000' from a flak ship in the bay. Another ship two miles south of centre of target map was on fire. Our target was hit, and a vivid red explosion was seen. It was hit several other times, jet black thick smoke rising from it. Several direct hits seen on the western ship.

### **15 August 1944 - Deelan**

The operation today was against German night fighter aerodromes in Holland and Belgium, 13 aircraft being detailed. This squadron's target was an aerodrome at Deelan. The target was clearly identified visually. The bombing was very good and runways, aircraft and buildings were very well hit. At 1209 hours 'J', captained by F/O Lindsay RAAF, called up to say he had two engines u/s and later ditched about 30 miles from the Dutch coast. Within about two hours, however, he and his entire crew had been picked up by a high speed launch. Otherwise all of our aircraft returned safely. No night flying.

**PB157Q** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 0932 Down 1325. 7 x 1000lb ANM 65, 3 x 1000lb ANM 44, 1 x 1000lb MC, 4 x 500lb GP. Very clear, excellent visibility. Target found visually, marked with yellow TI. Several sticks of bombs seen to fall around aiming point, with many bombs on runways. Buildings adjoining airfield on fire and smoke covered the whole. Controller later instructed aircraft not having bombed to bomb centre of smoke. Flak damage to fuselage, port mainplane and engine nacelle

### **16/17 August 1944 – Stettin Bay Mining**

**16.8.44** Some slight day training this morning. Tonight 12 aircraft of the squadron carried out one of its most successful and daring attacks. It was decided that during a heavy PFF and main force attack on the town of Stettin, this squadron should mark and mine the Stettin-Schwinemunde Channel. This channel runs across Stettin Bay from Schwinemunde to Stettin and is the only means of access that any large ship has to Stettin. One side of the channel has square buoys and the other side conical buoys. At 0101 hours the flare force arrived and dropped by means of their blind bombing apparatus over the channel. Illumination was hardly necessary as the Germans had guessed what was happening and had criss-crossed the bay with searchlights. However, the Controller (W/C Porter) and the two marker deputies (S/L Parkes and S/L Locke DFC RAAF) who were all down at 300 feet decided to "Press on". In the face of great batteries of light flak guns from all sides of the bay, and although they were coned the whole time, they located the buoys and flew down the channel marking it with 250lb flame floats and dropping mines in between. By 0105 hours, W/C Porter's machine had been so badly hit that he called up S/L Parkes on the VHF telling him that he had "Had it" and would have to bale out. He also wished everyone the best of luck. A minute later a W/T message was received from W/C Porter's aircraft – for the main force to go in and drop their mines over the flame floats. It is believed that his crew had every chance to bale out successfully. W/C Porter, S/L Parkes and S/L Locke have since received immediate awards of the DSO. A message of congratulation was also received by the squadron from the AOC.

**PB200G** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 2126 Down 0429. 12 x 7" clusters, 2 flame floats. Weather clear below, 10/10ths cloud above (14,000' base). Target confirmed by H2X and 1st wave flares. Dropped flares as briefed. Controller marked (8/9 flame floats) at 0106 hours, which Marker I assessed as "Bang on". Called force in to mine, and Flare Force told to go home. 2 flame floats jettisoned.

## **18 August 1944 – Bordeaux (Oil Storage)**

Some bombing and blind bombing practice this morning. 7 of our aircraft participated in another attack on the submarine pens at Bordeaux today. The attack commenced at 2010 hours. Most sticks were seen to fall accurately across the aiming point although moderate but very accurate heavy flak spoilt a number of bombing runs and contributed to a fair proportion of loose bombing. There were no fighters and weather was clear. All of our aircraft returned.

**ND589R** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, F/Sgt R.F.Powell, W/O E.W.Cope. (Deputy Controller II) Up 1453 Down 2258. 6 x 1900 GP. Weather clear. Identified target visually and arrived on time. Spread out in accordance with instructions. Hit by heavy flak on run up. Air speed indicator u/s, noticed after bombs gone, which made bomb sight u/s. Just after leaving target area, port outer engine caught fire and was feathered. Mid gunner wounded on bombing run. Decided to land at Manston. HF radar equipment, intercom, rear of engine u/s. Port outer feathered, mid upper turret u/s.

## **25/26 August 1944 - Darmstadt**

Usual training today. 8 aircraft took part in tonight's operation which was directed against Darmstadt. The plan was to have been that after the flares had been dropped blindly over the town the Mosquitos would go in low level and mark a band stand in the centre of town. The raid was a failure. The Controller and both deputies went missing before the target and although the flares went down correctly the Mosquitos were too low to identify it and as there was no proper Controller, no marking ensued. F/L N.Parker RAAF had the presence of mind to realise what had happened, and ordered more flares to be dropped in the hope of marking himself. However, he was unable to do so and rather than turn the raid into a fiasco, he ordered the crews to come in and bomb the town on their blind marking equipment. On the whole, not a successful raid. S/L Parkes and crew did not return. No message was received.

**PB376S** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, F/Sgt D.S.Nicholls, W/O A.J.Croll, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 2108 Down 0438. 11 x 7" clusters, 1 x 1000lb TI red (No 16), 2 rec flares. Clear, good visibility. Identification by H2S. On arrival, Marker I called Controller and got no reply. Flares dropped (9) and we listened for instructions; one of the VBUs answered and asked for more flares east of target. We made another run and dropped remaining flares. No markers were seen. Marker II heard to say at 0114 hours that wrong target had been illuminated. Flares dropped on wind 190/19. Actual wind found 160/21. To the best of my knowledge the correct target was found and illuminated.

## **26/27 August 1944 - Konigsberg**

Slight day training this morning. The target for tonight was Ko0nigsberg. 10 of our aircraft were detailed. The whole operation ran smoothly and to plan. The flares dropped accurately and on time. F/L N.Parker RAAF in a Lancaster aircraft marked the town initially. His marking was backed up well, although slightly to the north east. By H-4 the marking was finished and at H-1 Main Force were called in to bomb. The raid was quite successful although it was the NE part of the town which suffered most. F/O McCurdy RAAF, failed to return. Searchlights were very numerous although ineffective. Slight flak and fighter opposition. Considerable flak from Sweden.

**PB376S** F/L R.L.C.Lasham, F/Sgt W.Yates, F/Sgt S.R.Baynes, F/Sgt H.Wilson, W/O R.A.Bear, W/O A.J.Croll, W/O E.W.Cope. Up 2033 Down 0615. 12 x 7" clusters, 1 x 1 TI green, 2 rec flares. Weather clear. Visual identification of target, confirmed by H2S. On first run, owing to faulty manipulation, no flares were dropped so we ran in again and dropped our 12 clusters. Went in to drop green TI on first run at 0101.5 hours, but another aircraft was just in front of us. Landed at Tuddenham.



97 Sqn, Coningsby,  
Lancaster PB376 OF-S, September 1944, 32ops  
F/Lt R.L.C. Lasham (pilot) in cockpit; H. Wilson (his NAV  
II / B/A) in foreground

YB-0781-580(b)

## My Neighbour and I, or Over the Garden Wall

I took a weekend break this week — So what's so special, pray?

I very often pack my bags, and take the kids away.

Ah! This was something special, a break completely new.

For after 46 long years

I want to meet my crew

Your crew you say, I did not know

You rowed, you sly old fox

What position did you hold,

You're too big to be the Cox.

Not that crew, you bloody fool

We were never 8, just 7,

And for 18 months, we lived as one,

Our battlefield was Heaven!

A bomber crew, that's what we were.

A Lancaster our plane,

We laughed, we drank, we danced, and thought

Shall we ever see home again?

There was Gerry, Bob, Nick and Joe

Harry, Reg + Bill,

and even after all these years,

Young men I see them still.

Oh yes, the weekend, — it was great

It didn't even rain,

And in the Hotel bar each night

We lived our lives again.

The museum, at Hendon

land on a special do,

Because when all is said and done

We are a special crew.

They even let us board the Lane  
(we helped poor Gerry on)  
And we took up our positions  
And thought of days long gone,  
When young men all  
we fought the Hun and all his evil Horde  
Now, now, what's this, you're yawning —  
Don't say you're getting bored?  
The wives? Oh yes, I think that they  
Enjoyed the week-end too  
But they of course took second place  
At this very special do!  
I don't think that they minded  
I know they understood  
That going back in time for us  
was nothing if not good.  
We hope to meet again next year  
Providing all is well,  
But as we're getting older  
What Fate brings who can tell?  
But never mind, we've had our day  
When we shook hands and said,  
"Hello old friend, you haven't changed"  
(Did my face turn red)?  
Oh, - must go now, my wife has said  
There's someone at the door,  
But the memory of this week-end  
will live for evermore.  
For this was something special,  
a break completely new  
For after 46 long years —  
I want to meet my crew!



**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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