

SGT. M. JOHNSON

Flight Engineer



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97 (Straits Settlements) Squadron Association by the
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References: 97 Squadron Operational Record Books 1939-1943

Achieve Your Aim by Kevin Bending

Mark Howard

20225

Approved
George R.I.



J.D. Hester-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

Johnson, M. (F/Eng) Sgt

1. 15/16 Mar 44 Stuttgart (F/O Ellesmere) shown as H.A.,
2. 22/23 Mar 44 Frankfurt (F/O Ellesmere) shown as H.A.,
3. 24/25 Mar 44 Berlin (F/O Ellesmere) shown as M.A.,
4. 30/31 Mar 44 Nuremburg (F/O Ellesmere) shown as M.A.,
5. 11/12 April 44 Aachen (F/O Ellesmere),
6. 20/21 April 44 La Chappelle (F/O Ellesmere),
7. 24/25 April 44 Munich (F/O Ellesmere),
8. 28/29 April 44 Kjeller (F/O Ellesmere),
9. 1/2 May 44 Toulouse (F/O Ellesmere),
10. 3/4 May 44 Mailly-le-Camp (F/O Ellsmere) kia. (shown as M.A. in Bomber Command Losses)

Details from Operational Record Book

15/16 March 1944 Stuttgart

14.3.44 24 Lancasters detailed for operations. Briefing took place, with Stuttgart for the target. The attack was made in good visibility with 10/10ths cloud, tops 8000'. Wanganui flares were seen at 23.09 and at the commencement the target appeared to have been well marked, but a second concentration soon built up wide of the original one. Gaps appeared in the marking, supporters were late with scattered bombing. From all reports it would appear to be a disappointing attack.

JB731F F/O R.O.Ellesmere, Sgt H.A.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt M.N.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 1950 Down 0220. 5 x 2000lb. Vis good at target. 9/10ths cloud. Bombed at 19,700' on one green TI. No good concentration was achieved and Wanganuis which fell later were very scattered. Red glow was seen below cloud with white glow from incendiaries in between but no good results were observed.

22/23 March 1944 – Frankfurt

22.3.44 Some training was carried out in the morning and 14 Lancasters were detailed for operations tonight. Frankfurt was the target and the attack opened on time at 21.45. A fair concentration was achieved, timing was good, and marking was well maintained. Large fires were seen around aiming point and fires quickly extended with smoke rising to 10,000' and fires were visible 200 miles away. There was slight H/F, searchlights numerous but ineffective. Enemy fighter activity below normal. P/O Cooper and crew failed to return, no news having since been received. F/O Moroney and crew also failed to return, the last message heard was at 20.38 hours, position given as 53.21N 03.45E baling out.

ND452H? F/O R.Ellesmere, Sgt Wilson?, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt Hughes, Sgt Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 1850 Down 2335. 4 x TI, 1 x 4000lb, 2 x 1000lb, 600 x 4lb incs. Frankfurt attacked from 18,500'. 3/10ths cloud tops 11,000' in centre of red and green TI. Bomb bursts were seen around concentration of a red TI seen to cascade amongst others. A good concentration was maintained throughout. Own incendiary bombs were seen to fall ½ mile south of reds.

24/25 March 1944 Berlin

24.3.44 Training was suspended for briefing. 14 aircraft being detailed for operations. 14 Lancasters set out to attack Berlin, weather over target was 4 to 9/10ths cloud, visibility good. Defences slight H/F. and moderate L/F. Searchlights ineffective, night fighters active. Bombing took place from approx 19,000'. The attack opened with Wanganui flares and were in fair concentration. Later red and green TIs were seen. This was kept up and marking was fairly well concentrated and constant. Fires were seen in the area of TIs. Built up area and lines of streets were clearly seen around the glow of incendiaries. Generally considered a good attack. 12 photos attempted. F/O Todd and crew and P/O Coates DFM and crew failed to return. A signal was received from F/O Todd and crew when near the Calais area on return, but nothing further heard. Well over 2500 tons were dropped on this attack and a total of 72 bombers reported missing.

ND452E F/O R.O.Ellesmere, Sgt M.A.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt M.N.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 1850 Down 0120. 4 x TI, 20 flares, 1 x 4000lb, 1 x 1000lb, 2 x 500lb, 1 red/yellow flare. Berlin bombed on H2S from 19,000'. Weather 5/10ths cloud. Vis very good. Good concentration of TIs seen 10 seconds prior to bombing. Bomb bursts could be seen after leaving the target area and a large red glow was observed from a distance of 50 miles.

30/31 March 1944 Nuremburg

30.3.44 Some training was carried out prior to briefing. 14 crews were detailed to attack Nuremburg. Weather was 7 to 10/10ths cloud with tops varying from 10,000' to 20,000' with thick haze. 2 red TIs were seen to disappear under the cloud at 0103 hours. A cluster of skymarkers were observed at 0110, in a concentration east of Nuremburg with two others south of the city. The attack tended to become scattered towards the end, however, a large explosion was noted at 0113 hours. The flak was moderate to heavy, no searchlights. Fighters were up in great strength. Command experienced their heaviest night's loss in 96 aircraft. F/Lt Rowlands and crew and F/Lt Hyde and crew failed to return. P/O Edwards was badly shot up, returned safely.

ND706A F/O R.O.Ellesmere, Sgt M.A.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt M.N.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 2230 Down 0530. 3 x 2000lb, 10 x 90 x 4lb incs, 4 x TI. Visibility moderate at target. 7-10/10ths cloud at 20,000'. 4 sky marker flares burning. Attacked by H2S and also sky marker flares. A few others were seen later. Bombing appeared rather scattered.

11/12 April 1944 - Aachen

11.4.44 Fighter affiliation, "Y" runs and air-to-air firing carried out. 10 aircraft detailed to attack Aachen for tonight's operation. Weather was 10/10ths cloud with tops 6,000/8,000 feet, good visibility. First red TI was seen at 22.40 and marking from then was constant and in a very good concentration. Several areas of fires were seen and generally the attack was well concentrated. Fires over the target could be seen by a Mosquito crew taking off from base at 22.50. There was slight H/F, S/Ls were negligible, also fighter activity.

ND706A F/O R.O.Ellesmere, Sgt M.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt M.N.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 2040 Down 0025. 2 x TI, 12 x 1000lb HC. Bombed target from 17,400'. 3-4/10ths cloud tops 8/9,000'. Red TI was seen cascading. Bomb bursts seen concentrated to south of town and incendiaries bursting. Own green TIs not seen.

20/21 April 1944 – Paris (La Chappelle Marshalling Yards)

20.4.44 15 aircraft have been detailed for operations. The raid was carried out against the marshalling yards at La Chappelle, Paris. The attack was made in clear weather. Fighters reported on route and flak over target more troublesome than expected. Green TI clearly seen by all aircraft. Flares dropped in tight cluster. VHF and 1196 generally failed over target, but success of operation unaffected. Very large petrol explosion and other minor explosions seen. The second attack on the northern AP followed same lines as first attack, with believed equal success. Two aircraft were damaged by enemy action. S/Ldr Leatherland and crew failed to return from the operation.

ND706A F/O Ellesmere, Sgt M.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt N.M.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 2317 Down 0319. 5 x 4 x 7" flares, 4 x 1000lb GP, 5 x 1000lb GP. Target bombed from 14,500' in clear weather. Warehouses and buildings on both sides of yards were blazing fiercely as result of earlier attack. First green TI in second attack seen to fall in yard and illumination of area was concentrated. General concentration of bombing good.

24/25 April 1944 – Munich

24.4.44 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.

ND706A F/O R.O.Ellesmere, Sgt M.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L W.G.Cooper, F/Sgt L.G.Hughes, Sgt N.M.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 2101 Down 0635. 1 x 4000lb HC, 3 x yellow TI, 2 x red TI, 90 x 30lb incs. Weather over Munich clear, no cloud, good visibility. Attacked by RSFs. On arriving datum point, no yellow TIs were seen. First aircraft to release yellow TIs. At target first RSF seen to go down approximately 0144 hours. First run overshoot, came in again for dummy run when instructions received to bomb. Fires concentrated around RSF.

28/29 April 1944 – Kjeller (Oslo)

28.4.44 15 Lancasters have been detailed to attack a Maintenance Depot at Kjeller just outside Oslo. The attack was made in clear weather from 6-10,000 feet. Opposition nil. Datum point markers accurate. Flares provided perfect illumination on time. The raid was highly effective – hangars and buildings were seen to blow up. Excellent photos of aiming points obtained. All crews returned safely.

ND706A F/O R.O.Ellesmere, Sgt M.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, P/O P.A.Stevens, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt N.M.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 2113 Down 0422. 6 clusters 7" flares, 3 x yellow TIs no4, 5 x 1000lb MC. Weather clear, visibility excellent. Target identified by runway buildings, row of white lights, lakes and fjords. After seeing datum points, yellow TI at 0110 hours, aircraft dropped flares at 0115 hours, left target area and dropped yellow TI routemarker at 0124. Bombed at 0132 hours on RSF on factory. Incendiary bombs began at 0138 hours in strings across aiming point. Very little scatter. RSF very heavily and accurately bombed.

28/29 April 1944 – Kjeller (Oslo)

More details from the Master controller on this OP

From master controller

ND739Z W/C E.J.Carter, P/O G.Dunning, F/L R.J,Conley, F/O H.W.Rieger, F/L A.Chambers, W/O F.R.Watson, S/L M.Bryan-Smith. Up 2115 Down 0434. 6 clusters 7" flares, 6 x 1000lb MC. (Controller). No cloud over target area. Visibility perfect. Bombed visually. Datum point markers accurate. Flares released on visual identification. Flares seen over centre of runway, ours dropped to illuminate buildings on northern edge of airframe works. TI seen on bombing run. Some smoke on north-west corner of building "E". Our own bombs went in salvoes approximately 200 feet north. Arrived target area 0103 hours having previously descended to 6,000' and found bombing wind 003-36mph. I then received bombing wind 330-30mph from "J" and next from D/97 350-35. I then broadcast bombing wind of 353-35mph and wind appeared to be accurate. Datum point was down approximately on time and was kept backed up throughout the attack. Flares went down on time at Zero and target area was immediately illuminated perfectly. First marker to go down was on target "B" and for some reason was a RSF which dropped 200 yards north of target "B". A green was then put down just south of target "B" and then assessor passed instructions to bomb between green and red spot fire. These instructions passed on to "Beetroot" Force. A RSF was then dropped between buildings 7 and 9 (Illustration S523) but as buildings shielded, I asked Marker Leader to re-mark. This he did very accurately and second RSF went through building 5. This burned inside building and was difficult to see. I, therefore, asked marker leader to back up on target "A", when he informed me that all other spot fires had hung up and that no more were available for marking. I, therefore, called in both forces A and B (0127 hours) to bomb. At 0133 hours most of the HE seemed to have been dropped and I called in the incendiary force. At the same time it was apparent that target "B" had been very thoroughly covered while very little bombing appeared to have been directed at target "A". The markers on this target had meanwhile completely disappeared. I, therefore, ordered all remaining aircraft with an HE or incendiary to overshoot target "B" by approximately 2000 yards due west in an attempt to cover target "A". The bombing then spread in the direction of target "A" and it is possible this was eventually completely covered but this was difficult to assess due to lack of markers. Note –markers took so long to mark target "B" that the flares had completely died before target "A" was marked. I, therefore, called in Reserve Force (0124 hours) who completely illuminated the whole of target area and enabled markers to mark successfully target "A". Conclusions Green spot fires too weak to be satisfactory. Single spot fires of any colour are not effective on targets of this nature, since if they penetrate or fall between two buildings, they are practically invisible. Very obvious dummy fire sites illuminated approximately 300 yards to north of target "B". I warned "Beetroot" Force at 0135 to beware of these dummies.

3/4 May 1944 – Mailly-Le-Camp

3.5.44 A considerable amount of training was carried out in the morning. Operations that night were directed against a German military camp and supply depot at Mailly-Le-Camp. Our aircraft kept the target illuminated from 00.14 to 00.29 hours whilst the Mosquito aircraft marked the actual aiming point for the Main Force to bomb. The raid was extremely successful and the target was completely destroyed. Fighter opposition was exceptionally intense during a period from the end of the attack until crossing the French coast home. The whole operation was carried out in brilliant moonlight and on the return journey many of our aircraft flew at heights between 50/200' above the ground, often flying down German occupied aerodromes, strafing searchlights and flak towers! One of our aircraft – "A" captained by F/O Ross Ellesmere RCAF, did not return from this mission. The weather was very good.

ND706A F/O R.O.Ellsmere, Sgt M.Johnson, P/O S.Carlyle, F/L A.E.Carlton, F/Sgt L.F.Hughes, Sgt M.N.Duffy, P/O A.J.Newton. Up 2149. 6 clusters 7" flares, 8 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5" rec flares. Aircraft missing.



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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