

Joined the Royal Air Force in June 1941 as an Air Observer under training and saw service in London, Torquay, Eastbourne, Blackpool, South Africa, Honeyburne, and Long Marston.

So far, I had flown in Oxforde, Ansons, and Whitleys (known as a flying coffin). It was now March 1943 and I was in a crew totalling five and had now completed Operational Training.

The training was marvellous, we were happy, and all lived the life of Riley.

Events took a much more serious note in a posting to RAF Station Rufforth to convert to Halifax bombers. At Rufforth the crew was increased to 7 by the addition of a mid-upper gunner and a flight engineer. Conversion took just one month. Because of the rather absent minded behaviour of the Flight Engineer the Captain asked me to take over the job of pilot's mate in addition to navigation & bombing duties.

The crew now consisted of 4 Englishmen, 1 Scot, and 2 Canadians. We were all about 21 except Jock who was 36 and needed reading glasses. We all got on splendidly.

In May 1943 we were posted to 102 Squadron at Pocklington and here we very quickly learned that losses were currently extremely high and consequently morale at that time was low

What could you do to help survival ???

Keep on track corkscrew always near, or over, enemy territory, watch for fighters always, arrive on target at correct time - object is to saturate the defences

BEFORE THE OPERATION

At 10.00 notice on blackboard says "PARTY". About 16.00 briefing--- target, route, enemy defences along route-weather forecasts, wind strengths & directions-role on target-work out courses-egg, bacon, beans -collect coffee, sandwiches, orange juice, chewing gum, parachute, sextant, escape & survival packs, caffeine pills, assemble crew- Squadron Commander chalks AGLA on our pocket flap-aircrew bus to dispersal- Warm up aircraft engines, test magnetoes, taxi round perimeter track to runway- await green light and take off.

The aircraft & crew is now on their own and will remain so until touchdown.

OPERATIONS

23-5-43 Dortmund-5 hours 30 mins-happy valley
Beautiful colours. One failed to return

25-5-43 Dusseldorf-5 hours 20 mins-happy valley.

27-5-43 Essen-5 hours-happy valley-Krupps works-Flak was so intense you

could walk on it - explain about 2 sky markers
One failed to return

.TWO

12-6-43 Bochum-5 hours-happy valley.
One failed to return.

19-6-43 Le Creusot-7 hours 5 minutes-Armaments works

21-6-43 Krefeld-shot down over Dutch coast-ditched 11 miles out,time 1.55 on
22-6-43.
4 aircraft failed to return (including us)

Ditching very successful,aircraft floated for over half an hour.Sitting in a pool
of water in the dinghy very unpleasant & the dinghy had a leak.

MID MORNING.

Circled by Focke Wulf 190 who presumably obtained a fix on us.

Observed Flying Fortress being shot down by Me 109 (Met the crew later at
Felixstowe Hospital)

THE RESCUE

2 Typhoons of 198 Squadron airborne Martlesham Heath 15.15 to find and obtain
a fix on our dinghy ;this was achieved.

2 Waruses airborne Martlesham Heath 18.37 on 22-6-43 ,one Walrus picked up 4
of our crew,and the other the remaining 3. Both Walruses had difficulty in
taking of due to the rough sea & heavy load ,but one achieved this after 20
mins and several bounces.The pilot of the heavier aircraft decided that it was
too dangerous to attempt a take off and started taxiing to the English coast.

2 Typhoons airborne Martlesham Heath 19.04 on 22-6-43
4 Spitfires airborne Martlesham Heath 19.32 on 22-6-43
2 Typhoons airborne Martlesham Heath 19.72 on 22-6-43

2 Folke Wulfe 190 attacked at 20.55 on 22-6-43,one of which was shot down by a
Spitfire.

A Walrus and 2 Spitfires airborne Martlesham Heath 21.20 on 22-6-43.The sea
was too rough for the Walrus to land,but it stayed in the vicinity and was
ultimately able to direct MTB D16 (RN) to the taxiing Walrus.
2 Spitfires airborne Martlesham Heath 22.19 on 22-6-43.

Our Walrus taxied from 19.50 on 22-6-43 until 02.00 on 23-6-43 until prtrol was
exhausted. At this time waves were 10 to 15 high when the RN took 20 mins to
attach a tow rope to our Walrus.
The RN towed us for 1 hour but we were taking such a battering that it was

THREE

requested that the Walrus be abandoned and the crews be transferred to the MTB which was achieved with difficulty.
We arrived at Felixstowe at 6.30 on 23-6-43.

It was later learned that the Walrus drifted onto a sandbank and was later towed to Harwich by HMS Mackay (destroyer).

De-briefed by AvM Gus Walker who commented on the loss of 4 "T" Halifaxes on 4 successive operations;he wondered about sabotage.
We were given 14 days leave and were requested to consider volunteering for Pathfinders.

We were informed, following a meeting years after the war between the Pathfinder Association and the Luftwaffe Association, that we had been shot down by W/O Vinkler in a ME 110 . Regretfully Vinkler died in combat 24 hours later.

Posted to 35 Squadron-PFF

29-7-43 Hamburg-5 hours 55 mins-Supporter
2 aircraft failed to return

2-8-43 Hamburg-5 hours 15 mins-Iced up in Cumulo Nimbus-Very heavy predicted
flak-Supporter. One aircraft failed to return.

4-8-43 MANY BOUNCE LANDING & 3 ENGINE TAKE OFF-relationship between Captain
and pilots mate.

CRASH WITH 2 LORRIES ON PERIMETER TRACK

10-8-43 Nurnburg-7 hours-Supporter
2 aircraft failed to return

12-8-43 Turin-8 hours 30 mins-Supporter
Our route included Base-Reading-Selsey Bill-On arrival near Portsmouth
we saw intense A/c A/c through which we had to fly. The question is-
Were we flying through a German raid?,or were the RE exhibiting their
well known dislike of aircraft over their ships?.

16-8-43 Turin-3 hours 40 mins-turned back-engine failure-landed at Ford-
Supporter. One aircraft failed to return.

23-8-43 Berlin-7 hours 25 mins-Supporter
4 aircraft failed to return.

27-8-43 Nurnburg-7 hours 20 mins-Supporter
Coned by several search lights with potential attack by fighter

Dived steeply and managed to evade.H2S went U/S at this point and because of our excessive speed and frequent changes of course we were uncertain of our precise position .As a result we flew over Mannheim and recieved the undivided attention of their intensive predicted heavy Ac/Ac

Approaching Beachy Head we observed searchlights instructing us to turn to port which we did and then to land at Ford.On landing we were asked the reason for our arrival at a fighter base.It turned out to be an interservice exercise

Believe that this was the time that the Wop/ag discovered the "bomb" inside the fuselage.

30-8-43 Munchen Gladbach-4 hours 10 mins-supporter-attacked by fighter but evaded.

31-8-43 Berlin-7 hours 40 mins-Supporter
One aircraft failed to return.

5-9-43 Mannheim-2 hours 25 mins-turned back-engine failure-Supporter

22-9-43 Hannover-5 hours 55 mins-Supporter

23-9-43 Mannheim-6 hours 5 mins-Backer up

27-9-43 Hannover-5 hours 10 mins-Backer up

One aircraft failed to return

29-9-43 Bochum-4 hours 40 mins-Backer up

3-10-43 Kassel-6 hours 20 mins-Backer up-made dummy run!

4-10-43 Frankfurt-3 hours 15 mins -turned back-engine failure-Backer up

One aircraft comed for 5 miutes and severely shot up by flak. Crashed in flames at Biggin Hill-4 crew in hospital

8-10-43 Bremen-4 hours 50 mins-Blind Marker

One aircraft badly shot up-Crashed at Coltishall.Minor injuries only

11-11-43 Cannes-8 hours 40 mins-Blind Illuminator

2 aircraft failed to return.(Petrie-Andrews ditched off Sardinia & escaped to North Africa.)

22-11-43 Berlin-3 hours 15 mins-turned back-engine failure-Backer up

23-11-43 Berlin-6 hours 20 mins-Blind Marker

20-12-43 Frankfurt-5 hours 15 mins-Blind Marker

One aircraft failed to return,& one caught fire while landing.

* While circling the airfield prior to landing a Halifax captained by S/Ldr J.Sale caught fire when a target indicator exploded.S/Ldr Sale climbed to 2000 ft,baled out 5 members of his crew,the mid upper gunner being unable to do so as his parachute was destroyed by the ensuing fire.S/Ldr Sale calnaly landed the burning aircraft,taxied off the runway.The aircraft exploded when he & the gunner were some 200 yards away."

- 23-12-43 Berlin-7 hours-Blind Marker
 8-1-44 Stettin-9 hours-Blind Backer up
 Routed over Denmark and Southern Sweden Flak from the latter
 intensive ,but not at our height
 2 aircraft failed to return.
- 21-1-44 Magdeburg-6 hours 40 mins-Blind Backer up
 " Suddenly the rear gunner saw an ME210 astern level at 150 yards.He
 told his Captain to corkcrew starboar and caused the other
 aircraft to pass to port quarter up.As the bomber rolled at bottom
 of corkcrew and commenced it's climbing turn to port the fighter
 attacked from deep port quarter.Rear gunner opened fire at 100 yards
 with 250 rounds each and saw tracer enter the underside of the ME 210
 causing it to break off starboard beam below.ME210 fired a short burst
 without tracer before breaking off.No damage to Halifax but ME210
 claimed as damaged."
 3 aircraft failed to return.
- 15-2-44 Berlin-7 hours 5 mins-Blind backer up
 Numerous fighter flares above clouds. It was like day.
 One aircraft failed to return.
- 19-2-44 Leipzig-2 hopurs 40 mins-Blind backer up
 4 aircraft failed to return.
- 20-2-44 Stuttgart-6 hours 5 mins-Blind backer up
 One aircraft failed to return.
- 24-2-44 Schweinfurt-6 hours 50 mins-Blind backer up
 25-2-44 Augsburg-6 hours 30 mins-Blind backer up
 1-3-44 Stuttgart-6 hours 40 mins-Blind backer up
- 8-3-44 CONVERTED TO LANCASTERS
- 16-3-44 Frankfurt-5 hours-Blind backer up.
- 24-3-44 Berlin-6 hours 50 mins-Blind marker
 THE NIGHT OF THE JET STREAMS -Zephyring-Winds of 135 knots
 "Why aren't we going through the flak like every one else?"
 One aircraft failed to return.
- 16-4-44 Rouen-3 hours 40 minsBlind marker/Illuminator
 20-4-44 Cologne-3 hours 50 mins-Blind backer up
 23-4-44 Leam-3 hours 40 mins-Blind Illuminator
 Had to make 3 runs over target because bomb doors would not open.
- 24-4-44 Karlsruhe-5 hours 40 mins-Blind marker/Illuminator
 26-4-44 Villeneuve-St George-4 hours-Blind Illuminator
 27-4-44 Friedrichshafen-6 hours 30 mins-Blind re-centerer

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Flew over Switzerland on the commencement of bombing run!!
One aircraft failed to return.

3-5-44 Montdidier-3 hours 40 mins-Blind Illuminator

8-5-44 Haine St Pierre- 2 hours 45 mins-Blind Illuminator
One aircraft failed to return.

10-5-44 Lens- 2 hours 55 mins-Blind Illuminator

11-5-44 Hasselt-2 hours 55 mins-Illuminator at request of Master Bomber

28-5-44 Nardick-1 hour 55 mins-bombed using "G"

31-5-44 Trappes-4 hours 20 mins-Blind Illuminator

2-6-44 Trappes-3 hours 25 mins-Blind Illuminator

29-6-44 Crew, minus our pilot, asked to do another tour with Wing Commander P.H.Cribb, but on a majority vote,, this was declined. Cribb became CO of 562 Squadron, but did not survive for long.

Posted to Air Ministry London as a staff officer, including 3 months in Cairo at HQ Middle East

Note--On the 51 operations in which we participated 37 aircraft were lost. 21 aircraft is full squadron strength.

Acknowledge the considerable assistance given by Seema in the preparation of her file of our exploits.