

**Réconciliation du journal de bord de  
Fernand Richard  
et de celui de l'Association du 427<sup>e</sup> Escadron**

Le 427<sup>e</sup> Escadron fut créé le 7 novembre 1942, et fut actif jusqu'au 31 mai 1946. C'est cette période d'activité qui retient ici notre attention. L'escadron a connu quatre 'vies', chacune pour répondre à des besoins spécifiques du CARC et du Canada. L'escadron est présentement (2017) centré à Petawawa. [On pourra trouver ici l'histoire de cet escadron](#)

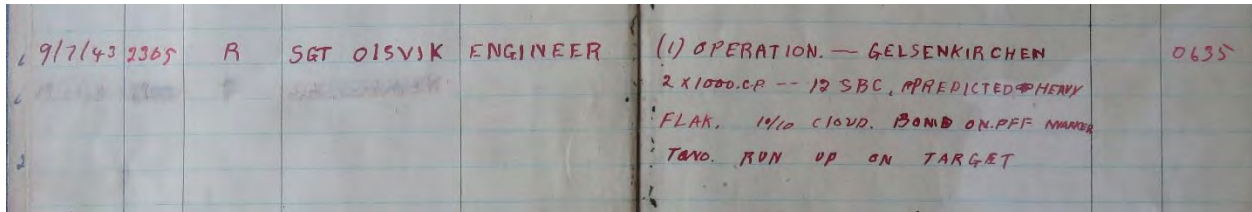
Nous avons combiné ici, dans ce document, des extraits du journal de bord de Fernand Richard et de celui de l'Association du 427<sup>e</sup> Escadron, ainsi que trois lettres de Fernand à sa famille, mentionnant les raids 23, 24 et 25.

Les pages qui suivent rassemblent uniquement des missions du 427<sup>e</sup> celles auxquelles Fernand a participé. [On pourra trouver à ce lien la totalité des missions du 427<sup>e</sup> Escadron durant la Deuxième guerre mondiale.](#) Les opérations y sont organisées par mois, de novembre 1942 à mai 1945.

Notez : Pour visiter ces liens à partir de ce document, cliquez sur le lien en tenant la clef CTRL pesée. Les liens sont également accessibles à partir du corps du site web.

Cliquer 'Page down' pour la suite

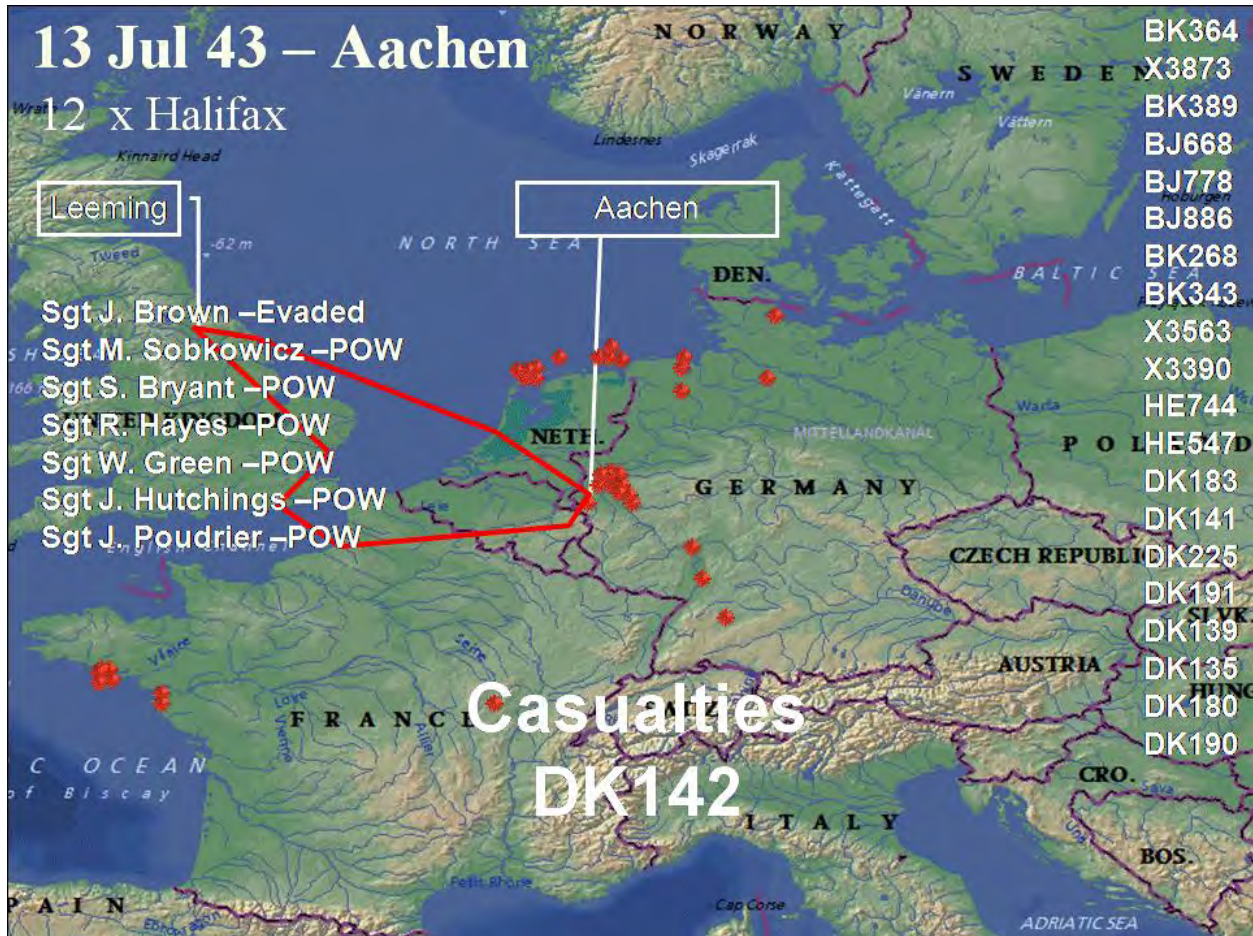
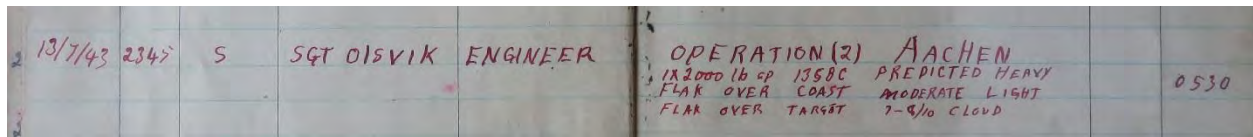
## Opération 1



9/7/43

S/Ldr Earthrowl went on leave today. 10 aircraft detailed to attack Gelsenkirchen (slide spelling Gelsenkirchen). F/Sgt Rodwell returned early owing to his bomb/airmen being ill. Otherwise the Squadron completed another Rhur raid without losses. This raid, according to all reports, but an end to the Battle of the Rhur - in which we had a very active part.

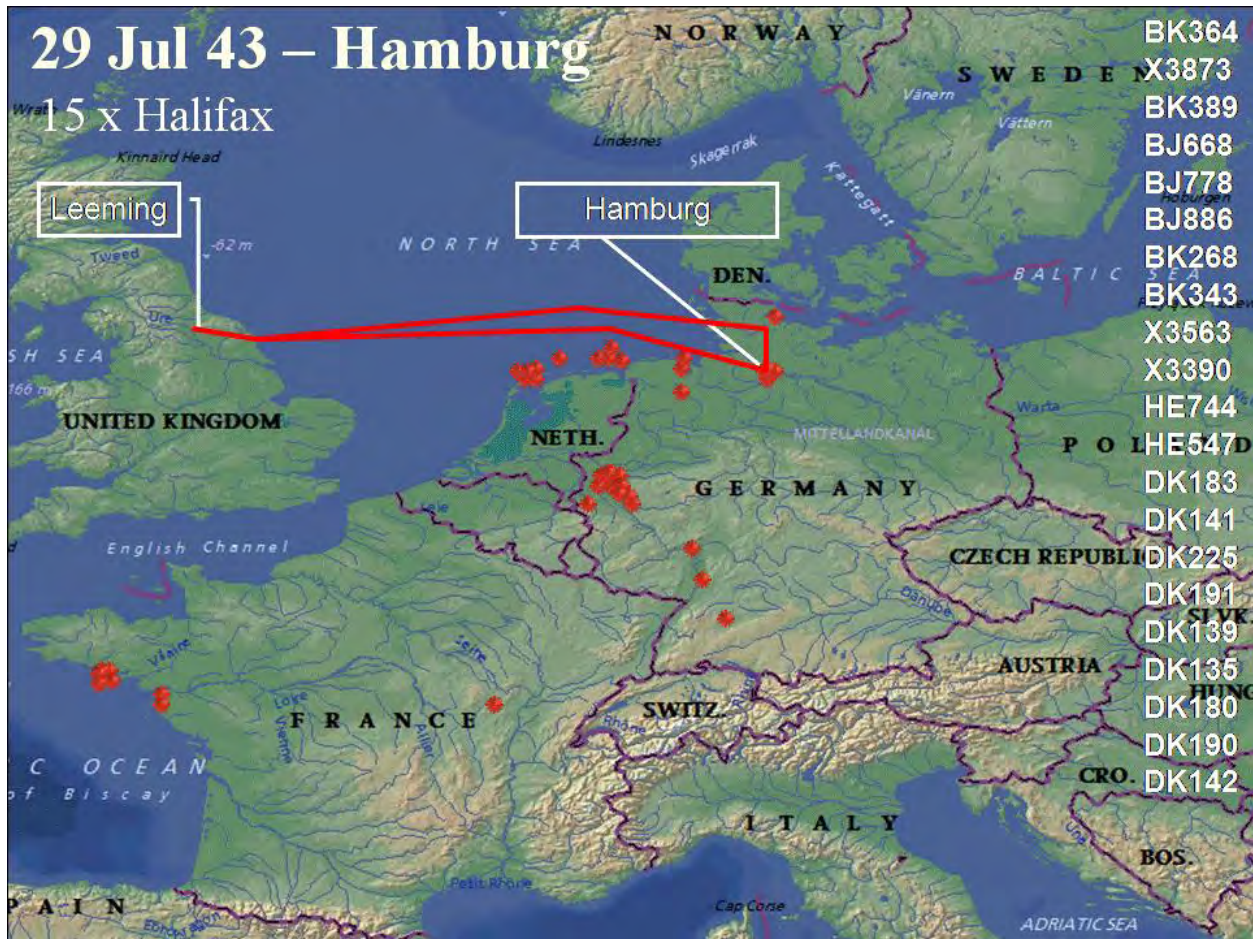
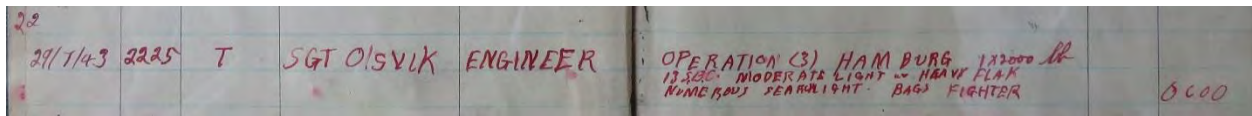
## Opération 2



13/7/43

12 aircraft detailed to attack Aachen (slide spelling Aachen). Captains were W/Cdr Burnside, F/O Arnet, F/L Norton, F/Sgt Rodwell, Sgt CorneliUS, (1st trip), Sgt Sobkovic (1st Trip) Capt Taylor, Sgt Olavik, Sgt Schmitt, P/O Williams, W/C Vandekerckhove, and F/Sgt Countess. Our only loss was Sgt Sobkovic - a new skipper. F/Sgt Rodwell returned early owing to engine trouble otherwise, it was a very good mission. Sgt Cornelius had a bad swing on take off and there were signs of relief when he straightened out and got airborne. Our old "Lion" the popular Rocky (Flare Path) Durocher, the Gunnery Leader, returned from hospital in the evening, with his foot still in plaster. He was looking very well and puts his healthy appearance down to the fact he has been on the wagon for a month. Quite a change for Rocky! F/O Soeder returned from leave, having had a quiet time, due to his foot having a "relapse".

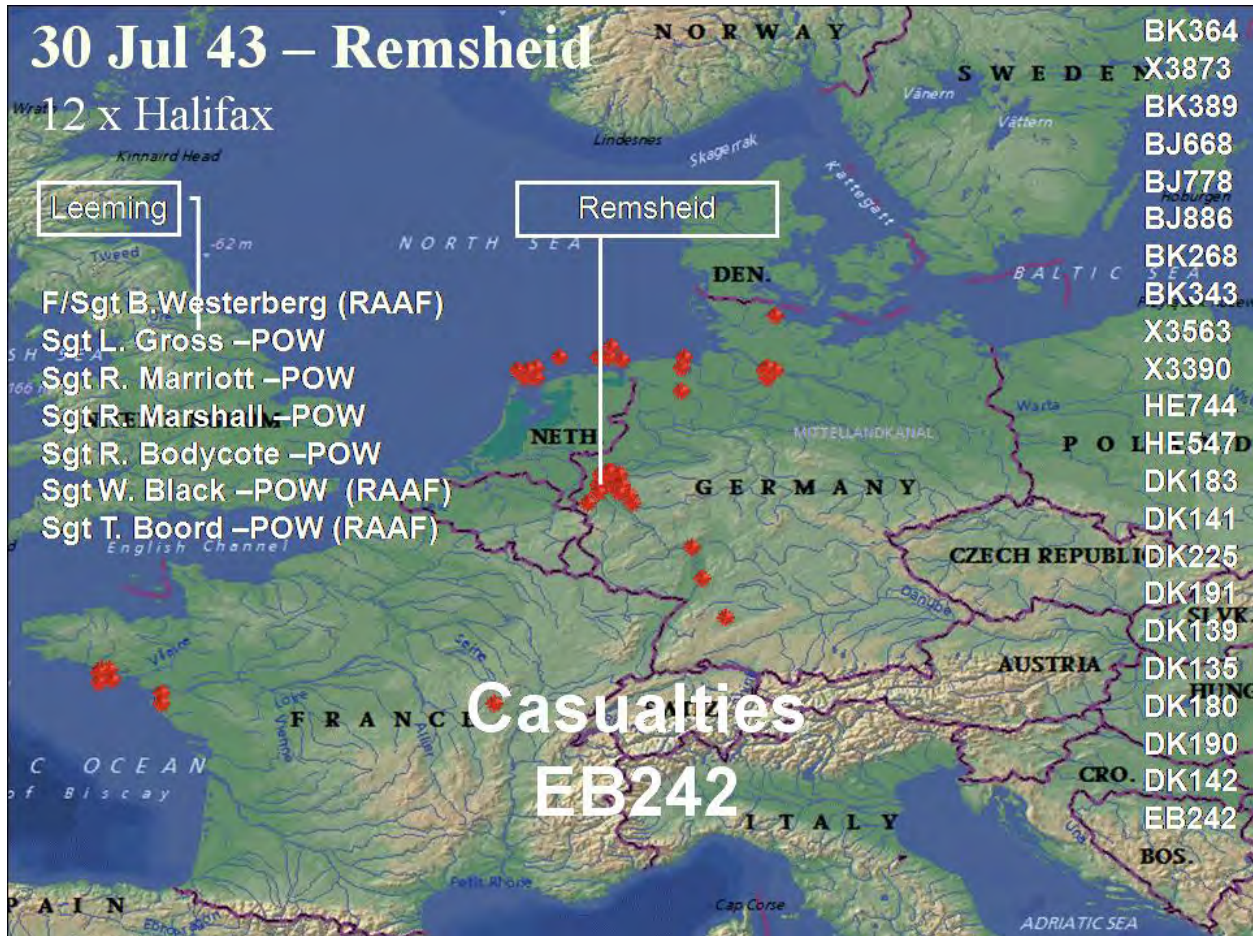
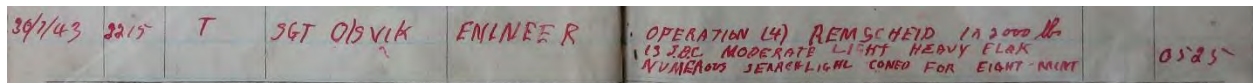
## Opération 3



**29/7/43**

Fifteen aircraft today again attacked Hamburg. This was our 3rd attack and as good as the rest. He didn't lose any kites but the boche suffered one down and one probable, after having attacked P/O Vandekerchove and crew. Sgt McLean the rear-gunner deserves credit for this feat, as Jerry's night fighter boys are generally not so dumb. On being credited with a probable, Sgt Williamson the Nav declared - "Jonz, they never give you anything in this outfit". McLean replied, - "O.K. Willie, I'll get you another one next time." There were no turn backs and everyone declared - a "gem op".

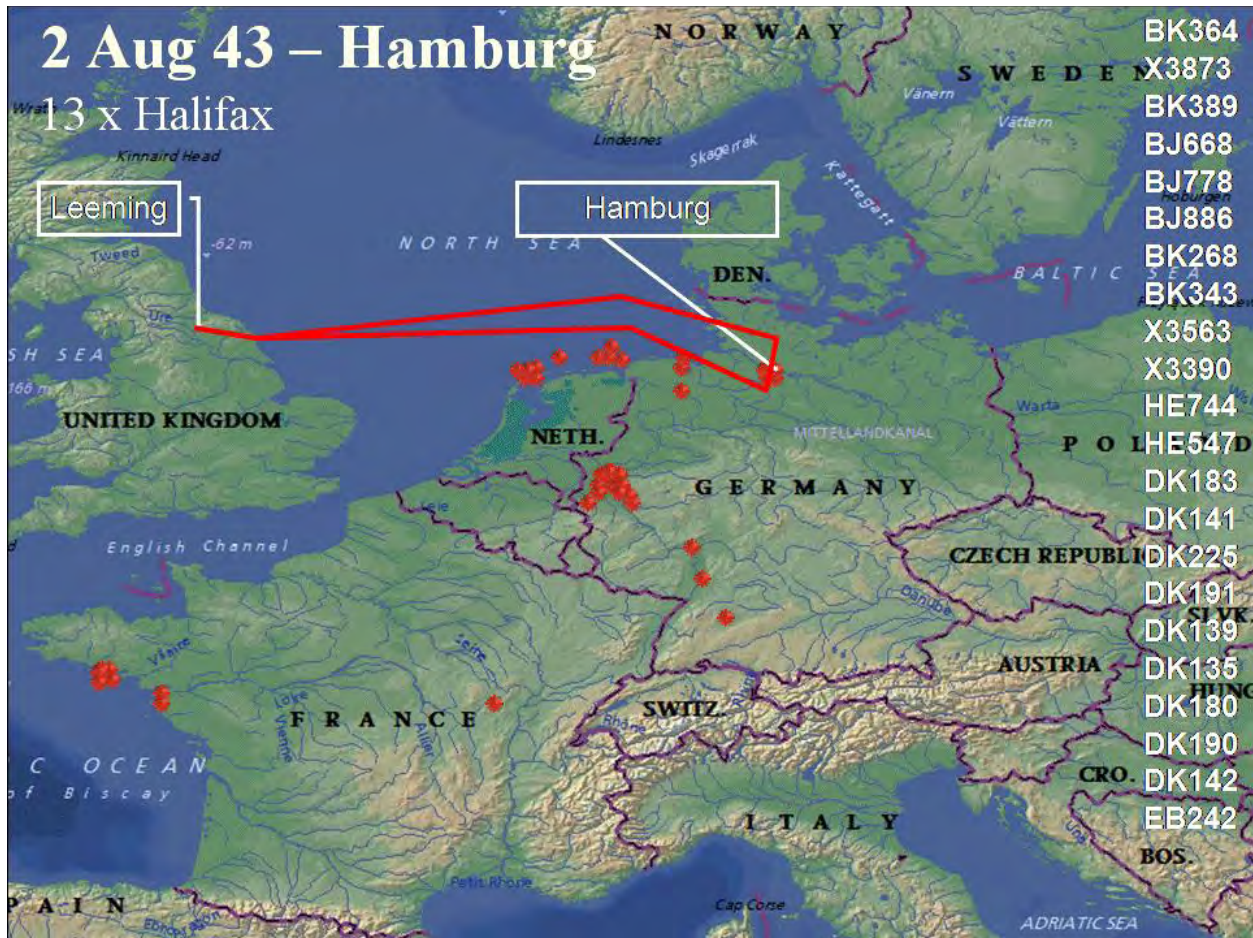
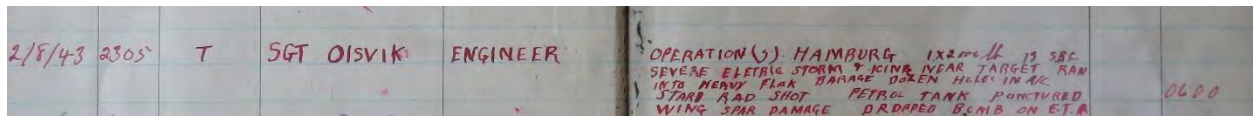
## Opération 4



30/7/43

More work again today when 12 aircraft were scheduled for operations against the Rhur. W/Cmdr Burnside again let the attack which was a two target affair. Later reduced to one. Also taking part were F/L Morton, P/O Arnott, Sgt Nesfurber, Sgt Cornelius p/Sgt Champion, Sgt Welch, F/S Biggs, Sgt Clevik, F/L Crew, Cpl Taylor and Sgt Walton. Sgt Cornelius non-starter. Our first loss for quite a while occurred tonight when Sgt Westerberg - an Australian(ed.Australian) Pilot and his Crew - failed to return. It was their first trip. F/Lt Izzard, the popular Signal's(sic) Leader and organizer of our Squadron party, which we hope to hold shortly, left for London on the scrounge for dresses and "Shekels" to put on a show worthy of the Lions.

## Opération 5

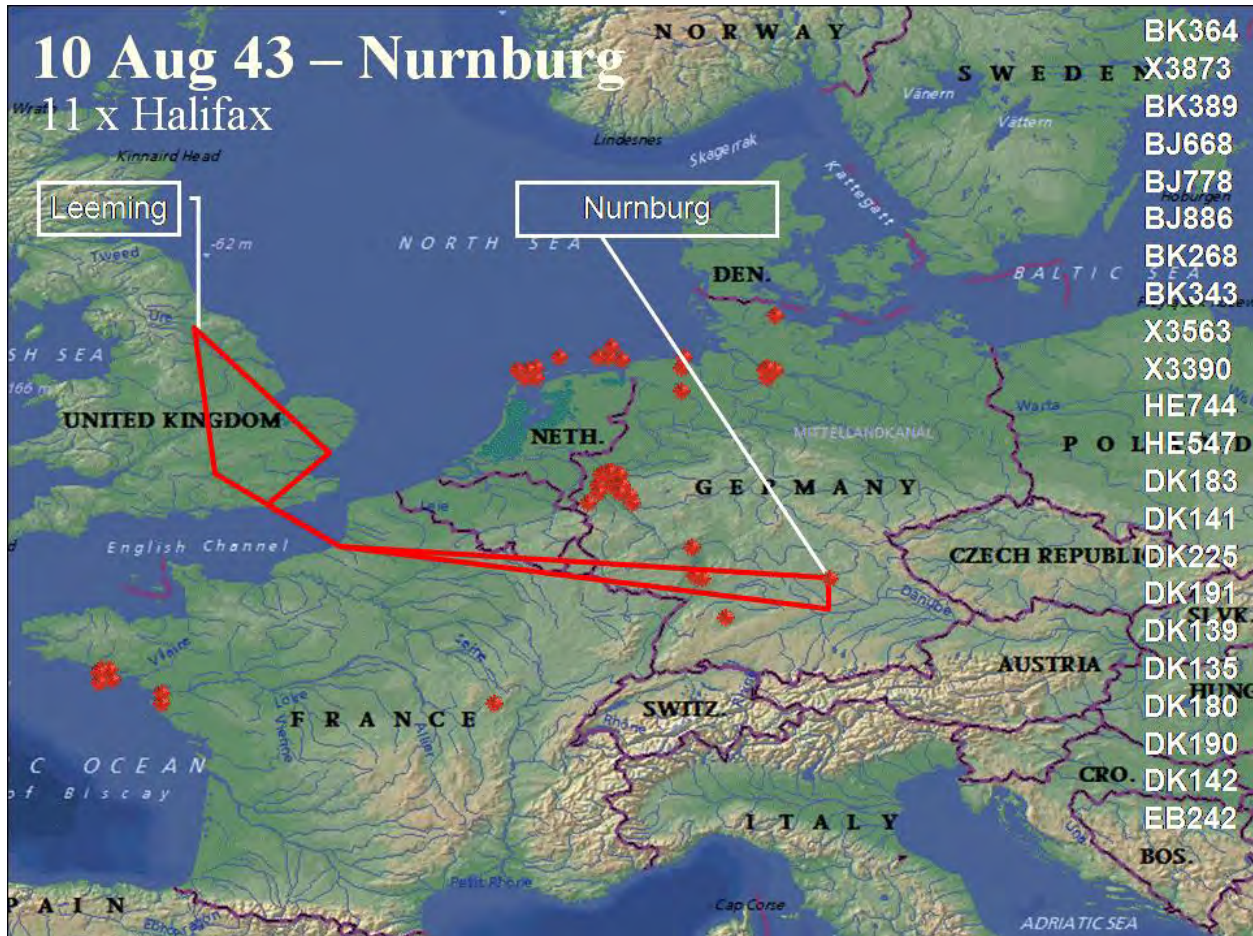


2/8/43

Once again the squadron was a hive of activity and again the target was Hamburg. Thirteen aircraft were detailed for this attack which according to the crews was a definite "prang" but not on the actual spot they were meant to prang. Reason for this was bad weather. P/O Vandekerchove and his crew had a "shaky do" and credit should go to Van for the way he handled his machine. The constant speed unit on his starboard outer went u/s and on top of that he had heavy icing. Owing to the drag on the starboard side the machine became very hard to control and the machine came down to 4,000 ft over the Kiel canal. After having a conference, the crew without any exception decided to stay with the ship and try and get her home, which after a hard struggle they did. Clouds reaching to 20,000 ft made flying very hazardous but none of our aircraft were missing. There were four boomerangs - F/Lt Tubman, Sgt Holton, F/Sgt Champion, and Sgt Holland owing to wing trouble.

## Opération 6

10/8/43 2135 T SGT OLSVIK ENGINEER OPERATION (C) NURNBERG (X100) 16 MSRC  
1 OVER LOAD TANK MODERATE FLAK DIVERTED  
ON RETURN 0900



10/8/43

Once again ops were on and this time we mustered 11 a/c. Tonight's attack was on Nurnburg, one of the longest trips we have done. All our a/c returned back to the country okay. P/O Williams being the only skipper to bring his kite home to base. This has no reflection on the other boys as they received a definite diversion.





# Early return

17/8/43 2140 T SGT OLSVIK ENGINEER EARLY RETURN FROM OPERATION ON PEEHEMUNDA 0305

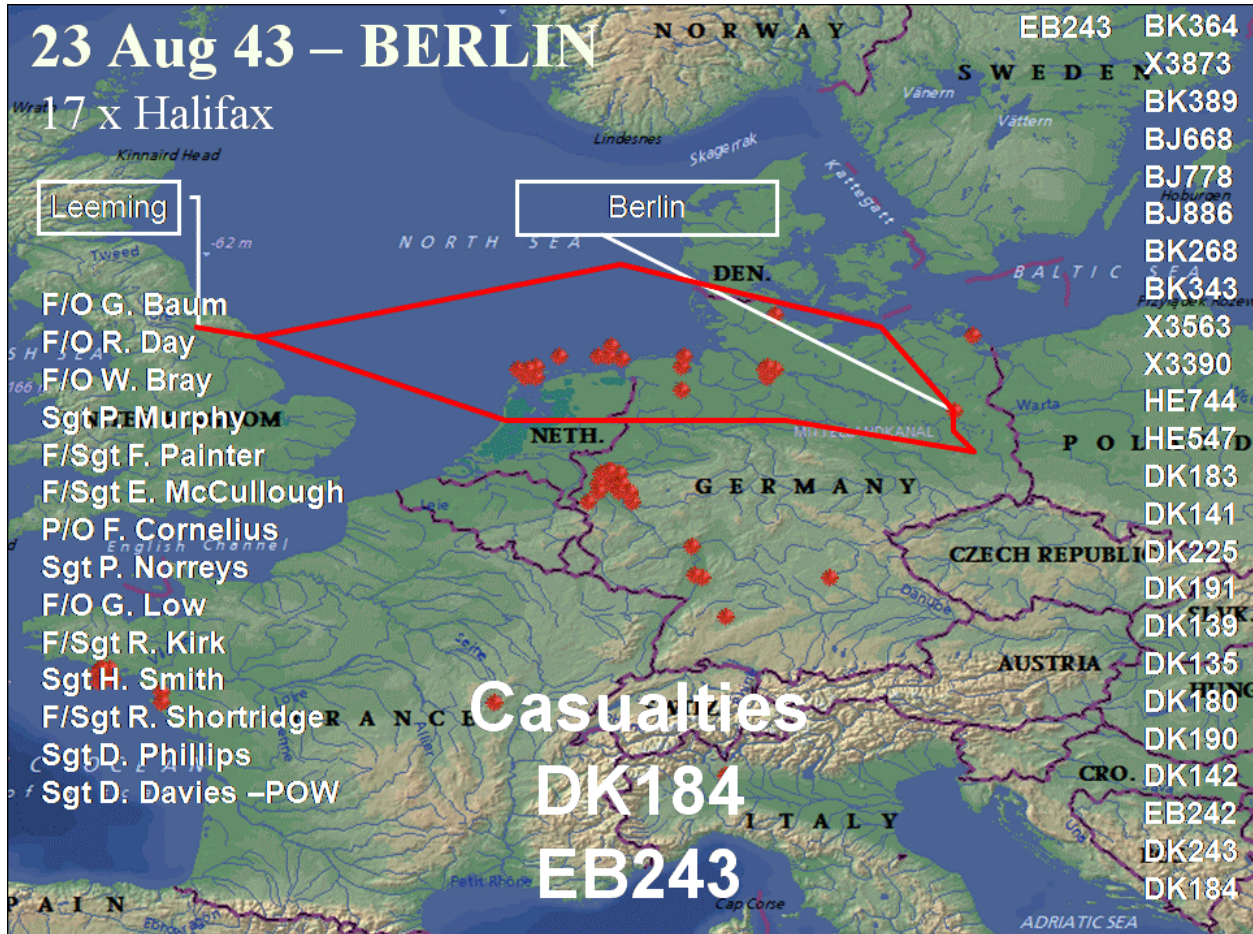
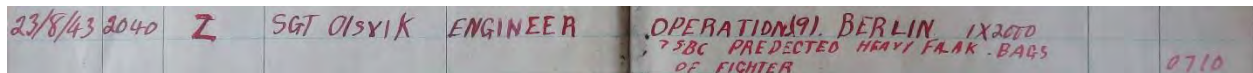


17/8/43

After a spell of resting, crews were glad to hear that familiar call - "ops on". Thirteen were detailed to attack the radio experimental station at Peenemunde, a small village on the Baltic coast. We suffered one loss - Sgt Brady - a new skipper. Air Marshal Harris, C.-in-C. Bomber Command, congratulated us on this "prang" and according to all reports our particular wave did the most damage to the lot. This trip saw the end of a tour for Sgt Schmitt and his crew - the first original crew to be screened on this squadron. The rest of our aircraft returned safely, after some of them having tussles with night fighters. Sgt Schmitts parting gift was a Fock Wolfe 190 which was shot down by his rear-gunner, Sgt. Stubby McNamara.



## Opération 9

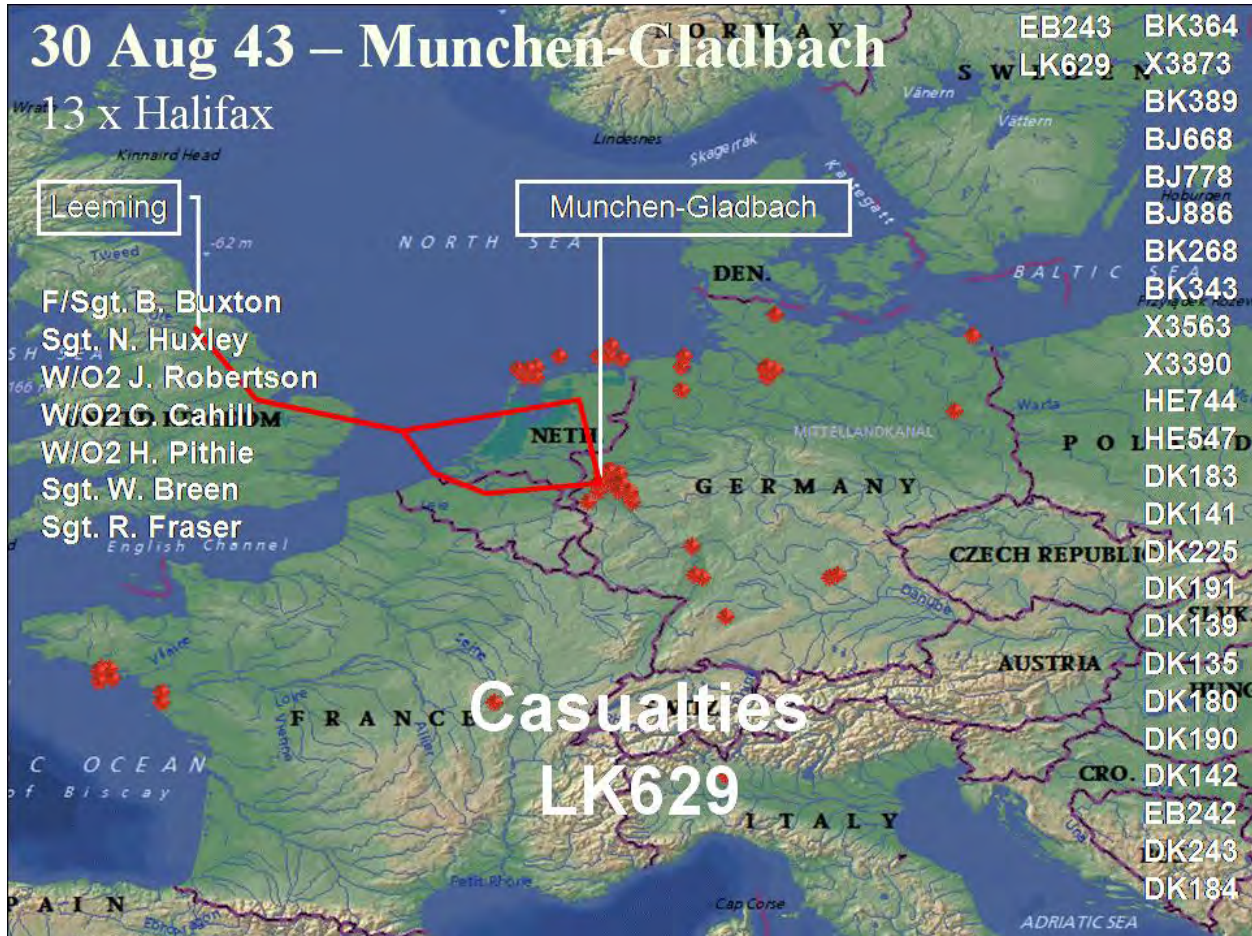


23/8/43

Seventeen aircraft set off for a raid on Berlin. To reimburse the dwindling numbers of serviceable aircraft, three kites were borrowed for the occasion from N0 429, presently non-operational, manned by Lions. F/S Champion and P/O Hilton were not destined to share in the glory of this attack, and were forced to abandon their task, due to the conking of port outer engine and the unserviceability of the rear turret guns, respectively. Unfortunately, two of our crews failed to return - F/O Baum and Sgt Cornelius - and although the powers "up high" were satisfied with the devastation left behind by our aircraft - the loss of these two up and coming crews, was a bad blow to the Lions. Apparently the boys are encountering terrific opposition from night-fighters these days and that Jerry is finally pulling his aircraft out of the ice-box. This is no doubt an indication, that this type of defence will be encountered in future, and to expect heavy losses.

## Opération 10

30/8/43, 2355 H SGT HOLLAND ENGINEER OPERATION(10) MUNCHEN GLADBACH 0530  
 SLIGH HEAVY FIAR BAG NIGHT FIGHTER



30/8/43

Fourteen aircraft were detailed for a raid on Munchen-Gladbach. F/L Horton and crew were non-starters. Sgt Doegan abandoned his task when his rear gunner reported that all guns in the turret were u/s, and the navigator proved that he could not operate with only a flashlight for a guide, when the light in his compartment went u/s. Sgt Wolton returned early also, after his inter-com became unserviceable. The remaining aircraft reached the target area, and thoroughly pranged "unpronounceable" leaving fires which were visible for over 100 miles on the outward journey. Unfortunately, Sgt Buxton's Halifax failed to return from this operation.

# Early return

31/8/43 2044 L SGT HOLLAND ENGINEER EARLY RETURN FROM OPERATION ON BERLIN 0305

**31 Aug 43 – Berlin**

12 x Halifax

Leeming

Berlin

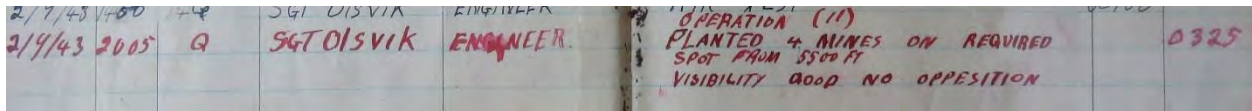
**Casualties**  
**EB251**

419 Squadron Crew	EB243	BK364
F/O R. Stewart	LK629	X3873
F/Sgt D. Garland	EB251	BK389
F/Sgt V. Cleveland		BJ668
Sgt A. Embley - POW		BJ778
Sgt L. Northcliffe - POW		BJ886
Sgt H. Tenny - POW		BK268
P/O S. James - POW		BK343
427 Squadron Crew		X3563
P/O G.P.C. Vandekerckhove		X3390
F/Sgt C. Grofton		HE744
Sgt E. Bartlett		HE547
P/O A. Young		DK183
F/Sgt J.A. Albert		DK141
W/O 2 J. McLean		DK225
Sgt W. Williamson - POW		DK191
Sgt A. Rothwell - POW		DK139
		DK135
		DK180
		DK190
		DK142
		EB242
		DK243
		DK184

Twelve aircraft were detailed for raid on Berlin. Sgt Welch returned early due to rear turret unserviceability, and Sgt Holland abandoned task due to inability of WOP /AG to receive oxygen. The remaining aircraft proceeded to the target and although reports would indicate that this raid was not nearly as concentrated as the last on this target, Berlin was still left a mass of burning fires. A bad blow to the Squadron was the loss of P/O Vandekerckhove who failed to return from this operation. (However note that in the first crew originally named below there is no Vandekerckhove. For some reason the first named crew is a 419 Squadron crew and are nowhere mentioned as 427 members. The 427 crew casualties were found at the [Canadian Virtual War Memorial](#). Rather than try and erase the 419 crew names the correct 427 crew names were added). He was one of the best liked members of this squadron, both with officers and men alike. His light-heartedness and cheerful personality was an inspiration to everyone. Only recently did he receive the D.F.C. for "at all times displaying fine airmanship and determination of the very highest order". Had Van been able to complete this sortie, he would have completed his first tour of operations.

Sgt Holland remplaçait Olsvik pour cette mission.

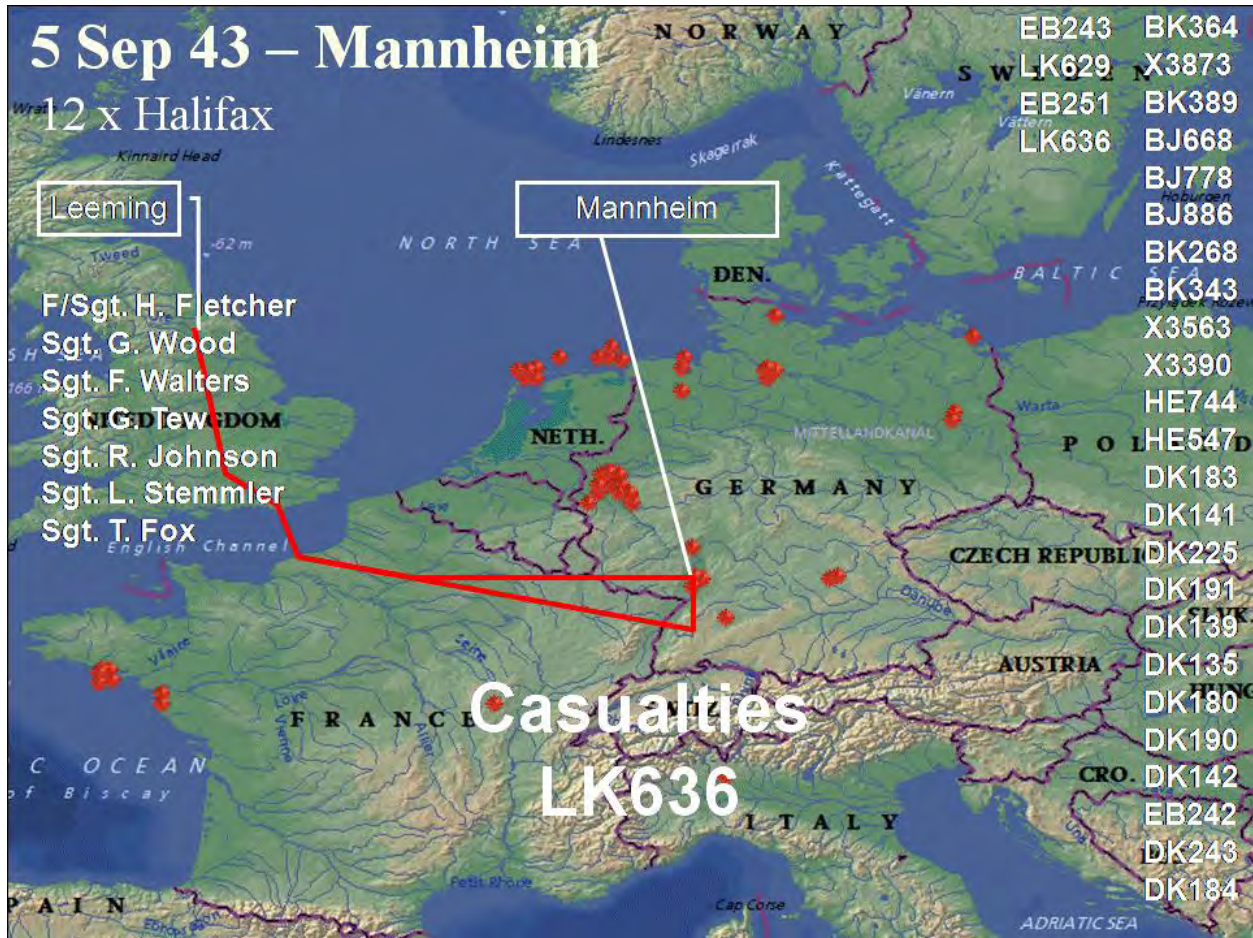
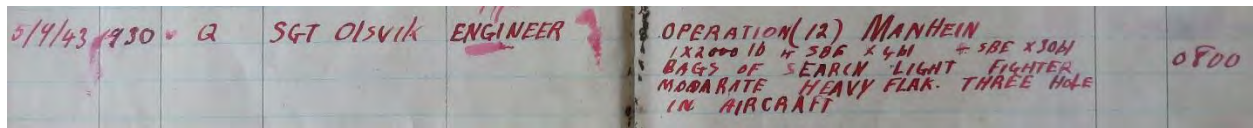
## Opération 11



**2/9/43**

A good response was made by Squadron Personnel to the appeal for blood donors made by the blood transfusion team re-visiting Leeming. Six aircraft detailed for MINELAYING Operations. Two aircraft returned early due to U/S Goons. The funerals were carried out for Sergeant Henry, Cpls Holt, Keighan and AC1 Davies, killed in a flying accident at SEDBURGH Westmorland. Internment being made at Holwood cemetery, Harrogate at 1400 hours. Large party of Bearers and personnel from the Squadron attended. Cpt C.A. Taylor and P/O E. Williams and their respective crews were screened from operations upon completion of their first tour. More postings of Groundcrew to the Tactical Air Force effected.

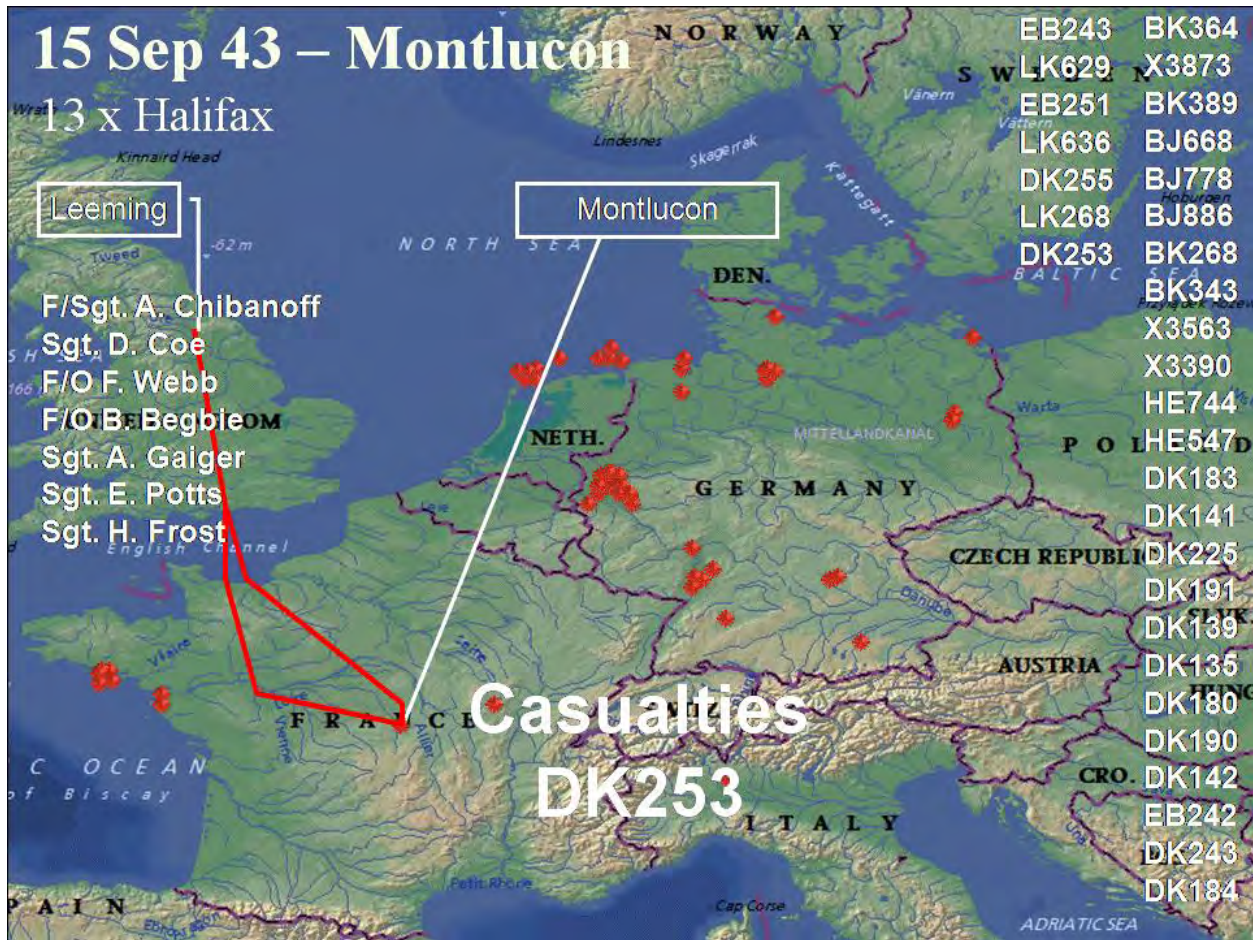
## Opération 12



Squadron parade was held and the Adjutant F/Lt Chasenoff presented gifts of a silver plate, a wrist watch and a traveling bag to Wing Commander and Mrs. Burnside as a farewell token of the esteem in which Wing Commander Burnside was held by the Squadron.

These gifts were paid for by the voluntary subscription by all members of the Squadron. Two new crews captained by Sgts Darlow and Dressler reported to the Squadron. Twelve aircraft were detailed for operations against MANHEIM. All the aircraft successfully took off but F/S Caldwell returned early due to engine trouble. Ten of the remaining eleven successfully bombed the target and nine returned to base. F/Lt Laird landed at Boscombe Down with one engine badly shot up. Crews reported numerous fighters and a good prang. F/S Fletcher is missing from this operation. Wing Commander Burnside departed on his posting to Bomber Command Headquarters.

## Opération 13

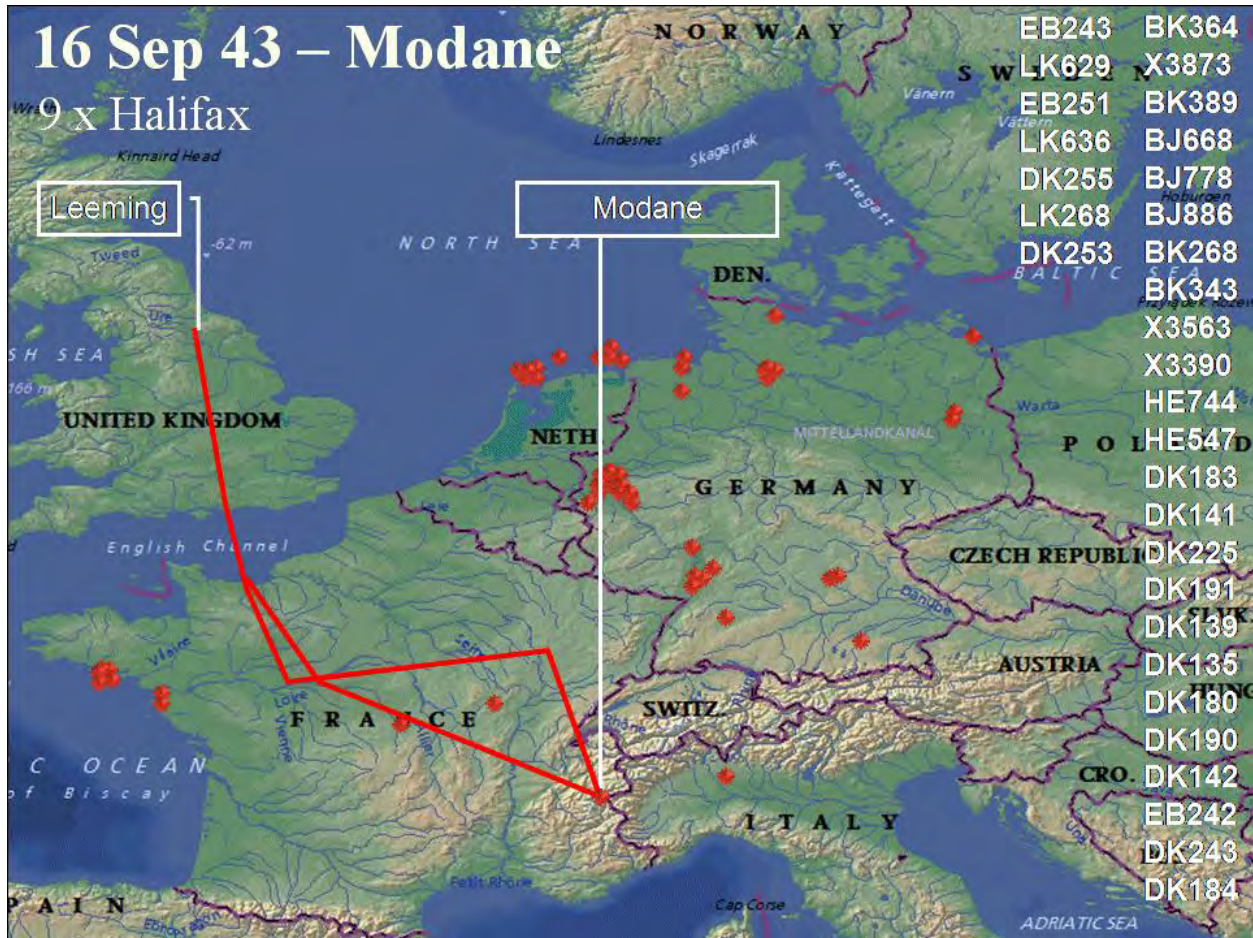
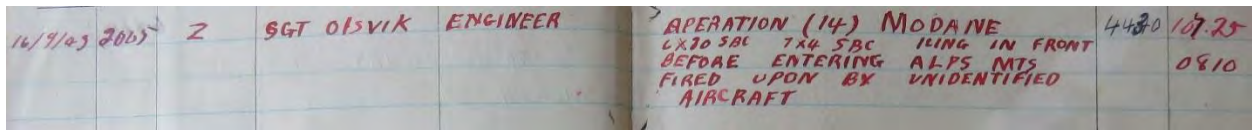


15/9/43

Our aircraft that landed in North Africa returned to camp. The members of the crew brought back some fresh fruit which were distributed to all Squadron personnel. Thirteen aircraft were detailed for operations against the rubber factory at MONTLUCON. Three of the aircraft returned early due to various troubles and the other ten aircraft successfully bombed the target. Sgt Chabinoff and crew crashed at West Drayton on the way home and all the personnel were killed. The remaining aircraft all landed successfully at base.



## Opération 14

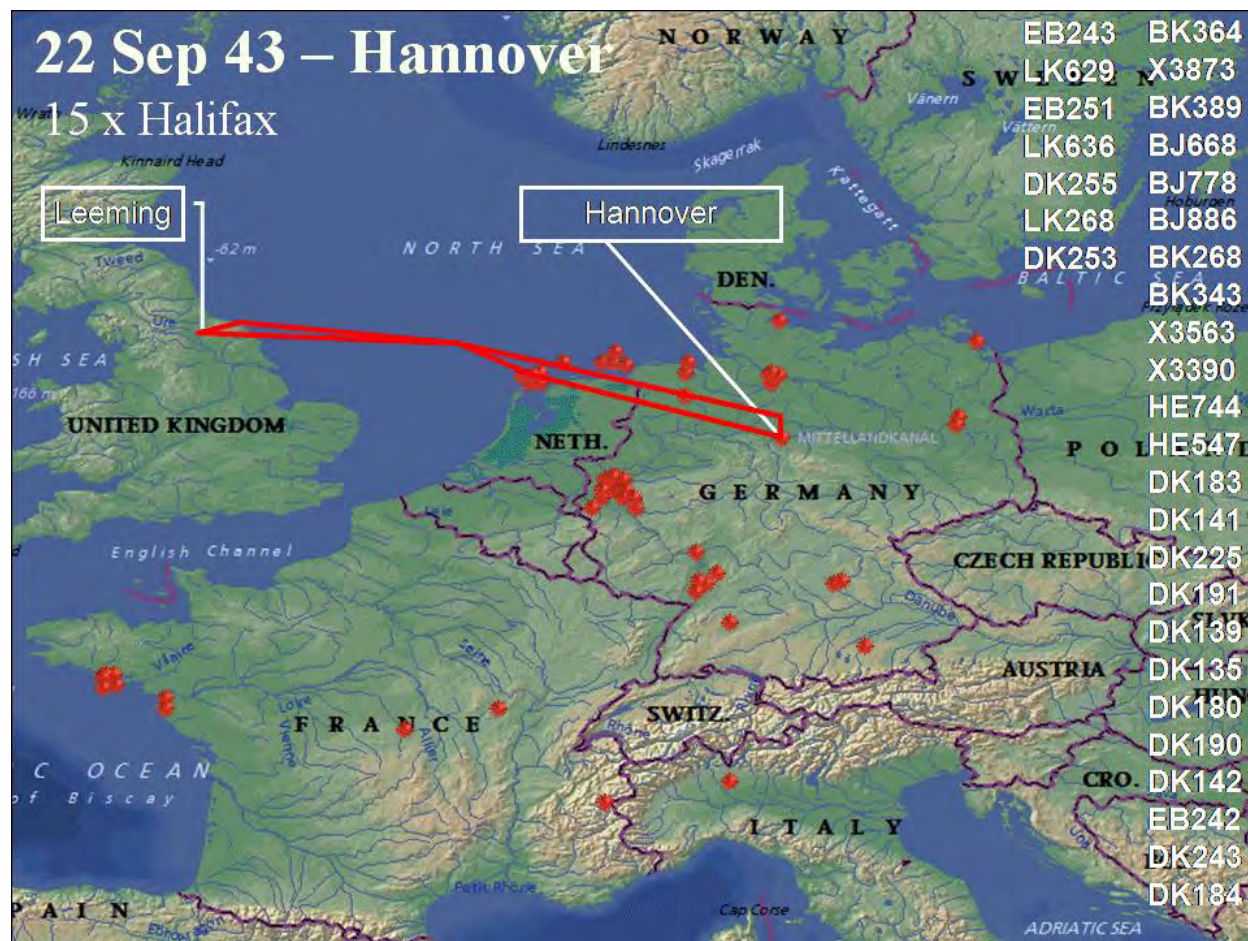


16/9/43

Nine aircraft were detailed for operations against MODANE (Italy) One aircraft returned early. The other eight aircraft successfully bombed the target and all landed at Bassingbourne due to adverse weather conditions at Base with exception of one which landed at Coningsby.

# Early return

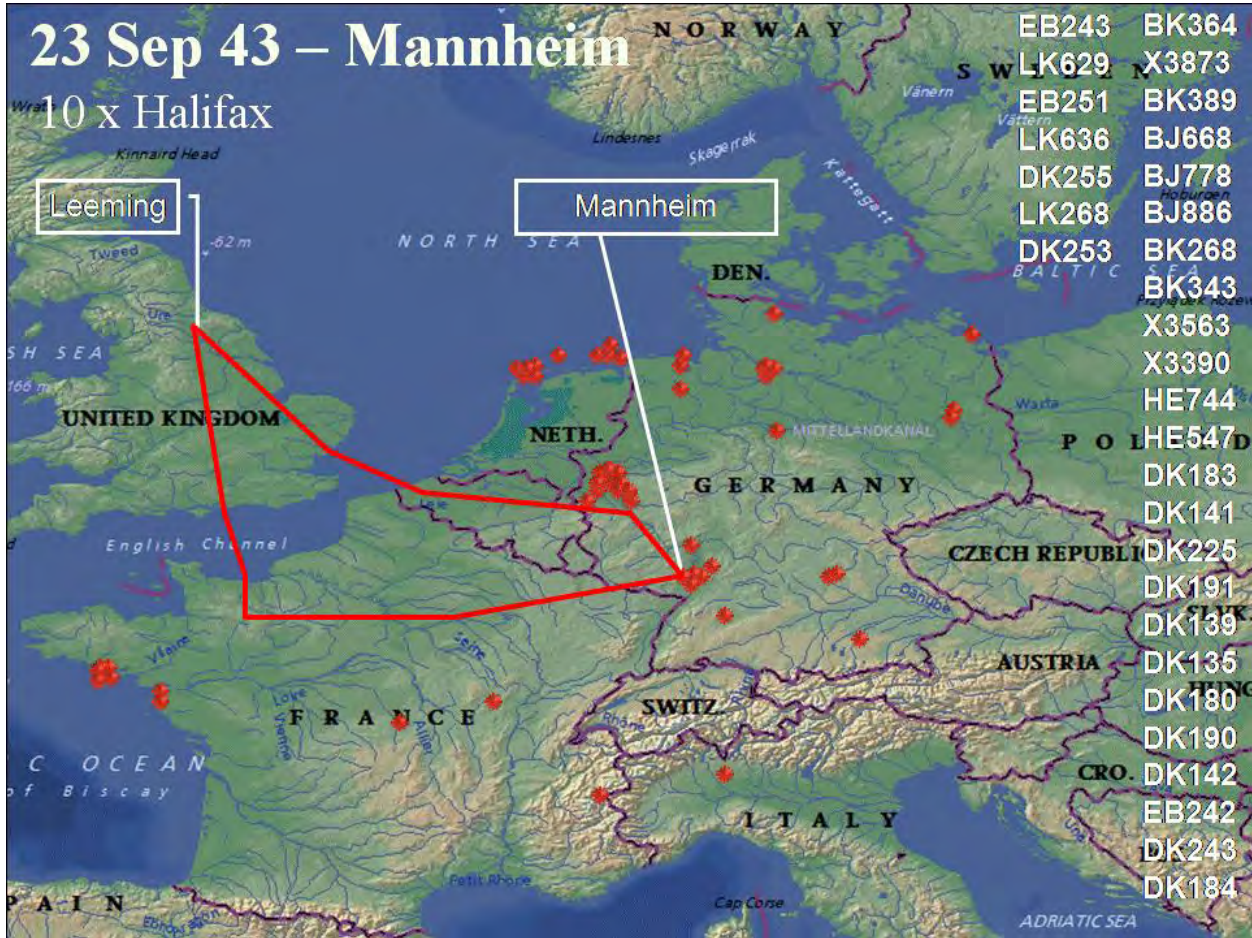
22/9/43 O SGT OISVIK ENGINEER EARLY RETURN ON HANNOVER 0335



No Squadron diary entry

# Opération 15

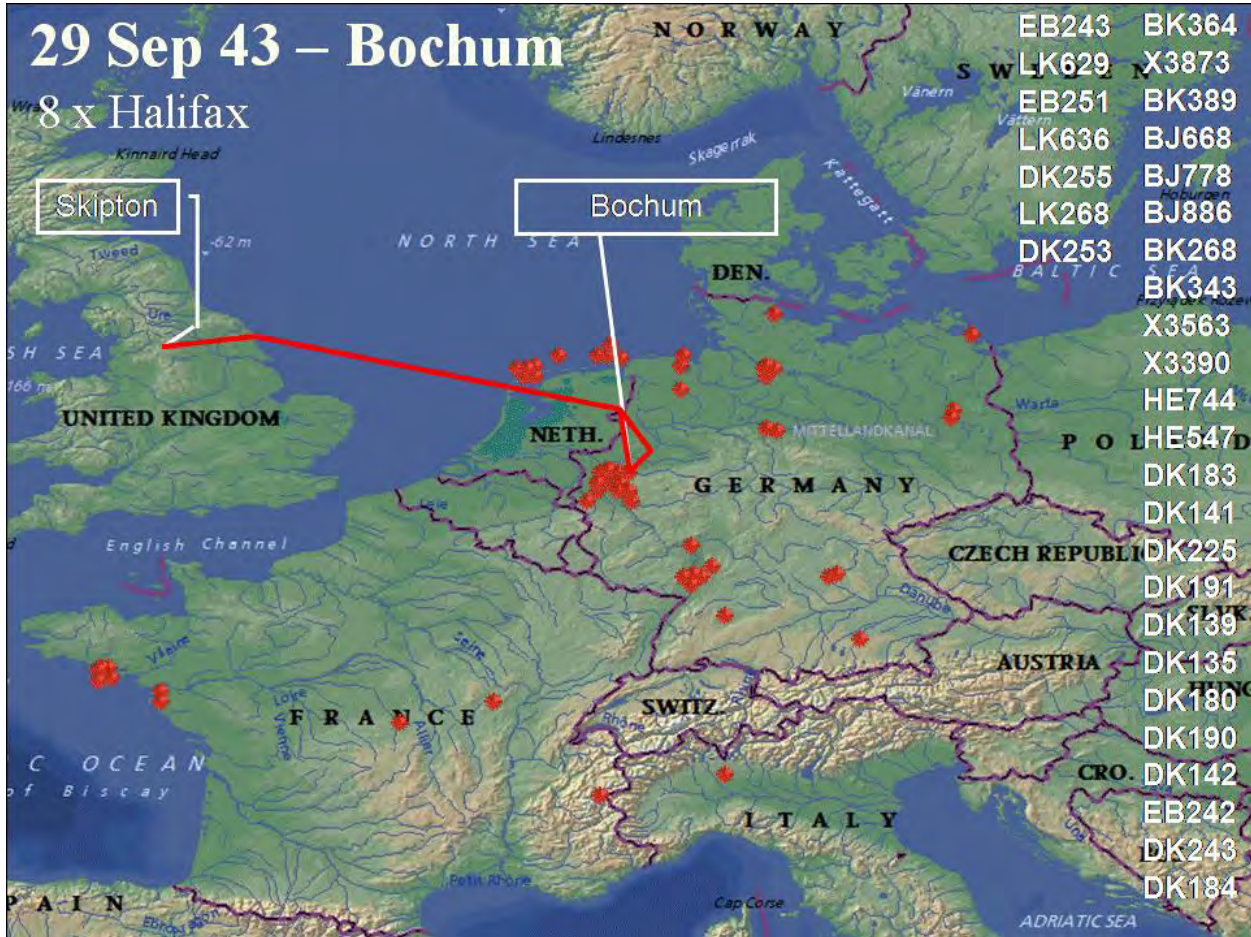
23/9/43 T P/O OLSVIK ENGINEER OPERATION (17) MANNHEIM 4 SBC 301B 1A 2.000 1b 4.5BC X41b 0735  
 BAG OF SEARCH LIGHT AND FIGHTER MODARATE HEAVY FLAK



No Squadron diary entry

# Opération 16

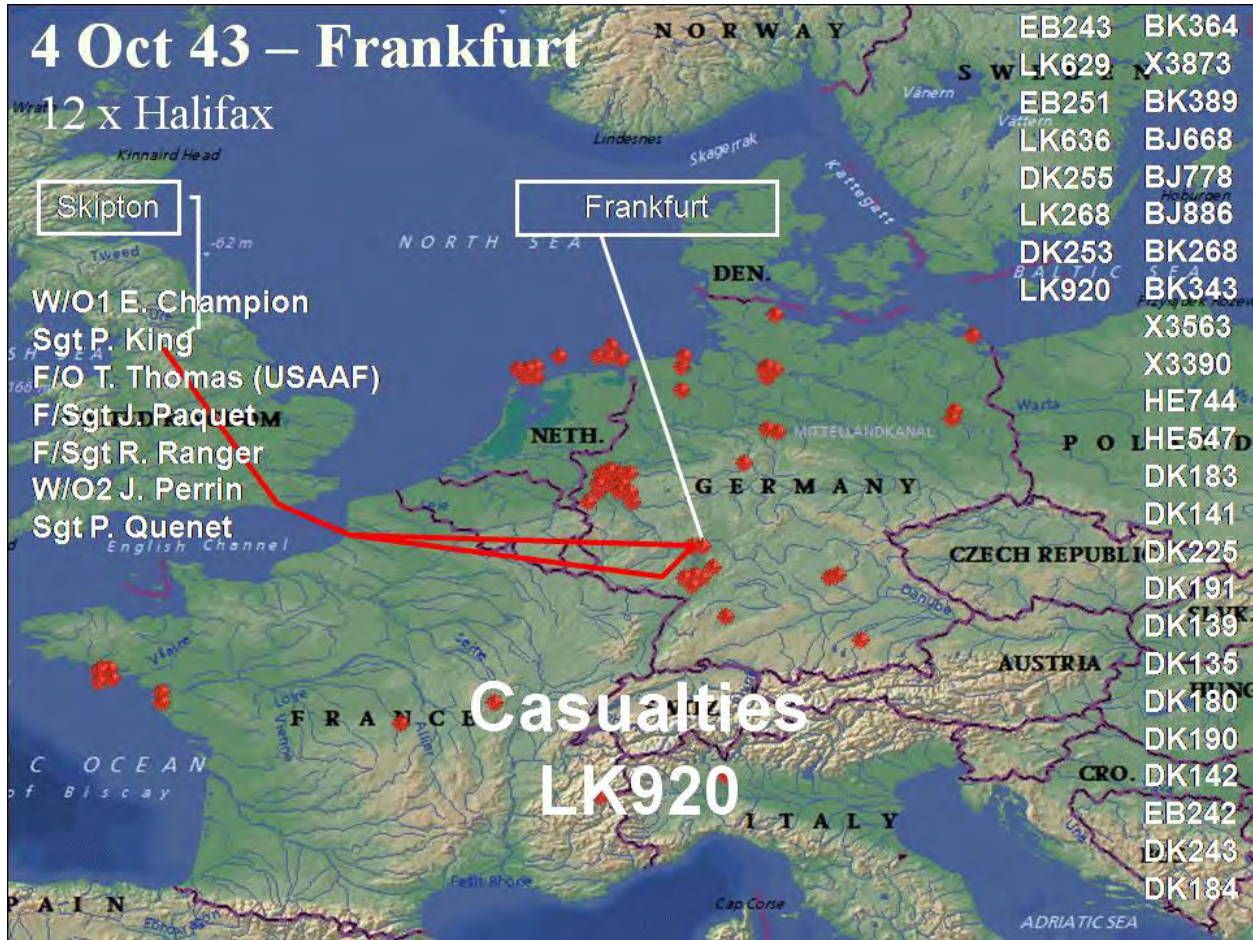
29/9/43 T P/O OLSVIK ENGINEER OPERATION (16) BOCHUM BAGS OF SEARCH LIGHT MODERATE HEAVY FEAR 0530



No Squadron diary entry

## Opération 17

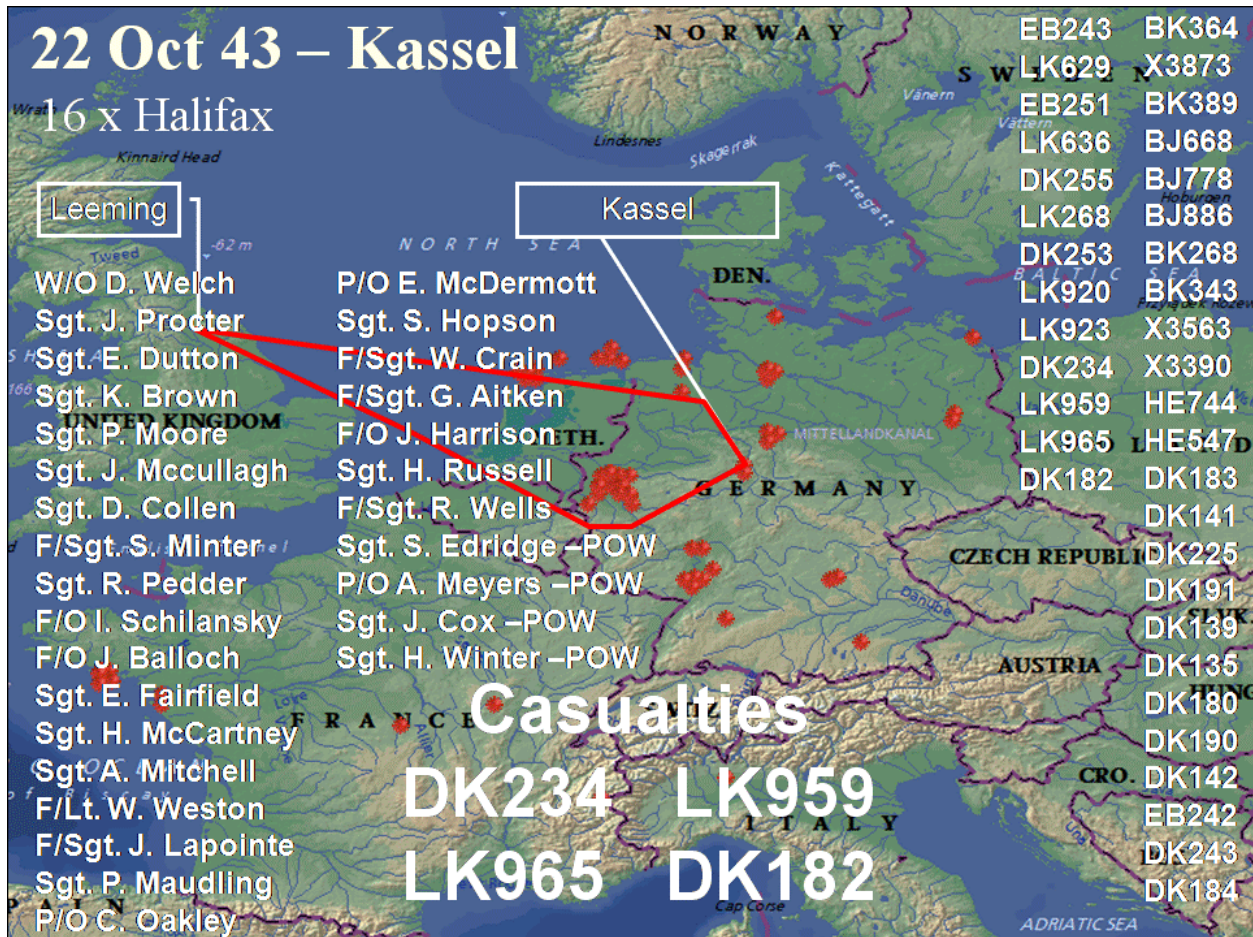
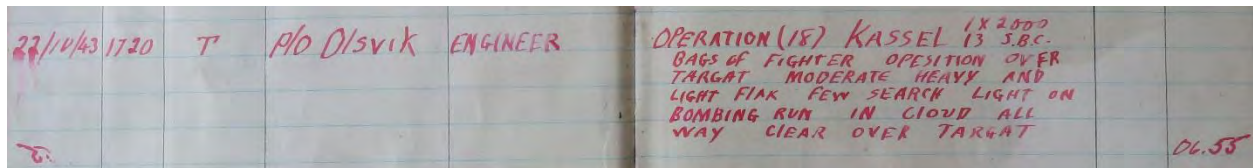
4/10/43	1805	T	P/O OISVIK	ENGINEER	OPERATION (17) FRANKFURT. 13 SBC SLIGHT TO MODERATE HEAVY FLAK FEW FIGHTER SEEN NUMEROUS SEARCH LIGHT	.8 05-
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## 4/10/43

Twelve aircraft were detailed for operations against Frankfurt. It was only the full cooperation of all the ground crew personnel that enabled the 12 kites to become airborne, and for this effort the ground crews were highly commended by the Winco. Eleven aircraft successfully bombed the target and upon returning to England six of that number, were diverted to various bases in the south. No news has been received of a missing aircraft "J for Johnny", and as a result W/O Champion and crew have been listed as missing. F/Lt Izzard departed to attend a Signals Conference at R.A.F. Moreton-in-the-Marsh.

## Opération 18 ...



22/10/43

Sixteen aircraft were detailed for operations against Kassel and as many became airborne at an extremely early hour. "R" returned early due to an oxygen failure in the mid-upper turret as a result of which the M/U gunner passed out. "V" abandoned task after three generators in engines had become unserviceable. "Q" returned early due to an oil pressure drop. "Y"'s port outer constant speed unit became unserviceable and as a result pilot decided to abandon task. "K" crossed the enemy coast off track due to l/Oth heavy cloud up to 20,000 feet which reduced visibility to nil. Soon after crossing the coast enemy defences consisting of accurate intense heavy flak opened up and holed "Kitty" fourteen times. Violent evasive tactics ensued, comprised of corkscrews, dives and turnings off course, until pilot succeeded in evading the defences. This action delayed "K" for approximately 20 minutes and since Navigator was unable

## ... Opération 18

to establish position, pilot decided to return to base after safely jettisoning bomb load somewhere over Rhur. "H" soon after crossing enemy coast encountered enemy ack-ack-intense heavy flak - which vibrated the aircraft into a spiral dive and only after the loss of 7,000 feet was the pilot able to pull the aircraft under control at 12,000 feet. In this engagement about 30 minutes were lost and since pilot would not have been able to reach the target with the main force, he returned to base early. "E" piloted by HO D.H. Welch, RAF, returning to base early for some unknown reason, crashed near Marston Moor, Yorks, all the crew being instantly killed. The young pilot, a reserved, unassuming capable pilot had only a week previously becoming a bridegroom.

Three crews failed to return from this operation - "B" piloted by F/L Weston, whose Navigator F/O Oakley had also become a bridegroom only a fortnight previously, "L" piloted by F/O Harrison and "Z" piloted by F/Sgt Minter.

Of the remaining aircraft which reached the target "U" piloted by P/O Cozens, was attacked by enemy aircraft three different times on the homeward journey and although there was an exchange of gunfire in each instance, the Halifax escaped unscratched and pilot succeeded in bringing it back to base.

S/L C .H. Earthrowl, "A" Flight Commander, flying aircraft "B" - "Beer" completed his 20th trip and also his 2nd tour of operations. In his last trip this evening, he carried a second pilot in the person of the Station Commander Group Capt. Plant, who appeared very much impressed by the sortie. The screening of Earthrowl on top of the aforementioned casualties comes as a bad blow to the Squadron, as he was an all inspiring leader and one of the best liked Senior Officers of the Station and who it is safe to say ranks as one of the most efficient and capable pilots in Bomber Command.

Weather - fair to cloudy, with slight mist and slight showers.

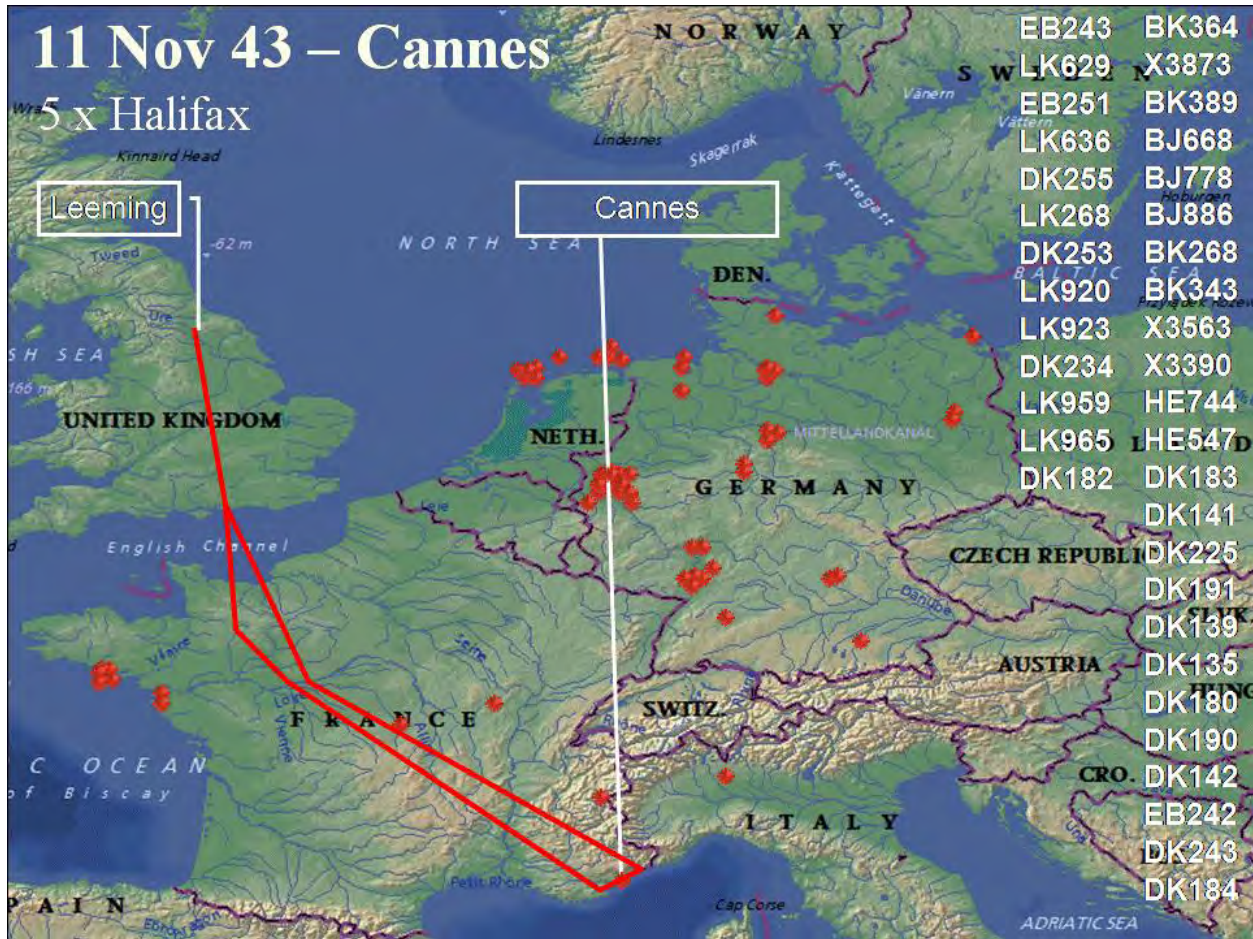
## Correction

Ed. note: I received the following email from Mr. Harry Winter. The night of 22/23 October was a bad night for Bomber Command. 569 aircraft took part in the raid on Kassel. 43 went missing which included 12 aircraft from 6th Group. Thanks to Mr. Winter for this correction.

Hello 427, I was reading the 427 Association war log October 1943. It is stated that four aircraft failed to return including aircraft "L" Love piloted by F/O Harrison. To be correct "L" Love would not start at 17.20 so we were transferred to "G" George LK633. We were shot down on our return over Ludge, SSW of Hamelin at 21.15 by an ME110. Monica (Tail Warning radar for Bombers) was U/S throughout the flight and the oxygen supply was faulty.

Best wishes, H.T. Winter, W/Op.

## Opération 19

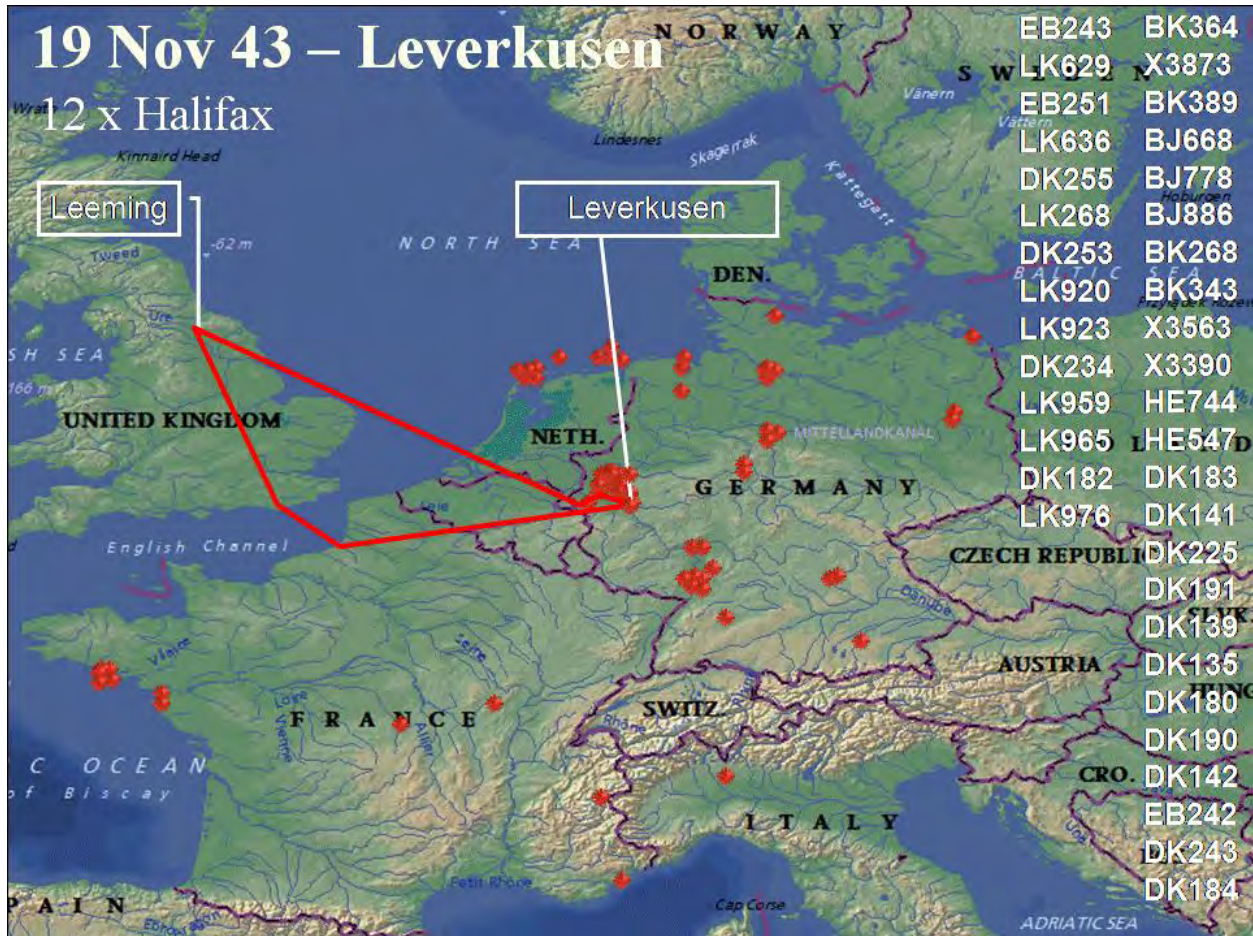
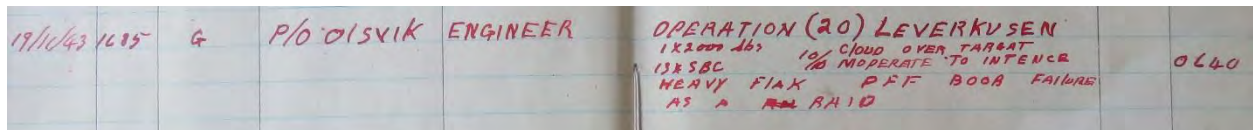


Specialist raid in full moon was scheduled for the longest target the Lions have as yet undertaken, the marshaling yards at Cannes in Southern France. Five aircraft were detailed, all old timers of the Squadron with plenty of experience behind them, and which also included the Squadron Commander. All aircraft reached the target to find it cloudless, with only a few haze patches to mar the clear visibility. They released their loads on the red T.I.'s by both visual pinpointing, and the use of the bomb sights, and although rather early on the target, they found several fires already taking a firm hold in the vicinity of the P.F.F.T.I. markers. The enemy opposition was negligible, and consisted of 2-3 heavy flak guns firing spasmodically and inaccurately. P/O Olsvik and F/Lt Arnot, obtained very fine aiming point photos. The raid is believed to be a very successful one.

Weather: Cloudy with mist and drizzle early morning and late evening: fair otherwise.



## Opération 20

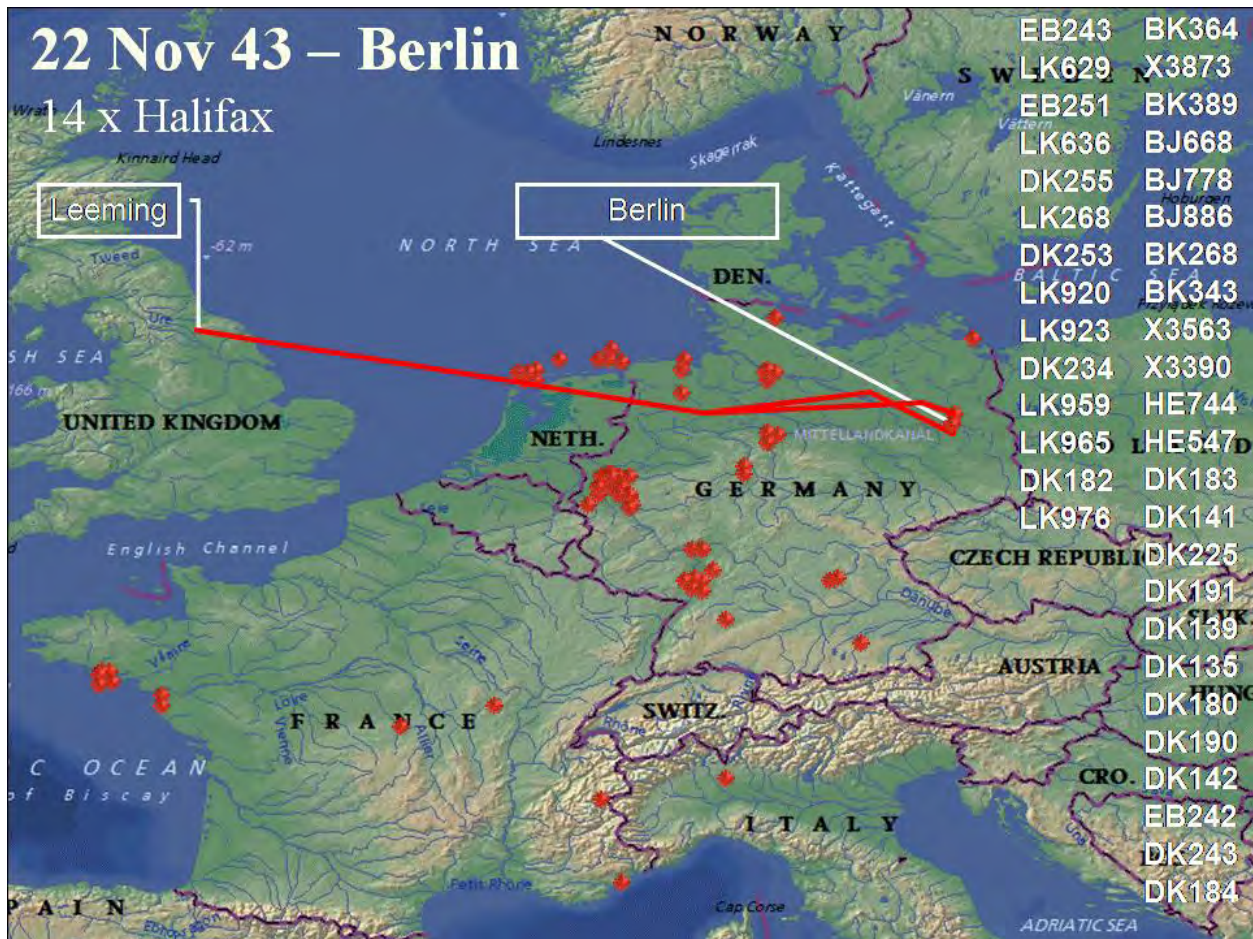
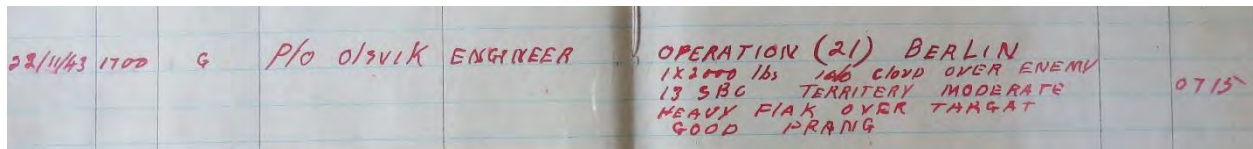


## 19/11/43

Twelve aircraft were detailed for a raid on Leverkusen, and as many became airborne. Two however, boomeranged, "S" due to u/s of rear guns and starboard inner failure, and "U" due to the failure of all electrically controlled instruments, and the cutting out of port inner engine. The remaining ten reached and bombed the target through 10/10th cloud releasing their loads on E.T.A. or on cascading flares. The enemy defences consisted of slight light flak, and moderate 10/10th heavy; searchlights were ineffectively reflecting on clouds. P.F.F. markers were scattered and it is felt that the majority of their defences were thought to be in action on way to target. Several aircraft returned from the raid, flak riddled, but otherwise unshaken.

Weather: Fair becoming cloudy with slight drizzle, mist and fog.

## Opération 21



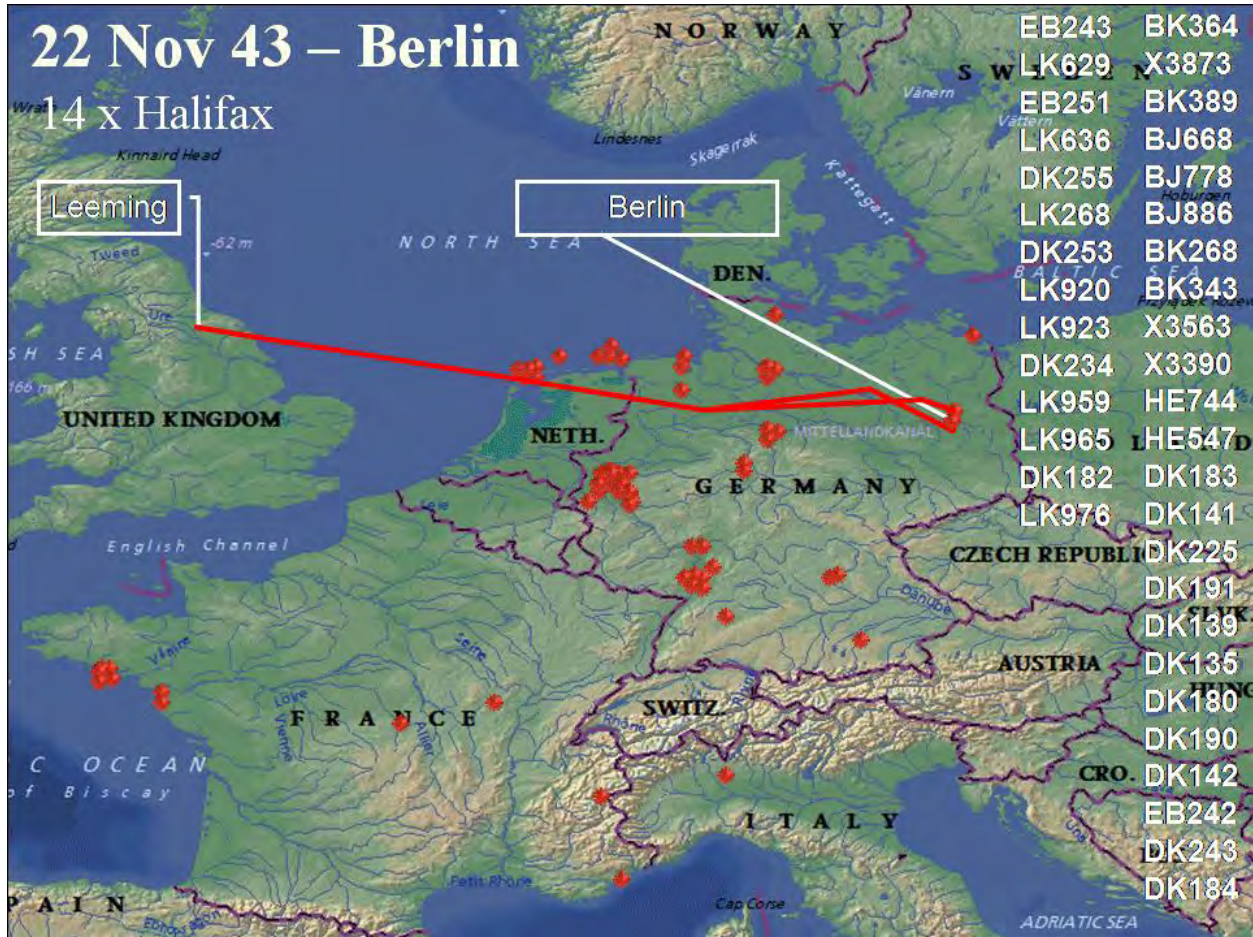
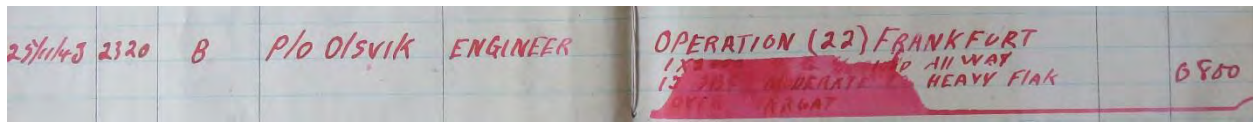
Fourteen aircraft were detailed for a bombing attack against Berlin and all our Halifaxes took off accordingly. Enroute to target, encountered a slight amount of icing soon after crossing the enemy coast, and found the target area covered by 9/10th clouds. All crews bombed on red P.F.F. flares, though congestion of our own aircraft over the target was terrific. F/Sgt McQuade, put up a wizard show in "H" - landing with only two engines, after his rear gunner had sustained a slight flak injury.

F/O A.J.F. Clark returned to the unit after obtaining an "A" category at the Bombing Leader's Course at Manby.

A farewell party held in the Officers Mess for G/C J.L. Plant who is taking up another post, and Squadron members played a prominent part in the proceedings.

Weather: Cloudy with drizzle and mist at first becoming fair then fine.

## Opération 22



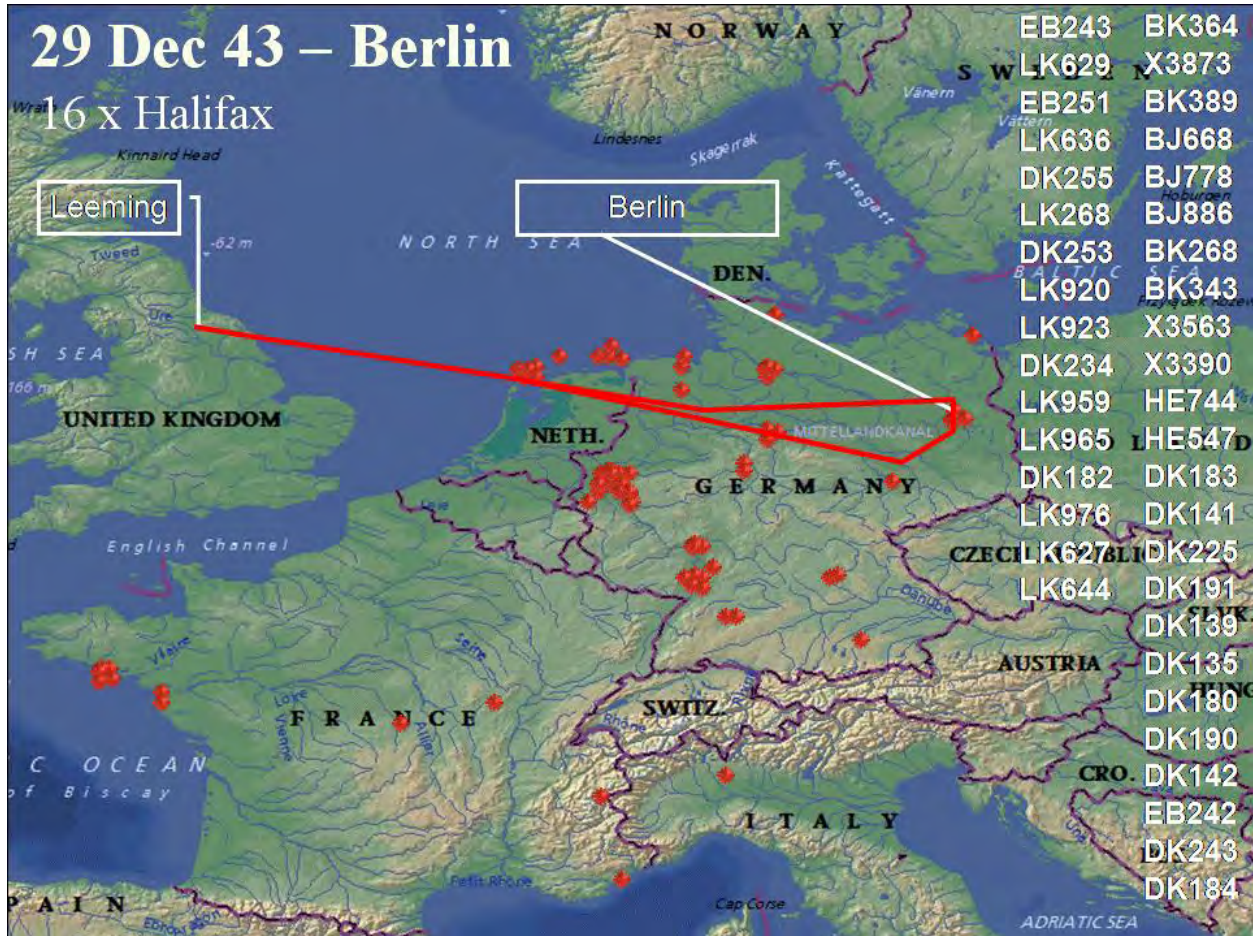
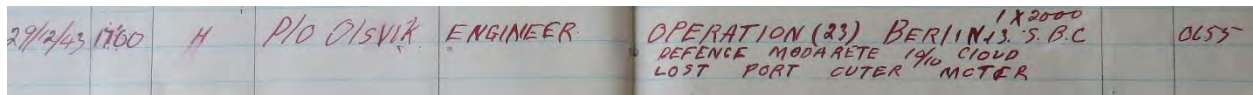
Fourteen aircraft were detailed for a bombing attack against Berlin and all our Halifaxes took off accordingly. Enroute to target, encountered a slight amount of icing soon after crossing the enemy coast, and found the target area covered by 9/10th clouds. All crews bombed on red P.F.F. flares, though congestion of our own aircraft over the target was terrific. F/Sgt McQuade, put up a wizard show in "H" - landing with only two engines, after his rear gunner had sustained a slight flak injury.

F/O A.J.F. Clark returned to the unit after obtaining an "A" category at the Bombing Leader's Course at Manby.

A farewell party held in the Officers Mess for G/C J.L. Plant who is taking up another post, and Squadron members played a prominent part in the proceedings.

Weather: Cloudy with drizzle and mist at first becoming fair then fine.

## Opération 23...



**29/12/43**

Weather: Fair to cloudy. Light shower in evening. Good visibility.

Sixteen aircraft took off this date, destined for a raid on BERLIN. The Wing Commander, who personally was leading the operation, flying in "B" for Beer, returned early after a technical failure in the port outer engine rendered it unserviceable. Aircraft "F" piloted by P/O H.W. Holland, also returned early due to the failure of the port inner engine. Aircraft "L" piloted by F/S A.F. Darlow, also failed to reach the target, because of the inability of his aircraft to gain sufficient height, and landed on the CO's orders.

P/O R.C. Deegan flying "W", making his 15th operational trip, by his exceptional skill and untiring efforts, was responsible for bringing back a badly crippled bomber, and perhaps saving the life of all the crew. His aircraft was a little better than halfway to the target and flying at

### ... Opération 23 ...

about 18,000 feet when the port outer engine failed and went completely u/s, and difficulty was encountered in maintaining height. Consequently the bomb load was jettisoned safely, and course was set for base. Ten minutes later, the war (sic) gunner F/S P.A. Dubois warned the pilot that night fighters were dropping flares in an attempt to vector the aircraft, and continued to do so for the best part of an hour, until the Zaider Zee was reached at which point a night fighter finally succeeded in picking up the Halifax and attacked from starboard and below. The rear gunner gave evasive action as soon as e/a closed to within a 1,000 yds, and after the manoeuvre, it was lost to view. Soon after the starboard inner engine went completely unserviceable and the pilot was faced with the task of reaching home on two engines. This further reduced height, and as a result all bomb containers and loose equipment were jettisoned over the Dutch Coast. During the confusion which followed, the trailing aerial was cut off by the bomb doors, which made it impossible for the Wireless Operator F/S J.A. Smith, to obtain fixes and send out messages, and in an attempt to repair the set, he did a masterful job in erecting a spare aerial for the purpose of dispatching the necessary S.O.S.'s. Shortly after leaving the Dutch Coast, the port inner was on the verge of packing up, and all the way across the North Sea at 5,000 feet, the pilot nursed two engines along, while the aircraft laboured and crawled through the air at 110 miles per hour, at almost stalling speed. But the pilot's perseverance and perspiration were rewarded when an aerodrome appeared below soon after crossing the English Coast, on which P/O Deagan immediately dove straight in for the runway, and just as he touched down the port engine faded completely, necessitating a one engine landing, which was as smooth as if he had all four engines available. P/O Deagan, in expressing his appreciation to the remainder of the crew, lauding the work and the cooperation of everyone concerned including the Co-Pilot, particularly praised the work of the Wireless Operator and the Flight Engineer, Sgt J.C. Corbiell.

The remaining twelve aircraft proceeded to the target on P.F.F. track, encountering little opposition from enemy defences en route. F/S R.E. Cook, the pilot of "S", received a Monica warning at 19:58 hours. The rear gunner then sighted an enemy aircraft on the star-board quarter down 400 yards and immediately gave the combat manoeuvre "Corkscrew Starboard". The fighter and both Gunners opened fire at the same time, the E/A crossing over to port beam down and was lost to sight, until it reappeared. again two minutes later on the port quarter up 300 yards. Another corkscrew followed, while the fighter closed in and crossed to starboard beam up. However, neither the fighter, nor our Halifax opened fire, and enemy aircraft left the scene. No damage was sustained by the Halifax, and no visual damage was observed on the fighter.

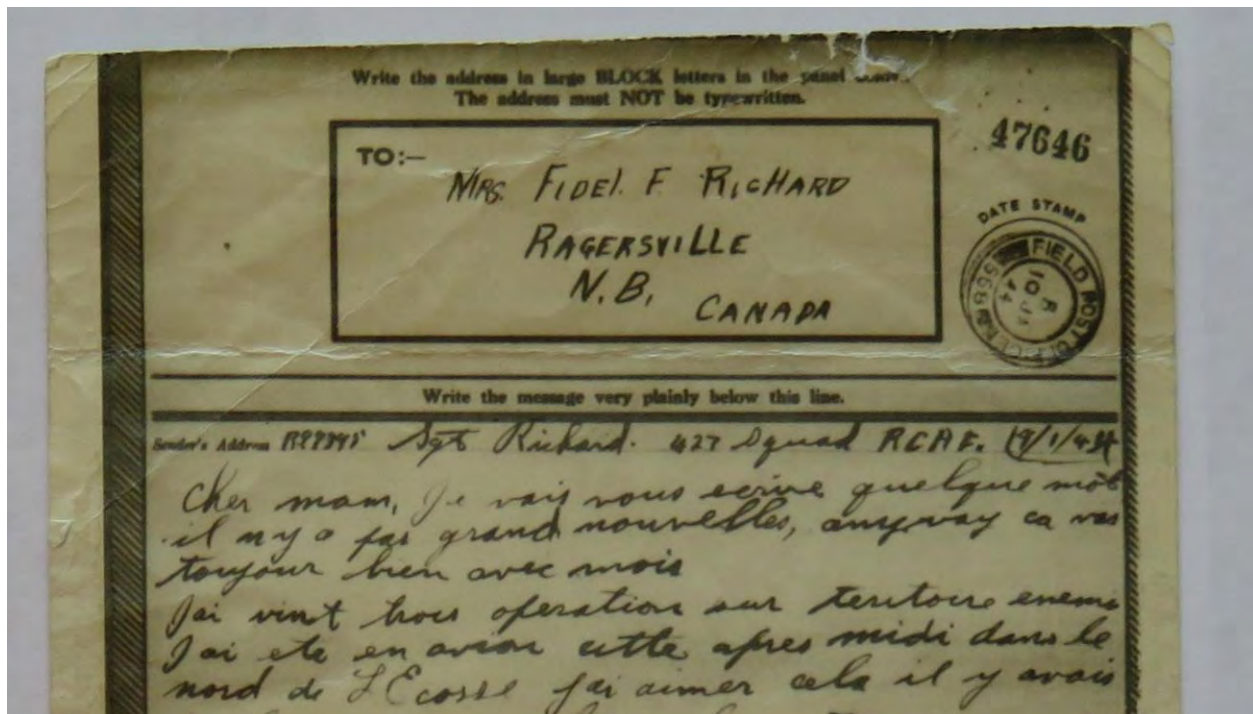
The target was found covered by 10/10th clouds to a height of 8,000 feet, with lateral visibility very good. Although at the time of arrival the raid was rapidly growing in intensity, the area was entirely obscured by the cloud cover, and our crews bombed on the red flares with green stars, seen cascading on the fires, reflecting on the clouds. Little or negligible enemy defences were in operation, and our crew's had a free run to the target.

On the homeward journey the only incident encountered. was the experience of F/L F.N. Murray, a native of Trinidad in the R.C.A.F., who by a wizard show, brought his badly damaged aircraft back to Britain, under the most adverse circumstances.

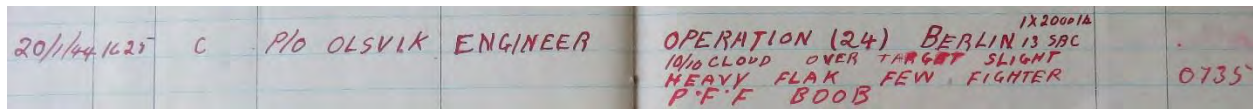
## ... Opération 23

Dick's comment: I guess we can consider this a M.A. !!

The crew of "P" for Peter had just dropped their bomb load on the target, when a Halifax above them about 1,000 feet began to release its bombs, incendiaries from which, crashed through the tail plane, the starboard wing and bent the aileron. The weight of the incendiaries sent the aircraft into an uncontrollable spiral dive, and only after 2,000 feet were lost, was the pilot able to regain control. The aircraft however, refused to stay on track and on the homeward journey continually kept listing to starboard. To add to the pilot's difficulties, a heavy flak barrage was encountered over Emden, shrapnel penetrating the aircraft in several places, one piece coming through the star-board window up to the co-pilot's seat. With the condition of the aircraft precarious, evasive action was attempted, but proved impossible owing to the condition of the aircraft. Strong head winds made it uncertain whether "P" would have sufficient petrol to reach the English Coast, but it eventually loomed up ahead, and the aircraft was landed perfectly, on the first aerodrome sighted. Examination of the aircraft found a gaping hole in the tail plane, caused by the incendiaries of the friendly Halifax, and the starboard aileron and a portion of the wing tip torn away. The operation is considered to have left a wide area of devastation in the already battered and tattered Berlin.



## Opération 24 ...



Weather: Fair becoming cloudy with poor to moderate visibility.

At long last the Squadron became operational again after an extended period during which it appeared that the Lion Squadron would take on the form of an CTU. This date the news of the detail was very welcomed, when sixteen aircraft were called for a raid on BERLIN. Of that total however, in view of last minute cancellations, only fourteen became airborne and Hun bound. S/L G.J. Lair, DFC, failed to reach the target after his aircraft "V", developed a starboard inner engine failure. He therefore returned early after jettisoning his bomb load safely. F/O G.A. Weldon and crew in aircraft "T" also returned early, due to the unserviceability of "G", after the bomb load had been jettisoned. The remaining twelve aircraft proceeded to enemy territory encountering cloud cover on the inward journey, which entirely obscured ground detail, but otherwise encountering no enemy opposition. The target was completely covered by 10/10ths clouds but was identified by red flares with green stars seen cascading, and it was on these indicators that the bomb loads were released. The results of the bombing however, remained unobserved due to the condition of the clouds.

## ...Opération 24

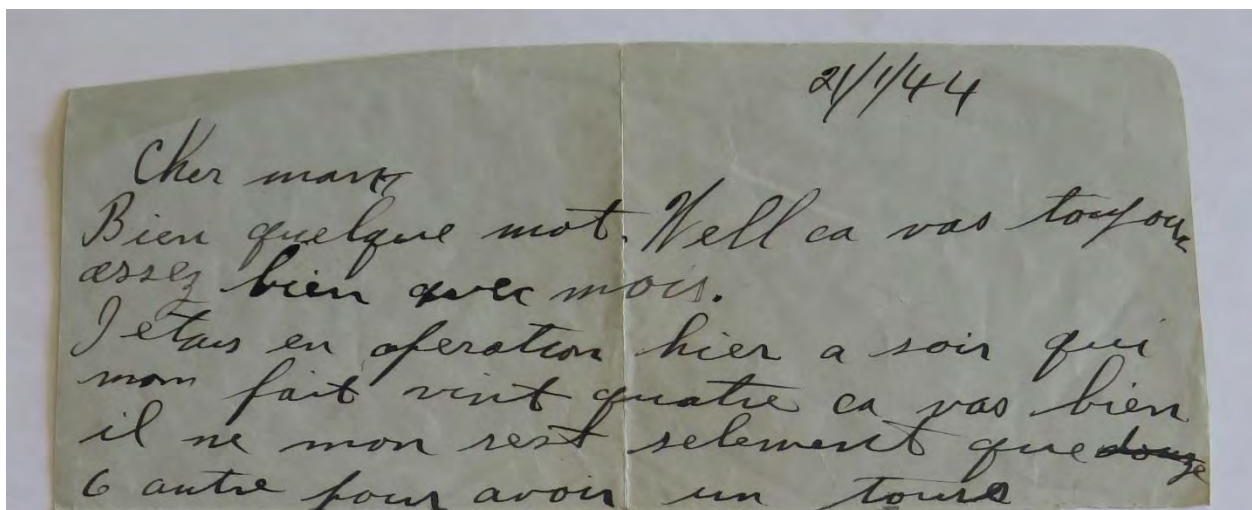
On the return journey F/O W.A. Cozens, RAF, due to lack of fuel decided to land at Coltishall, but after three attempts to land, he over- skidded the airdrome, crashing into tree tops and finally ending up in a nearby field, completely wrecking the aircraft and instantly killing F/O L.G. Biddiscombe, RAF, the Navigator and critically injuring the pilot, Sgt H.P. Whittaker, RAF, the WOP/AG, Sgt, W.L. Stockford, RAF, the Bomb Aimer and Sgt. J. McGowan, RAF, the Flight Engineer, while the other two members of the crew the gunners, Sgt R.B. Nairn and F/S G.L. Bemier, escaped uninjured. The Coltishall report of this crash is as follows:

"The aircraft crashed on its third attempt to land at this airfield the pilot having previously requested permission to land because of fuel shortage. The only members of the crew available to give evidence (Mid-upper and Rear Gunners) stated that the pilot went round again after his first attempt to land because the undercarriage was not completely locked down. They also stated that no engine trouble was apparent and that immediately before the crash, the pilot had said that he could not see the funnel lights.

It would appear that the aircraft was flying dangerously low when approaching to land and at a distance of two miles from the airfield. It first struck H.T. cables and, without losing height, flew on some 200 yards, striking the tops of trees in a small wood, finally crashing in a field approximately 100 yards from the wood. The aircraft was completely wrecked on impact. Fire occurred on the port side but this was localized and extinguished.

An examination of the wreckage was made but it was not possible to determine the amount of fuel owing to crash and fire damage. All propeller blades were broken off at their hubs and it is thought that all engines were running at power when the crash occurred. Propeller C/S levers were at 'course' and throttles closed, but these may have been disturbed on impact. All magneto switches were ON - elevator trim 'neutral' - altimeter registering 3s' The air- craft crashed with wheels and flaps down. Visibility was not ideal at the time of the crash and -this may have some bearing on the accident".

P/O N.S. Cook and crew failed to return from the operation and has been posted as missings "Cookie" as he was known to the Squadron, had recently been commissioned, and was well liked by all who came in contact with him. He was the possessor of a much admired handlebar moustache, which accentuated his otherwise "simplicity of conducts", A sad loss to the Squadron as a pilot and a gentleman.

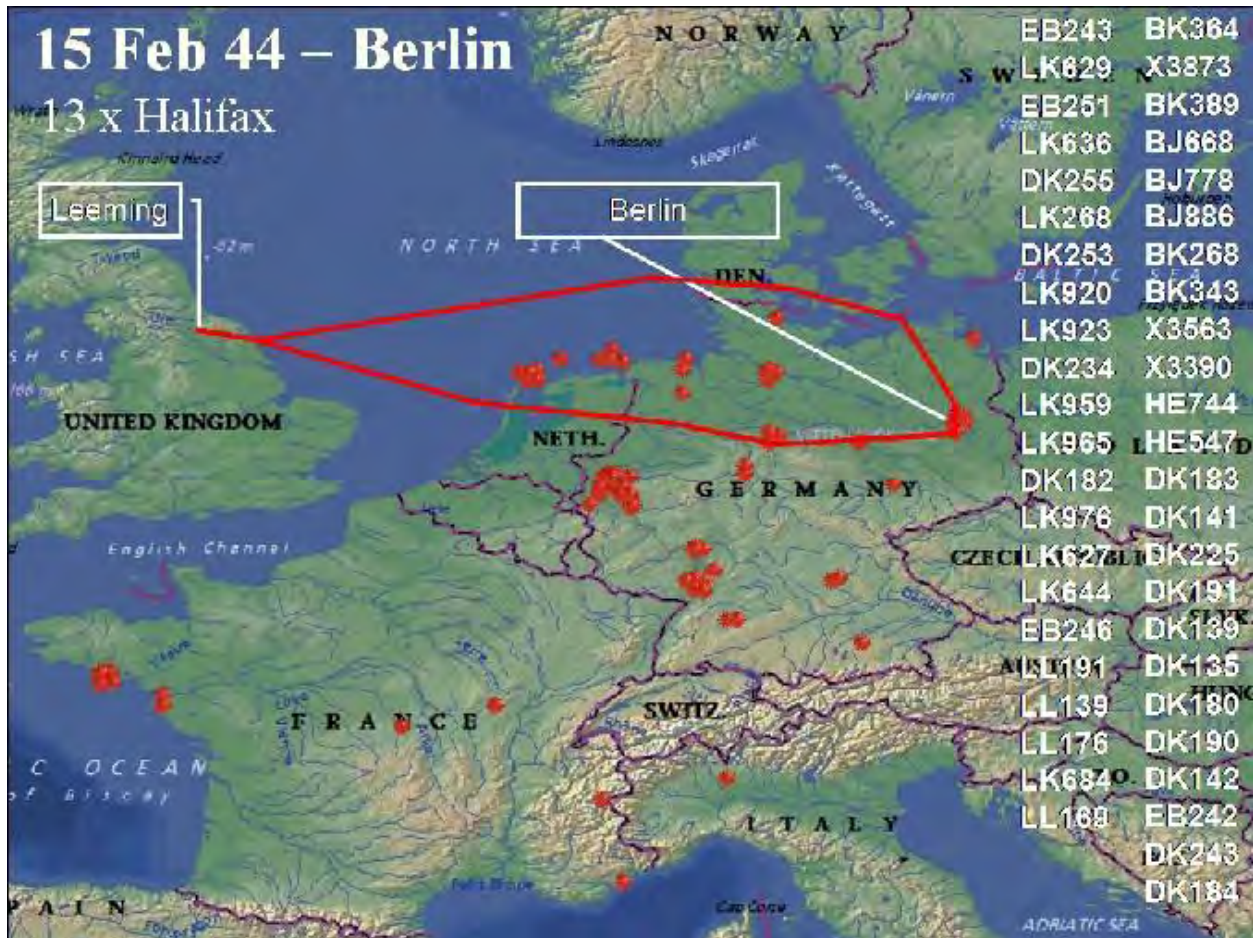
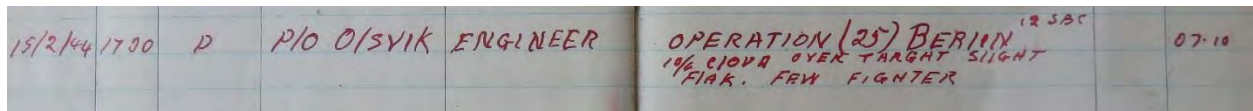


2/1/44

Cher mary  
Bien quelque mot. Well ca vas toujours  
assez bien avec moi.  
J'etais en operation hier a soir que  
mon fait vingt quatre ca vas bien  
il ne mon rest seulement que deux  
6 autre pour avoir un tour



## Opération 25...



Weather: Overcast. Visibility poor.

At long last the Squadron became operational after the rather extended lull, with fourteen experienced crews being detailed for a raid on BERLIN. This was to mark the first venture on operations with the Mark III Halifax, the performance of which everyone on the squadron, is hoping will be as satisfactory as training flights have proven. One aircraft of those detailed, failed to take off, when "Y" became u/s at the last moment with a gill motor. The pilot, F/O R.H. LAUT, who immediately transferred his complete crew to "A", one of the standbys, was not destined to take part in this raid, as this latter aircraft also proved defective, having faulty plugs, and he remained grounded. For a time it was felt that of the fourteen aircraft detailed, only twelve would take off, because "R" piloted by F/O WELDON, also developed plug trouble and could not be taken out on ops. However, he and crew scrambled out of their

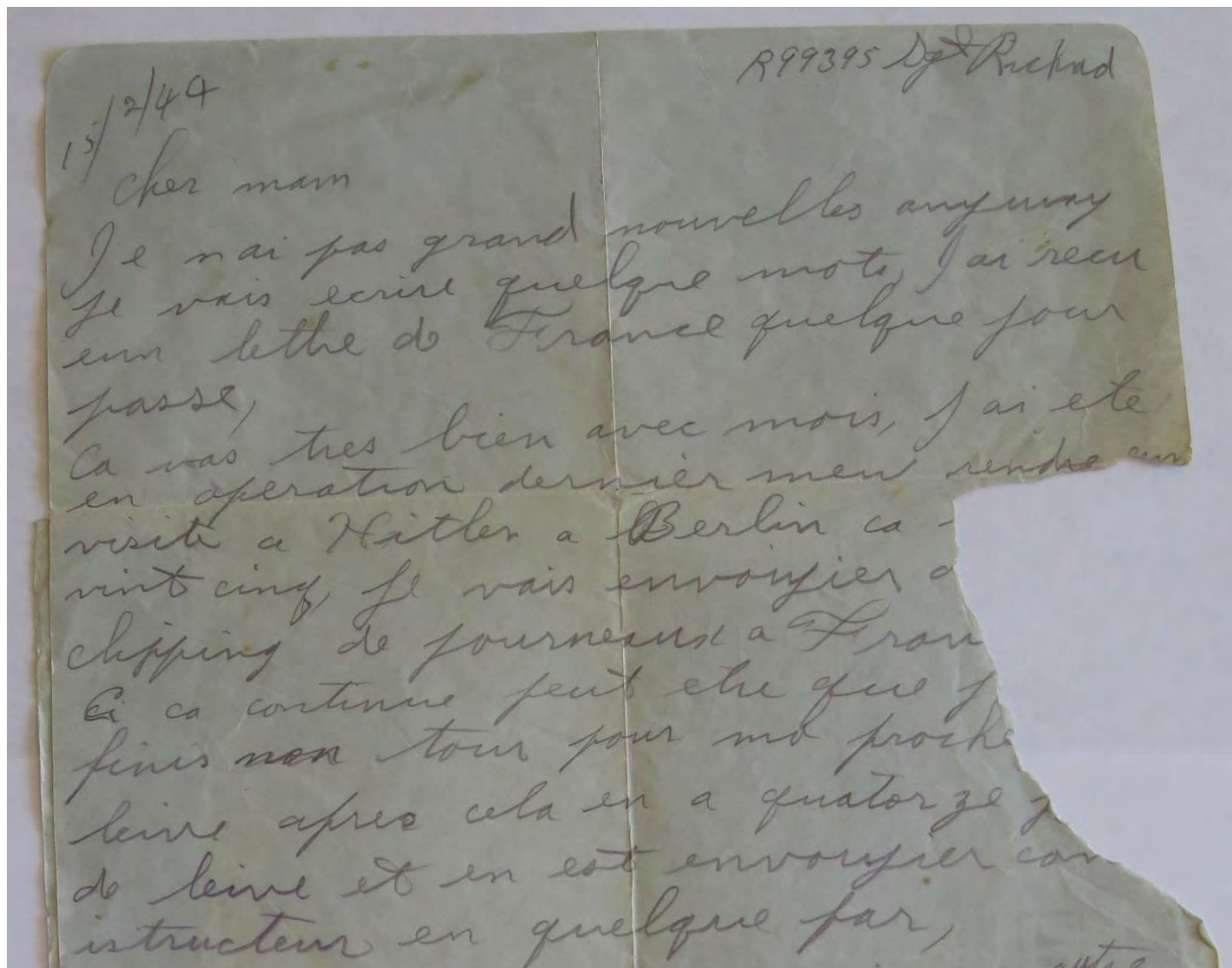
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aircraft, and made a mad dash towards "G" dispersal, and at the last possible moment became airborne in that aircraft.

From all reports the target was well pranged. Enemy opposition over the target was very weak, with very few fighters seen, and the negligible flak did not interfere with the bombing. Weather was as briefed, with 10/10 clouds encountered over the target and throughout the route. This weather probably accounted for the absence of fighters. P.F.F. markers were considered by most crews as well concentrated, possibly spreading a bit during the latter part of the attack.

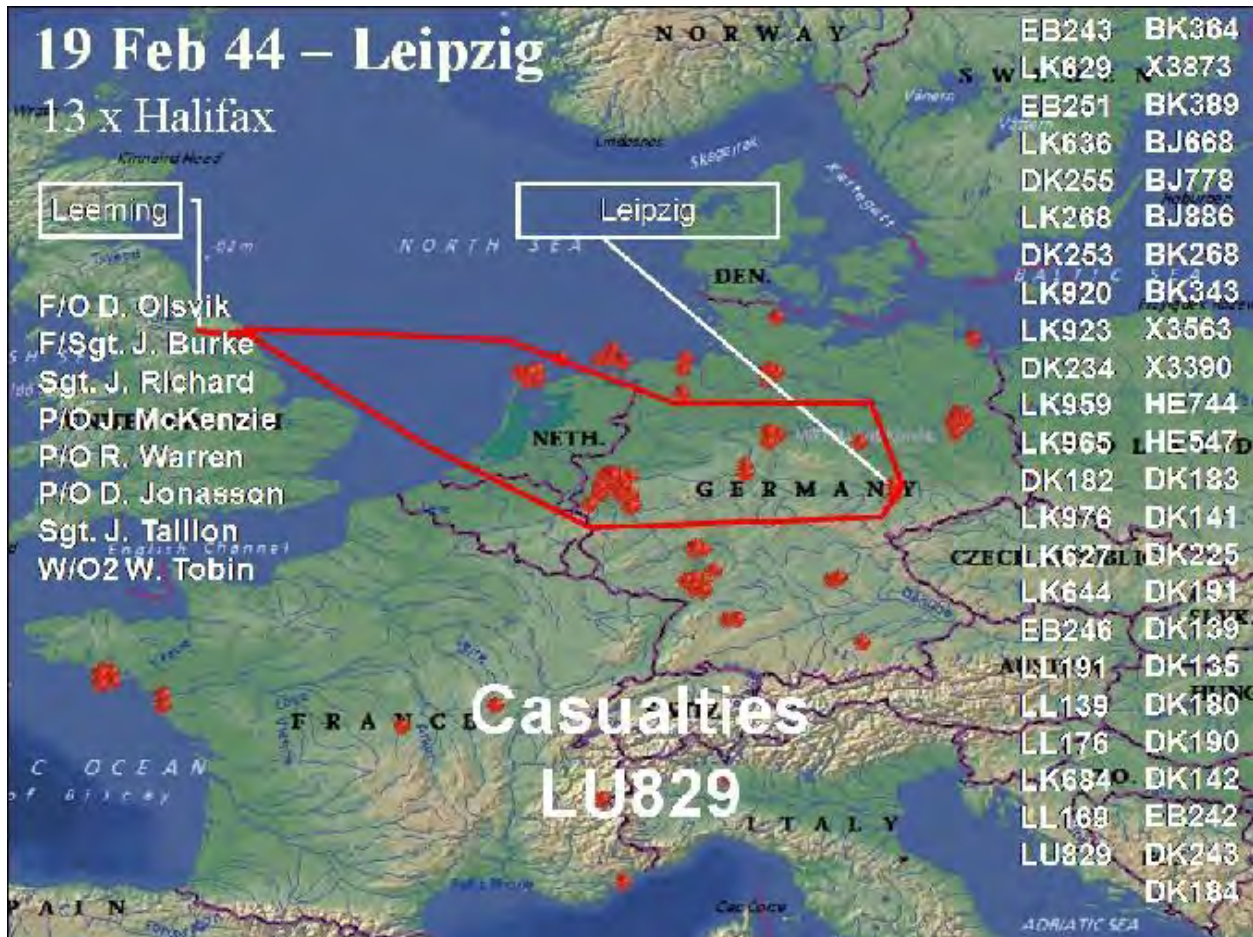
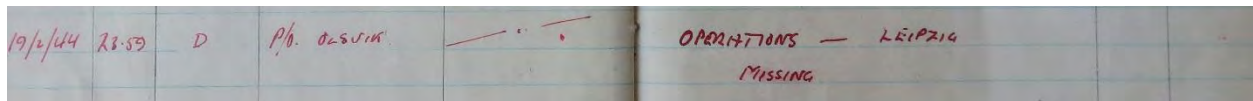
All crews which became airborne, reached and pranged the target, and the most astonishing thing of all, was that on return all aircraft were reported as serviceable and ready to take-off, just as soon as weather permitted, in order that they might return to base from their various diversion points.

It was a very good show, and an excellent start on the Hark III aircraft, which equalled the standards set on training programs. The target was well pranged.



15/2/44  
R99395 Sgt Rickard  
cher man  
Je n'ai pas grand nouvelles anyway  
je vais écrire quelque mots, j'ai reçu  
une lettre de France quelque jour  
passé,  
ça vas très bien avec moi, j'ai été  
en opération dernier men rendre une  
visite à Hitler à Berlin ça  
vint cinq je vais envoyer  
chipping de fournisseurs à Fran  
Et ça continue peut être que j  
finis mon tour pour mo proche  
leure après cela en a quatorze  
de leure et en est envoyer car  
instructeur en quelque par,

## Operation 26 ...



### 19.2.44

Weather: Cloudy with some sleet or snow. Visibility, moderate.

Sixteen aircraft were this date detailed for a raid on LEIPZIG. Slightly after midnight, with the night very dark, and clouds low in the vicinity of base, our aircraft began taking off. Unfortunately, three of our aircraft failed to leave the ground. On the run up, two engines in aircraft "S", piloted by F/L J.R.G. MILTON, RAF, proved u/s, and investigation later disclosed that plugs and three of the cylinders were faulty. P/O H.K. HOLLAND in aircraft "L" found difficulty in building up brake pressure while taxiing, and under the circumstances, failed to take-off. Another aircraft through faulty plugs, rendered an engine u/s; this aircraft "R", was piloted by F/S J. KING.

## ... Operation 26

Of the thirteen aircraft which became airborne, four returned early without reaching the target. Aircraft "A", captained by F/S C.H. FISCHER, developed hydraulic motor trouble which rendered the tail turret unserviceable, when it was 50 miles inside enemy territory. F/L F.N. MURRAY, in "P", developed a u/s starboard inner engine, when the block tube control broke and caused the butterfly valves to close. F/O R.H. LAUT in "Y", found difficulty in climbing. Captain F/S C.H. COATHUP in aircraft "U" encountered icing which reduced climb to about 16,000 feet, and any attempt he made to exceed that height, caused the aircraft to stagger and become sluggish, and consequently he returned early.

The remaining nine aircraft proceeded to the target in 10/10ths clouds with continued haze all the way on the inward journey reaching to a height of 20,000 feet. In an effort to confuse the enemy defences, our aircraft headed direct for BERLIN, and when reaching a point about 40 miles west of the capital, turned their main force due south in the direction of LEIPZIG, while a small force of aircraft continued on to BERLIN. But as results later showed, the enemy were not baffled by this strategy, and over the target which was completely obscured by cloud cover, many combats were seen with enemy aircraft. Our crews dropped their loads on P.F.F., and although results could not be seen, it was felt that those who reached the target, bombed it, dead on.

As the result of this raid one of our aircraft failed to return. P/O D.O. OLSVIK was flying "B", and carrying as second pilot the captain of a recently acquired crew, F/S C.G. BURKE. This loss of OLSVIK, was a sad blow to the Squadron, who during the twenty-five sorties he had already completed with the Lions, had proven himself to be one of the most capable pilots on the Squadron with the attribute of possessing a grim determination to reach the target at all costs." He loved his work, and had an urgent desire to transfer to the P.F.F., where he felt he would be able to continue on operations until he had a total of 45 trips, instead of the usual 30 on bombing squadrons. There is no doubt that he was an inspiration to all crews, and his quiet demeanor and simplicity of conduct, certainly will be missed by his fellow aircrew members.

This raid proved very unsuccessful insofar as the Lion's were concerned. Of the total number of aircraft which were detailed, only seven bombed the target and returned, and this definitely is not in keeping with the motto of the Squadron to "Strike Sure". After the excellent beginning on the Mark III aircraft, this is rather a let down, and here's hoping that a similar performance does not recur.

F/O "W.E.P. "Red" SOEDER, a navigator in S/L G.J. LAIRD's crew, celebrated his 26th birthday over LEIPZIG. On the same date a year ago, in celebrating his 25th birthday, he was guiding his Wellington aircraft on a raid to WILHEIMSHAVEN. Now "Red" wonders whether he will ever be able to celebrate a birthday in the Mess, or at least on the ground, during the course of this war.