

Washington Times



Newsletter

Issue 3

Summer 2002



Cover photos

- Top WF512 (44 Squadron) at dispersal, RAF Coningsby (*Ernest Howlett*)
- Centre Left 207 Squadron Commanding Officer and flight commanders. From left to right: B Flight commander, Flt Lt H. StJohn Garland (known as Judy), Commanding Officer, Sqd Ldr Geoffrey W. O’N. Fisher O.B.E., D.F.C. and A Flight commander, Flt Lt William H. Adams (known as Bill). Judy was one of the first navigators to hold such a position. The serial on the plane is indistinct but appears to be 44-62255, which would make it 207 Squadron’s WW352 (*John Laing*)
- Lower Right Washingtons lined up and ready for inspection at the Royal Review, RAF Odiham, July 1953. From furthest to nearest, WF565 (207 Squadron), WF562 (115 Squadron), WF572 (35 Squadron) and WF545 (90 Squadron). (*Jeff Brown*)

Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of the Washington Times newsletter.

This, third issue, once more retains the format of the previous ones. However space considerations have, unfortunately, meant that I have had to postpone the promised article on the Norden bombsight. This I will put in the next issue.

With the Golden Jubilee celebrations having just finished, it seemed an appropriate time to air the photos that I have obtained showing the Coronation review held at RAF Odiham on 15th July 1953.

In the next issue:

Historical info covers K-36 or WF394, the B-29 bombsight, Elint operations with 192 squadron B-29s and a plan of RAF Watton.

I hope you continue to find the contents of this newsletter of interest and, please, feel free to add to it in any way – suggestions for changes in format, additional material etc, comments on articles written etc are always welcome! So far I have sufficient material to complete the remaining two issues of this ‘subscription’ but unfortunately do not have enough to continue beyond that. Without wishing to pressure anyone, further submissions of memoirs etc are needed if you are interested in keeping the newsletter going!

Newsletter Contact

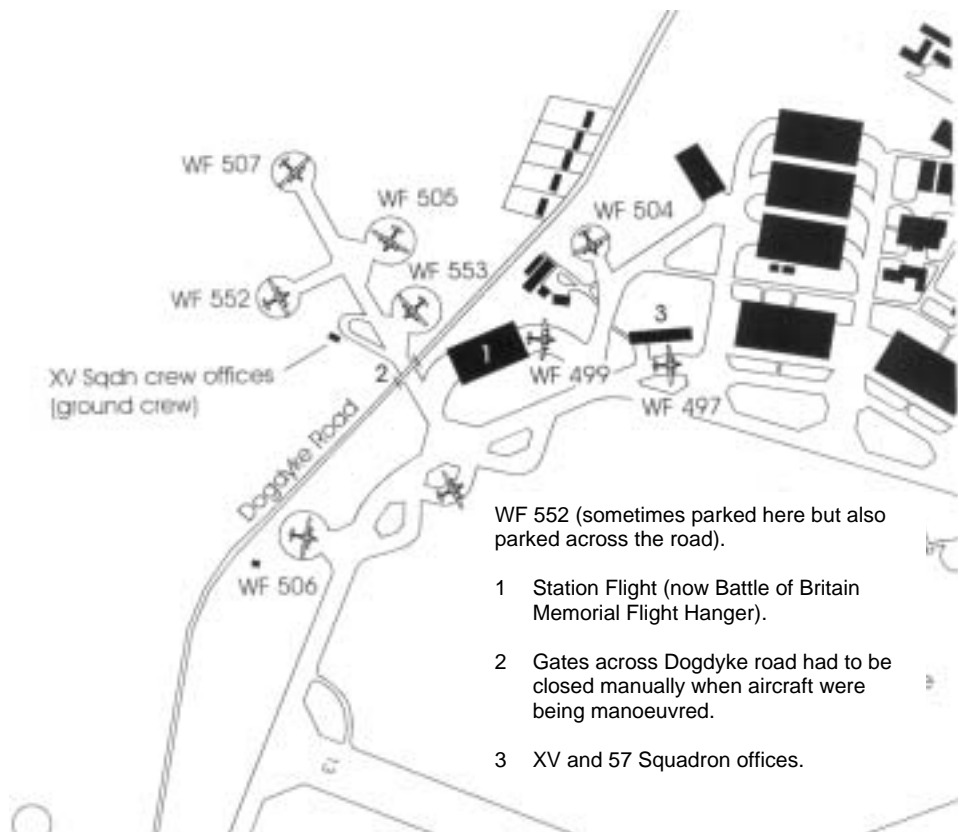
Chris Howlett
The Barn
Badbury Cross
Isle Abbotts
Taunton
Somerset
TA3 6RS

e-mail chris_howlett@tiscali.co.uk

(note the _ symbol between my names. This has caused endless trouble with most people using the – symbol instead and not getting through!)

Letters

In answer to my request for the locations of the aircraft within each squadron, Terry Collins replied with a fully marked up copy of the plan of Coningsby showing where the XV squadron planes parked. This is reproduced below for interest (and to perhaps encourage similar responses for other squadrons!?!). A plan of Marham is supplied with this issue and an indication of where the Marham planes parked would be most interesting – so far I cannot even locate the general Squadron areas!



A few people commented upon the 44 Squadron roster. Unfortunately, I have no idea what the abbreviation sn means in the list – perhaps ‘Senior’. I copied it direct from the form 540s and thought you may know! The roster has been reproduced in this issue with the corrections marked up. The term Sn also appears in the XV squadron roster that is also in this issue!

John King sent the photo of four ex 44 Squadron Washington aircrew taken at the 44 Squadron reunion, RAF Waddington 2002. From left to right 'Laurie' Lorenzo, Signaller, John King, Flight Engineer, Phil Batty, Signaller and Don Cowper, National Service Air Gunner.

Any other photos of Washington people from recent reunions would be a welcome addition to future newsletters!



Historical Info

WF439 (44-61634)

WF439 was built by Boeing at their Renton plant as a B-29A. After completion she went to the Birmingham modification centre before being assigned to Topeka AAF and the 2nd Air Force (Continental USA training Command). However, she never seems to have served with the 2nd AF but was despatched to the Marianas to become part of the 58th Bomb Wing, 40th Bomb Group, 44th Bomb Squadron flying from Tinian. The notes on the following pages are from a diary kept by Tom McCosker, the airplane commander while on Tinian. Tom brought 44-61634 back to USA in October 1945 where, as can be seen from the receipt below, she was classed as incomplete and war weary – what bits were missing is not clear!

WAR DEPARTMENT L. A. F. Form 700, 10 Revised May 16, 1945		WAR DEPARTMENT PROPERTY AND SUPPLY		RECEIPT	CREDIT
MEMORANDUM RECEIPT					
				No. _____	
Station <u>1505TH AAF BASE UNIT, MATHER FIELD, CALIFORNIA</u>				Date <u>16 OCTOBER 1945</u>	
Issuing organization <u>40TH BOMB GP., 58TH BOMB WING, APO 183, FM, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA</u>					
*Turned in by <u>1ST LT. THOMAS McCOSKER</u>					
QUANTITY	UNIT	PART NO.	ARTICLE		
			Received by the 1505th AAF Base Unit, Mather Field,		
			Sacramento, California, one (1) B-29 War Weary type		
			aircraft #44-61634, incomplete, pilot 1st Lt. Thomas		
			McCosker from 40th Bomb Gp., 58th Bomb Wing, APO 183		
			c/o FM, San Francisco, California.		
			<i>Richard P. Deane</i>		
			RICHARD P. DEANE		
			1st Lt., Air Corps		
			Project Control Officer		

After being returned she was stored at Victory Ville before being assigned to SAC on 12 May 1948. After this she was sent to Tinker AFB, presumably for modernisation (Tinker being a major B-29 overhaul base) before arriving at Carswell AFB and the 7 Bomb Wing, 8th Air Force. In May 1949 she was once more consigned to storage, this time at Campbell AFB before being reactivated for use by the RAF in February 1950. Transferred to Robins AFB, again for refurbishment, before being delivered to the RAF in May 1950.

When with the RAF, WF439 served with the Washington Conversion Unit (being coded FB-P) between May 3 1950 and 20 July 1951. After this she went to 22 Maintenance Unit for storage until being returned to USA and Davis Monthan AFB on 22 March 1954.

As with most returning Washingtons, WF439 had no further use and remained in store until used for explosive testing at Davis Monthan (see newspaper cutting below).

All the pictures and diary pages related to Flak Magnet were supplied by Tom McCosker via Sparky Corradina of the 40th BG Association (<http://40thbombgroup.org/>).

FLAK MAGNET MY B429 OVER TOKYO, JAPAN THE YEAR 1945

- MAY 5TH. HIRO AIRCRAFT FACTORY KURE, HONSHU ALT. 18,000 FEET. CARRIED 8 1/2 TON BOMBS, 7,200 GALS. GAS 2800 MILES 15:15 WAITING TIME. FLAK ON BOMB RUN & 30 SEC. AFTER BOMBS AWAY. FLAK DAMAGE: REAR BOMB BAY DOOR, VERTICAL FIN, UPPER SURFACE RIGHT WING.
- MAY 10TH. NAVAL OIL STORAGE OSHIMA, HONSHU ALT. 17,600 FT. CARRIED 18 500 LB. BOMBS, 7,300 GALS. 15 HRS. 45 MIN. SMALL AMOUNT OF FLAK VERY INACCURATE SLIGHT DAMAGE.
- MAY 14TH. URBAN AREA NAGOYA, HONSHU. REACHED ASSEMBLY POINT LOST ALL OIL IN #3 ENGINE, DROPPED BOMBS IN OCEAN AND RETURNED TO TINIAN. 14 HRS. 45 MIN. ENGINE CHANGED NEXT DAY ALSO NAMED AND PAINTED OUR SHIP FLAK MAGNET AFTER WE WERE HIT TWO RAIDS IN A ROW.
- MAY 19TH. HAMAMATSU.. 20 500# BOMBS ALT. 18,000 FT. 6700 GALS. OF GAS. 14 HRS. 50 MIN. TARGET WEATHERED IN BOMBED BY RADAR.
- MAY 24TH. FIRST FIRE RAID ON TOKYO.. TARGET SOUTH TOKYO (NIGHT) CARRIED 39 500# INCENDIARY BOMBS ALT. 10,800 FEET. 6400 GALS. GAS. 15 HRS. 15 MIN. BOMBED BY RADAR MANY FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MODERATE FLAK, MANY SEARCH LTS.
- MAY 26TH. TOKYO.. 34 500# INCENDIARY. ALT. 9,400 FT. NIGHT. 6700 GALS. GAS. 14 HRS. 50 MIN. COMACOZI MISSED BY INS. MANY SEARCH LIGHTS, HEAVY FLAK.. SUFFERED MAJOR FLAK DAMAGE IN VERTICAL FIN. MINOR HOLES IN WING. ONE FRAGMENT JUST MISSING ENGINEER.

WE LOST 12 AIRCRAFT ON THE 24TH. 19 ON THE 26TH.

- MAY 29TH. YOKAHAMA HONSHU... DAY FORMATION. ALT. 18,000 FT. 32 500# INCENDIARY BOMBS. FANTASTIC VIEW OF MT. FUJIANA.. LOST CLARK AND HIS CREW. THEY WERE RAMMED BY A COMACOZI WHO WAS HEADING FOR OUR LEAD SHIP WHICH WOULD HAVE GOTTEN US ALL. 15:00 WE WERE ALL SHOOTING AT HIM WHEN HE WAS HIT AND VEARED TO HIS RIGHT RAMMING CLARKS AIRCRAFT. I WAS ON THE RIGHT WING OF LEAD SHIP, SAW THE BETTY RAM CLARKS
- JUNE 1ST. BASED ON IOWA JIMA 3 DAYS.. NAVIGATED A SQUADRON OF P-51S. TO OSAKA, HONSHU FOR LOW LEVEL BOMBING AND STRAFING.. WE HELD OFF SHORE SENDING RADIO SIGNALS TO GUIDE THEM BACK TO US TO TAKE THEM HOME.
- JUNE 7TH. OSAKA HONSHU.. 32 500# INCENDIARY 1 500# FRAGMENTATION BOMBS. 18,000 FT. 14 HRS. 35 MIN. BOMBED BY RADAR.. NO DAMAGE.
- JUNE 15TH. OSAKA AGAIN.. 30 500# INCEN. 22 FT. RADAR 13:50
- 17TH. OYATA, KYUSHU.. 180 500# INCEN. 78 FT. NT. " 15:20
- 20-19TH. TOYAHASHA 40 500# INCEN. 78 FT. NTE. " 15:05
- 26TH. KAGANIGAHARA 27 500# GENERAL PURPOSE BOMBS ALT. 16,200 FT. NIGHT VISUAL 15:15 TARGET KAWASAKI AIRCRAFT FACTORY.. LOTS OF FIGHTERS AND FLAK.. NO. 3 ENGINE SHOT OUT OVER TARGET...
- JULY 28TH. OKAYAMA URBAN AREA.. 184-100# INCEN. NTE. RADAR 14:50
- 3RD. TAKAMATSU SHIKOKU.. 182-100# INCEN. NTE. RADAR 15:00
- 9TH. SENDI 170-100# INCEND. VISUAL NIGHT 15:55
- JAPS THOUGHT WE COULD NOT GET THIS FAR NORTH. CITY WAS COMPLETELY LIT UP. NEVER EXPECTING TO BE BOMBED. RESULTS: EXCELLENT... NO LOSSES. WFMAL
- DICK MARLEY CO-PILOT

JULY 13TH. TO 27TH.
 CREW SENT TO HAWAII FOR TWO WEEKS REST LEAVE.

AUG. 1ST. HACHIEJI.. INCENDIARY NIGHT VISUAL 14:30
 9TH. FUKUYAMA INCENDIARY NIGHT VISUAL 13:40
 14TH. HIKARI NAVAL ARSENAL 25-500# DEMELITION BOMBS
 DAY FORMATION 15:15

SEPT. 2ND. TOKYO... 17:10
 FLEW FORMATION OVER TOKYO BAY DURING SIGNING
 OF PEACE TERMS ON THE BATTLE SHIP MISSOURI.
 FOR THE FIRST TIME SAW THE DEVASTATING RUIN
 AND DESOLATION } CAUSED BY OUR RAIDS.....

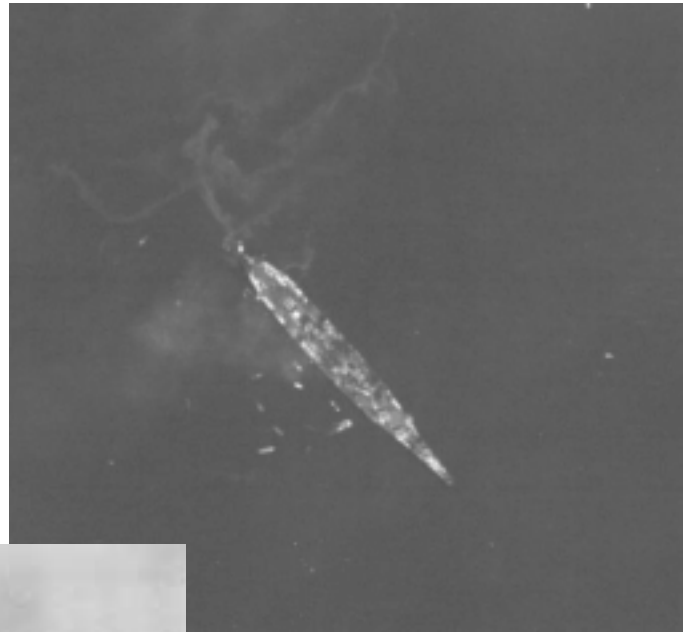


Rear: John Eiland (FE), Milton Skaer (TG), Eugene Attaway (N), Tom McCosker (A/C)
 Front: Eugene Hoops (CFC), Lewis Chase (Radio), Bob Unger (RG), Guilford (LG)
(Tom McCosker)



Flak magnet in flight from Tinian. The 40th BG had first deployed to India where their planes carried 4 horizontal bands on the tail. When they moved to Tinian the tail markings were changed to a Triangle to denote the 58th BW and S to denote the 40th BG. The tip of the tail is red denoting the 44th squadron. The original photo missed the nose of Flak Magnet!
(Tom McCosker)

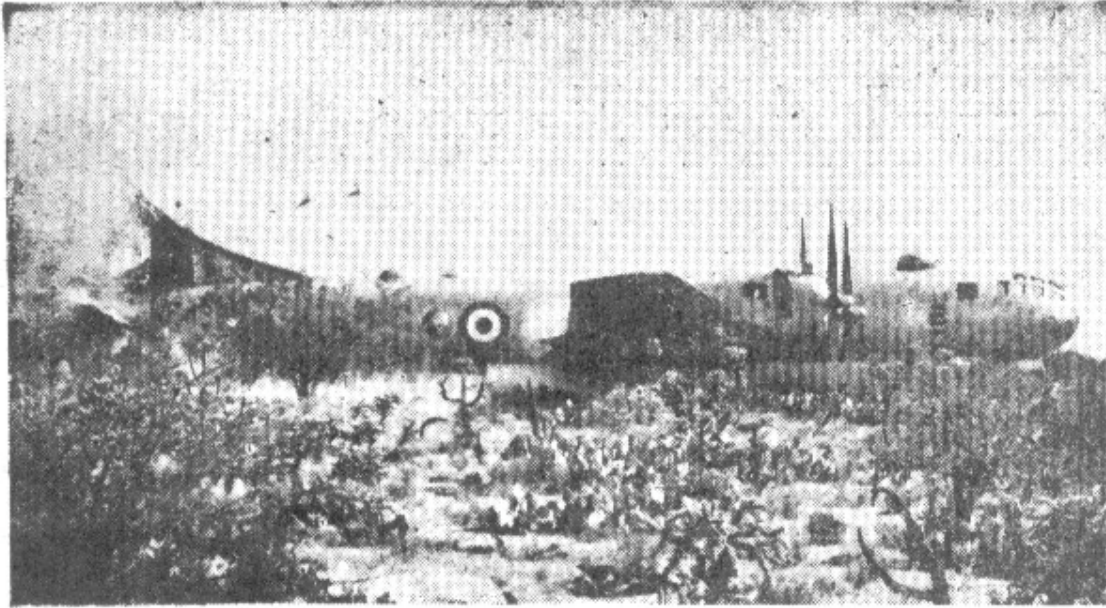
The battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbour during the surrender signing ceremony, September 2, 1945. *(Tom McCosker)*



Flak Magnet on her hardstand showing nose art applied after being damaged by flak on her first two missions. *(Tom McCosker)*



General view of Flak Magnet on her hardstand showing the triangle S denoting the 40th Bomb Group on her tail. *(Tom McCosker)*



THIS EXPLOSION shook up the lizards and desert creatures for miles around Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., but caused little ground shock. Metal parts were sent flying through the air leaving the rudder a wreck.

Davis-Monthan Explosions Rock B-29 As Superfort Surrenders to Science

By M/SGT. ROBERT B. McENERY

DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB, Ariz.—

To test new explosives the Army and Air Force joined hands here recently. They were assisted by a tired old B-29 still wearing the Royal Air Force insignia. Dragged from her resting place in the desert sun, she had been peacefully dreaming of her exploits in the Pacific in WW II when she was known as the WF 439. The proud old warrior, which was headed for

the scrap heap, saw her last bid for glory as a sacrifice on the altar of science.

The purpose of this test and subsequent ones to determine what type and quantity of explosives will be needed to blast enemy planes from the sky and also to prove what type of aircraft design will best endure the shock of such explosives.

For the next six months old aircraft stored here will be used by a six-man team from Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., headed by project director, Wilfred A. Baker, an ordnance engineer to test four types of new explosives, including two common types, pentolite and Composition B. The other two types—one of which is supplied by the Navy—are secret. These tests will utilize charges ranging from one ounce to 100 pounds. The charges will be set off in all parts of the aircraft and in all positions.

Witnesses of the first test today, standing 400 to 600 feet away, said the explosive resembled a grape fruit in size and the explosion was heard to echo for miles

across the desert but there was little ground shock. In this first test the explosive was cradled in a wooden framework on the stabilizer directly against the rudder. The type and quantity of explosive used was classified.

After the blast fire was seen to break out in various parts of the aircraft which was quickly extinguished by the fire department. The stabilizer was a mass of crumbled metal when it was over.

Maj. Alphonso Cortez, an Air Force officer from Aberdeen assigned to the project to evaluate the extent of damage to aircraft by these explosions and to assess the craft's ability to return to its base, said of the experiment:

"That plane wouldn't stay in the air."

Article from an unknown newspaper recording the demise of WF439 in an experiment at Davis Monthan AFB circa 1955. (Jeff Brown)

Rosters

44 Squadron Roster 31 July 1951 (from Form 540s - aircraft allocations by readers, any more would be most welcome).

Sqd Cdr	Sqd Ldr R. L. Wade D.F.C.	Pilot
Training Officer	Flt Lt G. W. O'Donovan D.S.O., D.S.C.	Pilot (WF508)
Flt Cdr Flying	Flt Lt Frank W. Alder A.F.C.	Pilot
Flt Cdr Flying	Flt Lt K. E. P. Evans	Pilot
Engineer	Flt Lt E. F. G. Launder	Eng
Flying	Flt Lt Howard Currie	Pilot
Flying	Flt Lt Gerry Maloney	Nav (WF508)
	Flt Lt J. D. Foster	Pilot
	Flt Lt Gordon K. Easter	Pilot (WF512)
	Fg Off Pete G. Worrall	Pilot (WF513)
	Fg Off J. H. Lucop	Co-Pilot
	Fg Off Doug Cook	Co-Pilot (WF508)
	Fg Off D. F. Denison	Co-Pilot
	Plt Off D. A. Taylor	Pilot
	Sgt N. G. Allsop	Co-Pilot
	Sgt S. A. Blupton	Co-Pilot
	Sgt W. J. Hyde	Co-Pilot
	Sgt G. R. Stevenson	Co-Pilot
	Sgt H. M. Good	Co-Pilot
	Vacant	
Nav (sn)	Flt Lt D. I. Jeffrey	Nav Leader
	Flt Lt J. G. Armstrong	
	Flt Lt Gordon E. G. Galletly	(WF513) Bomb Leader
	Fg Off P. P. Dusek	
	Flt Lt J. K. Bruton	
	Fg Off John K. G. Marsden ('Kiwi')	(WF508)
	Capt. W. D. Badger (USAF)	
	F/Sgt P.T. O'Reilly	(WF513)
	F/Sgt R. F. Rawlinson	
	Sgt D. Lamsley	
	Sgt J. Preston	
	Sgt Keith F. Sheppard	
	Sgt Jan R. Smuts	
	Sgt Z. T. Stepniewski	
Engineers	W/O J.L. Fairweather (Master Engineer)	Engineer Leader
	F/Sgt J. E. Dollins	
	Sgt John King	(WF508)
	Sgt Steve Morris	
	Sgt J. C. Peto	
	Sgt Lou J. Pinn	
	Sgt J. M. Silverright ('Jock')	
	Sgt Matt F. Stubbs	(WF513)
Gunners	Flt Lt G. Mitchel	Gunnery Leader
	F/Sgt A. Bruce	
	F/Sgt M. Marsh	
	Sgt R. Bell	(WF513)
	Sgt Robert (Bob) Bevan	(WF508)
	Sgt S. S. Carey	(WF513)
	Sgt E. A. Cole	
	Sgt D. A. Comber	
	Sgt N. R. Curtis	(WF508)
	Sgt K. Firth	
	Sgt A. F. O. Glen-Leary ('Glen' - Rhodesian)	(WF508)

	Sgt R. Goldsborough	
	Sgt S. B. Hill	
	Sgt P. G. Hollingsdale	(WF513)
	Sgt W. G. N. Kellet	
	Sgt D. Lee	
	Sgt C. M. Lyall	
	Sgt I. Micholson	
	Sgt Jimmy J. O'Dwyer	
	Sgt M. A. Palmer	
	Sgt T. E. Parish	
	Sgt A. D. Pitt	
	Sgt J. H. Potwerton	
	Sgt M. J. Simonds	
	Sgt P. J. M. Sullivan	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
	Vacant	
Signallers	Flt Lt H. B. Kneale	Signals Leader
	F/Sgt Phil H. Batty	Currie Crew?
	F/Sgt Phil E. Elliot	
	F/Sgt K. Lorenzo ('Lorie')	
	F/Sgt L. Walker	
	Sgt R. E. P. Alcock	
	Sgt K. G. Harding	(WF513)
	Sgt R. Rankine ('Jock')	(WF508) But posted away early.

XV Squadron Roster 31 August 1951 (from Form 540s).

Sqd Cdr	Sqd Ldr J. R. Denny M.B.E. D.F.C.	GD/Pilot
Training Officer	Flt Lt E. T. Ware D.S.C.	GD/Pilot
Flt Cdr Flying	Flt Lt R. H. Hardy D.F.C. D.F.M.	GD/Pilot
Flt Cdr Flying	Flt Lt Y. Vnoucey	GD/Nav
Engineer	Flt Lt J. E. Reader	Tech/E
Flying	Fg Off F. Krejci	GD/Nav
Flying	Fg Off R. A. Sigmund	GD/Nav
Pilot	Sqd Ldr W. A. C. Emmett	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Flt Lt R. Mather D.F.C. A.F.C.	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Flt Lt E. Livett	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Flt Lt F. A. Rust	Pilot
Pilot	Flt Lt E. A. Ladro	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Fg Off H. E. Williams	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Plt Off J. Shingler	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Plt Off R. W. Lambert	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Plt Off W. A. Burns	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Plt Off R. H. Pleace	GD/Pilot
Pilot	Sgt C. Cameron	Pilot
Pilot	Sgt J. F. Taylor	Pilot
Pilot	Sgt J. G. McWhirter	Pilot
Nav (Sn)	Vacant	
Navigator	Flt Lt E. G. Read	GD/Nav
Navigator	Flt Lt K. A. Drury D.F.M.	GD/Nav
Navigator	Flt Lt N. J. Hodnett	GD/Nav
Navigator	Flt Lt A. Young	GD/Nav
Navigator	Flt Lt H Adamson	GD/Nav

Navigator	Plt Off C. J. H. Fox	GD/Nav
Navigator	Plt Off C. Smith	GD/Nav
Navigator	F/Sgt J. W. H. Murdin	Navigator
Navigator	Sgt J. K. Fletcher	Navigator
Navigator	Sgt A. S. Fleming	Navigator
Navigator	Sgt A. Stringer	Navigator
Navigator	Sgt T. Robinson	Navigator
Navigator	Sgt K. J. White	Navigator
Engineer	Fg Off E. Cresswell	GD/Nav
Engineer	F/Sgt C. J. Gross	Eng
Engineer	F/Sgt C. Quine	Eng
Engineer	Sgt F. A. Bremner	Eng
Engineer	Sgt M. A. La Frenais	Eng
Engineer	Sgt G. Tomblin	Eng
Engineer	Sgt R. A. Wright	Eng
Engineer	Sgt W. T. Broxur	Eng
Gunner	Flt Lt M. T. O. Shields	GD/AG
Gunner	Flt Lt G. Dale D.F.C.	GD/AG
Gunner	Flt Lt G. G. Maule	GD/AG
Gunner	F/Sgt J. G. Arnold	Gunner
Gunner	F/Sgt D. L. Bassett	Gunner
Gunner	F/Sgt A. E. Travell	Gunner
Gunner	F/Sgt L. D. Millington	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt D. R. Gould	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt T. W. Beswick	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt M. Looms	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt D. C. W. law	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt W. Lambert	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt C. J. G. Leeder	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt L. P. Seccombe	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt H. Soo	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt J. E. Hallows	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt J. G. Adamson	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt M. H. Etherton	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt McNive	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt C. R. Russell	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt W. F. Russell	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt D. Wilmot	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt P. Marsh	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt S.V. Mefford	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt R. J. Debenham	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt A. K. McGonigle	Gunner
Gunner	Sgt D. Parker	Gunner
Gunner	Vacant	
Gunner	Vacant	
Gunner	Vacant	
Gunner	Vacant	
Gunner	Vacant	
Signaller	Flt Lt P. W. Hayes	GD/Sigs
Signaller	Flt Lt G. T. Jones	GD/Sigs
Signaller	Flt Lt S. C. Chapple	GD/Sigs
Signaller	F/Sgt D. S. Callaway	Signaller
Signaller	F/Sgt L. F. Lloyd	Signaller
Signaller	F/Sgt L. A. Margerison	Signaller
Signaller	Sgt J. Walker	Signaller
Signaller	Sgt J. G. Woods	Signaller

RAF Stories

THE BLITZ ON BRITAIN - PHASE 2

Or "OOPS - Where did that one go?"

John King (First published in Flight Plan, the newsletter of the Air Crew Association – Toronto Branch)

History books dealing with the Second World War will lead the reader to believe that the bombing attacks on Great Britain ended with the defeat of the Third Reich's Luftwaffe in 1945. Certainly the inhabitants of the country felt that they would now be able to sleep peacefully in their beds once again. However, for many members of the population, particularly those residing in certain coastal regions, there was scarcely a slackening of the bombing apart from a temporary respite following the victory celebrations. This hiatus was a result of the attacker's need to reorganize and rearm prior to commencing the next round. What will be even more surprising to the uninformed reader is the fact that this second phase of the Blitz was conducted by none other than that stalwart creator of victory, Bomber Command.

Although some evidence exists showing that both Fighter Command and the USAF occasionally participated, the continuation of the onslaught was almost entirely conducted by Bomber Command. This article shall concentrate on the efforts of that Command. The initial series of attacks began as soon as the main force of Bomber Command had re-equipped with the Avro Lincoln, the successor to the Lancaster. Looking every inch a stable-mate of its more illustrious predecessor, the Lincoln represented only a slight improvement in terms of performance and offensive capability. For the many aircrew in the Command who had previously flown the Lanc there was little to distinguish the two aircraft. The pilot and flight engineer still had four Merlins to cater to; true, they were Packard built and developed slightly more power, but otherwise they handled the same.

For the navigators there was the same old 'Gee box and a later version of H₂S to go along with an API (Air Position indicator). But they still carried the large green mailbag sized nav bags loaded down with 'Topos', Mercators, Gee charts and a weighty box of pencils and dividers. Dalton ICAN computers continued to provide heading, drift, ground speed and track-made-good data. Accurate plotting on the charts was assured, thanks to Mr. Douglas' transparent protractor. The principal approach aid, also the navigator's responsibility, was the Eureka, Rebecca/BABS combination.

Signallers, no longer responding to the appellation 'WOP', found the ever-familiar wireless sets still comprised the TR1154/55 combination. Their back-rest was still the front main spar and, as in the Lane, almost all the interior heating system was ducted past them before any attempt was made to distribute it to any of the other deserving but long-suffering crew members. Bomb-aimers were now fully qualified navigators and played their part in aeronautical affairs by looking after the H₂S and a Mark XIV Bombsight. One unit, No.44 (Rhodesia) Squadron, was equipped with the Stabilized Automatic Bomb Sight (SABS), Britain's answer to the Norden, but to many of the crews its functions remained a mystery. Maintenance crews consistently denied all knowledge of its workings; consequently, it was not blessed with the degree of serviceability and accuracy that its designers intended.

The remaining two members of the crew, the air gunners, were more exposed to the advances in technology than any of the others. The mid upper now found himself surrounded by twin 20mm cannons mounted in a Bristol B.17 turret while the rear gunner nestled between twin 50 cal. guns in a Boulton Paul product. Unfortunately the 20mm cannons were not blessed with the greatest degree of reliability and were prone to stoppages after a good rally of half-a-dozen rounds. Both turrets were equipped with gyro stabilized gun sights but suffered an equal amount of biting cold draughts as their Lancaster predecessors. The 'corkscrew' remained the only approved evasive manoeuvre.

Armed with this shapely example of metallic elegance, Bomber Command launched its first offensive sometime in the late 1940s, probably starting in 1947. Ostensibly, the principal targets were the strategic resources contained in the poorly defended coastal regions: Targets such as Theddlethorpe, North and South Donna Nook, Wainfleet, Chesil Beach and Jurby come readily to mind. They were each subject to a continual campaign, both day and night (weather permitting), which was to endure for years. Other targets were situated in inland areas at such sites as Othmoor, Berners Heath, and Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland.

For the majority of these attacks the main weapon of mass destruction employed by the Command at this time was the standard 25-pound smoke/flash bomb. Fortunately, due to the combination of an extremely high degree of precision attained by the crews and the low yield of the weapon, civilian casualties were kept to an absolute minimum, consistent with the achievement of the strategic aim.

In the main, attacks were conducted by visual means at medium levels and without the aid of the Marker Force, now reduced to two Hemswell based Mosquito squadrons - Nos. 109 and 139 (Jamaica) Sqn. Single aircraft attacks were preferred and routings were uncomplicated, usually following a direct line from base to target and return.

However, on those occasions when Command HQ felt it necessary to mount a concerted effort in an attempt to increase the target productivity, devious routings were devised. These involved exposing the main force to the rigors of continental airspace (ably defended by the night fighters of RAF Germany and the various NATO defence systems) before pouncing upon some unsuspecting target within UK.

Early in the campaign reports began to filter back to the bases of instances of wanton destruction and wayward bombing. Almost all of these incidents occurred at night and soon it became apparent that the unheated light series bomb carriers which supported the mighty load of up to eight 25 pounders were subject to accumulations of ice. Since the bomb-aimer could not witness the release of the weapon he would be unaware if it were hung up. Continued wandering around the target area, with the bomb doors open, would sometimes result in a delayed release. The suggestion that these were deliberate attempts by bomb-aimers to protest at the increased price of a pint of wallop were disproved. Little or no collateral damage was suffered, nor injuries sustained by the civilian population as a result of the 'Irregular Releases', as these events became known. Damage appears to have been restricted to open fields and achieved little more than scaring the living daylight out of some unsuspecting cattle; however, this was about to change with the advent of more modern aircraft and equipment.



An unidentified airman holding two of the deadly projectiles mentioned in the text (WF490 of XV Squadron stands behind). *Bob Cole*

By 1949 it was apparent to their lordships at Air House that there might be a serious punch-up in the offing against the Russians and the Lincoln did not seem to be aptly suited to perform this new task. The first jet bomber, the Canberra, was not due to enter into service until 1951 and the first of the V bombers; the Valiant was even further away. Therefore, as a stopgap solution some 90-odd Boeing B-29A aircraft were borrowed from the USAF. Known as the Washington B. Mk. 1 they were introduced into service in 1950, eventually equipping a total of eight squadrons in Bomber Command.

The changes for the crewmembers was dramatic. Firstly, the crew of 10 enjoyed the comfort of a fully air-conditioned environment and, secondly, for all there was a major advance in the technology. Some crew roles changed; the nav-plotter now doubled as bomb-aimer. For others their titles changed; air gunners, housed in the rear portion of the fuselage, now became Left and Right Scanners, working under the direction of a Central Fire Controller. A separate rear gunner was only carried on major exercises. Undoubtedly, the B-29 was designed for the betterment of the flight engineers in this world; their tasks were numerous and broad-based. They became responsible for the calculation of the fuel required, determination of the weight and balance, calculation of take-off weights and performance, cruise speeds and the management of the many aircraft systems. Pressurization brought forth comfort levels never before experienced by the Command, even at 30,000 feet gone

were the draughts and icy blasts; gone were the dried up and curly crisp sandwiches which had masqueraded in the guise of in-flight rations. Their places were taken by a shirtsleeve climate, heated urns of coffee, soup and hot tinned meals.

At last the Command had an aircraft with which it could mount a renewed offensive upon the unsuspecting British public. At last, sorties (the USAF insisted that they were 'missions'!) of truly long endurance could be

flown; flights of ten, twelve and even fourteen hours were not uncommon. On at least one occasion a full 24 hours airborne was achieved. However, a policy of minimum flight endurance resulted in even a session of circuit bashing being scheduled for 6 hours. That could be positively mind numbing.

One of the early recorded attacks by a B-29 Washington on a civilian target took place in 1951. This incident which occurred very late at night involved a single aircraft from No. 44 (Rhodesia) Sqn. that delivered a telling blow to the morale of the villagers of Spilsby, in Lincolnshire. It dropped a 25 lb. practice bomb slap in the middle of Post Office Lane.

The missile was actually destined for the Wainfleet range but, being loathe to terminate a sortie because of scattered cloud, the bomb-aimer (who also filled the role of Squadron Nav Leader) continued to direct the aircraft towards an illuminated triangle which, he was convinced, denoted the target. The radar Navigator, who sat in the seclusion of the rear fuselage and was not involved in the process of visual bombing, chanced to glance up from the novel he was reading just as the call "Bomb Gone" was made. Much to his horror the distinctive outlines of the Lincolnshire coastline and the Wash (containing the target area) were clearly visible on his scope - far removed from the aircraft's position.

The bomb struck full and square on the middle of said lane and created a crater measuring all of three feet across and at least six inches in depth. The brilliant flash and accompanying thud of impact quickly drew the attention of the local constabulary who immediately sealed off the area and arranged for all traffic (such as might have appeared at that remote place and at that unearthly hour) to be diverted. As daylight broke the outline of a sinister shape could be discerned lying at the bottom of the crater. The senior member of the constabulary (better known as the local 'Bobby') instantly recognized the object for what it was - an unexploded bomb. Rapid action resulted in the evacuation of numerous households and immediate assistance was requested from the nearby RAF station. It so happened that the nearest station, Coningsby, was also the parent unit of the perpetrator of this unprovoked attack.

Realizing that an Irregular (not to put too fine a point on it) Release had occurred, the crew immediately returned to base and duly made a report of the incident. They were still being de-briefed in the Operations Block when news of the point of impact came through. With a remarkable sense of duty and alacrity, the Navigation Leader offered to accompany the Station Armament officer, who had been alerted to deal with the reported UXB. Together they set off for the scene of the incident, just a few miles away. Their arrival was impeded by the 'Bobby' now dutifully protecting the deserted properties in Post Office Lane. It took a good deal of convincing before they were allowed to approach the gaping hole in the road surface, There they could clearly see the item which had given rise to the introduction of the emergency evacuation. It lay ominously at the bottom of the shallow indent that would have hardly been acknowledged by a passing Jeep; 25 pounds of inert bomb case. The gallant navigator and armament officer laid claim to the harmless lump of metal and carried it past the amazed policeman, recommending that he allow the weary occupants to return to their homes. In Spilsby they still talk of the night that they were bombed; visitors often murmuring sympathetic comments at the vision of hordes of Nazi bombers releasing their deadly loads on the innocent residents. Their error is seldom corrected by the locals!

But it was not only Lincolnshire that was subjected to these indignities; this writer was witness to an incident in which all eight bombs from the rear bomb-bay of a Washington departed the aircraft the instance that the doors were opened. The aircraft was preparing to start a night visual bombing detail using the target at Jurby, on the Isle of Man, when a visual check of the status of the bombs through an observation panel in the rear bomb-bay access hatch revealed that they had already departed and were on their way, earthwards. The simultaneous arrival of the bombs was seen by the range safety officer who, in a very agitated voice, instructed the crew to cease bombing since it appeared that the wrong target had been selected. We did not have the heart to tell him that indeed, none of his precious targets had been selected, nor that the danger of continued bombing had already been resolved by virtue of a total lack of remaining weapons.

The god, Thor, was acting very benignly that night since there was no damage whatsoever to any life or property from that incident in fact, the exact point of impact was never established. Presumably we had been over the Irish Sea at the moment the bombs released. Any number of subsequent attempts to reproduce this fault during the ensuing inquiry failed to provide an answer. It remained an unsolved mystery.

However, for other parts of Lincolnshire there were even more spectacular incidents in store. Fortunately, they were spread over several years and did not constitute a concentrated assault. One of the more infamous occurred one night in the village of Theddlethorpe in the early 1950s. It was not long after Bomber Command had at last entered the jet age with the introduction of the Canberra. Although not capable of carrying a bomb load as large as the Lanc/Lincoln, let alone the B-29, it could, nevertheless deliver its message from above 30,000 ft. provided, that is, that the target was visible. We have already seen that that, in itself, could present a problem.

On the night in question, a No. 101 Squadron bomb-aimer, lay prone in the Canberra's nose and saw what certainly appeared to be a triangle of lights surrounded by an illuminated circle alongside the shoreline. Convinced that he had the target nicely lined up in his bomb-sight graticule, and with scarcely more than a couple of calls of "Left – left – Steady!", he dispatched one well-aimed 25 lb. bomb. Had, in fact, the triangle of lights been those of Theddlethorpe's No. 1 target, he would have achieved a very creditable assessment of his bombing accuracy; however, the lights he saw were those of a traffic roundabout. The bomb landed squarely on the property of the very adjacent public house, the "Prussian Queen"!

The missile struck the roof of an outhouse attached to the pub - the ladies 'loo'. Penetrating deeply into the single storied building it passed through the centre of the toilet seat (naturally, down) and punched out the bottom of the bowl. This time both Fate and Mother Nature combined to prevent any injuries - the toilet was unoccupied at the time of impact! To prove that he was not lacking in a sense of humour, or possibly because he was grateful for the additional publicity, the publican presented the toilet seat to the squadron, based nearby at Binbrook. For several years a photo of the broken toilet featured on the unit's Christmas card and the seat, as a trophy, graced a wall of the crew room. Some say that the landlord dismissed the whole affair as being nothing more than a flash in the pan!

Not wishing to be out-done by the Main Force crews, even the small but efficient Marker Force, now similarly equipped with the Canberra, played their part in a very colourful way. On one occasion a Wing Commander, practicing the art of Shallow Dive-bombing (used for target marking), managed to confuse the bomb release and R/T buttons. These attacks were started at about 3000 feet and 250 knots; following a steep dive the bomb was released about 700 feet above the target using the famous TLAR (That Looks About Right) sight in combination with the Mark 1 Eye-ball. The buttons were mounted on the control spectacle, quite separate from each other. However, this newcomer to the task pushed the R/T button at the bottom of the dive over the Wainfleet salt marshes in the belief that it was the bomb release; he then pulled up steeply and pressed the bomb release to advise the range of the release of his target indicator. Viewing the trajectory of the cascading 500 lb. green TI. as it arched through the night sky, in the process of being tossed a good mile away from the target; must have been a thrilling experience for the range safety officer - it was certainly an illuminating one for the aircrew!

FRIENDLY FIRE

By John King

As the intensity of the Cold War increased, in the 1950's the Royal Air Force was faced with prospect of having to defend its own airfields in the event of a surprise attack. The size of the Army was such that the RAF could not expect any assistance from that quarter, neither was the RAF Regiment capable of providing more than a token force for this task. Therefore it was decreed that all aircrew would be trained in the basics of Airfield Defence so that, in the event of their being caught on the ground at the time of hostile action, they would be formed into local defence platoons. To achieve this aim, aircrew were required to attend a one-week course at their base, administered by the resident RAF Regt. team. This small team often comprised an officer and several instructor NCOs.

In 1952 the crew of No. 44 Sqn.'s WF508 attended their annual ground defence course at RAF Coningsby. Their training covered lectures on weapons, NBC warfare, tactics and other associated subjects. However, for most the high spot was usually the time spent on the 25 yards range firing the pistol, rifle and Bren gun; WF508's crew were no different in this respect. I well recall the instructions for operating the Bren gun – to conserve ammunition we were admonished to limit it to "short service bursts of three rounds". This was delivered in a staccato voice with a strong 'Cor Blimey' accent. The RAF Regt. instructors were, in the main,

somewhat humourless and dull in their presentation but one was never in any doubt of their knowledge of the subject, especially when it came to weaponry. But there are always exceptions to the rule.

In addition to the normal weapons training it was also felt that aircrew should be able to provide the station's defences with at least a smattering of anti-tank and mortar fire. For this purpose the use of the PIAT (Projectile Infantry Anti-Tank) and the 2 inch mortar weapons was demonstrated. The local Regt. Warrant Officer was the specialist for these weapons and so acted as our instructor. Our crew were the first destined to receive this training and, since it called for an area much larger than the 25 yards range, an area behind the Sergeants Mess was selected for this demonstration. This grassy area gave direct access to the station's sports field and so opened up a 'range' of several hundred yards, culminating at the station boundary delineated by the lane that led down beside the airfield to a well-known watering hole, the Dog at Dogdyke.

Our crew gathered behind the Sgts. Mess for this demonstration pleased to be outside on a bright morning rather than in the lecture hut. The first weapon chosen by our esteemed instructor was the PIAT. As a target he had brought along a large barrel made of compressed cardboard and this he positioned some 50 yards from the small sandbagged parapet he had prepared. The missiles were inert, possibly sand-filled, and hit and penetrated the barrel with a satisfying 'Thud'. The weapon had a massive recoil kick once the spring-loaded firing pin was released and it took considerable effort to compress the spring again during the reloading process. Once we had both seen the weapon fired and a few had tried it ourselves, our W.O. instructor moved on to demonstrate the 2 inch mortar.

Prior to firing this weapon the W.O. announced that he would be using smoke bombs and would demonstrate "a high trajectory shot followed by a low trajectory one – in each case you will observe the smoke commence to trail behind the bomb before reaches its target". That said he promptly picked up a triple container of bombs and proceeded to tip the first round out onto the grass. As it landed, nose first; we all sucked in a deep breath, accompanied by a backward step, as we clearly saw the red and yellow bands on the bomb's body denoting high explosive contents. "But then", we rationalized, "maybe the 'Rock Apes' (our colloquial term of endearment for the Regt. personnel) use a different system of markings." His next action positively had us astounded as we observed him load the bomb upside down into the barrel! Having announced a 'high trajectory shot' he pulled the short lanyard which released the firing pin, producing a loud 'click' but fortunately no other reaction. "Ah! Misfire", proclaimed our instructor and promptly tipped the bomb out of the barrel. "Not the approved method of dealing with a misfire, but it does the trick, don't it?" Thus reassured we watched the subsequent correctly loaded missile sail across the sports field, across the road, and land in the garden of an adjacent house! No sign of the promised 'trail of smoke' but the resulting distinct 'crump', puff of smoke and small shower of dirt spoke volumes. It literally left us speechless. However, the W.O., having seen none of this as his line of sight to the target was obscured by the sandbags, proceeded to load a second bomb in preparation for the promised low trajectory shot. On reflection I am amazed that not one of us made any comment or protest despite having witnessed what was obviously an HE bomb being used as a gardening implement.

Puzzled, but undismayed at the lack of smoke produced by his first shot, our instructor proceeded to fire the second, carrying similar markings, into the hockey goalmouth about 150 yards to his front. This time he noted both the lack of smoke and the telltale impact of an HE round. Rising from his firing position he announced, in a matter-of-fact manner, "The remainder of this demonstration is adjourned to the site of the Board of Inquiry". Who said he lacked humour? We did venture as far as inspecting the damage to the sports field but deigned to ignore the damage to private property across the road!

The conclusion to this event? Well, I never did hear the outcome as shortly after I left the squadron and exchanged my exalted rank of sergeant to that of officer cadet and commenced pilot training. But I have never forgotten the lesson I learned that day – it pays to be curious; don't always assume that your superiors know it all, and when in doubt ask questions!



RAF Marham

Plan of RAF Marham. Any details of where the squadrons were based, or the hardstands where individual planes resided will be most welcome.



Marham's maintenance area plus several Washingtons.
(*Gerry Beauvoisin*)



Photo Corner



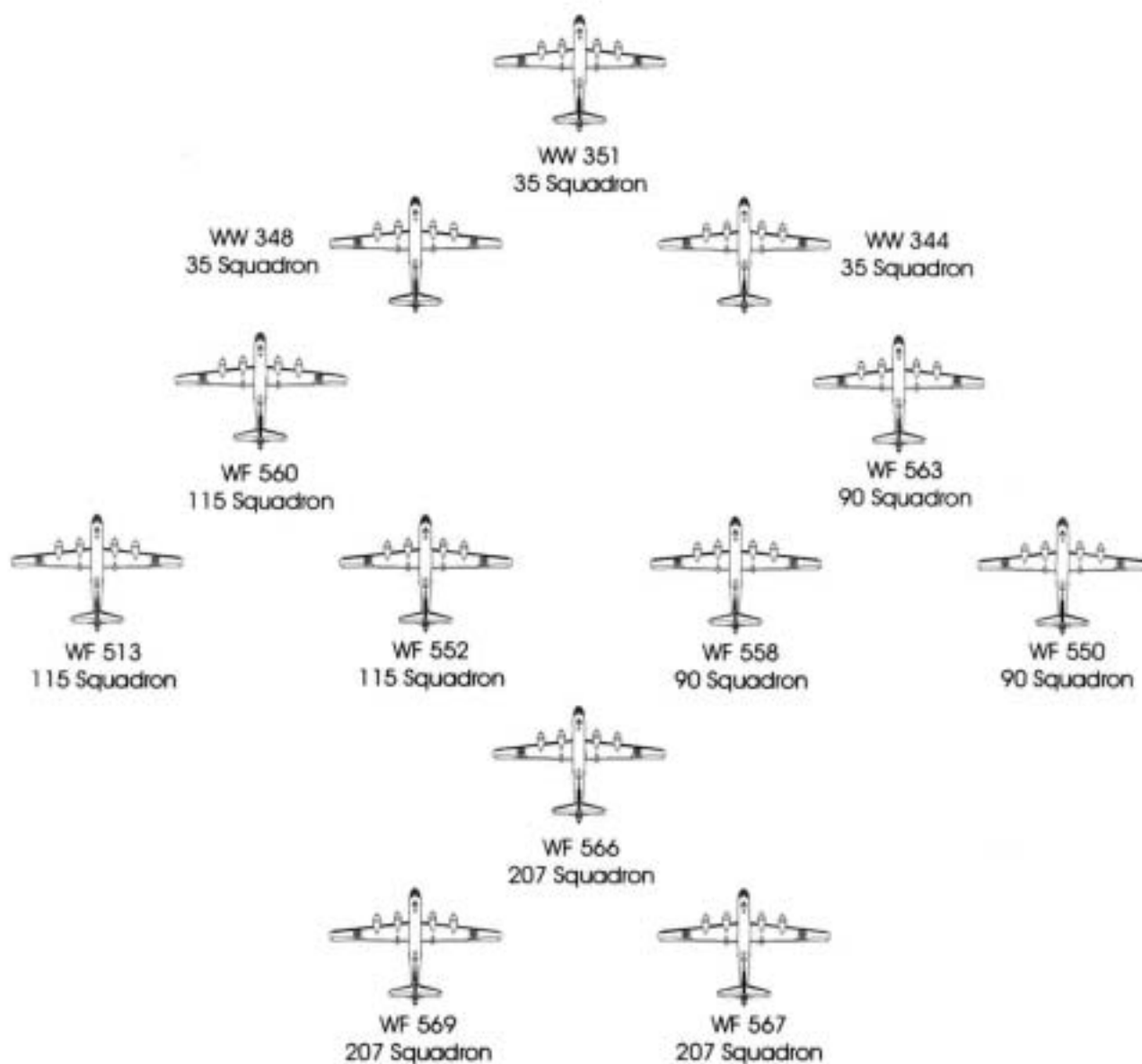
115 Squadron Formation over Odiham during the review. WF513, WF560, WF552 (*Jeff Brown*)



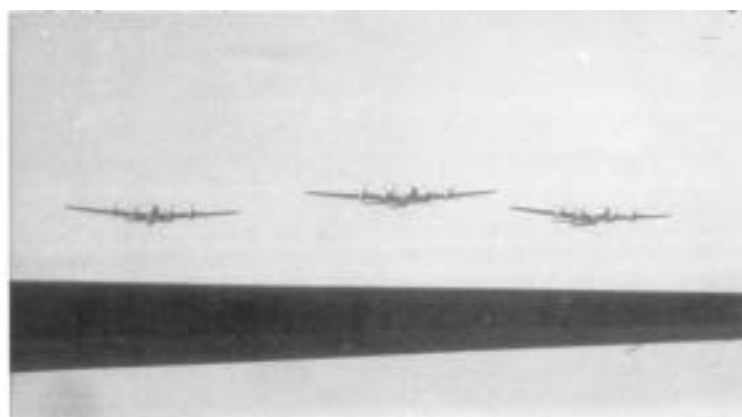
WF565 polished up and ready for inspection. (*John Laing*)

The Washingtons scheduled to take part in the Coronation Review were polished with duraglit, a task that took many men several weeks to complete. Unfortunately, having been polished to perfection, WF565 suffered an engine failure while being flown from Marham to Odiham. This left the engine an oily mess and required much extra work by ground crews at Odiham. All was cleaned up but oil still seeped from all openings in the nacelle – something only cured by jamming all the available rags under the cowlings and closing the fasteners. It worked and she remained clean for the inspection!

Coronation Review Fly Past Formation



Coronation review formation practice taken from Marham. (*John Laing*)



Coronation review formation practice. (*Gerry Beauvoisin*)

Contacts

A list of those people who have made contact with me – if you wish to contact any of them, let me know and I will pass on your request:

David	Alexander	ASF Marham
Phil	Batty	44 Squadron Navigator
Gerry	Beauvoisin	57 Squadron Air Gunner
Ray	Belsham	ASF Engine Fitter Marham
Joe	Bridge	Webmaster, RAF Marham Website
Jeff	Brown	149 Squadron Air Gunner
William	Butt	115 Squadron Crew Chief
Katie	Chandler	Widow of Vern Chandler, A/C 44-69680 (WF437)
Pat	Chandler	Daughter of Vern Chandler, A/C 44-69680 (WF437)
Brian	Channing	149 Squadron Navigator
Bob	Cole	149 Squadron Electrical Fitter (WF498)
Terry	Collins	XV Squadron Engine Fitter
Doug	Cook OBE	44 Squadron Co-Pilot (WF508)
John (Buster)	Crabbe	207 Squadron Crew Chief
Don	Crossley	90 Squadron Signaller
Howard	Currie	44 Squadron Pilot
Mike	Davies	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Keith	Dutton	?? Squadron Air Gunner
Ken	Firth	44 Squadron Air Gunner
Charles	Fox	Bombardier 42-94052 (WF444)
Dave	Forster	Researching RAF ELINT Squadrons
John	Forster	207 Squadron / WCU Air Gunner
Ray	Francis	57 Squadron Association
Gordon	Galletly	44 Squadron Navigator / Bombardier
Norman	Galvin	XV Squadron Engine Fitter
Alan	Gamble	90 Squadron Radio Operator
Brian	Gennings	Ground Maintenance Hanger
Bob	Goater	XV Squadron Instrument NCO
Tony	Goodsall	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Ken	Harding	44 Squadron Signaller
Roy	Hild	Pilot 42-94052 (WF444)
Tony	Hill	Archivist P&EEE Shoeburyness
Julian	Horn	RAF Watton Website
Henry	Horscroft	44 Squadron Association
Brian	Howes	115 Squadron
John	Howett	A/C 44-61688 (WF498)
Ernest	Howlett	44 Squadron Engine Fitter (WF512)
Jimmy	James	Engine Fitter
David	Karr	Nephew of William Karr, XV Squadron Air Gunner
J.	Kendal (Ken)	90 Squadron ??
Andrew	Kerzner	Tail Gunner 44-69680 (WF437)
John	King	44 Squadron Flight Engineer

John	Laing	207 Squadron Air Gunner
George	Lane	Navigator 44-69680 (WF437)
Peter	Large	Brother of Edward Large, Pilot 44 Squadron
Pete	Lewis	149 Squadron Engine Fitter
G.	Maloney	44 Squadron Pilot (WF508)
Patrick	McGrath	115 Squadron Pilot
Tom	McKosker	A/C 44-61634 (WF439)
P.	McLaughlin	Engineering Officer, Pyote Texas
Peter	Morrey	90 Squadron Air Gunner
Mo	Mowbrey	57 Squadron Air Gunner
Ralph	Painting	57 / 192 Squadron Flight Engineer
Tom	Pawson	35 Squadron Signaller
Harry	Rickwood	149 Squadron Electrical Fitter
Harold	Roberts	Witness to crash of WF502
Ivor	Samuel	207 Squadron Air Gunner
William	Santavicca	Gunner 'Look Homeward Angel', 6 th Bomb Group Association
S	Smisek	Son of A/C of City of San Francisco (K-29, 330 th Bomb Group)
Joe	Somerville	Engine Fitter Marham
Derek	Stanley	57 Squadron radio Engineer
Jim	Stanley	
Bill	Stevenson	35 / 635 Squadron Association
Albert	Urquhart	Left Gunner K-39, 330 th Bomb Group
Colin	Williams	XV Squadron Navigator / Bombardier
Robert	Willman	A/C 42-93976 (WF440)
Charlie	Woolford	90 Squadron