

May 1941 ^{15/6} TJS + Ken Palmer joined the RAF
at READING

Went separately to CARDINGTON FOR swearing in
attestation & tests

Sept 2/41 TRAIN TO FEARNTH - COLLECTED UNIFORMS

4 TRAIN TO BOURNEMOUTH VISITED PRIVATE HOUSES

Several weeks training - ~~eg~~ bashing & having
an enjoyable time

TRAINS TO WENDOVER + RAF HALTON

2 WEEKS FATIGUES STARTING ARMOURER (GUNS)
COURSE.

Jan 1942 After course finished posted to HENLOW

Ken Palmer to SWINDORBURY

WORKING ON GUNS + GUNTURRETS

WORKING ON HURRICANES FROM CANADA

Spring 42 VOLUNTEERED FOR AIRCREW

MEDICAL TESTS AT CARDINGTON

AUTUMN 42 POSTED TO LORDS CRICKET + STAY IN VICEROY CT

FOR FEW WEEKS

GROUND THE TIME IN LONDON WAS FREE OF
AIR RAIDS - 4 WEEKS LATER 2 RAIDS WITH
100 LOST

Nov-Dec 42 POSTED TO RAF ITIV SCARBOROUGH YORKS

3-4 MONTHS COURSE, POSTED TO TRAIN AIR BOMBER

MARCH 43 POSTED TO HEATON PARK MANCHESTER TO PREPARE

TO TRAIN IN CANADA. UNEXPECTEDLY POSTED TO
CAMP AT LUDLOW, UNDER CANVAS + LABOUR DUTIES

JULY-AUG 43 VOLUNTEERED FOR TRAINING AS AIR GUNNER

4 TRAINING AT MORPETH WING LITTLE HORWOOD CREWED UP
TRAINING STRADISHALL

FEB 44

514 SQUADRON

514 Squadron RAF WATERBEACH

3 LPS 3 LANCASTER ^{FINISHING} ~~FINISHING~~ SCHOOL

HAVING FLOWN IN STIRLINGS AT 1657 CU

(CONVERSION UNIT) STRADISHALL
(SUFFOLK)

LAST FLIGHT AT 3 LPS 28 JAN 1944

FELTWELL 18 FEB 1944

PROBABLY HAVING 7 DAYS LEAVE

CREW GOING TO 514 SQDN WATERBEACH
CAMBS

FLYING LANC MARK I's AT 3 LPS

NOW FLYING MARK IIs AT WATERBEACH

NEEDING CONVERSION COURSE

TO TRAIN IN MARK IIs RADIAL ENGINES

TRAINING FROM MARCH 4TH TO 22ND MARCH

18 MARCH 1944 1ST OP TO FRANKFURT
(22 TOTAL LOSS)

NO LOSSES
514

22 MARCH 2ND OP TO FRANKFURT

2 LOST FROM 514 SQ

(34 TOTAL LOSS)

F/L NICHOL

F/S UNDERWOOD

4 POW DEVO
1 +
2 POW
5 +

The 2nd operation gave our crew
a rough idea of what they
could face. The Captain Wishart
had an earplug in his ear as a 2nd officer
flying with experienced crew.

We saw many aircraft on fire
and falling. The target was hit by flares + several lights

May 19

Sept

4

Jan 19

Spem

Auton

Nov -1

MAR

JULY

4

FEB

The normal procedure with bomber operations was to start with a met protheser wind speed. Then the bomber aimer used drifts to give a air speed & send it back to HQ by wireless operators. The result at HQ was gained & sent back a different result because the wind speed too high. No result most a/c went off course or bombed wrong places

24th March we were briefed for BERLIN

There had been a big campaign to destroy Berlin over a number of raids in late 1943 & in the New Year. This was to be the last of the major raids. (TOTAL LOSS 73)

Routing over the Baltic sea in order to approach from the North. Very powerful searchlights of blue light (as modern car head lights) caught several planes and within minutes we were one of next victims. The skipper heavily corkscrewed us to get clear of the lights - but had unusually * prop. which put us into a diving corkscrew which we fell some 8 thousand feet. At the same time a high pitched sound - a ^{hellish} sound - Due to the great skill of Wishart the props were forced and saved us from certain death. Had to

jettison our bombs & head 500 miles back to UK at some 800 feet dangerously low & vulnerable & split a 2 engine aircraft & fired a burst of tracer.

The main force ran into trouble with inaccurate wind speeds.

Many bombed at wrong places

* see end of tour

514
lost F/O LIVING

6 crew lost

1 POW

The propellers were variable pitch but went to fine pitch which stopped biting the air. The props on the oiler side pulled us into a spiral.

The general idea was the Nuremberg ^{RAID} would have got us away from the Ruhr area. Crews thought it could be straight forward. Night fighters were waiting for us and also the wind speed was very high. Navigators were misled. Wishart's crew flew 2000 ft higher than the main force. We were still very "GREEN" & inexperienced - but somehow we avoided the real trouble.

On the way back we had to fly through a cold front - with bad icing. We landed at Waterbeach with very little fuel.

The announcement on the BBC to discuss death have caused considerable worry. I telephoned as soon as possible & at least our family were relieved.

MAR 26

ESSEN

(TOTAL LOSS 9)

514 NO LOSSES

MAR 30

NURENBURG

514 LOSSES

P/O CROMBIE

5 LOST
2 POW

The heaviest CASUALTIES OF THE WAR 96 LOST

A WHOLE BOOK WRITTEN ON THIS SUBJECT

W/O MCGOWAN

FORCE LANDED
2 BALED OUT
NO INJURIES

Rear Gunner + I were in the same room as GREGORY + CREW. They called us (Brassey + I)

F/O HOOD
6 POW
1 LOST +

the horizontal in force

always lying on our beds

F/S GREGORY
6 LOST +
1 POW

A FIRST REAL SADNESS OVER their loss

F/O HUGHES

Service police took all their kit away (normal procedure)

6 LOST +
1 POW

11 April 11

AACHEN (AIX LA CHAPELLE)

(TOTAL 9 LOSS)

P/O THACKRAY

6 LOST
1 POW

26 April

ESSEN

(TOTAL 7 LOSS)

No Loss 514

We were expecting to fly on to an ^(Probably) CORSICA island in the med. after bombing we were ordered back to UK. Rather disappointing FRIEDRICHSHAVEN WAS ON LAKE CONSTANZ Switzerland was on the other side.

Cap Gray Del was a short trip just across channel. to attack large guns

27 April

FRIEDRICHSHAVEN

No Loss 514

(TOTAL 18 LOSS)

MAY 12

CHAMBLEY

F/L CURTIS

ALL LOST

(TOTAL 5 LOSS)

MAY 17

NANTES

No Loss 514

(TOTAL 1 LOSS)

May 19

CAP GRIS NEL

(NO LOSS)

MAY 19

LE MANS

F/S SHEARING

4 LOST

1 INJ

1 BALED OUT

(TOTAL 3 LOSS)

MASTER BOMBER & HIS Deputy COLLIDED.

The MASTER BOMBER DIRECTED TO MAIN FORCE OVER ^{THE} AIR

ON MANY OCCASIONS

SOMETIMES THEY ^{USED} VERY RIFE LANGUAGE

The Master bombers were very VULNERABLE & could be picked by night ^{FIGHTERS} fighters

F/L GRAY

HIT BY FLAK CRASH LANDED GRAVELEY

ALL SAFE

Ice accrues on metal surfaces and propellers. The wind-upper turret was often battered with chunks of ice

21 MAY

DUISBURG

(Total 29 lost)

SGT GIBSON
ALL LOST

UNABLE TO
LAND WITH
BOMB LOAD

CRASHED IN SEA

P/O WINDSOR

ALL LOST

F/S MEDLAND
DFW

3 LOST +
2 EVASDED
1 POW

A few crew members escaped
+ made their way back to OK

22 May

DORTMUND

SEVERE icing - CAUSED
SEVERAL AIRCRAFT UNABLE TO
CLIMB (included us)

The wing commander + crew
had an 8000lb bomb which
could not be dropped until at a
certain height. Most of the crew
had to bail out before the bomb
could be dropped in the N Sea
1 Aviator died.

(Total 29 Lost)

No Losses
514

A beautiful afternoon hopping over the
land to keep at a low level to avoid
RADAR. We were given lemons instead of
oranges. A lot of our flying was
very enjoyable - we were not always
waiting for trouble

A number of raids were to bomb railway
yards + sites for jumping flying bombs
(we were then unknown of the heavy bombs)

27 May

AACHEN

F/L TAYLOR
All Lost

(Total 12 Lost)

ANGERS

28 May

A Low level flight below 100'
all the way to the Gap of Biscap
Passed over Marlow (probably
Whit Sunday 1944
(Total 1 Lost)

31 May

TRAPPE

No 514 Losses

(Total 4 Lost)

10 June

DREUX

(Total 18 Lost)

11 June

NANTES

No 514 Losses

(Total 4 Lost)

LE HAVRE

14 June

(Total 1 Lost)

No 514 Losses

Our squadron had to practice daylight flying (not as the Americans in formation but in ^{groups} groups. Talk about dangerous flying! We flew on gaggles as some geese do!

The aircraft from 3 group (us) were flying at a certain height and accurate time. The other group were due to fly higher and a little later. We were late → & they were early. I noticed sticks of bombs coming down (in daylight). One of our LANCs was hit by a bomb. We saw one of the crew run across at water heels (obviously caught napping) and just got on board - the one hit by a bomb

VALENCIENNES

15 June

F/S ROWLES

6 LOST

1 EVA

Total 5 Lost

H/O KINGHAM

7 LOST

21 June

DAMOLEGER
(daylight)

(No Losses)

1 HEX

23 June

(5 lost)

No Losses 514

30 June

VILLERS BOGAGE

Daylight raid highly successful
on 2nd & 9th Panzer divisions
Field Marshall Montgomery asked
(Total 2 Lost) for the raid

F/O WOODS

7 LOST

F/O HANESSON

5 LOST

2 INT

BEAUVIS

No Losses 514

July 2

No Losses

7 July VAIRES
 (FLYING BOMB SITES)
 Pepered by fog. Lots of holes in a/c 1 piece
No Losses thru' navigators table

10 July NUCOURT
 Day eight attack flying bomb sites
No Losses

12 July VAIRES
 flying bomb sites

23 July KIEL
 4 Losses

25 July STUTTGART F/O
MIDDLETON
 21 Losses ALL LOST

The last operation. It had a large
 variety of experiences. The ~~Wend~~ LANCES
 could ^{not} climb so had to ~~drop~~ drop a couple of bombs
 to get height. The air temp was ^{HIGH} high. Saw many
 com bats flares + tracer fire. On way back
 saw a number V1's en route to London. Lower + faster
 than us. The skipper was riding over small cumulus in sun

TOTAL
LOSSES
ON THE
SAME
AS US
397

On the 26th July 1944 our crew
Wishart and six airmen completed
a tour of 29 operations.

I think we went out at about 1130 AM
back to the aircraft and thanked
the ground crew. The NAAFI Van
had just arrived and custard tarts
were on sale - custard tarts were
a prominent food mark in my 22 years

~~The~~ say the least this day I have
never dreamed that I would survive

to see the 29th ~~tour~~ ^{OP}. During the tour 21 aircraft crashed &
crews from 514 Squadron were either killed
injured or made prisoner.

Some ~~parts~~ of the targets were very long
& dangerous a few of better ones were
shorter, but everyone was vulnerable.

The skipper NORRIS WISHART once
said you'd have to have 50% luck
& 50% ability. I thought our crew
were reasonable claps and was very
lucky to be one of them.

The rear gunner Fairbairn was a slightly
older man with wife and child
in digs in Cambridge, he was pure
Tottenham and had a North East
London accent.

We sometimes went out together to
Cambridge & Bury St Edmunds
when at our unit. Fish & chips at the
cinema. I don't ^{THINK} we drank too much beer
but Brosie felt ill when we travelled
in a RAF transport bumpy & hot on
one occasion. Early in 1944 when we
were on Stirlings going out to town
was very cold. Having been issued
with white silk gloves - ideal for
air gunners - but not for eating
chips. The result was silk ^{BECAME} stiff
like boards and didn't make it
to target freezing operations

The crew - Wishart (pilot) (AWARDED THE D.F.C.)

D GRAY (navigator)

Thornber (air bomber)

CARTWRIGHT (chief engineer)

TURNER (wireless operator)

Fairbairn (rear gunner)

T Jaint (mid upper gunner)

I remember them as highly qualified men.

They all had to be good at their jobs.

I cannot remember the navigator getting
lost - which was one of the most vital
aspects of the crews. The flight engineer

had to look after engines and keep tabs
on the petrol consumption.
The bomb aimer was in the plane to
work with the pilot and drop his bombs
accurately - which was the sum
total of us doing the operation.

Wireless Ops was there to listen in
helping the Navigators & guiding us by
mapping the route by Beacons

The two gunners were not there
to attack ^{BANDITS} aircraft but to watch endlessly
for ^{NIGHT FIGHTERS} ~~bandits~~ (foreign planes) the gunners
telling the pilot to bank port & starboard
to try and look beneath the plane

Just before New Year 1944 Fairbairn & I were
sent on a weeks course on Newmarket
race tracks, or near the tracks where
an air odrome was on flat ground.

Most of the flights were on Wellingtons
& co-operating with a fighter (either a Hurricane
or Mustang)

We were "attacked" by these fighters each having
a cine camera. All the attacks were from above
(dipping down to attack us). Later on when we
were operating over enemy territory - we were
going to be attacked from below. The fighters had
a gun upward firing - trying to shoot our petrol tanks

During the 5 months from Feb
to July ¹⁹⁴⁴ - life on 514 SQUADRON
was fairly free compared with
previous RAF stations. Most of the
discipline was in the aircraft
and crew. Operations took
place on various days & nights
but otherwise there ^{were} were hold ups
or ^{due} delays during the fog & full
moon.

On an operation day work was
very active. ^{BESIDE} ~~beside~~ bombing up &
briefings & air tests filled up the
days and ready for take off
usually late evening.

On other days crews were
"stood down" at 2 PM which
allowed us to go to Cambridge
& wherever.

On several occasions I got out
to the fly road outside the camp
and hitch-hiked to Marlow. In spite
of less traffic in the roads there were
tourist & business cars ready to
pick up service people. The best way
was to go to Royston & A1 to HATFIELD
& then Rickmansworth & Denham.

I usually got to Marlow by 5.30
contacted my parents + Meg.
The next morning was slightly more
'dicey'. 7.15 train to London - Felgate (met)
Leightonstone Epping forest etc.
Looking back I must of had a fair
bit of nerve to be back before
lunch and not be missed.

The war went on seven days a
week but in order to have leave (which³
was needed to get away from flying)
six days were made available every
six weeks. The leave list for crews
was going to be altered because of the
losses. The more ops you survived
the crews had to fill up the gaps.
It was ^{5th} late when you found you
hard to fill up the gaps because
so ^{many} ~~many~~ crews were missing and
the more senior you were you had more
leave.

On one of the leaves I say took June 6, 1944
place (June 6th). All leave was cancelled
except Navy + a few others. Meg + I cycled to
a pub above Pleasant Hill, watched gliders
+ biplanes - going south. Felt very guilty,

At the end of our tour we had probably two weeks leave and in Summer weather had picnics by the river and heard gunfire from the continent.

We went to another camp for a few days and were leave + then Fairbairn + I were posted to a place called Broda near Inverness. We travelled on the Aberdeen express (only allowed to go at less than 60 miles an hour).

It was quite a respite and a long way from the war.

The idea was to interview the air gunners (all ex operational) to find future jobs for us.

During our tour of ops the invasion of France hopefully leading to the end of the war. In my case I had been an armorer and it was possible to make me revert back to ^{my} trade. There were jobs for gunners to be target towers + armament instructors.

This was what would be my 1st choice after further training.

The time at Brocks was helping
hay making and Bessie & I
visited Loch Ness. The Farmer
invited me to Sunday tea -
the largest meal I had since 1939.

Hanging over our heads was
the possibility of going out East
to fight the Japs - a dreadful
thought.

After Brocks we seemed to
have indefinite leave - with
no station to go to.

When I had volunteered to be an
engineer - the Wing Commander
said we could carry on later to
train as Air Bombers after we'd
completed our tour. They kept
their word and sent a telegram to
offer training for Air Bombers. I
declined as by this time I was
a bit of a Veteran & sought stripes
on the telegram offering me an
armament job at Belfast University.

I declined this one and within a
short time I was to be posted to West Freucht-
Stranner on the Mill of Galloway
Just across the water from Ireland

Another Christmas in the war 1944
Next door to our hut (full of ex-crew)
were WAAF's. On the 25th it was
too good a chance to make a visitation
to our next door neighbours. Which
was done. Most of the girls were in
bed - it was all very respectable
in fact one chap became engaged to
one of them.

We heard later that a RAF
Station in Ireland (IRELAND) where a
similar thing happened - the CO. came
down heavily on some of the chaps.

On another occasion a party of
WAAF's from the cookhouse - sitting -
reading on the bed - tipped the bed out
on the floor - very good fun.

Another long rail journey to CARLISLE
Caught a train very early AM to
travel on a single line through
very rugged country. Just before
Stranraer a huge port which had
been built for the Americans - called
Cairn Ryan. Apparently one of the
huge landing flats were built there
and towed down to ^{NORMANDY} NORMANDY.

West Fough was a brick built
station & reasonably comfortable.

Most of the chaps were ex ops
like myself. Crews came back from
Canada and needed extra tuition.
I was supposed to be an instructor
but they expected me to go on an
air armament course.

Just after Christmas 1944 I was sent
on a course to Manby (Lincs)

Manby was quite near the North
Sea and was bitterly cold.

January '45 had snow and
ice. I had lots of lectures and later
on training to become in the air on
Wellington.

I was back + forth was to Wells until as there was a posting to TERNHILL (another brick built camp).

I was by this time a Warrant Officer + was allocated a room for two in the mess. On the second day I was at Ternhill an airman (a W.O.)^{who} had a big wangle going on. He spent the week between Ternhill + London taking back eggs etc from farms. He suggested I went with him and I asked the fanners wife if I could bring my wife down for a weekend. Megs made an instant friendship with the wife and stayed at Longford nearly a year.

Soon afterwards I was allowed to live 'out of camp' and having Meg with me in a bed sit in the old farmhouse. The farm at Longford was down a long lane a mile from the camp. Mr & Mrs Martin's farm have outside too with a two hole seat a tin bath and a tap in the dairy.

We had lovely big fires and had great comfort for heavy weds. We had a double bed upstairs with en-suite pot + wash stand. I had very little to do at the camp - an occasional lecture. Megs got a job at Jones Motors as a typist at Market Drayton.

I went to 2 courses from Ternhill one to Sutton on Hill for aircraft recognition and another to Brize Norton for a lecture course. All things about cost for ever so a lot of aircrew and officers had to move to the other end of Lincolnshire to HIBALSTONE. There was little or nothing to do at this place. Most of us were planning how to get back to Market Drayton.

We went to Scunthorpe to a tinware club but I was able to see the Steel Works after dark with flower sparks from blast furnaces.

Some of the chap were sitting secret certificate exam. Many aircrew had lower demob numbers so demob was within site. I frequently went back to Longford by train + hitch hiking. One one time ready for Easter 1946.