

# 1000 BOMBER RAID

*Fg Off Leslie Manser pilots his crippled 50 Squadron Manchester bomber, moments before it plunged to the ground in an action which earned Manser the Victoria Cross. (IMAGE BY ANDY HAY)*



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IN MAY 1942, THE ROYAL AIR FORCE'S UNPRECEDENTED AND REMARKABLE 'THOUSAND BOMBER' RAID TO THE CITY OF COLOGNE SENT A TREMOR THROUGH THE NAZI HIERARCHY. THE ATTACK, CODENAMED 'OPERATION MILLENIUM', WAS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF THE BLUNT DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE BOMBER, AND IT HAD A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY WE LOOK AT THE RAID THROUGH THE EYES OF THOSE WHO WERE THERE.

## BELOW:

Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, C-in-C, RAF Bomber Command.

# THE BACKGROUND

COMPILED BY STEVE DARLOW

**A**S THE second anniversary of the outbreak of war approached, the war-winning bomber dream seemed to be just that – a dream. Since the Battle of Britain, the RAF had embarked upon an escalation of the bomber offensive against Germany. But, put quite simply, the aircraft, technology and experience of the aircrew fell short of requirements. The Butt Report of August 1941 analysed just over 4,000 photographs taken by individual aircraft on bombing raids in June and July of that year. One of many statistics proving Bomber Command's inefficiency was that only one in four of the respective crews that reported bombing a German target had been within five miles of the aiming point.

Following the revelations of the Butt Report, a review of the future of Bomber Command

was carried out, culminating in a new general policy adopted in February 1942. The key summation in this directive stated: 'It has been decided that the primary objective of your operations should now be focussed on the morale of the enemy civil population and in particular of the industrial workers.' In addition, a new leader took control of Bomber Command: one of the most determined and controversial commanders of the entire war. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris remained in command of the RAF's largest heavy bomber force through to the end of the war.

Shortly after his appointment, Harris felt that a point had to be made. The worth of continuing the bomber offensive was indeed still under serious scrutiny. Harris sought to muster an all-out attack on the enemy, calling upon all the resources in his command. Efforts were also made, ultimately unsuccessfully, to draw on aircraft from other RAF commands. The enormous

destructive potential of the RAF's UK based bombing force was to be tested and hopefully proved, with over 1,000 aircraft to be sent to a German city, with Cologne eventually chosen as the designated target. In his post-war memoir, *Bomber Offensive* Harris laid out his thoughts. He was going out on the proverbial limb, extending his resources to the limit.

'At that time, as it happened, I did have a force of well over 1,000 aircraft in my command; if the crews and aircraft at the OTUs [Operational Training Units] and conversion units were added to the front-line squadrons we could easily raise our strength to that figure. They were half-trained crews, of course, but the OTUs had already undertaken the task of dropping propaganda leaflets over France, often on a large scale; it was useful training for them, it relieved the front-line squadrons of this task, and they gained some knowledge of what it was like to be shot at by flak or even intercepted by nightfighters. If there were great risks involved in a high concentration of aircraft then these risks would be increased by sending out large numbers of new crew, but if, on the other hand, this high concentration was a definite protection against fighters and flak then I should not be calling on new crews to run so grave a risk as the front-line squadrons had habitually taken. The dangers were many and obvious. If anything went seriously wrong – and this was to be in many ways a wholly new type of operation – then I should be committing not only the whole of my front-line strength but absolutely all my reserves in a single battle.'

Harris trawled through his entire command to find the aircraft to support his unprecedented venture. What follows are recollections from a handful of airmen who took part in the historic attack. Some were novices when it came to bombing in hostile territory. Others were flying on their first tour of duty, and many were tour-expired 'veterans' who were called upon to make up the required numbers.

The following pages tell the story of that courageous band of Bomber Command crews who participated in this, the first one thousand bomber raid in history.





# THE BOMBER BOYS' STORIES

**W**HILST THE story of the first 1,000 Bomber Raid can be told through the official narrative, through facts and statistics and through the bald commentary of archive material held, for example, at the National Archive it is surely the accounts of the men who were involved which provides the most compelling and immediate testimony. This, then, is the story of that momentous Cologne raid as told by some of the many thousands of men who participated.

**HAMISH MAHADDIE**, one of the most well-known Bomber Command pilots of the war, with two tours of operations to his name, recalled:

*'This raid proved to everybody that wanted to have proof, that the strategic concept was something that could be a very important aspect of our war effort. I was an instructor. I had finished a tour of bombing and was instructing at Kinloss. We stopped training, we had to produce*

*every aircraft and send them down to the bomber bases in the south.'*

**GORDON MELLOR**, flying from RAF Elsham Wolds, home to No. 103 Squadron, held the crew position of observer and recalls the build-up of the Millenium force.

*'In the last days of May a change was felt in the air. Additional planes and aircrews began to arrive from 22 OTU at Wellesbourne Mountford, adding to the congestion both in the domestic camp as well as that in the working areas. The engineering ground staff were being pushed to get all planes up to full flying condition. It looked as if a maximum operational effort was in the wind, but nobody was saying what.'*

**ALEX SHAW** had completed a tour with No. 99 Squadron and then took up a role training fledgling crews.

*'To find 1,000 crews they had to rope in instructors. We had an all instructor crew. We went up to Snaith, taking our training aircraft. The unit there had modern, up-to-date Wellingtons. After*

*the raid was over our ground staff flight sergeant, who went with us, told us that his opposite number was laying bets that none of us would get back, because of our clapped-out aircraft. In point of fact we all did and they lost some of theirs. >>*

**ABOVE:** Avro Manchester, L7385 (OL-C) of 83 Sqn, RAF Scampton, with a 2,000 lb bomb being prepared for loading.

**LEFT:** Flt Sgt Gordon Mellor, September 1942.



*We wondered whether or not we were going to meet any other aircraft because there were loads there.'*

Bomber Command airman **IAN ROBERTSON** recalled the use of some of the command's most war-weary aircraft to make up the numbers.

'Aircraft from training units had to be used to supplement the operational squadrons of the RAF. Their aircraft were mostly old Wellington bombers relegated to training duties, obsolete for operational use. We took off from Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire on one of those Wellingtons with a full load of fuel and incendiaries.'

**PETER WARD-HUNT**, already having operational experience recorded in his logbook, received the call to add one more operation to his tally.

*I was temporarily in charge of a training flight at Scampton at the time, training crews to transfer from Manchesters to Lancasters. We got the call that a special raid was on, and that all crews were to be involved. Well I didn't get a Lancaster, I ended up with an old Manchester. Just as we were about to leave, the squadron commander came and joined us as his plane was unserviceable.'*

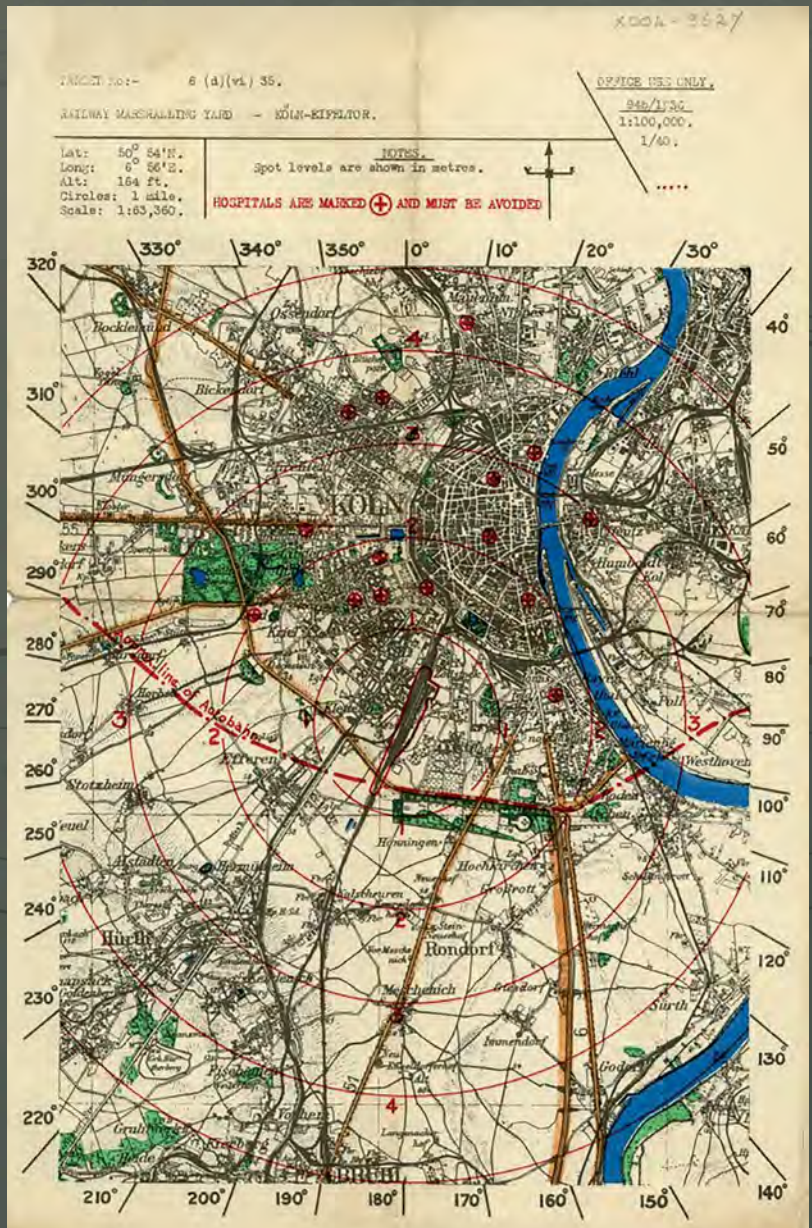
**TOM TATE**, a wireless operator with No. 75 Squadron, was initially asked to fly with an unfamiliar crew in a Handley Page Hampden.

**RIGHT:**

An RAF Bomber Command map of Cologne and the surrounding district, the River Rhine being a prominent feature flowing through the city.

**BELOW:**

Aircrew of the Avro Manchester equipped 106 Sqn after the Cologne 1000 bomber raid, grouped around their CO, Sqn Ldr Guy Gibson.



*'The Hampdens were almost ancient Britons in the war. I said 'Well I would prefer not to.' I couldn't refuse. The commanding officer took a sympathetic view and he said he had managed to get a replacement for that crew.'*

*Tom would still fly on the raid with another crew. 'I remember that day because it was clear and the sky was absolutely full of aircraft. It was fantastic.'*

## PREPARATION AND BRIEFING

Before the sky could fill with aircraft, the crews had to be prepared and be briefed on the plan for the raid. Victor Martin was with No. 1652 Conversion Unit, flying a Halifax, where crews would normally transition from twin-engine to four-engine aircraft away from operational duties, when he received the call to take part in the Cologne raid. Prior

to the briefing, Victor, like thousands of other airmen all over England, checked his aircraft.

*'Raid details are not yet known but aircraft reliability must be checked and routine armament testing carried out, all essential for a successful operation. Flying across to the North Sea, aircraft checks are carried out and over the water the gunners can concentrate on the efficiency of the guns by firing into the sea. All is well and return to base for refuelling and 'bombing up' with up to six tons of high explosive or with a mixture of incendiaries.'*

Early on the day of the raid, those men who would participate were still none the wiser as to where they would be going that night. Soon they knew they were detailed for operations. But where to? Observer Gordon Mellor, fulfilling the role of both navigation and the dropping of bombs, would be

**RIGHT:**  
An Avro Manchester in flight. In total, 46 Manchesters took part in the raid.



**BELOW:**  
A ground-crew member cleans the Perspex of a Wellington front gun turret.



one of the first of the aircrew to know, attending the navigation briefing prior to the main squadron briefing.

*'On the morning of 30 May the hustle increased as air tests were carried out. Radio checks in all aircraft were made during the usual morning period. This was confined to set times throughout Bomber Command so that bursts of radio activity should not indicate to enemy listening stations that preparations for a raid were in hand. Petrol bowsers circled the airfield, refuelling the Wellingtons, while air gunners and armourers inspected gun turrets, and bombloads were lifted into bomb bays. By this time the crew lists had been posted, so that we already knew that we were on for this operation. Navigators were warned of the time of their particular briefing in the afternoon.'*

*Time fled by. This was an important step in the preparation programme; >>*

**RIGHT:**  
Thousand bomber raid veteran, Gordon Mellor.



**RIGHT:**  
Gordon Mellor  
(crouching second  
from right) with his  
crew in 1942.



**RIGHT:**  
Fg Off Henry  
Maudslay  
piloted an Avro  
Manchester of  
44 OCU on the  
Cologne raid but  
later went on to  
become one of the  
'Dambuster' pilots  
of 617 Sqn.

charts and maps had to be marked up and flight plans prepared. To do this, full information had to be made known; consequently the navigators were among the first to be made aware of the target for that night. We were tense and ready in the nav. briefing room, where it was crowded and tables were drowning in a sea of charts and maps. At the far end of the room the wall was covered by a map of the whole of the European theatre of war, the detail obscured from view by a large blue curtain. The buzz of conversation and speculation ceased as the station nav. officer entered the room and made sure doors and windows were closed. This was the critical moment. As he swept the blue curtain aside, all was revealed. Eyes flashed to the end of the marker tape and the spot in Germany at its end. 'Cologne.' A collective 'Ah!

**BELOW:**  
An Avro  
Manchester in  
flight.

breathed its way over the chart tables, followed by 'Not bad then, not bad at all.' The way back was different to that to be followed on the way to the target, to avoid meeting head-on the aircraft still advancing, possibly to stretch the defences and perhaps a quicker way back to base.'

Eventually all the aircrew trades, the pilots, flight engineers, bomb aimers, navigator, wireless operators and air gunners gathered to discover their task that night. Tom Dailey was a wireless operator with No. 158 Squadron and recalls the main briefing.

'A collective sigh of relief eddied through the flight briefing room of 158 Squadron in Drifffield, Yorkshire on 30 May 1942, as the squadron leader identified our latest mission. 'Your

target for tonight', he announced, 'is Cologne.' The port city of the Rhine was in relatively easy reach, just 2 or 3 flying hours away and therefore less time for being shot down. A gasp followed his next utterance. 'It will be a big one. We intend to send over 1,000 bombers.' No air raid on this scale had ever been conceived before. Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, head of Bomber Command, was out to make an impression. Before we took off there was the usual banter, 'Can I have your bacon and eggs if you don't come back?'

**GORDON MELLOR**, with maps, charts and routes to and from the target prepared, attended the main briefing with his crew.





*'After a meal, the time for the main briefing approached rapidly and the hall set aside for this purpose was overfilled with the crews of the many aircraft now awaiting the time of take-off. With the name of the station commander on the ops list, something special was about to happen. Chair legs scraped on the wood floor as everybody stood up when Group Captain Constantine entered, followed by the various specialist officers who were to conduct the briefing. Those of us who had a seat sat down and the rest, well hard luck. This was the moment of truth when speculation came to an end. 'We are tonight taking part in an operation that for the first time puts more than one thousand aircraft over the target.' The Group Captain's words produced a roar of approval from the assembled aircrews, which took some moments to subside. The rest of the briefing followed the traditional form, with relevant information and facts for pilots by the squadron CO and by the radio, gunnery, navigation and engineering leaders as well as intelligence gen for all. Then spoke the duty Met. officer, whose promise of favourable weather conditions throughout was greeted by ironic cheers. He left the room smiling.'*

Pilot Jo Lancaster, having completed a tour of duty with No. 40 Squadron, was instructing with No. 22 Operational Training Unit. 'We didn't know what the target was until the briefing' Jo recalled.

*'Security was very good indeed. I was given a screened navigator, Flight*

*Sergeant Joe Hart, and a screened wireless operator, Flight Sergeant Harrison, plus two Canadian pupil air gunners, one of whom became so excited over the target that he asked if he could spray his guns about. I told him to look inconspicuous. Our aircraft, Z9932 'X', was one normally engaged on dual circuits and bumps training. It still had its dual controls fitted which made entry and exit rather difficult – particularly if one was in a hurry.'*

## A LAST RALLYING CRY

The overall plan for the raid encompassed the introduction of

### ABOVE:

An Avro Lancaster awaits its bomb load.

### BELOW:

A 2,000 lb bomb loaded into the bomb bay of an Avro Manchester.

the 'bomber stream' where crews would fly to and from the target on a set route, thereby crossing fewer German radar controlled Kammhuber Line nightfighter boxes than if the force had been spread. Allocations of height and time over target were also made. All of this was aided by the recently introduced Gee navigational aid. The attack on Cologne itself entailed a 90-minute concentrated bombardment, opening with incendiaries on the centre of the target, lighting the way for the crews in their wake. The following bombers would then unload their explosives. The objectives of the raid were two-fold. As the operation order stated:

*'The stage of the war has been reached when the morale of the German people is likely to be seriously affected by an unprecedented blow of great magnitude in the West at a time when they are experiencing difficulties on the Russian front. We were in a position to deliver this blow from the air ... Apart from the effect on morale of such an attack, the unrepresented damage which will be caused is bound to have a considerable effect on the issue of the war.'*

At the end of the briefing a message was read out from Sir Arthur Harris, a last rallying cry to his men.

*'The force of which you form a part tonight is at least twice the size and has more than four times the carrying capacity of the largest air force ever before concentrated on one objective. You have an opportunity, therefore, to strike a blow at the enemy >>>*



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*An Avro Lancaster is readied for a raid as bombs are moved into position for loading. In total, 73 Lancasters were engaged on the Cologne raid.*  
(SARAH WARREN-MACMILLAN)









which will resound, not only throughout Germany, but throughout the world.

*In your hands lie the means of destroying a major part of the resources by which the enemy's war effort is maintained. It depends, however, upon each individual crew whether full concentration is achieved.*

*Press home your attack to your precise objective with the utmost determination and resolution in the foreknowledge that, if you individually succeed, the most shattering and devastating blow will have been delivered against the very vitals of the enemy. Let him have it – right on the chin.'*

At the Bomber Command stations, aircrews donned their flying gear, made final personal preparations, and were transported to their weapons. Eventually 1,047 aircraft would take part in the raid, comprising 602 Wellingtons, 131 Halifaxes, 88 Stirlings, 79 Hampdens, 73 Lancasters, 46 Manchesters, and 28 Whitleys. Thousands of airmen climbed into their bombers, made final checks and

waited for the call to take to the air. Victor Martin recalled.

*'As the time for take-off approaches we are ferried to the aircraft. Engines running and all checks carried out, we taxi to the runway and await the take-off signal, the green light flashes and with throttles opened to full power and boost, the aircraft gather speed down the runway, a slight bounce and we are airborne. The lights of the flare path disappear below into the darkness and the raid begins as we trim for climb and set course.'*

**TOM DAILEY** had been sitting patiently in his 158 Squadron Wellington.

*'A flash from an Aldis lamp, on the darkened runway, was the only signal for our five-man bomber to lumber into the air. The sound of a thousand engines would have been deafening as we passed over the east coast of England heading across the North Sea. But at 10,000 feet it was bitterly cold. There was no formation flying at night. Each aircraft was alone.*

**ABOVE:**

A target photograph of Cologne after the raid.

**RIGHT:**

The rear gun turret of an Avro Manchester.



*As wireless operator, I used Morse to obtain coded fixes, triangulated from ground control, for the pilot to set our course.'*

But not all the crew that set out that night would reach their destination. Ian Robertson, despite using full throttle, had great difficulty achieving height.

*'By the Dutch coast, we had only reached 9,000 feet. Shortly after crossing the coast, the starboard engine failed and as the aircraft could not maintain height on one engine, the bomb load was jettisoned. Even after this, the aircraft was losing height and some fuel was jettisoned. We hoped to be able to reach an emergency landing ground at Woodbridge, near Orfordness. On reaching the coast of England at Orfordness, at 800 feet, it was obvious that we could not make the airfield and it was decided that rather than crash-land on land we would try to land on the beach, as near to the sea as possible. In the dark, at least the seashore could be seen.*

*The landing was successfully achieved, no one was injured and there was no fire. We were rescued by coastguards from Orfordness Lighthouse, who had heard and seen us land.'*

Back to the raid, and those remaining continued on to the target. Vivid recollections of the raid became etched in the airmen's minds, in particular for those who approached the target after the incendiary bombing had opened the attack. Shortly after the operation, a Flying Officer Friend made a recording of his experience.



**LEFT:**  
Lancasters taxi out for the night's operations.

*'The dykes, the towns, and sometimes even the farmhouses of Holland; we could see them all clearly as we flew towards Cologne soon after midnight. The moon was to our starboard bow and straight ahead there was a rose-coloured glow in the sky. We thought it was something to do with a searchlight belt, which runs for about 200 miles along the Dutch/German frontier. As we went through this belt we saw by the light of blue searchlight some friendly aircraft going the same way as ourselves and a few coming back. But the glow was still ahead. It crossed my mind then that it might be Cologne, but we decided between us that it was*

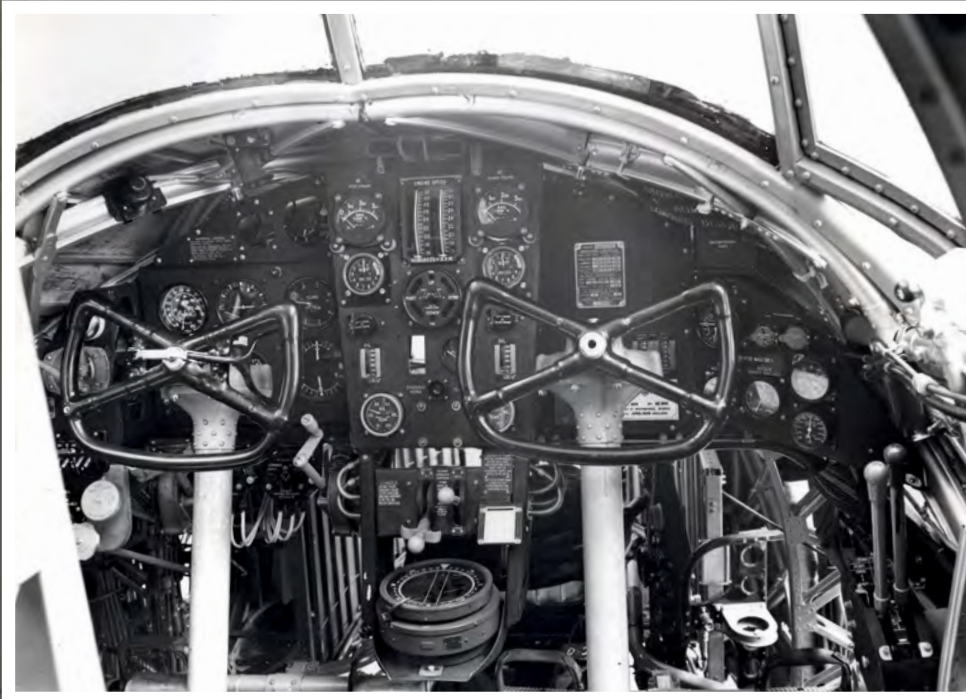
*too bright a light to be so far away. The navigator checked his course. It could only be Cologne.'*

**VICTOR MARTIN** sat in the 'dim glow' of his cockpit.

*'Silence reigns until the navigator's voice comes over the intercom with the words 'enemy coast ahead'. Shortly after crossing the coast we encounter the defensive line of searchlights and anti-aircraft guns set up to protect entry into Germany. The searchlights sweep the night sky and should an aircraft be caught, the master searchlight immediately focusses onto it, then all others follow >>>*

**BELOW:**  
An impression by war artist W Krogman of the 1000 bomber raid on Cologne. In reality, the bombers are flying at an unrealistically low altitude – but the painting still portrays the scale of the raid. Named 'Operation Millennium' it was initially expected the devastation from such raids might be enough to knock Germany out of the war, or severely damage morale. The raid was also useful propaganda for the Allies and particularly for RAF Bomber Command's concept of a Strategic Bombing Offensive.





**ABOVE:**  
The cockpit of an  
RAF Wellington  
bomber.

suit. The guns begin what is called a box, they fire above, below, ahead, and astern and gradually reduce the box until the aircraft is hit or can take violent evasive moves to extricate itself. Silence once again as we enter enemy territory with its defences now on alert following

earlier waves, broken only by the gunners as they quietly check with each other regarding the sighting of a nightfighter; we do not attack to give away our position but observe in case of a sudden turn for hostile action. The first wave has now attacked and in the distance a

red glow is already visible in the sky. Above the fleecy lining of the clouds hiding the enemy below all seems so peaceful; another aircraft appears ahead and travelling at the same speed we are motionless. Suddenly the heavy anti-aircraft guns open fire and the exploding shells shatter our world of peace. The aircraft ahead receives a direct hit and with a blue flash is gone. Taking the immediate evasive action of undulating and banks to port and starboard we continue our course.'

**GORDON MELLOR**, over enemy territory, was maintaining his navigational log and making sure his aircraft remained on course.

'The front gunner called up to tell us he had seen the reflection of moonlight on the river we have to cross; there was a large bend just to the south, so we got a good pinpoint to confirm our position and also to check our timing towards the target. In a few minutes I had a small change of course calculated and also an adjustment to our air speed to ensure that we arrived over Cologne on time. Another look around and there was a faint glow on the horizon ahead, little else other than some isolated flak up to



**RIGHT:**  
The devastation  
caused by the  
attack is clear  
in this post-raid  
photograph.



our level. Ah! Over to the south a couple of miles away there was a bright ball of red, which exploded with a flash. It must have been one of ours. There were night fighters about then, unless it was one of the German pyrotechnics. I took the time to enter the event in my log. More information came in for me; the wireless operator had got some loop bearings for me so I was busy for a time.

A check of the time on my watch and I called the pilot to inform him of how many minutes we had to go. His reply was to summon me up to the front to take a look. The light in the pilot's position was bright yellow and a mile or two ahead was Cologne, a sea of bright flares, trails

**ABOVE:** New, Lancasters ready for the raid.

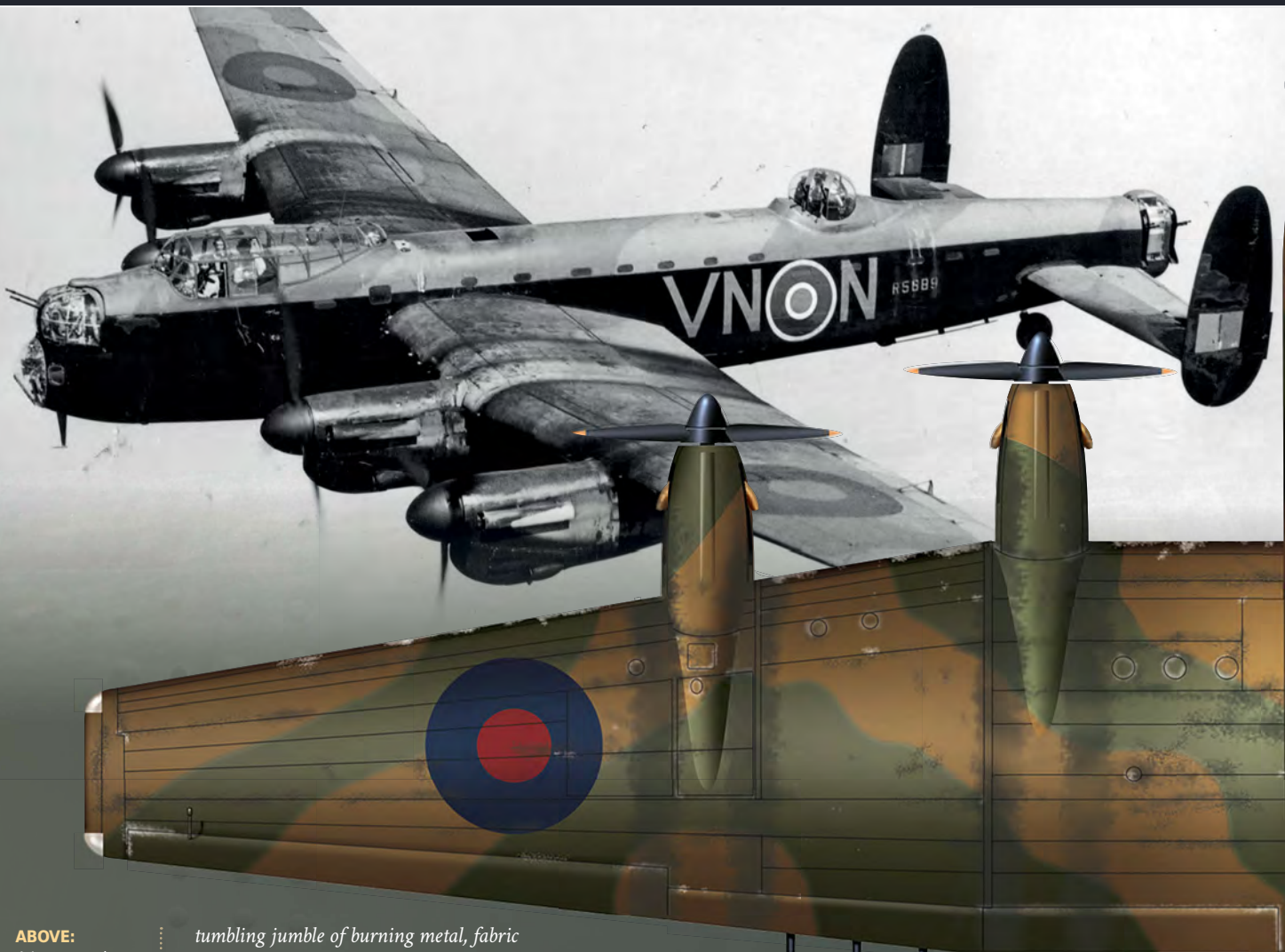
**RIGHT:** Guy Gibson, CO 106 Sqn, did not take part in the raid due to illness, but as CO 617 'Dambuster' Sqn, he led an operation more famous than the Cologne raid!

**BELOW:** With 602 committed, more Wellingtons flew in the raid than any other type.

of incendiaries, fires, flashes of high explosives and brief, intense bursts of brilliant light from the photographic flashes dropped for the camera in each attacking aircraft. Vast wands of searchlights swayed across the sky, sometimes locking on to a bomber at or above our level, to be followed by six or more joining

to form a cone of light, with clusters of prickly stars of heavy flak trying to shoot it down. On occasions they succeeded, with an aircraft falling out of the sky in a >>





**ABOVE:**  
A Lancaster in flight.

tumbling jumble of burning metal, fabric and fuel, and men. It was a sobering sight.'

**TOM DAILEY** recalled that as his crew approached the target area, 'The atmosphere aboard was edgy.'

'But no one was biting their nails. There was always fear of the unknown, but you didn't show it. Training bolstered your spirits and we had already been bloodied on previous sorties. Still miles from the target the skipper called me up to the cockpit, 'Tom, come here and have a look at this.' It was astounding. The night sky was a swirling fire of red, orange and yellow. Cologne was alight. We were in the second or third wave, and the bombers which had gone in ahead of us had dropped incendiaries. In our plane was a feeling of exultation. This was payback. We had suffered the Blitz for all those years and were full of venom and hate for all things German. I was 20 years old and twice, before I joined up, I was nearly killed by bombs falling on London.'

## SKELETONS IN THE MIDST OF FIRES

As Flying Officer Friend's crew neared the target area, such was the

size of the glow in front of them that they prepared to bomb somewhat prematurely.

'It looked as though we were on top of it in a minute or two and we opened our bomb doors. We flew on; the glow was as far away as ever, so we closed our bomb doors. The glare was still there like a huge cigarette-end in the German blackout. Then we flew into smoke; through it the Rhine appeared a dim silver ribbon below us. The smoke was drifting in the wind. We came in over the fires. Down in my bomb aimer's hatch I looked at the burning town below me. I remembered what had been said at the briefing, 'Don't drop your bombs on the buildings that are burning best. Go in and find another target for yourself.' Well at last I found one right in the most industrial part of the town. I let the bombs go. We had a heavy load, hundreds of incendiaries and big high explosives. The incendiaries going off were like sudden platinum-coloured flashes, which slowly turned to red. We saw many flashes going from white to red and then our great bomb burst in the centre of them. As we crossed the town there were burning blocks to the right of us and to the left the fires were immense. They were really continuous. The flames

were higher than I had ever seen before. Buildings were skeletons in the midst of fires. Sometimes you could see what appeared to be frameworks of white-hot joists. The blast of the bombs was hurling walls themselves across the flames. As we came away we saw more and more of our aircraft below silhouetted against the flames. I identified Wellingtons, Halifaxes, Manchesteres and other Lancasters. Above us there were still more bombers lit by the light of the moon. They were doing exactly as we did; going according to plan and coming out according to plan and making their way home.'

**VICTOR MARTIN** also witnessed the conflagration below, before dropping his explosives and turning back towards England.

**CENTER:**  
In total, 131 Halifax bombers were committed to the Cologne attack.



*'Closing in on the target, the intensity of the fire became more apparent: not the usual cluster of separate burnings, it appeared that the complete area below was ablaze in one large fire. A feeling of sorrow came, but with a ferocious burst of anti-aircraft fire bouncing the aircraft about with explosions, concentration on the purpose of the*

*mission became uppermost. With the most dangerous part now commencing, a level and steady course had to be maintained for accurate aiming, the navigator lying down over the bomb sight giving instructions for lining up the target - 'left, left, steady, right, steady, bombs away.' As all bombs are released at once, the aircraft, relieved of its heavy load, rose like*

*a lift and with so many bombers above this could cause a serious problem unless quickly controlled.*

*Course was set for home and the running of the gauntlet of ack-ack, searchlights and nightfighters once again. Dropping down to an altitude below the range of the heavy guns and above light fire, we were suddenly in a ring of searchlights giving a most eerie feeling, a ghostly light filling the darkness of the cockpit. The tracer shells from the guns seem to be still as you look at them, coming up and then flashing past the windscreen. A bank to starboard gave the gunners a better view to return fire, the aircraft fills with the sinister sound of machine guns firing at a rate of several thousand rounds a minute. Searchlights >>*

**BELOW:** John Banfield, a wireless operator with 207 Sqn, took part in the Cologne operation and is photographed here at his station.



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*A total of 88 Short Stirlings were sent on the Cologone raid. Here, incendiary bomb canisters are readied for loading into one of them.*





are hit and the tracer shells coming up, like water from a hose pipe moving around to cover an area, also cease.'

Over the target, **TOM DAILEY** recalled the buffeting of flak as his crew prepared to release their bomb load.

'As we went in on our bombing run we had to observe W/T [wireless telegraphy] silence. Flak was bursting around us. Our bomb aimer, lying prone above the open hatch, was guiding the pilot. Left was always repeated twice, to avoid confusion. So it was, 'left, left, right a bit.' Then the words we all waited for, 'bombs gone!' Two tons of high explosives, and incendiaries in canisters, had been delivered to their destination. We felt the aircraft lift, and then tilt as the pilot put on full throttle and banked to the left, heading for the North Sea and home.'

**GORDON MELLOR**, having guided his crew to the target, now prepared to release their explosive cargo.

'I was now down in the nose of the Wimpy, bombsight set up, the bomb

switches at the ready, looking forward for our aiming point. Trailing aerial was wound in and the bomb doors opened.

I compared the scene before me against the target map in my hand. There was the square with the cathedral ahead. We were now flying straight and level. This was the time that our position in the sky could be predicted accurately by the anti-aircraft batteries below; were they on to us? In a few seconds we would know. 'Left ... left skipper ... steady ... steady ... right ... steady.' Then with a press of the button, 'Bombs gone.' Relieved of its load the aircraft lifted in the sky. 'Flash gone', now it was straight and level. The photo was taken. The pilot changed direction, putting the nose of the aircraft down to increase speed, closed the bomb doors, and we hastened out of the target area and turned on to the first course for home. Very little flak now, but everyone looks out for fighters. 'Did anyone see that four-engine Halifax above us on the way in?' The response was 'No.' 'He was just over to starboard when he dropped his load.' We all agreed that was too close for comfort.

We seemed to be alone in the sky again. All the conflagration that was Cologne was beginning to recede into the distance.'

#### SIDE PROFILES:

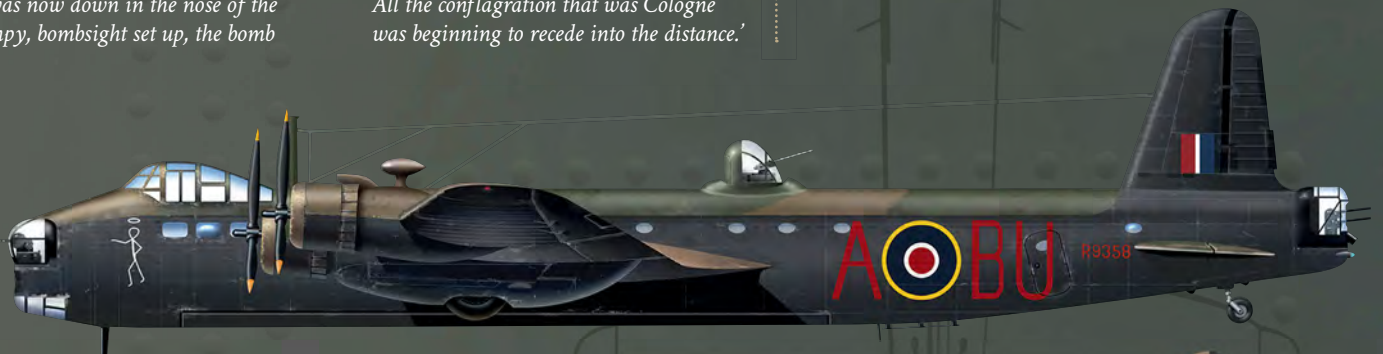
Colour profiles of a Halifax, Stirling and Wellington - three of the main types committed to 'Operation Millennium'.

#### GETTING HOME

With bombs gone, dropped on the target, a Bomber Command airman's main duty had been fulfilled. In harsh militaristic terms it was now a matter of surviving to fight another day: getting home, increasing the return on the RAF training investment, and bringing back a valuable piece of equipment. With returning crew came stories of the night's activities, the sight of the burning city, the flak, the fighters, seeing other aircraft exploding and falling in flames. Victor Martin was one man who could relate such tales.

'Dawn broke as we crossed the coast and the number of aircraft in the sky was awe inspiring. Back at base it was discovered the navigator had cuts on each side of his neck, probably caused by shrapnel during the steady bombing run in. If so, a slight waver could have proved fatal. The raid was considered an outstanding success.'

**JO LANCASTER**, having successfully bombed the target, and approaching home base, felt he could at last relax. >>





# 'REAPING THE WHIRLWIND'

A LANCASTER RADIO OPERATORS EXPERIENCE

**JOHN BANFIELD** WAS A RADIO OPERATOR ON A LANCASTER OF 207 SQUADRON DURING THE COLOGNE 1000 BOMBER RAID:

"We were due to bomb in the last 20 minutes of the raid, but before we crossed the Dutch coast we could see Cologne on fire. When we got there there was very little opposition so we bombed quite easily. I will always remember, being in the nose, that all of a sudden I saw a chute come down and the skipper pulled the aircraft up and over him. That was over Cologne which was a mass of flame - really shocking. They'd bombed London and also Coventry. We didn't give a damn about the loss of life. We were determined to give them their own medicine. They'd 'reap the whirlwind' as Bomber Harris said."



| Date     | Time  | Location  | Remarks              | Remarks                            | Remarks |
|----------|-------|-----------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| 3-5-42   | 19:15 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | N.F.T.                             | 0-40    |
| 3-9-42   | 21:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 2nd W/O | EXERCISES, HULLSWELL               | 0-10    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | PRACTICE SPLITTING FOR             | 1-40    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | EXERCISES                          | 1-40    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | PRACTICE SPLITTING FOR             | 1-40    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | EXERCISES                          | 1-40    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | N.F.T.                             | 0-30    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | N.F.T.                             | 0-30    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | N.F.T.                             | 0-30    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | EXERCISES (CIRCUIT INCLUDING AT)   | 6-00    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | EXERCISES (AT INTENT ON EXERCISES) | 5-00    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | N.F.T.                             | 0-30    |
| 12-10-42 | 19:30 | LANCASTER | Sgt McCarty, 1st W/O | EXERCISES, SOMERSET                | 6-10    |



# 1000 BOMBER RAID



the oil pressure quickly recovered. The engine had drunk its normal oil capacity of 17 gallons in less than five hours' flying. Two nights later we took the same aircraft to Essen, but this time we didn't wait for the starboard engine to consume all its oil before replenishment.'

**TOM DAILEY** and his crew could bring their story home. Not so for some of his colleagues, with a total loss of life among two other crews, ten airmen, from 158 Squadron.

'Apart from a few small holes in the fuselage we were unscathed. But dirty, dog-tired and sweaty. Beneath our sheepskin flying jackets we all wore three or four woollen vests to keep out the cold.

At breakfast we had our bacon and eggs. But there were gaps around the Mess tables. Nobody mentioned them.'

Geoffrey Hall, who had been learning his trade at an operational training unit, had taken a Wellington to Cologne with his fellow crew trainees. In addition, 'My son Peter, who was now over a year old, also accompanied me on every flight via a

photo that I carried inside my flight jacket.' For Geoffrey the experience over Cologne remained vivid.

'The weather that night was fine and clear. The moon was full, and over Germany the river Rhine showed up like an illuminated winding ribbon. I will always remember experiencing the spectacular view of aircraft exploding and the crowded sky of aeroplanes, shell bursts, and searchlights around Cologne as the great fires burned below. We did nearly collide with another aircraft over the target as we were running in to release our bomb load. That is a night I shall never forget and it brings tears to my eyes even now when I talk to other people about it. This was the start of a new phase in the air war and all units involved received many plaudits for this raid.'

In total, Bomber Command losses for the raid amounted to a record high figure for the war to date, but in cold military terminology it was an acceptable 5% loss rate. Behind these statistics though are the stories of men fighting for their lives. For >>

'We took off in rain but on the return trip the weather was fine, as with dawn breaking, we cruised back towards Wellesbourne Mountford at about 1,000ft. The W/Op, Flight Sergeant Harrison, came up forward to sit beside me and we were enjoying a cigarette when – I think almost simultaneously – we saw the starboard engine oil pressure gauge drop abruptly to zero. Fortunately Harrison was a very experienced Wimpy man and knew exactly what to do. He dashed aft and started to transfer oil from the 14 gallon reserve tank by hand-pump and

**ABOVE:**  
The appropriately named Jo Lancaster with his Lancaster.

**RIGHT:**  
Veteran Jo Lancaster, photographed recently.

**BELOW:**  
Jo Lancaster's logbook page detailing the Cologne operation.



|  |    | TOTALS BROUGHT FORWARD |   |
|--|----|------------------------|---|
| MAY  | 12 | WELLINGTON X 8782      | SELF. SGT. GORVIN. DUAL.                      |
| "  | 27 | STIRLING R 9304        | P/O BAYLEY. SELF. DUAL & TEST TO 'Dope'       |
| "  | 27 | " R 9304               | SELF. P/O BAYLEY. WATERBURN - WYTHAM & RETURN |
| "  | 28 | WELLINGTON X 9932      | SELF. CREW. N.F.T.                            |
| "  | 29 | " X 9932               | SELF. CREW. N.F.T.                            |
| "  | 29 | " X 9932               | SELF. CREW. W/T TEST.                         |
| "  | 30 | " R 1522               | SELF. CREW. N/C TEST.                         |
| "  | 30 | " X 9932               | SELF. CREW. (3) OPS. COLOGNE.                 |
| <p><i>Jo Lancaster</i><br/>                 SUMMARY FOR: <u>28 MAY</u> 1942. AIRCRAFT TYPES:<br/>                 UNIT: <u>158 Sqn</u> 1. <u>WELLINGTON</u><br/>                 DATE: <u>14/15/42</u> 2. <u>STIRLING</u><br/>                 SIGNATURE: <u>Jo Lancaster</u> 3. <u>STIRLING</u><br/>                 4. <u>STIRLING</u></p> |    |                        |   |
| JUNE   | 1  | WELLINGTON X 9932      | SELF. P/O. HARRISON. CONSUMPTION TEST.        |
| "  | 1  | " X 9932               | SELF. CREW. (3) OPS. ESSEN.                   |
| "  | 3  | " R 1711               | SELF. P/O FRIEND. AIR TEST.                   |
| "  | 3  | " R 1711               | SELF. SGT BURRILL. DUAL.                      |
| "  | 4  | ANBOXY AN 258          | SELF. CREW. CROSS-COUNTRY.                    |
| "  | 6  | WELLINGTON DV 691      | SELF. SGT WEBSTER. A/C TEST.                  |
| "  | 7  | " W 5649               | SELF. P/O HAVILL. TO SATELLITE                |
| "  | 7  | " X 9932               | SELF. CREW. FROM SATELLITE                    |
| <p>GRAND TOTAL: (5000 11 10 110)<br/>                 715 100 50<br/>                 TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD</p>   |    |                        |   |



# Daily Mirror

No. 12,001 ONE PENNY  
Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

JUNE 1

# 1,500

# PLANES IN BIGGEST RAID: 3,000 TONS BOMB STORM

MORE THAN 1,500 PLANES WERE USED BY THE RAF IN SATURDAY NIGHT'S GREATEST-EVER RAID.

## Rommel mauled, turning back

**R**OMMEL, having fought his way into a "box" of British troops in Libya, was last night trying to get out again. News from the battlefield indicated that the Afrika Korps has already taken a severe knock. It is fighting for its existence. Rounding the southern flank of the Allied line into the 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions and the 90th Light Motorised Division have been followed up by the bulk of the rest of the Korps, which is now fighting out the climax of the ferocious battle. They are being attacked unceasingly by the RAF and our land forces, which are inflicting heavy losses. The Nazis, prevented from forcing a way to the sea and thrown back from the east, are now trying to blast a path to the west through the extensive minefields surrounding the Allied forward positions. Deadly shelling by British 25-pounders—the best artillery in the field—is blocking the way for the passage of fresh fuel and water, without which the German field commander, General Nehring, cannot fight on much longer. Last night's reports reaching Cairo said that the fighting is as ferocious as ever, but officials at Allied headquarters believe the pace cannot last much longer. Rommel himself has been in the fighting line. British Medical Corps men who escaped after being captured by a German tank force said yesterday that the Nazi commander visited their captured medical dressing station after it had been surrounded by German tanks south-west of Tobruk. He entered the station on Friday and had a long conversation with the officers.

**Victory "Guarantee"**  
Rommel guaranteed his men victory in an Order of the Day, issued two days before that of General Ritchie, which has fallen into British hands. He says: "The armoured army of Africa moves today in a decisive attack against the British mobile forces in Libya. Continuing the victorious deeds of January and February."

**Continued on Back Page**

## GOVT. TAKE OVER A PIT

**T**HE Mines Department has taken over Parkhill Colliery, Wakefield, Yorks, where a strike is in progress. Mr. C. R. Urquhart, of the Mines Department, has been appointed controller. This was announced in Wakefield last night to the strikers who had been summoned to a meeting by notices shown on local cinema screens.

**Refused to Start**  
They were also told that negotiations aimed at settling their grievances would be opened as soon as they resumed work. Unanimously, however, they refused to re-start at the pit this morning. The Mines Department stated early today that it has power to put in a controller at a colliery where, in the interests of coal production and the bearing it has on war production, it is necessary to do so.

## SAW FOR HIMSELF



This is Air Vice-Marshal J. E. A. Baldwin, who, after spending the day planning his group's share in the first "four-figure" attack on Germany, climbed into a plane and flew to Cologne to observe the effects. Aged 59, and a Yorkshireman, he is the first officer above the rank of Group Captain to have taken part in a Bomber Command operation. He left the Army to join the RFC in August, 1914, had a brilliant record, retired at his own request in August, 1939—but returned to the service, and on Saturday night he took to the air again.

Well over a thousand bombers dropped 3,000 tons of high explosive on Cologne, the Ruhr and the Rhineland, the chief target area. The raid lasted only ninety minutes. Every six seconds a fully-loaded plane arrived over the target. When they had finished there was a pall of smoke 15,000ft. high. Flames were visible 140 miles away. The few hundred planes in the raid which did not go to Germany attacked gun sites and aerodromes to prevent too much interference with the RAF's programme. The bombers formed the greatest concentration of planes ever sent to a single target area. **THE RAIDING FORCE WAS AT LEAST TWICE THE SIZE AND HAD MORE THAN FOUR TIMES THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE LARGEST AIR FORCE EVER BEFORE CONCENTRATED ON ONE OBJECTIVE.** The biggest planes in service were there—Lancasters, Halifaxes, Stirlings and Manchester—great weight-carriers, taking far heavier bombs than ever the Luftwaffe dropped here.

**All Stations There**  
Every bomber station in this country was represented in the raid. Throughout the afternoon armoureds had worked loading up planes with bombs weighing in all an astronomical number of pounds. A telephone message from Air Marshal A. T. Harris, chief of Bomber Command, set the raid in motion. Senior officers decided to fly with the crews under their command to see for themselves the effect of the first four-figure attack on Germany. Air Vice-Marshal J. E. A. Baldwin, commanding one of the Bomber Command groups, was one of them. He had spent the day planning his group's share in the raid, and then stepped into one of his planes to observe the effects. The bombers arrived over

**Continued on Back Page**

## "Misery on us"—Nazis in Cologne

**G**ERMAN radio began to wall last night about the great RAF raid on Cologne.

"Terrific damage" was admitted, and a special transmission from Cologne said: "Much misery has come over our town."

"Many famous buildings, churches and monuments have been wrecked," it was stated. The announcer claimed that the population was unshaken, and as "proof" four Cologne people were brought to the microphones to relate their experiences.

**"Reprisals"**  
One of them, apparently an elderly man, almost broke down several times. The number of incendiary bombs dropped was colossal," said another man.

"Don't go to Germany, the biggest British raids are now starting," Moscow radio warned European workers last night.

All Axis radio stations declared fiercely that reprisals would come soon.

One man broadcasting from Cologne described how an air raid shelter was blasted and he helped to knock down a wall to release twenty-two women and children inside.

**ACID STOMACH**



Where's that sunny smile, that merry whistle, that schoolboy appetite, this morning? Why is he so glum and won't touch his breakfast? The answer is ACID STOMACH! Excess acid sours the stomach and unsettles the system. So naturally you feel out-of-sorts and the thought of food is nauseating. Take a little Milk of Magnesia, or two Milk of Magnesia brand Tablets and that sick sour feeling disappears almost instantly. For Milk of Magnesia promptly neutralises the excess acid responsible for the upset. The stomach is soothed and strengthened, appetite returns and digestion proceeds in comfort. Flatulence, heartburn, nausea, indigestion and all stomach troubles due to excess acidity vanish in a marvellous manner on taking Milk of Magnesia. It is the antacid most acceptable to the stomach and the one most extensively prescribed by doctors for patients of all ages. Keep it in readiness as a quick, safe and pleasant corrective for an acid stomach. Obtainable everywhere. Milk of Magnesia, 1/5 and 1/10 (Frebles' size). Also Milk of Magnesia Tablets 70, 1/12, 20 and 3/112. (Including Purchase Tax).

## 'MILK OF MAGNESIA'

**Milk of Magnesia is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of Magnesia.**

ABOVE: The 'Daily Mirror' got rather carried away with things and in their headlines added a further 500 bombers to the massive raid! Interestingly, reference is made to Air Vice Marshal J E A Baldwin, C-in-C, 3 Group, RAF Bomber Command, flying as an observer on the raid.



## FURTHER READING

**GORDON MELLOR'S** AUTOBIOGRAPHY *ETA - A Bomber Command Navigator Shot Down and on the Run*, and **JO LANCASTERS'S** BIOGRAPHY *First Out in Earnest - The Remarkable Life of Jo Lancaster DFC from Bomber Command Pilot to Test Pilot and the Martin Baker Ejection Seat* are on general release and available from publisher Fighting High [www.fightinghigh.com](http://www.fightinghigh.com).



### LEFT:

*In capable hands, the agile Lancaster could almost 'be thrown around like a fighter' according to the original caption of this 1942 image.*

### BELOW

*A view of a shattered Cologne, 1945.*

most of these men what they went through will never be told, though not all would perish in their aircraft. Some would survive to be either captured or evade. And ultimately they could describe the circumstances of their loss, and in some cases report on certain acts of extraordinary courage and selflessness. One of the most conspicuously heroic actions of the raid resulted in a Victoria Cross for Flying Officer Leslie Thomas Manser, of No. 50 Squadron. His supreme award for gallantry was gazetted on 23 October 1942:-

*'Flying Officer Manser was captain and first pilot of a Manchester aircraft which took part in the mass raid on Cologne on the night of 30 May, 1942. As the aircraft was approaching its objective it was caught*



by searchlights and subject to intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire. Flying Officer Manser held on his dangerous course and bombed the target successfully from 7,000 feet.

Then he set course for base. The Manchester had been damaged and was still under heavy fire. Flying Officer Manser took violent evasive action, turning and descending to under 1,000 feet. It was to no avail. The searchlights and flak followed him until the outskirts of the city were passed. The aircraft was hit repeatedly and the rear gunner was wounded. The front cabin filled with smoke; the port engine was overheating badly.

Pilot and crew could all have escaped safely by parachute. Nevertheless, Flying Officer Manser, disregarding the obvious hazards, persisted in his attempt to save aircraft and crew from falling into enemy hands. He took the aircraft up to 2,000 feet. Then the port engine burst into flames. It was 10 minutes before the fire was mastered, but then the engine went out of action for good, part of one wing was burnt, and the air speed of the aircraft became dangerously low.

**RIGHT:**

Although a photo from much earlier in the war, even the Bristol Blenheim helped 'make up the numbers' for the thousand bomber raid.



**BELOW:**

Fg Off Leslie Manser was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions during the thousand bomber raid on Cologne.

Despite all the efforts of pilot and crew, the Manchester began to lose height. At this critical moment, Flying Officer Manser once more disdained the alternative of parachuting to safety with his crew. Instead with grim determination, he set a new course for the nearest base, accepting for himself the prospect of almost certain death in a firm resolve to carry on to the end.

Soon the aircraft became extremely difficult to handle, and when a crash was inevitable, Flying Officer Manser ordered the crew to bale out. A sergeant handed him a parachute but he waved it away, telling the non-commissioned officer to jump at once as he could only hold the

aircraft steady for a few seconds more. While the crew were descending to safety they saw the aircraft still carrying their gallant captain plunge to earth and burst into flames.

In pressing home his attack in the face of strong opposition, in striving against heavy odds to bring back his aircraft and crew, and finally, when in extreme peril, thinking only of the safety of his comrades, Flying Officer Manser displayed determination and valour of the highest order.'

**LESLIE MANSER** had given his all to fulfil his commander's request to give it to the enemy, 'right on the chin.'



## SOURCE MATERIAL

**HARRIS, SIR ARTHUR.** *Bomber Offensive* (Greenhill Books, 1998)

**HAMISH MAHADDIE,** *IWM sound archive, 2897*

**ALEX SHAW,** *IWM sound archive, 25279*

**IAN ROBERTSON,** *WW2 People's War* [www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)

**PETER WAR-HUNT,** *WW2 People's War* [www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)

**TOM TATE,** *IWM sound archive, 3593*

**VICTOR MARTIN,** *WW2 People's War* [www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)

**TOM DAILEY,** *WW2 People's War* [www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)

**BARKER, R.** *The Thousand Plan* (Pan Books, 1967)

**FLYING OFFICER FRIEND,** *IWM sound archive, 2150*

**GEOFFREY HALL,** *WW2 People's War* [www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)

**LONDON GAZETTE,** 23 October 1942

**SPEER, A.** *Inside the Third Reich* (Phoenix, 1995, pp 382-383)

**DR CHAVE,** *IWM documents archive, 6625*

**MELLOR, GORDON.** *ETA* (Fighting High, 2016)

During the 1000 bomber raid on Cologne, the RAF paid a heavy price; 53 aircraft from 32 operational squadrons and support units lost, approximately 5% of the force. In these aircraft, 190 aircrew were killed, with 59 captured. Not represented here are a further four killed in a Wellington IC which crashed in transit that day, and two killed and two captured when their Mosquito IVs, the first to be lost in Bomber Command service, were downed in follow up sorties to photograph the aftermath of the raid. Here, in tribute to all Bomber Command aircrew, John Ash presents the crews of the 53.

**9 SQUADRON****Wellington III X3469**

Crash landing at Retie after engine failure.

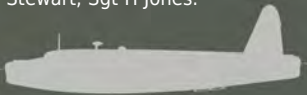
KIA: Sgt K Paxman (died of injuries)

POW: Sgt S Langton, F/S G Welsh, Sgt J Haworth, Sgt J Johnson.

**Wellington III, BJ674**

Downed by night fighter, crashed at 0240 at Vierlingsbeek.

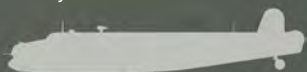
KIA: F/L M Hodges, Sgt T Hatnett (Can), F/S T Newby, F/S C Stewart, Sgt H Jones.

**10 SQUADRON****Halifax II W1042**

Downed by night fighter, crashed at 0200 at Maarheeze.

KIA: Sgt A Moore, Sgt M English (Can), Sgt F Walker

POW: Sgt D Thurlow, WO2 L Silver (Can), Sgt J Ogden, Sgt H Stacey

**12 SQUADRON****Wellington II W5361**

Downed by flak at 0026 over Schiphol.

KIA: F/L A Payne DFC, Sgt B Sigler, Sgt J Wise, Sgt G Praagst (Aus), Sgt J Brown, Sgt W Callaghan

**Wellington II, Z8376**

Crashed near Dusseldorf.

KIA: P/O A Waddell (Aus), F/S K Holden (Aus), F/S A Seifert (Can), Sgt H Bottomley, F/S E Masson

**Wellington II Z8598**

Exploded near Swaffham.

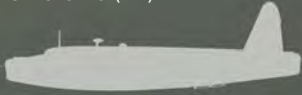
KIA: Sgt G Everatt, Sgt A Draper, F/S D Moodie (Can), Sgt J Brett, Sgt H Hooley

**Wellington II Z8643**

Fate of A/C unconfirmed.

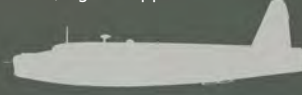
KIA: P/O W Shearer (Aus)  
POW: Sgt E Ansford (NZ), Sgt B

Brown (Aus), Sgt G Gane (NZ) Sgt C McKenna (NZ)

**57 SQUADRON****Wellington III X3387**

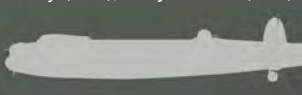
Crashed landed at 0015 near Lakenheath

Rescued: P/O Ravenhill, F/O Taylor, Sgt R Osbourne, Sgt H Bond, Sgt R Yapp

**61 SQUADRON****Lancaster I R5561**

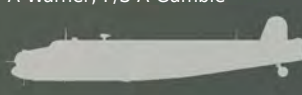
Crashed at Niederaussem.

KIA: P/O J Underwood, P/O B Usher (NZ), Sgt A Williamson, F/S R Fawkes, F/O P Bluett, P/O J Patey (Can), F/S J Charles (Can)

**78 SQUADRON****Halifax II W1013**

Collided with Hampden and crashed near March.

KIA: Sgt G Bolton, Sgt A Caie  
INJ: GP/O G Foers, Sgt Curtiss, Sgt A Warner, F/S A Gamble

**101 SQUADRON****Wellington III X3670**

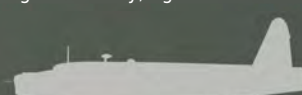
Lost without trace.

KIA: P/O A Gardner, Sgt W Arnold, Sgt R Hart, Sgt D Pearson, Sgt I Spooner

**Wellington III Z1612**

Engine failure after fighter attack.

POW: P/O C Read, P/O D Davidson, Sgt R Killwyn (Can), Sgt M Doherty, Sgt R Charles

**103 SQUADRON****Wellington IC DV452**

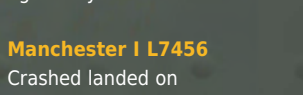
Fate of A/C unconfirmed.

KIA: F/S W Onions, Sgt M Rogerson, Sgt H Hallam, Sgt W Jones, Sgt A Leslie, Sgt B Sansom

**106 SQUADRON****Manchester I L7301**

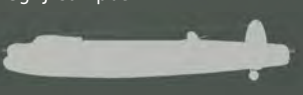
Downed by flak, crashed near Bree at 0200.

KIA: P/O L Manser VC  
POW: P/O R Barnes  
Evaded Capture: Sgt LBaveystock, P/O R Horsley, Sgt S King, Sgt A Mills, Sgt B Naylor

**Manchester I L7456**

Crashed landed on Dusseldorf-Lobhausen airfield after engine failure.

KIA: Sgt A Bee, Sgt E Finch  
POW: Sgt J Wilkie, F/S C Tobias (Can), Sgt A Benn (Aus), Sgt J Campbell

**109 SQUADRON****Wellington IC Z1113**

Fate of A/C unconfirmed.

KIA: Sgt D Miller, Sgt R Currie, F/S H Witts  
POW: Sgt T Eddy, F/S J Austin, Sgt T Hatfield (Can)

**114 SQUADRON****Blenheim IV V5645**

Crashed near Oldenburg.

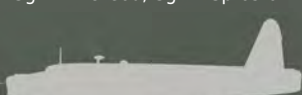
KIA: P/O J Fox (NZ) (Died of injuries), Sgt J Leonard, Sgt A Smithson

**115 SQUADRON****Wellington III Z1614**

Lost without trace.

KIA: Sgt E Edwards, F/S W

Crampton MiD, Sgt M Boyle, Sgt W McLeod, Sgt H Sproston

**142 SQUADRON****Wellington IV Z1208**

Fate of A/C unconfirmed.

KIA: Sgt N Lowden, P/O W Gregory, Sgt F Thornton, F/O P Candler MiD, Sgt L Mallon

**Wellington IV Z1209**

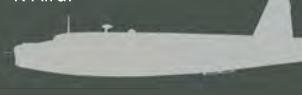
Lost at sea.

KIA: P/O G Chaffey (Can), F/S J Smyth (Can), Sgt G Watson, P/O J McAleavey (Can), Sgt I Mackeand.

**150 SQUADRON****Wellington III X3448**

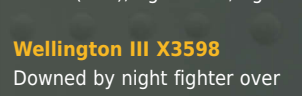
Crashed near Faldingworth.

KIA: Sgt S Shaw, Sgt R Peverill, Sgt J Dean, Sgt G Lustoe, Sgt L Beck, Sgt K Aird.

**156 SQUADRON****Wellington IC DV715**

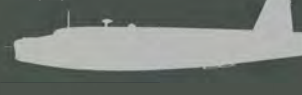
Downed over Vorden.

KIA: Sgt P Malin, Sgt J Holmes, Sgt L Cooke (Can), Sgt R Peel, Sgt R Catley

**Wellington III X3598**

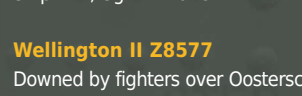
Downed by night fighter over Oosterschelde, crashed at 0035.

KIA: P/O J Bain DFC (Can), F/S W Cormack (Can), P/O L Newton, Sgt A Brunton, Sgt D Normington, P/O E Evans.

**158 SQUADRON****Wellington II W5392**

Crashed near Meiderich.

KIA: Sgt R O'Brien (Can), P/O W Reason (Can), Sgt A Schofield, F/O G Skipwith, Sgt W Waller

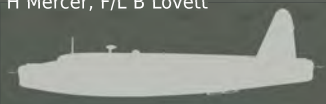
**Wellington II Z8577**

Downed by fighters over Oosterschelde.





KIA: S/L D Harkness DFC (NZ), P/O A Edgar DFM, P/O H Radcliffe, Sgt H Mercer, F/L B Lovett



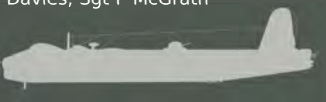
**214 SQUADRON**

**Stirling I R9325**

Crashed on landing at 0336. Rescued: F/O C Ordish, Sgt Thornton, P/O C Whittingham, Sgt Inman, Sgt R Collett, Sgt W Thompson, Sgt G Findlay

**Stirling I W7534**

Crashed near Monchengladback. KIA: P/O Dent, Sgt C Muir (Aus), Sgt R Cruise, P/O S Dimond, Sgt G Bunning, Sgt J Munday, P/O W Davies, Sgt P McGrath



**218 SQUADRON**

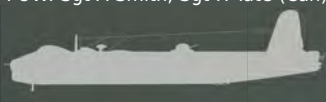
**Stirling I R9311**

Forced to belly-land at 0555 at Marham.

Rescued: Sgt S Falconer DFM, Sgt Humphreys, Sgt Birke, Sgt Wolstencroft, Sgt E Harding, F/S J Lawler, Sgt E Green, Sgt Wilkes

**Stirling I W7502**

Downed by flag over Huppenbroich. KIA: P/O A Davis, Sgt R Guntrip, F/S J Borrowdale, Sgt T Allen, Sgt K England  
POW: Sgt A Smith, Sgt H Tate (Can)

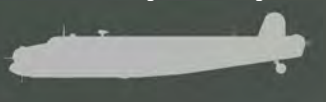


**405 SQUADRON RCAF**

**Halifax II W7707**

Lost without trace.

KIA: Sgt L Wadman (Can), Sgt N Acton, F/S G Welsh (Can), P/O G Sankey, Sgt A McLean (NZ), Sgt W Pickett (Can), Sgt D Henning



**420 SQUADRON RCAF**

**Hampden I AE399**

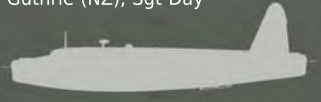
Crashed on landing at 0403, Waddington.  
INJ: F/S W McDermid (Can), F/S L Gardiner (Can)  
Rescued: Sgt Waddington, Sgt Wilkinson



**11 OTU**

**Wellington IC R1065**

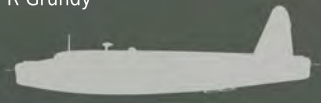
Fate of A/C unconfirmed.  
POW: F/S J Bulford, Sgt D Dunkley, Sgt R Higham, Sgt T Guthrie (NZ), Sgt Day



**12 OTU**

**Wellington IC X9874**

Ditched off Harwich.  
KIA: P/O R Ferrer, P/O A Lucki (Can), Sgt J McKenzie (Can) (died of injuries)  
Rescued: Sgt H Buck (Can), F/S R Grundy



**14 OTU**

**Hampden I L4173**

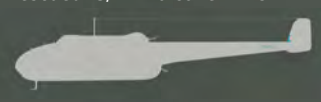
Crashed on landing, Horsham St. Faith.  
KIA: F/L W Cameron, Sgt J Sheridan, F/S M Porter, Sgt E East

**Hampden I P2116**

Downed by Lt M. Meurer, III./NJG1 and crashed at 0205 near Diepenveen.  
KIA: P/O W Gorton, P/O V Woolnough DFM, Sgt F Falk  
POW: P/O T Ramsey

**Hampden I P5321**

Collided with Halifax and crashed near March.  
KIA: F/S C Holmes, Sgt J Knowling, P/L H Little  
Rescued: S/L D Falconer DFC



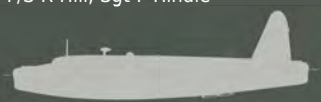
**15 OTU**

**Wellington IC R1791**

Downed by night fighter over Marchienne.  
KIA: W/O S Green, F/S T Lyons, Sgt J McCormack  
POW: Sgt D Paul DFM  
Evaded Capture: F/S B Evans DFM

**Wellington II W5586**

Fate of A/C unknown.  
KIA: W/O R Collins (Aus)  
POW: W/O J Hatton, P/O J Harper, F/S R Hill, Sgt F Hindle



**22 OTU**

**Wellington IC R1235**

Fate of A/C unconfirmed.  
KIA: F/S C Matthews, Sgt P Barclay (Can), P/O W Caldwell DFM, Sgt D Edwards (NZ), P/O D Tallis DFM

**Wellington IC R1714**

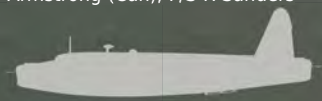
Fate of A/C unconfirmed.  
KIA: F/L A Hamman DFC & Bar (SAfr), W/O E Neesom MiD, Sgt R Harrison (Can), F/S W Hawkins  
POW: Sgt K Monk

**Wellington IC DV701**

Lost without trace.  
KIA: F/O R Blake DFC (NZ), F/O D MacLean (Can), Sgt R Creswell (Can), F/S J Wanbon DFM, Sgt N Grattan (Can)

**Wellington IC DV843**

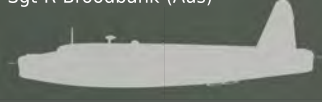
Crashed near Dinteloord at 2340.  
KIA: P/O W Fullerton DFM, F/O L Tait, F/S J Napier DFM, Sgt R Armstrong (Can), F/S R Sanders



**23 OTU**

**Wellington IC N2851**

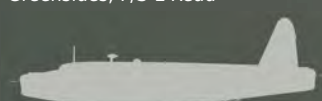
Crashed near Gravendeel at 0010.  
KIA: Sgt W Johnson (Can), Sgt J Donn-Patterson (Aus), Sgt M Glenton-Wright (Aus), Sgt G Bolton, Sgt R Broodbank (Aus)



**25 OTU**

**Wellington IC L7802**

Abandoned after flak caused engine fire.  
POW: P/O C Hughes, Sgt B Whittle, F/S R Baker, F/S R Oliver, Sgt F Greensides, F/S L Read



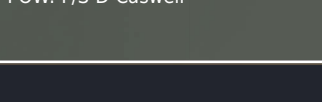
**26 OTU**

**Wellington IC W5704**

Downed by night fighter over Middelbeers.  
KIA: F/O W Whiting, Sgt J Garrick, Sgt J Hall (NZ), Sgt R Williams, Sgt A Young (NZ)

**Wellington IC DV707**

Downed by night fighter over Venlo.  
KIA: F/S E Ford DFM, P/O D August, F/S F Barker DFM, F/S J Thompson  
POW: F/S D Caswell



**Wellington IC DV709**

Overturned on landing in field near Soham.  
KIA: Sgt J Dixon, Sgt B Camlin.  
INJ: Sgt Scroggie (Can), Sgt Green, Sgt Broadhurst

**Wellington IC DV740**

Downed by night fighter over Alem.  
KIA: Sgt D Fletcher, P/O A White, Sgt D Vincent, Sgt H Smith.  
POW: W/O F Hillyer



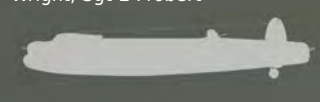
**49 CONVERSION FLIGHT**

**Manchester I L7429**

Lost without trace.  
KIA: P/O J Carter, F/S D Block, Sgt G Haynes, Sgt J Ramsey, Sgt L Yeates, Sgt A Welch (Aus), Sgt M Ash

**Manchester I L7290**

Downed by flak over Mulheim-Oberhausen.  
KIA: P/O P Floyd, Sgt J Smith  
POW: Sgt D Randall (Aus), Sgt J Valentine, Sgt F Woodrow (NZ), Sgt J Wright, Sgt E Probert



**1502 FLIGHT**

**Whitley V Z9307**

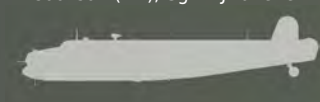
Downed by night fighter over Hoboken.  
KIA: P/O D Box (NZ), F/S J Godbehere (Can), Sgt W H Orman  
POW: S/L J Russell DFC, F/O D Forster DFM



**1652 CONVERSION UNIT**

**Halifax I L9605**

Undermanned aircraft, Crashed at Tegelen.  
KIA: Sgt K Manley  
POW: F/L S Wright, Sgt H Lowman, F/O D Cookson (NZ), Sgt R J Tavener



**CENTRAL GUNNERY SCHOOL**

**Wellington IA N2894**

Downed by Oblt E. Woltersdorf, III./NJG1, crashed 0225 at Klarenbeek.  
KIA: P/O D Johnson, W/O O Jambor (Cz), F/L H Batten, F/S J Connor, F/S J McLean  
POW: F/S G Waddington-Allwright



**EPILOGUE:** HOW SHOULD WE VIEW THE AFTERMATH OF THE FAMOUS RAID? ANDY SAUNDERS ASKS.

Was the sacrifice of Leslie Manser and scores of his colleagues worth it? And was it worth the grief endured by the families of those missing, or indeed of those killed by the bombing in Cologne?

Photographs of the city were eventually taken, showing widespread destruction. Final assessments of the results were most promising for Bomber Command. Sir Arthur Harris had certainly made his statement of intent both to the doubters at home, and, with equal importance, to his enemy across the sea. The Reich's Minister of Armaments, Albert Speer, recorded the disbelief in the results of the raid at the highest levels of the Nazi hierarchy. 'We were given a foretaste of our coming woes.' On the morning after the raid both Speer and Erhard Milch, who was overseeing the development of the Luftwaffe, were, by chance, summoned to see the commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe Hermann Goering.

'We found him in a bad humour, still not believing the reports of the Cologne bombing. Impossible, that many bombs cannot be dropped in a single night,' he snarled at his adjutant. 'Connect me with the Gauleiter of Cologne.' There followed, in our presence, a preposterous telephone conversation, 'The report from your police commissioner is a stinking lie! Apparently the Gauleiter begged to differ. I tell you as Reich Marshal that the figures cited are simply too high. How can you dare report such fantasies to the Fuehrer?' The Gauleiter at the other end of the line was

evidently insisting on his figures.

*'How are you going to count the fire bombs? Those are nothing but estimates. I tell you once more they're many times too high. All wrong! Send another report to the Fuehrer at once revising your figure. Or are you trying to imply that I am lying? I have already delivered my report to the Fuehrer with the correct figures. That stands!'*

A few days later Speer was in Adolf Hitler's presence and the 'excitement' over the Cologne raid was still evident. Speer mentioned to Hitler the conversation between Goering and the Gauleiter: '...naturally assuming that Goering's information must be more authentic than the Gauleiter's. But Hitler had already formed his own opinion. He presented Goering with the reports in the enemy newspapers on the enormous numbers of planes committed to the raid and the quantity of bombs they had dropped. These figures were even higher than those of the Cologne police commissioner. Hitler was furious with Goering's attempt to cover up, but he also considered the staff of the air force command partly responsible.'

There was also one further important consequence of the Cologne raid – the effect on the morale of the population in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Two years previously *The Daily Express* was reporting on defeat, 'Through an inferno of bombs and shells the B.E.F. is crossing the Channel from Dunkirk'. From

September 1940 to May 1941 reports of the Luftwaffe's Blitz on UK cities filled the front pages. A year later *The Daily Express* headlined 'The Vengeance Begins: The ruins of Cologne are hidden under a pall of smoke rising 15,000 feet after the first thousand bomber raid in history'. *The New York Times* led with '1,000 British bombers set Cologne on fire'. A Doctor Chave kept an extensive diary during the war and provides a suitable example of the effect at an individual level. He recorded his feelings of the news of the raid.

*'On that night of [the raid] I stood outside the house and listened to the roar of the planes passing overhead. They were like a great aerial armada flying over in the darkness. I had never heard so many before. The next day we learnt that a thousand bombers had been launched against Germany that night. This was for me a moving experience, because for the first time since the war began I felt certain that we would win. For if we could make these massive airborne attacks on the enemy in his homeland, then, no matter how long it would take, the victory must in the end be ours.'*

The Thousand Bomber raid on Cologne was truly a historic turning point in the war. Germany had no choice but to respond; and the air defence of the Reich would draw in further war resources from other theatres of action. Bomber Command was fighting back with the bomber crews putting their lives on the line, night after night, as the air war over Germany escalated. Cologne gave the advocates of air power the 'new start' they so desperately needed. ○

**BELOW:**

The memorial to RAF Bomber Command in London's Green Park.

