

Flight Lieutenant FC Jenkins

Born Eastney, Hampshire March 1920. The only son of a Royal Marine Gunner who had been put forward for a Victoria Cross after the raid on Zeebrugge in 1918.

Married Sheelagh Newman at the age of 20. Had one son at the age of 23. Died on the Isle of Wight at the age of 80 years.

Flew in Wellingtons as Bomb Aimer/ Navigator and after his proscribed tour of duty (which he extended even in the face of a devastating rate of mortality for flight crew) he transferred to Transport Command flying in Dakotas including being the Navigator in one of the Dakotas towing gliders to the Arnhem battle.

Signed up to serve in the RAF (not 'called up') at the age of 19 years. Left the RAF with the rank of Flight Lieutenant. Won the DFM For gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations. As an airman of 148 Squadron he participated in 57 operational missions, of which 28 were carried out over Germany and enemy-occupied territory. Sergeant Jenkins was specially chosen for the first raids on Italy from England. In one raid on Milan, he scored a direct hit on the Pirelli factory. On another occasion, with the oil refinery at Port Marghere, Venice as the objective, he displayed superb navigation as, owing to adverse weather conditions, he was compelled to rely entirely on astro-navigation. On his last operational flight from England, he scored a great success when attacking the Focke Wulf factory at Bremen. He dropped two sticks of bombs, scoring a direct hit with every bomb. In addition, he secured two photographs which recorded each stick bursting on the target. As a result of this raid, intelligence information stated that one third of the factory output ceased. In the Middle East scene of operations, he performed excellent work, including successful raids on targets in Libya, Greece, Rhodes and Crete. On one occasion, during an attack on Tripoli harbour, he obtained a direct hit on a ship which was set on fire, while in another attack at Messina he obtained a hit on the power station and assisted in the attack on the marshalling yard whereby the entire objective was set on fire. Throughout, he was said to have shown great courage, skill and determination.

Anecdotes: On one raid over Germany his Wellington was 'held' by German searchlights for many minutes. Amazingly this was not followed up by anti aircraft fire as presumably the German 'Ack Ack' guns were too busy firing at other targets ! After another raid his Pilot misjudged the landing back in England and overshot the runway but fortunately all escaped with bruises and the plane was largely undamaged. On one raid as the Wellington finished its bombing 'run' the bomb bay doors jammed and as the plane banked Freddie Jenkins began to fall through the open doors, but was able to grab the edge of the bomb bay opening in time to prevent his disappearance into the dark night below !

He and his fellow crew men never seemed to bother overmuch with parachutes and also they got rid of the machine guns in the beam of their aircraft to reduce weight. They were proud of the plane's manoeuvrability, strength and speed and overall felt that to 'stay with the plane' come what may was the preferred option.

I'm almost 100% certain that 149 Squadron was the one that my Dad was serving with. The Log Book sent you does make reference to my Dad having dropped food 'packages' (towards the end of his active service and after he had finished his bombing sorties plus the extra ones he tacked on).

At the end of the war no. 149 squadron participated in [Operation Manna](#), to drop food to the starved Dutch population still under German occupation, and Operation 'Exodus', to return former prisoners of war back to the UK.

The other interesting thing regards 'his' Squadron is that the famous war time movie called "Target for Tonight" being commanded by Group Captain Pickard (who was later killed when bombing the Amiens prison camp)

was based on 149 Squadron and features a Wellington bomber called "F" for Freddie. A bit of a coincidence I guess as my Dad was always known to his chums as "Freddie" and all of his active sorties were in Wellingtons.

One other anecdote was that he would never fly without his 'lucky charm' - ie. a rabbits foot. On one occasion he forgot to have it in his pocket with all his fellow aircrew in the Wellington getting ready to take off. His

'skipper' (ie. the first pilot) waited on the tarmac whilst Freddie ran back to the billet hut to get his 'charm'.