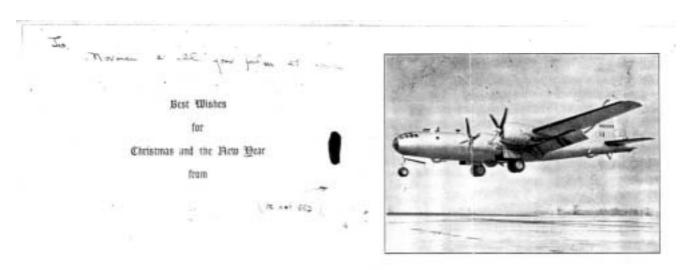




Newsletter
Issue 4

Christmas 2002



Cover photos

Top WF512 (44 Squadron) at dispersal, RAF Coningsby (*Ernest Howlett*)

Centre Left By way of Christmas greeting to you all a, rather poor I'm afraid, copy of a XV Squadron

Christmas card from 1952. The cover shown above with the interior below. Perhaps oddly, the depicted plane, seen landing on its delivery flight and still wearing its US serial, is 44-61599, which never served with XV squadron, serving only with the WCU where it was coded FB-K

and WF434. (Terry Collins)

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Washington Times newsletter. With Christmas imminent (or perhaps just past if I have missed the last post to your area!) I have included a copy of a Washington Christmas card to give the cover at least a Christmas feeling although I have refrained from including holly and reindeer! If anyone has other examples of Christmas cards showing, or related, to Washingtons I would be most interested in seeing them.

I also want to thank all of you who responded to my request for further articles. Without wishing to put you off sending any more to me, I now have sufficient articles for some more issues so thank you all very much and will consequently be asking for your 'subs' when I post out issue 5 during the spring!

In the issue 5:

The Historical info chapter in this issue contains the last of the more detailed information that I have managed to collect on the WWII exploits of the 'to be' Washingtons. I hope to get some more supplied soon to cover WF442 or 42-65274 Bad Penny of the 40th BG and the oldest of the Washingtons (Bad Penny being the only Washington that deployed to India). However if this does not materialise then I will cover a number of those B-29s for which I have sketchy information only. I intend to go through the Washingtons in RAF serial number order but if you wish a particular plane to be covered early on then please let me know and I will include it. Also to be included are an article on B-29 gunnery and a plan of RAF Waddington, the last of the four bases that housed Washingtons. I will also include a roster for No 149 Squadron, providing that this has arrived in time!

Finally I will take this opportunity to wish everyone a **Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year!**

Newsletter Contact

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

Historical Info

WF444 (42-94052)

Built by Boeing at their Renton factory 42-94052 was a B-29A (all Renton built B-29s being B-29As). Completed on February 19, 1945 it was delivered to the Denver (Colorado) modification centre on February 21 where it remained for just over one month having the latest changes added to the basic airframe as built at Renton. On March 30, 1945 it arrived at Kearney AAF in Nebraska where crew 803 of the 458th Squadron, 330th BG, 20th Air Force took her over on April 1. After flight-testing the new plane crew 803 deployed to North Field on Guam, leaving the US from Mather Field in Sacramento California on April 7, 1945 and arriving at North Field on Guam April 11, 1945 having made refuelling stops at Hickam field on Hawaii and Kwajalein atoll en-route.

While deploying the planes were factory fresh, carrying only the standard US markings and serial. However, upon arriving on Guam the maintenance crews painted the large block K on the tail denoting the 330th BG and the 36 on the rear fuselage and outer engine cowls turning B-29 42-94052 into K-36. The crew also christened their plane 'City of Terre Haute' after the hometown of their commander 1st Lt Earl Meyers, this being indicated on a standardized map image applied to both sides of the nose.

The morning after they arrived on Guam crew 803 met their 'buddy' crew commanded by Lt A. Carle. These two crews had trained together at Walker AFB in Kansas and become close friends. Lt Carle's crew had arrived a few days earlier and, having just returned from their (and the 330th BG's) first mission the previous night, were soon off to be briefed for their second mission, a night raid on Tokyo scheduled for the night of April 13/14. As Charles Fox remembered 'it was a joyous reunion, one that has many memories for me. Lt Muhlenberg, their bombardier, was the first person I met (January 1944) when I transferred from the US Army to the US Army Air Force, and began training for aircrew service at Santa Anna. Unfortunately, this was our last time together. They did not return from that mission'. Lt Carle's plane was damaged by flak over Tokyo and ditched a short way off shore. The position was known and as it happened crew 803's first mission was to search for any survivors from their buddy's crew. No bombs were carried, just auxiliary fuel tanks in both bomb bays and extra survival gear. Nothing was found for unknown to the 20th AF the survivors had been picked up by the Japanese and imprisoned in a Tokyo Jail.

Sadly, the survivors of Carle's crew were to die in their cells a few weeks later on the night of May 23/24 during another night attack on Tokyo by the B-29s. The jail guards released the Japanese prisoners but kept the American airmen locked in where they perished in the fire. After the war, the Japanese prison guards responsible were convicted of war crimes and put to death. The 314th BW and crew 803 took part in that raid and Charles remembers 'we bombed the area where they were imprisoned and they lost their lives to the fire that burned out the area. They were denied release from their cells. I feel responsible for their deaths, although there is no proof that the bombs we dropped were responsible for starting the fires in that area.'

Crew 803 flew a total of 30 missions to Japan, 26 of them in K-36 (in fact Charles and the Navigator, 2nd Lt Ruddell Reed, flew 31 missions having both flown as replacement members in other crews). As for K-36, 330th BG records show that she flew 32 missions although who flew the other 6 or to what targets is not known!

Most of the missions flown by crew 803 are listed in the record of service for Charles Fox shown on the following page although the first five appeared on an earlier sheet. These were:

April 15, 'Dumbo' mission searching for the downed B-29 crew.

April 21, daylight medium altitude attacking Kamikaze airfields at Kushira on Kyushu.

April 24, daylight medium altitude precision mission to an aero engine factory at Tachikawa.

April 26, return to the Kamikaze airfields on Kyushu.

April 29, yet another mission against the Kamikaze airfields on Kyushu.

Which mission was flown with another crew is not known. Also, four of the missions listed were flown in other aircraft: April 26 (in K-33), April 29 (in K-56), June 1 (in K-40) and June 18 (in K-39).

K-36 returned to the USA as part of the Sunset Project, departing North Field, Guam on November 1, 1945 piloted by Lt E Smith. Crew 803 who had flown her for most of her missions had returned earlier, ferrying a 73rd BW B-29 'Shady Lady 2' back in September.

After returning to USA, K-36 was stored at Victory Ville until being assigned to SAC and the 301st Bomb Wing at Smokey Hill AFB on October 18, 1948. After serving with the 301st she was once more placed in storage on August 1, 1949 this time at Kelly AFB. After being refurbished at Robins between April 19, 1950 and June 23, 1950 she was assigned to the RAF arriving at Marham on June 28, 1950.

When with the RAF she served entirely with 115 Squadron at Marham before being passed to the disposal flight on July 1, 1953 and returning to the US on August 25, 1953. Arriving in the US she was stored at Davis Monthan before being scrapped (or reclaimed as this was termed!) on September 8, 1954.

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Crew 803 pose in front of K-36, 'City of Terre Haute'.

Standing L-R: S/Sgt Russell L. Lawson, radio operator; S/Sgt Robert E Miller, left gunner; S/Sgt Sheldon F Pond, right gunner; T/Sgt Louis R Ormsby, CFC; 1st Lt Earl W Myers, A/C; 2nd Lt Charles R Fox, bombardier; 2nd Lt Ruddell Reed Jr., navigator; 2nd Lt Roy C Hild, pilot; 1st Lt Clyde W Brown Jr., radar operator.

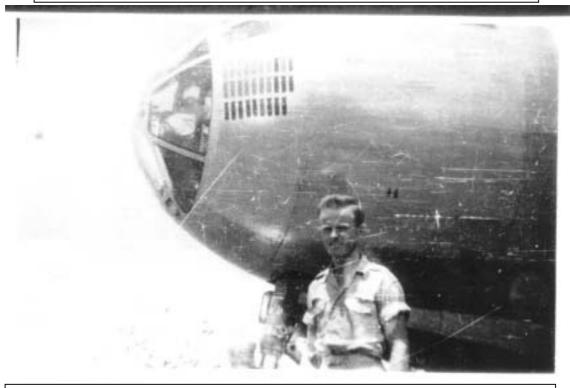
Kneeling L-R: M/Sgt James D Webb, flight engineer; Sgt Philip Pecuch, tail gunner. (*Roy Hild*)



K-36 on her hardstand in the 330th BG's area of North Field Guam. Roy took several rolls of film while on Guam but unfortunately, after returning home he discovered that most were ruined, leaving only a few viewable. (*Roy Hild*)



Side view of K-36 resting on her hardstand. The tents arranged around the periphery of the hardstand would be engineering tents – no high tech maintenance facilities there! (*Roy Hild*)



Lt Roy Hild in front of K-36 showing 29 of the eventual 32 bomb symbols. Roy and crew 803 flew K-36 on 26 missions, who flew her on the others is not known. (*Roy Hild*)

SUNSET PROJECT NOVEMBER 1, 1945

330TH BOLDARDLEAT GROUP PILOT'S FLILEY

DEPARTURE FROM GUAM

AIRPLANE COLLENDER	AIRPLANE	START M.G.	TAXI	TAKE OFF
Kinnaird	44-61669 (K-15	2145	2150	2200
Riggs	42-9390 <u>8</u> (K-3]	2150	2155	2295
Smith, E	. 42- <u>94</u> 05 <u>2 (K-</u> 35	6)2155	2200	2210
Gunther	42-24906 (M-4.)	2200	2205	2215
Gilbert	44-70016 (K-40	2205	2210	2220
Ormand	.44-61 <u>537 (</u> K	2210	2215	2225
Johnston	12-9402/ (K-1	2215	2220 _	2230
₩illman	1.2-93976 (K-1.	2220	2225	2235
Matthews	42- <u>9</u> 3957 (K-5)	2225	2230	_ 2240
Bradford	42-23278 (K-7)	2230	2235	2245
Hinzman	42-9398 <u>0</u> (K-8	2235	2240	2250
Eby	42-93971 (K-6	2240	2245	2255
Wolejko	42-94061 (0-5	1) 2245	2250	2300
Kellogg	42-94048 (K-2	2250	225	2305
Bryant	44-69872 (K-3	2255	2300	_ 2310
Trask	_42-93959 (M-5	2) <u>Spare</u>		
Hickerson	42-63566 (0-4	3)Spare	,	
Coblentz	44-69928 (K-1	1) Spare		

'Mission Flimsy' showing take off times for the first leg home on the Sunset Project. K-36 was due to take off at 22:10 hrs for the night time flight to Kwajalein Atoll. Note also K-1 piloted by Robert Willman taking off at 22:35 hrs. K-1 became WF440 and was the subject of the first 'Historical Info' article back in issue 1. (*Robert Willman*)

The B-29 "Washington" Bombsight

The B-29 "Washington" was equipped with the Norden Bombsight that was an innovation for most RAF bomb aimers since it is a tachometric bombsight, a type that many bomb aimers had never used. Until the arrival of the Washingtons most RAF bomb aimers had used the Mark XIV bombsight which was a vector instrument in that the bomb aimer was presented with a graticule (looking like an extended crucifix) projected onto a glass plate, the plate being gyro stabilized in the lateral plane: when the aircraft banked the graticule remained stabilized instead of swinging left or right. On a bombing run the bomb aimer's task was, by means of heading corrections passed orally to the pilot, to get the target tracking down the fore-and-aft graticule line and then to release the bomb manually once the target reached the crosswire. The accuracy of this method of bombing depended to a large extent on the accuracy of certain parameters (e.g. wind velocity) that the bomb aimer had to set manually into the Mark XIV's computer unit; other parameters such as altitude and air speed were fed into the computer unit automatically. The skill of getting the aircraft maneuvered such that it tracked accurately to the target and the accuracy of the timing in pushing the bomb release button were naturally also very important. With a tachometric bombsight like the Norden the bomb aimer operated the instrument so as to keep crosswires on the target continuously during the run-up to the target: in doing so the Norden bombsight was able to measure the groundspeed and drift of the aircraft and thus calculate the exact moment when the bomb(s) needed to be release in order to hit the target.

A further sophistication of the Washington's bombing equipment was the fact that the Norden bombsight was coupled to the Minneapolis-Honeywell C1 Autopilot. At the start of the bombing run the pilot would put control of the aircraft onto autopilot and would then hand control of the aircraft to the bomb aimer; as the bomb aimer operated the four control knobs on the bombsight in order to keep the crosswires on the target, so this automatically turned the aircraft left or right until the aircraft was in the correct release position when, automatically, the pneumatically-operated bomb doors would be opened, the bomb(s) released and the bomb doors then closed. The Washington's bomb jettison system was also more sophisticated than the Lincoln in that the bomb aimer merely had to operate a "Jettison" switch and the bomb doors would open automatically, all bombs would be released "safe" in a salvo after which the bomb doors would close automatically. On the Washington the bomb doors opened and closed extremely rapidly, being pneumatically operated rather than hydraulically operated as on the Lincoln aircraft.

Some RAF bomb aimers had had previous experience of tachometric bombsights: some Lincoln aircraft, including those of No.44 Squadron, had been equipped with the British Stabilized Automatic Bomb Sight (SABS) which was a tachometric instrument but not as sophisticated as the Norden.

The Norden Bombsight had been described by the USAF as being capable of dropping a bomb "in a pickle barrel from 20,000 feet" - an exaggeration but certainly indicative of the much better bombing accuracy obtainable with the instrument.

Prepared by: Sqn Ldr Gordon Galletly, RAF (Ret'd) (No.44 (Rhodesia) Squadron, RAF Wyton & RAF Coningsby, Nov.1949 - July 1952; Washington Conversion (July, RAF Marham, July 1952 - April 1953)



The author sitting at the bomb aimer's position. The Norden bomb sight is just visible to his front. (*Gordon Galletly*)

192 Squadron Washingtons

192 Squadron acquired three RB-29As as replacements for its three Lincolns in the first half of 1952. The first two aircraft (WZ966, WZ967) arrived at Watton in April and were joined by the third (WZ968) in June. Work then got underway at the CSE to develop an Elint fit for the aircraft.

The modifications, carried out by the CSE, involved the removal of all gun turrets and bombing equipment; fairing over of the rear observation blisters; the conversion of the rear pressurised compartment into an Elint compartment accommodating six Special Operators; the installation of two radomes under the rear fuselage for direction-finding antennae and the fitting of a number of other external antennae.

The primary tasks of the aircraft were to intercept, analyse and plot the positions of Soviet radar stations; and to intercept Soviet radio communications (including. transmissions between Soviet GCI stations and fighters). The six Special Operator positions comprised two VHF communications intercept positions (AN/ARR-5); two metric radar intercept and D/F positions (AN/APR-4); and two centimetric (X-band and S-band) radar intercept and D/F and positions (ARI 18021, AN/APR-9, AN/APA-11). Wire recorders were also carried to capture signals for later analysis.

Modification and installation of the first Washington, WZ966, began in May 1952. After a few minor problems work was finally completed at the end of September and the installation cleared early in October. Work was then started on the remaining two Washingtons. Using the experience gained in the first conversion these proceeded quickly and were completed in December.

During the first half of 1953 the squadron devoted its efforts to the training of its Washington crews and to the installation and trials of equipment in the aircraft. Training Special Operators was a particular problem since the Washington carried three times the number previously carried by the squadron's Lincolns. The training programme was helped by the acquisition of an unmodified Washington (WW346) in April, primarily for pilot continuation training. This aircraft helped take the load off the three Elint aircraft that were flown intensively on combined navigator/special operator training sorties. Training flights were also made to the Middle East for pilot/navigator training. The squadron took advantage of Exercise Jungle King, a NATO naval exercise, in March 1953 to fly a series of Elint sorties using all three Washingtons to locate and track the 'enemy' fleet using radar and voice intercepts.

The first Washington Elint operation carried out during 1953 (Operation REASON) was a one-off operation to intercept the new Soviet cruiser Sverdlov just north of the Shetlands following its visit to the UK in August 1953. This highly successful operation revealed the presence of X-band fire control radar on the ship. The squadron took part in a further NATO naval exercise at the end of September when a Washington carried out two long-range sorties in support of Exercise Mariner. The Washington was tasked with the detection and location of the 'enemy' Blue force fleet; the detection of AEW and anti-submarine aircraft radar transmissions; and interception of radio traffic between ships and between carriers and their aircraft on both VHF and UHF bands.

Operational flying began in earnest in October 1953 when two Washingtons, accompanied by WW346 as a support aircraft, were detached to Nicosia. Two Elint flights were carried out during the detachment, probably over the Black Sea.

During the next four years the Washingtons were flown on three basic types of Elint operation. The first, and least controversial, was the routine Border sortie. These were daylight sorties over West Germany, flown approximately 15 miles or so from the East German border. Roughly four of this type of sortie were flown each month, although these were often cancelled to make way for more important operations. The second type of operation was the shadowing of Soviet naval units. These operations were flown on an opportunity basis and occasionally required the diversion of aircraft from pre-planned Elint sorties. Strict rules governed the conduct of these flights, limiting how close the Washington could approach the Soviet vessel or vessels. The third type of operation, and the most risky, was the monthly series of Elint sorties flown in neutral or international airspace along the borders of the Soviet Union and its allies. The main areas of operations for these flights were the Baltic Sea (from Watton or Germany), the Black Sea (from Cyprus) and the Caspian Sea (from Iraq). The

Washingtons normally operated in conjunction with the squadron's Canberras – the Washingtons standing-off a minimum of 70 miles from Soviet territory and monitoring reactions to the Canberras, which approached to within 30 miles of the border. Each of these sorties was reviewed and authorized by the Foreign Minister, before it was flown. Although these operations were flown in international airspace at a respectable distance from Soviet borders they still risked a hostile reaction. To minimize the risk they were always flown in absolute darkness during the period of the new moon. Since very few Soviet air defence fighters then carried AI radar this offered some protection from interception.

In February 1956 Washington WZ966 carried out the first RAF Elint sortie into the Barents Sea. The 18 hour mission was made even more arduous by the failure of the aircraft heating system and the loss of one engine after 12 hours flying. Following this operation the Barents Sea was added to the list of regular operational areas. However subsequent sorties into the Barents Sea operated from Norwegian airfields.

In the autumn of 1956 a single Washington was detached to Malta for several months to compile an Egyptian electronic order of battle prior to the joint UK-French operations to reclaim the Suez Canal.

The Elint suite in the Washington was subject to rolling programme of improvements during the aircraft's service. The main problem was the accuracy of direction-finding, and thus the accuracy with which Soviet radar stations could be plotted. A number of improvements were made to the ARI 18021 equipment, and also to operating procedures; the ARI 18021 was later supplemented by the addition of US-built APA-17 direction-finders. Provision was also made for an alternative fit of additional HF and VHF receivers to enhance the aircraft's communications intercept capability. By the time the Washington was replaced by the Comet the intelligence-gathering ability of the aircraft had been transformed. Many of the lessons learnt with the Washington were applied directly to the Comet.

Maintenance of the 192 Squadron Washingtons was complicated by the withdrawal of the type from Bomber Command service in early 1954. This made spares harder to obtain and as a result the aircraft were sometimes flown with non-essential equipment inoperable. The autopilot seems to have been an early victim of the spares situation. Main plane corrosion problems were also encountered. By 1956 the squadron was complaining that it was becoming more difficult to meet its tasks as "the age and flying hours of the Washingtons increase".

The end for the Washington came December 1957. By then the maintenance situation had deteriorated to the point where it was considered unlikely the aircraft could successfully complete a sortie without some major unserviceability. As a result all three operational aircraft were stood down. Luckily the Washington replacement, the Comet R.2, was nearly ready for operations. In the end only two months were lost in the changeover, the Comet flying its first operational Elint sortie in February 1958.

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Although printed in the last issue, this photo fits so well with this article it is reproduced here too! WZ966 at RAF Watton. (*Julian Horn*)



A fine aerial photo of RAF Watton taken circa 1955. Two Lincolns and a Washington, presumably of 192 Squadron, are parked on the spectacle dispersals near the hangers to the top of the photo. The identities of the planes on the southern dispersal (to the bottom of the photo) are unknown. (*Julian Horn*)

Photo Corner



Keeping with the bomb aimer theme, a fine view of the Norden bombsight, this time in a USAAF B-29 on Guam during WWII. Lee Crowder, the bombardier and photographer was taking a serious risk in taking this photo. The Norden was a classified piece of equipment and if discovered the photo would have earned Lee a sever punishment! (*Lee Crowder* via *Jeff Brown*)



500lb General Purpose bombs waiting to be loaded on an RAF Washington, possibly WF556 of 90 Squadron at RAF Marham. (*Mike Davies*)



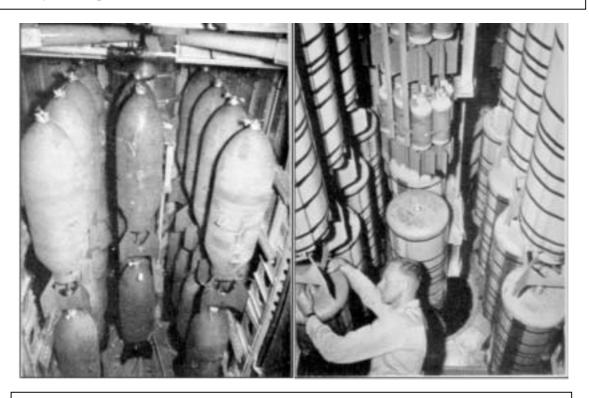
90 Squadron's WF556 having bombs loaded while at its dispersal. (Mike Davies)



Another of 90 Squadron's Washingtons, this time WF558. ($\it Mike Davies$)



Continuing the Christmas theme (if one ever really got gong!) WF567 of 207 Squadron sitting in a snowy landscape at Marham. (*John Broughton*)



Finishing up with a bombing photo. Two views of fully loaded bomb bays from USAAF B-29s during WWII. **Left**: 20*500lb general-purpose bombs per bomb bay, a load not unknown on the RAF Washingtons. **Right**: M69 aim able incendiary clusters. Although not, to my knowledge, carried by the RAF these were the bombs that wrought most of the destruction to Japanese cities. Weighing 500lb, after being dropped the M69 aim able clusters broke apart at a predetermined altitude and spread 76*6lb M69 incendiaries. Above the armourer's head is a single M26 fragmentation bomb cluster containing 20*M41 20lb fragmentation bombs. (19th BG History CD)

Contacts

On a sad note, Howard Currie, formerly a pilot with 44 Squadron and Tom McKosker, formerly A/C of 44-61634 (WF439) both died earlier this year.

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
TZ - 4' -	C1 11	W' 1 f W Ol 11 A /O 44 (0(00 (WE427)
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
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
Ray	Taneis	37 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	Vorr	Nonhow of William Korr VV Squadron Air Common
Javid J.	Karr Kendal (Ken)	Nephew of William Karr, XV Squadron Air Gunner 90 Squadron ??
	Kendar (Ken) Kerzner	-
Andrew	VCI THEI	Tail Gunner 44-69680 (WF437)

John King 44 Squadron Flight Engineer

JohnLaing207 Squadron Air GunnerGeorgeLaneNavigator 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

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', 6th Bomb Group Association S Smisek Son of A/C of City of San Francisco (K-29, 330th Bomb Group)

JoeSomervilleEngine Fitter MarhamDerekStanley57 Squadron radio Engineer

Jim Stanley

Bill Stevenson 35 / 635 Squadron Association

Albert Urquhart Left Gunner K-39, 330th Bomb Group

Colin Williams XV Squadron Navigator / Bombardier

Robert Willman A/C 42-93976 (WF440)

Charlie Woolford 90 Squadron



An unidentified Washington, probably of 44 Squadron. (Gordon Galletly)