

# Pilot Officer Douglas Edward Broughton DFC

**Rear Gunner**



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References: 97 Squadron Operational Record Books 1939-1943

*Achieve Your Aim by Kevin Bending*

Mark Howard

2020

*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

**Broughton, D.E. (RG) 179389 RAFVR**

- Sgt 1.** 26/27 Mar 44 Essen (P/O Shorter),
- 2.** 11/12 April 44 Aachen (P/O Shorter) *shown as D.E.*,
- 3.** 28/29 April 44 Kjeller (P/O Shorter),
- 4.** 29/30 April 44 Clermont-Ferrand (P/O Shorter) *shown as B.E.*,
- 5.** 1/2 May 44 Toulouse (P/O Shorter) *shown as B.E.*,
- 6.** 6/7 May 44 Louailles (P/O Shorter) *shown as B.E.*,
- 7.** 22/23 May 44 Brunswick (P/O Shorter) *shown as B.E.*,
- 8.** 24/25 May 44 Eindhoven Phillips Works (P/O Shorter) *attack cancelled by Controller at target, shown as D.E.*,
- 9.** 27/28 May 44 Morsalines (P/O Shorter) *shown as D.E.*,
- 10.** 5/6 June 44 St Pierre du Mont (P/O Shorter) *shown as D.E.*,
- 11.** 6/7 June 44 Argentan (P/O Shorter),
- F/Sgt 12.** 24/25 June 44 Prouville (F/O Shorter),
- 13.** 4/5 July 44 St Leu D'Esserent (F/O Shorter),
- 14.** 20/21 July 44 Courtrai (F/O Shorter),
- 15.** 24/25 July 44 Longes (F/O Shorter),
- 16.** 25/26 July 44 Stuttgart (F/O Shorter),
- 17.** 5 Aug 44 St Leu d'Esserent (F/L Shorter),
- 18.** 6 Aug 44 Bois de Casson (F/L Shorter),
- P/O 19.** 25/26 Aug 44 Darmstadt (F/L Shorter),
- 20.** 26/27 Aug 44 Konigsberg (F/L Shorter),
- 21.** 29/30 Aug 44 Konigsberg (F/L Shorter),
- 22.** 11/12 Sept 44 Darmstadt (F/L Shorter),
- 23.** 12/13 Sept 44 Stuttgart (F/L Shorter),
- 24.** 23/24 Sept 44 Munster (F/L Shorter),
- 25.** 26/27 Sept 44 Karlsruhe (F/L Shorter),
- 26.** 27/28 Sept 44 Kaiserslautern (F/L Shorter),
- 27.** 6 Oct 44 Bremen (F/L Shorter),
- 28.** 14/15 Oct 44 Brunswick (F/L Shorter),
- 29.** 19/20 Oct 44 Nuremburg (F/L Shorter),
- 30.** 4 Dec 44 Heilbronn (F/L Shorter),
- 31.** 13 Dec 44 Horten (F/L Shorter),

## **FROM THE OPERATIONAL RECORD BOOKS**

**26.3.44** Flying during day and seven aircraft detailed for night cross country exercises. 6 aircraft detailed and briefed for tonight's operations. The aircraft took off in good weather to attack Essen. Weather at target 10/10ths cloud, poor visibility, H/F was slight. Bombing was from approx 19,000'. Red TIs were difficult to identify and only three aircraft brought back the TI greens. Opposition was weak, all returned safely to base. The night exercise was also carried out.

### **26/27 March 1944 Essen**

**ND415B** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, F/Sgt A.Aveline, F/Sgt C.A.P.Thompson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, D.Broughton. Up 1955 Down 0025. 1 x 4000lb, 6 x 1000lb, 510 x 4lb incs, 30 x 4lb "X" incs. Bombed on DR from 19,700'. 10/10ths cloud (strato) tops 8-10,000'. Vis good. Red TI was seen to fall but quickly went out. There was no backing up. After bombing quite a number of green TIs were seen to fall but the concentration was not visible.

**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.

### **11/12 April 1944 - Aachen**

**ND415B** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, F/Sgt A.Aveline, F/Sgt C.A.P.Thompson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, D.E.Broughton. Up 2045 Down 0025. 13 x 1000lb. Vis good over target. 8/10ths cloud tops 5,000'. Attacked from 16,700'. Red TI was in sight and on dropping obscured by cloud. First red TI seen at 2241 hours followed by another at 2244. Four green TIs seen. On leaving target a good concentration of fires seen and incendiaries burning.

**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.

### **28/29 April 1944 – Kjeller (Oslo)**

**ND415B** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, F/Sgt A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thompson, F/Sgt P.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, D.E.Broughton. Up 2102 Down 0432. 9 x 1000lb MC. Weather at target area clear. Visibility good. Target located visually by runway on airfield. On first run aircraft was not properly straight and level so another run was made. Markers were well placed but were not burning well backed up. Bombing was concentrated. Large yellow explosion observed at 0130 hours.

**29.4.44** 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.

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

**ND589D** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, F/Sgt A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thompson, F/Sgt P.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, B.E.Broughton. Up 2212 Down 0440. 6 clusters 7” flares, 6 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5” flares. Weather clear with haze. Located visually by RSF. Marking excellent. RSF on buildings kept backed up with reds. First flares on town but second lot actually on the target. Told our flares not needed, called in to bomb 0125 hours. Attack very good indeed. No fighters or opposition except one light gun in target

**6.5.44** 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 hosepiping red and green tracer up to about 6,000 ft. The weather was very good. All our aircraft returned safely.

#### **6/7 May 1944 - Louailles**

**ND415B** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, F/Sgt A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thompson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, B.E.Broughton. Up 0040 Down 0506. 6 x 7” flares yellow No 16, 6 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5” flares clusters, 2 x TI. Ammunition dump at Louailles located by RSFs, also woods. Weather clear – good visibility. At 0233 hours approx, first RSF appeared as aircraft approached and was backed up without delay, soon forming a satisfactory concentration. Aircraft bombed at 0241 hours when instructed. RSF concentration remained satisfactory. Some good sympathetic explosions towards the end.

**27.5.44** Some training this morning. The coffins of F/O Paige and F/Sgt Dunae were conveyed to Dogdyke station for funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. The target for the night’s operation was a gun position at St Valery-en-Caux. Our aircraft illuminated the target with reco flares but the Mosquitos were unable to identify the target at first. The Controller gave orders for more flares to be dropped and in a short while the target was marked with a RSF. At about this time the marker aircraft was heard to report that he was hit. He afterwards ditched in the Channel. The Main Force then went in and bombed. The raid was very successful.

#### **27/28 May 1944 – St Valery-en-Caux**

**JA846A** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt P.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, D.E.Broughton. Up 2250 Down 0215. 12 x 7” clusters, 2 x 1000lb MC, 3 x 4.5” reco flares. On running up to target, instructions received on W/T at 0037 hours and VHF at 0038 hours for raid to be called off.

**5.6.44** 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.

#### **5/6 June 1944 – St Pierre du Mont (D-DAY)**

**PA973A** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt P.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, D.E.Broughton. Up 0306 Down 0659. 11 x 1000lb MC, 4 x 500lb GP. 10/10ths cloud 9,000' base, tops 11,000'. Vis good above, poor below. Identification by special equipment and red and green TI. Icing prevented accurate vision. Bombing seemed concentrated on the greens. Slight icing in cloud on the whole route. Satisfactory trip and attack appeared successful.

**6.6.44** No training today. Tonight 16 of our aircraft were detailed to attack a German supply depot and the rail centre at 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.

#### **6/7 June 1944 – Argentan (D-DAY)**

**JA846A** P/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt P.Withers, Sgts G.Batho, D.E.Broughton. Up 2324 Down 0301. 6 x 7 x 4.5” clusters, 10 x 500lb MC, 3 x 4.5” reco flares. Located target (Argentan east) on GEE. Also yellow Oboe marker reflected on ground. 10/10ths cloud base 5,500', tops 8,500'. If the markers were “on”, it appeared a good attack and was over very quickly. Bombing was well concentrated on the markers. A lot of smoke from bombing obscured details.

**24.6.44** Many training cross countries this morning. Some practice bombing at Wainfleet. The target for tonight was Prouville – a point from which the Germans had been sending their pilotless aircraft to bomb London. 12 aircraft were detailed. At 00.10 and 00.11 the first Oboe markers were seen. Flares were immediately dropped over them. It was very difficult, however, for the marker aircraft to identify the target, especially as they were hampered by searchlights, light flak and night fighters. The Deputy Controller attempted to mark blindly on his blind bombing equipment, but it is feared that as greater accuracy was needed than was possible that the raid must be considered abortive. F/Lt Walton, flying Lancaster “J”, did not return from this sortie. No message was received from him. The gunners of “Q” – F/O Jones and W/O Clark – distinguished themselves by shooting down in flames two JU88s which attacked them. A third JU88 was claimed as a probable. An exceptionally good effort.

#### **24/25 June 1944 – Prouville**

**PA973A** F/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt P.Withers, Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 2249 Down 0216. 9 x 7 x 4.5” clusters, 6 x 500lb, 1 x 500lb MC LD (6 hrs), 2 x 4.5” rec flares. No cloud, vis clear, some haze. Location by Oboe marker. At approx 0016 hours while we were running in we received instruction on VHF to standby for second flare wave, and very soon afterwards, ordered to release. Illuminated by searchlights but not held. Orbited and extra flares were demanded at 0022 hours; as we were getting in to position we were coned by 10 searchlights. Tried to evade as we were passed on from one searchlight to another for about 10 minutes. Also engaged by heavy flak. Then fired on by Me109 and hit while still coned. Enemy aircraft came in three times. Starboard outer engine was set on fire and feathered. Gyro toppled and fighter made another attack. After the last attack, searchlight went out (0043). No marking now visible. MCs and clusters all jettisoned safe in sea.

**4.7.44** 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.

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

**ND840J** F/O D.E.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 2325 Down 0325. 9 x 7” clusters, 4 x 1000lb MC, 1 x 1000lb MC LD, 3 rec flares. Attacked at 0140.5 hours at 18,000’. Bombed on RSF and TI green.

**20.7.44** 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.

#### **20/21 July 1944 – Courtrai**

**PA973A** P/O D.A.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 2318 Down 0217. 9 x 7" clusters, 5 x 1000lb MC/GP, 3 rec flares. Weather clear with haze. Target located by red TIs. Our flares not needed. At 0055 called in to bomb. Marking very good. First green TI was assessed as 100 yards 12 o'clock, second green was about 50 yards and the third was on aiming point. Ordered to bomb green TI. Bombing concentrated except for a few loose sticks. Numerous explosions. Distortion and interference on VHF.

**24.7.44** 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.

#### **24/25 July 1944 – Longes**

**PA975A** F/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 2244 Down 0351. 9 x 7" clusters, 4 x 1000lb MC, 1 x 1000lb LD (6 hours). Nil cloud, hazy. Target located visually, confirmed by H2S. Oboe dropped on time, followed by flares which proved accurate. Mosquitos dropped green TI which appeared well concentrated around aiming point. Bombs were generally well concentrated with a few loose sticks. Large explosion observed at 0149 lasting 3 seconds.

**25.7.44** 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.

#### **25/26 July 1944 – Stuttgart**

**PA973A** F/O D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 2158 Down 0523. 6 x 7" clusters, 2 x TI red, 1 x 4000lb HC, 4 x 500lb GP, 1 x Wanganui green/red. No cloud but ground haze. Identification by DR; illuminating flares and one TI red cascaded just before bombing. Red TI fell roughly 5 miles away on port beam. Aircraft obliged on DR as H2S was u/s from French coast out to target. The transmitter was apparently u/s. Two green TIs were seen falling about two miles apart two minutes after bombing. A few scattered fires were observed. Ground haze too thick for visual identification of target.

**5.8.44** Some training this morning, but the majority of today's flying was on the daylight operation against a flying bomb base at St Leu d'Esserent, in which attack 15 of our aircraft participated. The controller led the formation and ran up approximately 5 miles to starboard of the target. He recognized the target to port and ordered a sharp turn to port. Most aircraft immediately astern of him were able to turn in time but a few to his starboard were unable to turn in time and overshot the target by nearly 2000 yards. This turn, however, did not appear to affect too seriously the rear formations, and some accurate bombing resulted. Within two minutes of bombing, however, the target area was covered in dust up to 12,000 ft and later crews had a hard job to find the target and bomb it. There was slight heavy flak, but no signs of fighters. There was three to seven tenths cumulus cloud with tops up to 12,000 feet. All of our aircraft returned safely from this raid. No night flying.

#### **5 August 1944 – St Leu d'Esserent**

**PA974A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 1039 Down 1522. Weather – 3/10ths to 7/10ths cloud. Cumulus tops 12,000'. Results – Controller ran up approx 5 miles to starboard. He recognised the target to port and ordered a sharp turn to port. Most aircraft immediately astern were able to make turn in time, but some further on his starboard could not make the turn in time and some overshot by 2000 yards. This turn did not appear to affect too seriously the rear formations and some accurate bombing resulted. The target area was covered with dust up to 12,000' by 1332 hours. Opposition Encountered – Slight heavy flak increasing to moderate in early stages. No signs of fighters.

**6.8.44** Today also the training flights were overshadowed by another operation against a flying bomb base at Bois de Casson, for which 9 of our aircraft were detailed. The raid was not a great success as the controller's navigational equipment became unserviceable at the English coast out. A deputy controller took over and led the force into a large cumulus nimbus cloud which was lying across track. The formation broke up in the cloud and on emerging had spread over many miles of sky. The target was bombed more or less by individual aircraft, and the bombing that did occur was believed to have been accurate. There was moderate heavy flak over the target and the fighters attacked the aircraft which were most dispersed on breaking cloud. 'J' captained by F/O Bucknell RAAF, did not return from this mission.

### **6 August 1944 – Bois de Casson**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, F/Sgt D.E.Broughton. Up 0915 Down 1342.

**25.8.44** 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.

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

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt P.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 2106 Down 0125. 2 rec flares, 12 x 7" clusters, 1 x 1000lb TI green, 1 x 1000lb TI red (B16s). Weather clear, fair visibility. Target identified on H2S. 2 sticks of flares were dropped before we made our run. Our flares were dropped using our found wind at 135/10 kph and believed to be very slightly to port of aiming point. No messages from Controller or Deputies were received. On leaving target no markers were seen. There was no object in staying in target area so we set course for base.

**26.8.44** 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.

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

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, F/L T.Campbell, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 2030 Down 0548. 12 x 7" clusters, 1 x RSF, 1 X TI red No 16, 2 rec flares. Weather clear. Identification confirmed by H2S. Marking appeared good. We dropped RSF on position B at 0044 hours as briefed. No flares required from us illumination was adequate. Landed at Tuddenham.

**29.8.44** Practice bombing at Wainfleet this morning. Tonight Koenigsberg was the target again with 13 aircraft and crews taking part. This time the target was the marshalling yards and the dock area. The attack was on similar lines to the previous raid. The flares went down at 0107 hours. The Controller, W/C Woodroffe, soon initially marked the target, but owing to VHF trouble and a backers-up bomb sight toppling, the marking became very protracted and main force were not called in until 0142 hours. W/O Moir blind marked the target with a TI green which fell 400 yards 080 degrees from the aiming point. Photographic evidence has proved the raid to have been quite successful. All of our aircraft returned safely. There was considerable light and slight heavy flak. Fighter activity was slight.

### **29/30 August 1944 - Konigsberg**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P. Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 2029 Down 0637. 12 x 7" clusters, 2 x TI red No 16, 1 x TI yellow No 16, 2 rec flares. 10/10ths cloud at 15,000', base 9,500'. Target confirmed by H2X. Dropped 9 cluster flares on Box as briefed. Circled target, descending during protracted marking. At 0125 hours approx, Controller ordered spare flares to be dropped over green TI, which we did. Coned by searchlights at 0130 hours, fired at some from 7,000', which dispersed. Fighter approached but defensive manoeuvre was successful; mid upper gunner fired but no claim made.

### **COMBAT REPORT**

OF - A PA973 0130 hours

7000'

In the target area the aircraft had just dropped 3 flares and was coned by searchlights. About 30 seconds after being coned the pilot saw a FW190 on the starboard up coming in. He immediately corkscrewed starboard. The enemy aircraft crossed over the top of OF-A to the port beam and came in to attack again. By the time enemy aircraft commenced to attack, OF-A was corkscrewing port. The mid upper gunner opened fire but the enemy aircraft was lost in glare of searchlights. It could not be followed and its break away was not seen owing to dazzle. FW190 did not make any further attacks. No claim.

Rear gunner – P/O Broughton (did not fire)

Mid upper gunner – F/Sgt Batho (200 rounds)

**11.9.44** 6 bombing details, one fighter affiliation exercise, 22 GPI and “Y” runs, and a “Y” cross-country were together done this morning by a total of 11 aircraft. The main event of the day was however the operational mission to Darmstadt. For this, 15 aircraft and crews were detailed, all of which took-off. This operation represented a considerable success for the Flare Force (of whom this Squadron provided 6), for the illumination was on time and extremely accurate. The first red TI was, as a result, dropped as early as H-9 (“H” was 0000 hrs). This was accurately backed up and a good concentration resulted. Green TIs were also dropped accurately in the centre of the town by aircraft of this squadron, arrangement having been made that the first aircraft to make good blind runs for flare dropping should release green TIs at this point, however, a certain amount of confusion arose, owing to a misunderstood order of the Controller; both red and green TIs were backed up with further greens, and as a result the concentration became scattered. Despite this, however, early bombing was accurate, and later photographic evidence shows that much damage was done. Opposition was reported as slight; heavy flak was very slight, and light flak “meagre”. A little fighter activity was experienced round the target. The weather was clear, with very slight haze on the inward journey. From this operation S/Ldr de Belleruche of “B” Flight, failed to return. No signals were received. W/Cdr Walker, a u/t controller of 54 Base, who was flying aircraft “H” of this squadron, also failed to return.

### 11/12 September 1944 - Darmstadt

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 2113 Down 0213. 12 x 7” clusters, 2 x TI green No 16. Weather clear. No more flares needed. Red TI seen to go down, assessed as excellent; no backing up needed with greens. Flare Force told to return to base 2354 hrs. Dummy TI greens seen to drop 10 miles west and incendiaries three miles from target in woods. Large explosion in target area 0010 hrs.

**12.9.44** NFTs were done this morning and afternoon in preparation for the night’s operational mission to Stuttgart. For this, 13 aircraft were detailed, all of which took off. This would seem to be the most successful raid ever on this target, or, perhaps, the only really successful one in some thirty attempts. “H” was 2310. At 2258.9 three aircraft of the flare force who were able to make exceptionally good blind runs dropped green TI, the first flares were dropped at 2259, and by 2304 (H-6) the whole target was completely illuminated. Simultaneously, aircraft of this Squadron were dropping TIs as primary blind markers. Though two TIs cascaded very wide, they did not affect the issue. The aiming point was marked by Mosquitos with red TIs and red spot fires. Backing up was completed by H-21/2, and main force bombing actually commenced at H exactly. Violent explosions lasting for many seconds were reported seen at 2329. As far as can be seen at the moment, this attack seems to have been highly successful. All our aircraft returned safely. The flak, both light and heavy, was moderate only; no searchlights were seen, and no fighter opposition encountered. Although there was a little ground haze near the target, visibility was on the whole good.

### 12/13 September 1944 - Stuttgart

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 1901 Down 0122. 2 x TI green No 16, 8 x 1000lb (1/2 hour delay). No cloud, slight haze. Target confirmed on H2X. Two lots of green TI went down one minute and ½ a minute before ours, approx 400 yards apart. Ours overshoot about 500 yards to south east. Red TI later seen south of greens but unable to give exact position. All greens seen to be in built up area. At 2328.5 hrs a big red explosion lasting 5-10 seconds lit up whole area.

**23.9.44** 11 aircraft were detailed to participate in a raid on an aqueduct at Munster. All aircraft detailed took off. In no way could the raid be described as a success. One of the controllers had navigational trouble, arrived late, and took no part in the operation. The remaining controller assessed the first flares as south of the target, and ordered the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> flare waves to drop their flares 3 miles to the north. It was afterwards found however that the Mosquitos had, in the light of these flares, marked the wrong aqueduct some 6 miles to the north of the target, so the original flares could hardly have been south. The issue was further complicated by low cloud creeping across the target, and a lower cloud base generally than was expected. Many crews of this and 83 Squadron reported that they saw no markers at all. It is hoped, however, that some damage was done to the enemy. Crews detailed to drop TI and bombs on the town of Munster itself did so. The heavy flak was slight but increased as the main force aircraft came in. There was also some light flak. Fighters in some strength were encountered on the first leg of the homeward route. From this raid, two aircraft of our Squadron failed to return. They were S/L Higgs in "F" and F/O Lopez (RAAF) in "B". No signals were received.

### 23/24 September 1944 - Munster

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, P/O C.A.P.Thomson, F/L J.L.Billington (A/B 2), F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 1907 Down 2344. 15 x 7" clusters, 2 rec flares. 10/10ths strata cu on west of target area, stretching north and south. Unable to pick up Rheine on H2S, therefore no GPI could be made. No flares dropped as message received to drop 3 miles north of existing flares, and we were too far south for a run to be made in time. We were Link I, and should have heard 7 winds being sent in, but only 3 were heard; we, therefore, left Breeze Leader to average winds as he probably received them all. Wind received from him was 236/26.5 at H-2.

**26.9.44** The bodies of F/O Walker, F/Sgt Sharpe and Sgt Strowger (all of F/O Lopez's crew, missing 23/24 of this month) were today recovered from the Wash. 11 aircraft were detailed for operations, target Karlsruhe. All aircraft detailed took off, but F/O Negus (RAAF) in aircraft "C" returned early with u/s intercom in his rear turret. The attack failed, because cloud conditions and searchlights combined to make marking impossible. The target was covered with 10/10ths cloud, the base of which is believed to have been about 400'. The first blind markers (green TI) and flares (this Squadron provided the greater part of the flare force) went down to time, but it was found impossible to mark, and those aircraft able to see the green TI dropped their reds on it. Main Force were then ordered to bomb the mean point of impact of reds and greens. It is feared however that little damage was done. All our aircraft returned safely. The heavy flak, though slight, was above expectation. A few fighters were seen.

### 26/27 September 1944 - Karlsruhe

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, F/L C.A.P.Thomson, F/L J.L.Billington (A/B 2), F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 0048 Down 0649. 1 x green TI B22, 1 x green TI No 16, 11 x 1000lb MC (1/2 hour delay). 10/10ths cloud. Target identified on H2X. Arrived over target at H-10, dropped bombs on equipment but not quite satisfied with H2S results to drop TI. Heard Controller order Main Force to bomb subsequent concentration of reds and greens, Mosquito being previously ordered to back up latter as they were unable to identify marking point. 10/10ths cloud prevented observation of results. Second and third flare force also ordered to back up green.

**27.9.44** Training in the morning – “Y” runs and bombing mostly – and NFTs in the afternoon in preparation for the evening’s serious work. This was a mission to Kaiserslautern, for which 9 aircraft were detailed from this Squadron. All aircraft detailed took off. The attack is thought to have been a moderate success. The flares went down on time, but of the various aircraft detailed to act as primary blind markers, only one dropped his red TI. The 3 aircraft of this Squadron so detailed – their captains were F/L Shorter, F/O Simpson (RCAF) and F/O Scholefield (RAAF) – all retained their reds, not being satisfied with their bombing runs. Despite this, the Red Marking Point was accurately marked at 0055 (H-5) and the Green Marking Point had been marked at 0054. At 0058 the Controller called in Main Force to bomb, and the attack ran smoothly, (although a jettisoned load to the north attracted some bombing). It was generally agreed that the lack of blind marking could not be laid to our blame. In the absence of the blind TIs however, the Mosquitos markers did most of the work, and in this way they were helped by the good work of the Flare Force, of whom this Squadron provided five. F/O Woolnough of this Squadron reported a very large explosion at 0100.5 hours. Flak – both heavy and light – was slight only; there were no searchlights and no fighters seen. A more serious obstacle was the cloud, which was stratus, 7/10 to 9/10, at approx 5000’ with thick base, and mist.

#### **27/28 September 1944 – Kaiserslautern**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, F/L J.L.Billington, F/L C.A.P.Thomson, F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 2158 Down 0321. 1 x TI red B22, 1 x TI red No 16, 7 x 1000lb MC (1/2 hour delay). 7/10ths cloud, vis good. Target located by illuminating flares. H2S was u/s from beginning so arrived early and overshot target area. First flares went down about two minutes late at 0054 hrs. Repeated on VHF that the first RSF was 50 yards north. Main Force called in to bomb green TI on eastern aiming point at 0101 hours on W/T and RSF on western aiming point (ignoring 2 stray reds miles away) at 0103 hrs approx. Own aircraft dropped bombs only on order of Controller on green TI. Bombing results appeared good as seen below cloud after leaving target.

The following officers were temporarily awarded the PFF Badge on the dates shown:-

1605604      P/O D.E.Broughton      GDG    17.8.44



**6.10.44** An H2S exercise was done this morning, with Hyde Park as the objective. It was desired to discover whether the average set-operator was capable of picking out and marking a small open area (such as Hyde Park or the Templehof Airfield) within a large built up area. Photographs taken by the crews show that the standard of set work was uniformly good, but it is still an open question whether the presence of the Serpentine in Hyde Park allows the latter to be considered a representative target. The usual training went on in the daytime, and 10 aircraft were detailed to attack Bremen. All aircraft detailed took off. Of these, 4 were detailed as Primary Blind Markers, five as Flare Force, and one as Supporter. The attack went smoothly and as arranged. H was 2025, and the first flares were dropped by F/O Woolnough of this Squadron at 2016, (H-9 as arranged). The M/P was marked, the markers backed up, and Main Force was called in at 2023. A very efficient raid, apparently, with the last of spectacular incidents emphasising the efficiency of all concerned. Flak (both heavy and light) was only slight while our aircraft were on target, though the heavy flak increased as the Main Force aircraft came in the searchlights were reported as “intense and troublesome”. All our aircraft returned safely. After-note (9/10/44) Photographic evidence has since shown that this raid was highly successful. The old city is now almost completely gutted, and there are further areas of devastation in the residential area to the SE.

#### **6 October 1944 - Bremen**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, P/O A.A.Aveline, F/L J.L.Billington, F/L C.A.P.Thomson (AB 2), F/Sgt E.Withers, F/Sgt D.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 1743 Down 2148. 1 x TI red B22, 1 x TI red B24, 6 x 1000lb MC (1/2 hour delay). Clear, slight haze. Target confirmed on H2X. Coned by searchlights on Y run in. Made corkscrew defensive manoeuvre during which bombs were released, but with markers in sights.

**14.10.44** Today's event was a mission to Brunswick, for which 10 aircraft of this Squadron were detailed – 2 as Primary Blind Markers and the rest as Flare Force and Supporters. All of our aircraft reached the target, though one must technically be counted as abortive – aircraft D (F/O Ryan) – as his flares hung up. Crews enjoyed clear weather and an almost complete absence of flak. Searchlights also were negligible. A marking point in the centre of the town was to be marked with red TI, and, with the help of a system of overshooting by main force, it was hoped that the whole of the town would be severely damaged. The attack went smoothly and to plan, and its success was indubitably laid on the foundation of flares and green TI dropped by aircraft

of this Squadron and 83 Squadron. Main force were called in to bomb at 0229 (H-1) and were ordered to "complete bombing and return to base" at 0238 hours. All of our aircraft returned safely to their base. Reconnaissance aircraft over the target one hour later reported that the centre of the town and large portions to the west were burning fiercely, with smoke up to 15,000'.

### **14/15 October 1944 - Brunswick**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, F/O A.A.Aveline, F/L C.A.P.Thomson, F/L J.L.Billington, F/Sgt E.Withers, W/O G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 2304 Down 0512. 12 x 4.5" clusters, 2 rec flares. No cloud, good vis. Identification of target on H2S. Flares were released blind as briefed but were well over town on visual check up. Green TI appeared well in bomb sight. First green TI appeared at 0219 hrs. Mosquitos marked Marking Point successfully about 0222 hrs. Master Bomber instructed Main Force to bomb concentration of reds as briefed. A good concentration of reds achieved.

**12.9.44** 12 aircraft were detailed this evening to attack Nuremburg, as flare force, both blind and visual, supporters, Primary Blind Marker, and Visual Backer-up. Of these all 12 took off and reached the target area, but two of these did not attack for technical reasons and must therefore be considered abortive. They were:- O – Captain F/O Scholefield (Aus) and "Q" – F/O Coulter. The primary attack plan had involved visual identification of the target. But when the Controller and Marker Leader arrived over the target, they found that although the target itself was clear, the surrounding areas were covered by stratus with base at 4000', and therefore decided on blind marking for general identification. In accordance with instructions, therefore, the first blind TI went down at 2045 (H-10). H was followed by flares, but the illuminating power of the flares was minimised by low banks of cloud (stratus) by now surrounding the target. The first green was backed up by reds, since accurate identification of the aiming point was impossible, and at 2054, the main force aircraft were called in to bomb the red and green markers direct. Although it is feared that the concentration of markers, visual markers, and bombs was well below the usual average, it is believed that a good deal of damage was done to this highly difficult target. At the moment, however, the presence of cloud and the inconclusive nature of the flare force's reports make assessment of results a matter of conjecture. The flak was, generally speaking, more intense than was expected, and the light flak was very accurate. There were no searchlights. All aircraft despatched from this Squadron returned safely to their base.

### **19/20 October 1944 - Nuremburg**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, F/O A.A.Aveline, F/L C.A.P.Thomson, F/L J.L.Billington, F/Sgt E.Withers, W/O G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. Up 1746 Down 0008. 2 x TI green No 16, 4 x 1000lb MC (1/2 hour delay), 5 flares red /green star. 10/10ths cloud. Identification of target visual, confirmed by H2S. By the light of flares position of green TIs was identified. No more flares were ordered and everyone carrying TIs were asked to back up existing greens, giving a good concentration. Bombing started to creep back, so Controller ordered Main Force to overshoot green and red TIs by 3-400 yards.

4.12.44 Improved weather – eight a/c were airborne first thing in the morning for training. 16 a/c took off soon after 16.00 hrs to attack HEILBRONN. Two primary Blind Markers, flare forces in 3 waves & two supporters. Weather was clear over target except for some thin stratus at 7500ft. Flak negligible, some predicted H/F south of Mannheim, little fighter activity. The attack was punctual with PBM tow of those fell in the centre of the town. A profusion of flares followed, producing intense illumination of the whole town & adjoining countryside. Flares were very accurate, F/O Yaxley had icing troubles

leaving target, and turned back eventually, breaking cloud 8 miles east of Karlsruhe. He reported this town well ablaze, but fires at Heilbronn even better. All crews returned safely to base.

#### **4 December 1944 - HEILBRONN**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, F/O A.A.Aveline, F/L C.A.P.Thomson, F/L J.L.Billington, F/Sgt E.Withers, W/O G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. UP1627 DOWN 2248. 14 x C.P. No.1 One Red T.I. seen approx.. 150 yds. 200° from marking point. Long arm of the docks showed up very clearly. Red was to the East of this arm. Illumination was perfect and marking carried out very accurately.

13/14.12.44 seven aircraft detailed for early flying, but details not carried out. Operations on and 14 a/c and crews detailed, take-off 15.30 hours. All 14 a/c returned to diversion aerodrome at Milltown, Scotland. Weather very poor and a/c stranded at Milltown. No training carried out. 14.12.44 All aircraft returned to base in afternoon with exception of two a/c, which had to remain at Milltown, due to unserviceability. No night flying carried out.

#### **13 December 1944 – “EMDEN” and “KOIN” at HORTEN (OSLO FIORD)**

**PA973A** F/L D.H.Shorter, F/Sgt E.J.Betts, F/O A.A.Aveline, F/L C.A.P.Thomson, F/L J.L.Billington, F/Sgt E.Withers, W/O G.Batho, P/O D.E.Broughton. UP1528 DOWN 2152 (Milltown) 8 x C.P.No3 1 x T.I. Green No.2 5 x 1000 MC. Clear Target located on H2S. One Green T.I. was down about ½ min. before ours; it appeared to be correctly placed.Red T.I. seen to cascade at about 18.57 hrs. fairly accurate. Own flares dropped across existing flares. Warship (believed “Emden”) lying immediately North of Veales island was not receiving much attention. Another large ship believed to be a liner was in the middle of the harbour and being bombed, but no hits seen.



Crew of F/L Derek Shorter DFC. (From left) Charlie Thomson (Bomb Aimer), Doug Broughton (Rear Gunner), George Batho (Mid upper gunner), Derek Shorter (Pilot), Tony Aveline (Nav), Ted Withers (W/Op), Eddie Betts (F/Eng).