



All these extracts were taken from BOMBER COMMANDS website at :-
<http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/sep44.html>

Dads Squadron : Rhodesian 44 Squadron (Also known in following extracts as No.5 Group.)

Sortie 1 18/19 September 1944

Bremerhaven: 206 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos of No 5 Group. No 100 Group's RCM Operations successfully kept German night fighters away from the force and only 1 Lancaster and 1 Mosquito were lost. This was another successful No 5 Group method raid and **Bremerhaven**, which had not been seriously bombed by the RAF before, required only this one knock-out blow by the comparatively small force of aircraft carrying fewer than 900 tons of bombs. The centre of the town, the port area and the suburb of Geestemünde were gutted by fire. 2,670 buildings were destroyed and 369 seriously damaged.

33 Mosquitos to Berlin and 6 to Rheine, 30 RCM sorties, 67 Mosquito patrols, 4 Lancasters minelaying in the River Weser. No losses.

Sortie 2 19/20 September 1944

227 Lancasters and 10 Mosquitos of Nos 1 and No 5 Groups to the twin towns of **Mönchengladbach/Rheydt**. 4 Lancasters and 1 Mosquito lost. Bomber Command claimed severe damage to both towns, particularly to Mönchengladbach.

The Master Bomber for this raid was Wing Commander **Guy Gibson**, VC, DSO, DFC flying a No 627 Squadron Mosquito from Coningsby, where he was serving as Base Operations Officer. Gibson's instructions over the target were heard throughout the raid and gave no hint of trouble, but his aircraft crashed in flames - according to a Dutch eyewitness - before crossing the coast of Holland for the homeward flight over the North Sea. There were no German fighter claims for the Mosquito; it may have been damaged by flak over the target or on the return flight, or it may have developed engine trouble. It was possibly flying too low for the crew to escape by parachute. Gibson and his navigator, Squadron Leader JB Warwick, DFC were both killed and were buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery at Steenbergen-en-Kruisland, 13km north of Bergen-op-Zoom. Theirs are the only graves of Allied servicemen in the cemetery.

Aircraft of No 100 Group flew 15 RCM and 17 Mosquito sorties without loss.

Sortie 3 23/24 September 1944

549 aircraft - 378 Lancasters, 154 Halifaxes, 17 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 3, 4 and 8 Groups to Neuss. 5 Lancasters and 2 Halifaxes lost. Bomber Command's report states that most of the bombing fell in the dock and factory areas.

136 Lancasters and 5 Mosquitos of No 5 Group to bomb the banks of the 2 parallel branches of the Dortmund-Ems canal at a point near Ladbergen, north of Münster, where the level of the canal water was well above the level of the surrounding land. Despite the presence of 7/10ths cloud in the target area, breaches were made in the banks of both branches of the canal and a 6-mile stretch of it was drained. Most of this damage was caused by 2 direct hits by 12,000lb Tallboy bombs dropped by aircraft of No 617 Squadron at the opening of the raid. 14 Lancasters -more than 10 per cent of the Lancaster force - were lost.

113 aircraft - 107 Lancasters, 5 Mosquitos, 1 Lightning - of No 5 Group carried out a supporting raid on the local German night-fighter **airfield** just outside **Münster**. 1 Lancaster lost. No photographic reconnaissance flight was carried out after this raid. Some of the bombs fell in Münster itself; the town records 100 high-explosive bombs but no fatal casualties.

38 Mosquitos to Bochum and 6 to Rheine night-fighter airfield, 31 RCM sorties, 45 Mosquito patrols. No aircraft lost.

Sortie 4 14/15 October 1944

Bomber Command continued Operation Hurricane by dispatching 1,005 aircraft - 498 Lancasters, 468 Halifaxes, 39 Mosquitos - to attack Duisburg again in 2 forces 2 hours apart. 941 aircraft dropped 4,040 tons of high explosive and 500 tons of incendiaries during the night. 5 Lancasters and 2 Halifaxes were lost.

Nearly 9,000 tons of bombs had thus fallen on Duisburg in less than 48 hours. Local reports are difficult to obtain. The Duisburg Stadtarchiv does not have the important Endbericht - the final report. Small comments are available: 'Heavy casualties must be expected.' 'Very serious property damage. A large number of people buried.' 'Thyssen Mines III and IV: About 8 days loss of production.' 'Duisburg-Hamborn: All mines and coke ovens lay silent.'

Not only could Bomber Command dispatch more than 2,000 sorties to Duisburg in less than 24 hours, but there was still effort to spare for No 5 Group to attack **Brunswick** with 233 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos. The various diversions and fighter support operations laid on by Bomber Command were so successful that only 1 Lancaster was lost from this raid. Bomber Command had attempted to destroy **Brunswick** 4 times so far in 1944 and No 5 Group finally achieved that aim on this night, using their own marking methods. It was **Brunswick's** worst raid of the war and the old centre was completely destroyed. A local report says 'the whole town, even the smaller districts, was particularly hard hit'. It was estimated by the local officials that 1,000 bombers had carried out the raid.

141 training aircraft on a diversionary sweep to Heligoland, 20 Mosquitos to Hamburg, 16 to Berlin, 8 to Mannheim and 2 to Düsseldorf, 132 aircraft of 100 Group on RCM, Serrate and Intruder flights (no sub-totals are available), 8 aircraft on Resistance operations. 1 Halifax was lost on the diversionary sweep - it was seen to dive into the sea in flames - and 1 Mosquito was lost from the Berlin raid.

Brunswick Burns



Sortie 5 17-Oct-44

47 Lancasters and 2 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked the sea wall at **Westkapelle** on **Walcheren**. Bombing appeared to be accurate but no major result was observed. No aircraft lost.

5 RCM sorties, 4 Ranger patrols to Denmark, 4 Hudsons on Resistance operations. No aircraft lost.

Sortie 6 19/20 October 1944

Stuttgart: 565 Lancasters and 18 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups in 2 forces, 4½ hours apart. 6 Lancasters lost. The bombing was not concentrated but serious damage was caused to the central and eastern districts of Stuttgart and in some of the suburban towns. Among individual buildings hit were the important Bosch factory.

263 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos of No 5 Group dispatched to **Nuremberg**. 2 Lancasters lost. This was only a partial success for the No 5 Group method and the knock-out blow on **Nuremberg**, which had eluded Bomber Command for so long, was not achieved. The target area was found to be almost completely cloud-covered. The aiming point is believed to have been the centre of the city but the local report says that the bombing fell almost entirely in the southern districts, but this was the industrial area of **Nuremberg**.

48 Mosquitos to Wiesbaden and 6 to Düsseldorf, 49 RCM sorties, 82 Mosquito patrols. 1 Mosquito Intruder was lost but other Mosquitos claimed 2 Ju88s, 1 Ju188 and 1 Me110 destroyed and 3 other night fighters damaged, a better-than-average night's success.

Total effort for the night: 1,038 sorties, 9 aircraft (0.9 per cent) lost.

Sortie 7 28/29 October 1944

237 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos of No 5 Group to attack the U-boat pens at [Bergen](#). It is probable that No 5 Group had been waiting to attack this important target for several days; the Group had not flown any operations since 23 October. Clear conditions were forecast for the target area, although there were some doubts about this. Unfortunately the area was found to be cloud-covered. The Master Bomber tried to bring the force down below 5,000ft but cloud was still encountered and he ordered the raid to be abandoned after only 47 Lancasters had bombed. 3 Lancasters lost.

30 Mosquitos to Cologne, 4 to Karlsruhe and 3 to Rheine, 8 RCM sorties, 5 Mosquito patrols, 14 Lancasters minelaying off Oslo. No aircraft lost.

Sortie 8 30-Oct-44

102 Lancasters and 8 Mosquitos of No 5 Group successfully attacked gun batteries on [Walcheren](#). 1 Mosquito lost. This was the last Bomber Command raid in support of the [Walcheren](#) campaign and the opening of the River Scheldt. The attack by ground troops on [Walcheren](#) commenced on 31 October and the island fell after a week of fighting by Canadian and Scottish troops, including Commandos who sailed their landing craft through the breaches in the sea walls made earlier by Bomber Command. It required a further 3 weeks before the 40 mile river entrance to Antwerp was cleared of mine and the first convoy did not arrive in the port until 28 November.

102 Lancasters of No 3 Group carried out a G-H raid on the oil refinery at Wesseling. No results were seen because of the cloud but the bombing was believed to be accurate. No aircraft lost.

7 RCM sorties, 1 Hudson on a Resistance operation. No losses.

Sortie 9 01-Nov-44

226 Lancasters and 2 Mosquitos of No 5 Group, with 14 Mosquitos of No 8 Group attempted to attack the [Meerbeck](#) oil plant at [Homburg](#). The marking was scattered and only 159 of the Lancaster crews attempted to bomb. 1 Lancaster lost.

2 RCM sorties, 1 Hudson on a Resistance operation

Sortie 10 2/3 November 1944

992 aircraft - 561 Lancasters, 400 Halifaxes, 31 Mosquitos - dispatched to [Düsseldorf](#). 11 Halifaxes and 8 Lancasters were lost, 4 of the losses being crashes behind Allied lines in France and Belgium. This heavy attack fell mainly on the northern half of [Düsseldorf](#). More than 5,000 houses were destroyed or badly damaged. 7 industrial premises were destroyed and 18 were seriously damaged, including some important steel firms. This was the last major Bomber Command raid of the war on [Düsseldorf](#).

42 Mosquitos to Osnabrück and 9 to Hallendorf (only 1 aircraft reached this target), 37 RCM sorties, 51 Mosquito patrols. No aircraft lost.

Total effort for the night: 1,131 sorties, 19 aircraft (1.7 per cent) lost.

Sortie 11 6/7 November 1944

235 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attempted to cut the [Mittelland Canal](#) at its junction with the Dortmund-Ems Canal at [Gravenhorst](#). The marking force experienced great difficulty in finding the target. The crew of a low-flying Mosquito - pilot: Flight Lieutenant LCE De Vigne; navigator: Australian Squadron Leader FW Boyle, No 627 Squadron - found the canal and dropped their marker with such accuracy that it fell into the water and was extinguished. Only 31 aircraft bombed, before the Master Bomber ordered the raid to be abandoned. 10 Lancasters were lost.

Sortie 12 16-Nov-44

Bomber Command was asked to bomb 3 towns near the German lines which were about to be attacked by the American First and Ninth Armies in the area between Aachen and the Rhine. 1,188 Bomber Command aircraft attacked [Düren](#), Jülich and Heinsburg in order to cut communications behind the German lines. [Düren](#) was attacked by 485 Lancasters and 13 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 5 and 8 Groups, Jülich by 413 Halifaxes, 78 Lancasters and 17 Mosquitos of Nos 4, 6 and 8 Groups and Heinsburg by 182 Lancasters of No 3 Group. 3 Lancasters were lost on the [Düren](#) raid and 1 Lancaster on the Heinsburg raid. 1,239 American heavy bombers also made raids on targets in the same area, without suffering any losses. More than 9,400 tons of high-explosive bombs were dropped by the combined bomber forces. The American advance was not a success. Wet ground prevented the use of tanks and the American artillery units were short of ammunition because of supply difficulties. The infantry advance was slow and costly.

Sortie 13 4/5 December 1944

Karlsruhe: 535 aircraft - 369 Lancasters, 154 Halifaxes, 12 Mosquitos - of Nos 1, 6 and 8 Groups. 1 Lancaster and 1 Mosquito lost. The marking and bombing were accurate and severe damage was caused, particularly in the southern and western districts of the city. Among individual buildings destroyed were the important Durlacher machine-tool factory, the main Protestant church and the concert hall.

Heilbronn: 282 Lancasters and 10 Mosquitos of No 5 Group. 12 Lancasters lost. This was a crushing blow on **Heilbronn** which stood on a main north-south railway line but was otherwise of little importance. It was the first and only major raid by Bomber Command on this target. 1,254 tons of bombs fell in a few minutes and the post-war British Bombing Survey Unit estimated that 351 acres, 82 per cent of the town's built-up area, were destroyed, mainly by fire. Much investigation by various people resulted in the reliable estimate that just over 7,000 people died. Most of these victims would have died in fires so intense that there was probably a genuine firestorm.

54 Mosquitos to Hagen and 12 to Bielefeld and Hamm (the figure was not subdivided), 47 RCM sorties, 60 Mosquito patrols. No aircraft lost.

Sortie 14 6/7 December 1944

Leuna: 475 Lancasters and 12 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 3 and 8 Groups. 5 Lancasters lost. This was the first major attack on an oil target in Eastern Germany; Leuna, near the town of Merseburg, just west of Leipzig, was 250 miles from the German frontier and 500 miles from the bombers' bases in England. There was considerable cloud in the target area but post-raid photographs showed that considerable damage had been caused to the synthetic-oil plant.

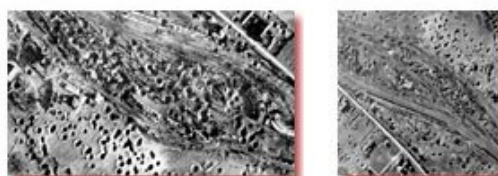
Osnabrück: 453 aircraft - 363 Halifaxes, 72 Lancasters, 18 Mosquitos - of Nos 1, 4, 6 and 8 Groups. 7 Halifaxes and 1 Lancaster lost. This was the first major raid on Osnabrück since August 1942. The raid was only a partial success. The railway yards were only slightly damaged but 4 factories were hit, including the Teuto-Metallwerke munitions factory, and 203 houses were destroyed.

Giessen: 255 Lancasters and 10 Mosquitos of No 5 Group. 8 Lancasters lost. There were two aiming points for this raid. 168 aircraft were allocated to the town centre and 87 to the railway yards. Severe damage was caused at both places.

42 Mosquitos to Berlin, 10 to Schwerte and 2 to Hanau, 37 RCM sorties, 47 Mosquito patrols. 2 Mosquitos lost - 1 from the Berlin raid and an Intruder aircraft which crashed in France.

Total effort for the night: 1,343 sorties, 23 aircraft (1.7 per cent) lost.

Railway yards at Giessen



Sortie 15 08-Dec-44

Urft Dam: 205 Lancasters of No 5 Group; 1 aircraft lost. Bombing was affected by 9/10ths cloud and no results were seen.

163 Lancasters of No 3 Group carried out a G-H raid through cloud on the railway yards at Duisburg. 30 Mosquitos of No 8 Group attacked the Meiderich oil plant near Duisburg, probably using the Oboe-leader technique. No aircraft lost.

1 Hudson flew a Resistance operation.

Sortie 16 14/15 December 1944

30 Lancasters and 9 Halifaxes minelaying in the **Kattegat** without loss.

Sortie 17 17/18 December 1944

Duisburg: 523 aircraft - 418 Halifaxes, 8, Lancasters, 24 Mosquitos - of Nos 4, 6 and 8 Groups. 8 Halifaxes lost. Duisburg was badly hit again.

Ulm: 317 Lancasters and 13 Mosquitos of Nos 1 and 8 Groups. 2 Lancasters lost. This was Bomber Command's first and only raid on Ulm, an old city but also the home of 2 large lorry factories - Magirus-Deutz and Kässbohrer - several other important industries and some military barracks and depots. 1,449 tons of bombs were dropped during the 25-minute raid, starting in the centre and then creeping back to the west, across the industrial and railway areas and out into the country. The Gallwitz Barracks and several military hospitals were among 14 Wehrmacht establishments destroyed.

Munich: 280 Lancasters and 8 Mosquitos of No 5 Group. 4 Lancasters lost. Bomber Command claimed 'severe and widespread damage' in the old centre of Munich and at railway targets.

44 Mosquitos to Hanau (a 'spoof' raid), 26 to Münster and 5 to Hallendorf, 44 RCM sorties, 50 Mosquito patrols. No aircraft lost.

Total effort for the night: 1,310 sorties, 14 aircraft (1.1 per cent) lost.

Sortie 18 18/19 December 1944

236 Lancasters of No 5 Group attacked the distant port of **Gdynia** on the Baltic coast and caused damage to shipping, installations and housing in the port area. 4 Lancasters lost.

40 Mosquitos to Nuremberg and 16 to Münster, 34 RCM sorties, 11 Mosquito patrols, 14 Lancasters of No 5 Group minelaying in Danzig Bay. 1 Mosquito Intruder lost.

Sortie 19 28/29 December 1944

Mönchengladbach: 186 aircraft - 129 Lancasters, 46 Halifaxes, 11 Mosquitos - of Nos 1, 4 and 8 Groups. No aircraft lost. The railway yards were the aiming point but little damage was caused there.

Bonn: 162 Lancasters and 16 Mosquitos of Nos 1 and 8 Groups. 1 Lancaster lost. The intention again was to bomb the railway installations. Bomber Command's report states that the main weight of the attack fell on the railway yards, causing 'considerable damage'.

67 Lancasters and 1 Mosquito of No 5 Group attacked a 'large naval unit' and some merchant ships in **Oslo Fjord** but no direct hits were claimed. No aircraft lost.

87 Mosquitos to Frankfurt - 79 to the city generally and 8 to the railway yards - 35 RCM sorties, 45 Mosquito patrols, 16 Halifaxes of No 6 Group minelaying in the Skagerrak and 11 Lancasters of No 5 Group off Oslo, 12 aircraft on Resistance operations. 1 minelaying Halifax was lost and 1 Mosquito from the Frankfurt raid crashed in France.

Total effort for the night: 638 sorties, 3 aircraft (0.5 per cent) lost.

Sortie 20 30/31 December 1944

Cologne: 470 aircraft - 356 Halifaxes, 93 Lancasters, 21 Mosquitos - of Nos 4, 6 and 8 Groups to attack the area in which the Kalk-Nord railway yards were situated. 1 Halifax and 1 Lancaster lost. The presence of cloud caused difficulties for the Pathfinders and the outcome of the raid could not be observed. But the local report shows that the Kalk-Nord yards, as well as the 2 passenger stations near by, were severely damaged. At least 2 ammunition trains blew up. Nearby Autobahns were also badly damaged, all adding to the effect upon the German transportation system.

154 Lancasters and 12 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked a German supply bottleneck in a narrow valley at **Houffalize**. The results of the raid are not known. 1 Lancaster crashed in France.

68 Mosquitos to Hannover, 9 to Bochum and 8 to Duisburg, 32 RCM sorties, 36 Mosquito patrols, 11 Lancasters minelaying off Heligoland, 21 aircraft on Resistance operations. No aircraft lost.

Total effort for the night: 821 sorties, 3 aircraft (0.4 per cent) lost.

Sortie 21 4/5 January 1945

Royan: 347 Lancasters and 7 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 5 and 8 Groups. 4 Lancasters were lost and 2 more collided behind Allied lines in France and crashed.

This was a tragic raid with a strange - and disputed - background. **Royan** was a town situated at the mouth of the River Gironde in which a stubborn German garrison was still holding out, preventing the Allies from using the port of Bordeaux. The task of besieging the town had been given to 12,000 men of the French Resistance commanded by Free French officers appointed by General de Gaulle. The commander of the German garrison recognized the Resistance units as regular forces and the normal rules of warfare were observed. The French, lacking artillery, made little progress with their siege. The German commander gave the inhabitants of the town the opportunity to leave but many preferred to stay in order to look after their homes. It is believed that there were 2,000 civilians at the time of the raid.

On 10 December 1944, a meeting took place at the town of Cognac between French officers and an American officer from one of the tactical air force units in France. After a meal, at which much alcohol is supposed to have been consumed, the American officer suggested that the German garrison at **Royan** should be 'softened up' by bombing. He was assured by the French that the only civilians remaining in the town were collaborators - which was not correct. The suggestion that the town be bombed was passed to SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force), which decided that the task should be given to Bomber Command: 'To destroy town strongly defended by enemy and occupied by German troops only.' It is said that SHAEF ordered a last-minute cancellation because of doubts about the presence of French civilians but the order, if issued, was not received by Bomber Command in time.

The attack was carried out by 2 waves of bombers, in good visibility conditions, in the early hours of 5 January. 1,576 tons of high-explosive bombs - including 285 'blockbuster' (4,000lb bombs) - were dropped. Local reports show that between 85 and 90 per cent of the small town was destroyed. The number of French civilians killed is given as '500 to 700' and as '800' by different sources. Many of the casualties were suffered in the second part of the raid, which took place an hour after the first and caught many people out in the open trying to rescue the victims of the first wave of the bombing trapped in their houses. The number of Germans killed is given as 35 to 50. A local truce was arranged and, for the next 10 days, there was no fighting while the search for survivors in wrecked houses continued.

There were many recriminations. Bomber Command was immediately exonerated. The American air-force officer who passed on the original suggestion to SHAEF was removed from his command. The bitterest disputes took place among the Free French officers and accusations and counter-accusations continued for many years after the war. A French general committed suicide. De Gaulle, in his Memoires, blamed the Americans: 'American bombers, on their own initiative, came during the night and dropped a mass of bombs.' The German garrison did not surrender until 18 April.

66 Mosquitos to Berlin and 7 to Neuss, 2 Halifax RCM sorties. No aircraft lost.

Sortie 22 5/6 January 1945

Hannover: 664 aircraft - 340 Halifaxes, 310 Lancasters, 14 Mosquitos - of Nos 1, 4, 6 and 8 Groups. 23 Halifaxes and 8 Lancasters lost, 4.7 per cent of the force. This was the first large raid on Hannover since October 1943.

131 Lancasters and 9 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked **Houffalize**, a bottleneck in the German supply system in the **Ardennes**. The target was bombed with great accuracy. 2 Lancasters lost.

69 Mosquitos to Berlin, 8 to Neuss and 6 to Castrop-Rauxel, 58 RCM sorties, 55 Mosquito patrols. 4 Mosquitos lost, 2 from the Berlin raid and 2 from No 100 Group.

Total effort for the night: 1,000 sorties, 37 aircraft (3.7 per cent) lost.

Sortie 23 7/8 January 1945

645 Lancasters and 9 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 Groups to **Munich**. 11 Lancasters lost and 4 more crashed in France. Bomber Command claimed a successful area raid, with the central and some industrial areas being severely damaged. This was the last major raid on **Munich**.

54 Mosquitos to Hannover, 18 to Nuremberg and 12 to Hanau, 39 RCM sorties, 45 Mosquito patrols. 2 Mosquitos lost - 1 from the Hannover raid and a No 100 Group aircraft.

The last Bomber Command Wellington operation was flown on this night by Flying Officer BH Stevens and his crew of No 192 Squadron. The Wellington was on an RCM flight over the North Sea 'to investigate enemy beam signals connected with the launching of flying bombs and believed to emanate from marker buoys'. Bad weather over the North Sea caused the flight to be curtailed but the Wellington landed safely, the last of more than 47,000 sorties carried out by this type of aircraft in Bomber Command.

Total effort for the night: 822 sorties, 17 aircraft (2.1 per cent) lost.

Sortie 24 2/3 February 1945

495 Lancasters and 12 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups to Wiesbaden. 3 Lancasters crashed in France. This was Bomber Command's one and only large raid on Wiesbaden. There was complete cloud cover but most of the bombing hit the town. 5 important war industries along the banks of the Rhine were untouched but the railway station was damaged.

Wanne-Eickel: 323 aircraft - 277 Halifaxes, 27 Lancasters, 19 Mosquitos - of Nos 4, 6 and 8 Groups. 4 Halifaxes lost. This target was also cloud-covered and the attack, intended for the oil refinery, was not accurate. Local people assumed that the target was a local coal mine - Shamrock 3/4; most of the bombing fell in the open ground around the mine.

Karlsruhe: 250 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos of No 5 Group. 14 Lancasters lost. No 189 Squadron, from Fulbeck, lost 4 of its 19 aircraft on the raid. Cloud cover over the target caused this raid to be a complete failure. **Karlsruhe** reports no casualties and only a few bombs. The report mentions 'dive bombers', presumably the Mosquito marker aircraft trying to establish their position. This was a lucky escape for **Karlsruhe** in its last major RAF raid of the war.

43 Mosquitos to Magdeburg and 20 to Mannheim, 54 RCM sorties, 44 Mosquito patrols. No aircraft lost.

Total effort for the night: 1,252 sorties, 21 aircraft (1.7 per cent) lost.

Sortie 25 7/8 February 1945

Goch: 464 aircraft - 292 Halifaxes, 156 Lancasters, 16 Mosquitos - of Nos 4, 6 and 8 Groups. 2 Halifaxes lost. This raid was preparing the way for the attack of the British XXX Corps across the German frontier near the Reichswald. The Germans had included the towns of Goch and Kleve in their strong defences here. The Master Bomber ordered the Main Force to come below the cloud, the estimated base of which was only 5,000ft, and the attack opened very accurately. The raid was stopped after 155 aircraft had bombed, because smoke was causing control of the raid to become impossible. Considerable damage was caused in Goch but most of the inhabitants had probably left the town.

Kleve: 295 Lancasters and 10 Mosquitos of Nos 1 and 8 Groups. 1 Lancaster lost. 285 aircraft bombed at Kleve, which was battered even more than Goch. After the war, Kleve claimed to be the most completely destroyed town in Germany of its size. The British attack, led by the 15th (Scottish) Division, made a successful start a few hours later but quickly ground to a halt because of a thaw, which caused flooding on the few roads available for the advance, and also because of the ruins which blocked the way through Kleve. Lieutenant-General BG Horrocks, the Corps Commander in charge of the attack, later claimed that he had requested that Kleve should only be subjected to an incendiary raid but Bomber Command dropped 1,384 tons of high explosive on the town and no incendiaries.

177 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked the Dortmund-Ems Canal section near Ladbergen with delayed-action bombs. Later photographs showed that the banks had not been damaged; the bombs had fallen into nearby fields. 3 Lancasters were lost.

38 Mosquitos to Magdeburg, 16 to Mainz and 41 in small numbers to 5 other targets, 63 RCM sorties, 45 Mosquito patrols, 30 Lancasters and 15 Halifaxes minelaying in **Kiel Bay**. 4 Mosquitos lost - 3 from No 100 Group and 1 from the raid on Mainz.

Total effort for the night: 1,205 sorties, 10 aircraft (0.8 per cent) lost.

Sortie 26 15/16 February 1945

37 Lancasters and 18 Halifaxes minelaying in Oslo Fjord and the **Kattegat**, 2 RCM sorties, 6 Mosquito patrols. 1 Mosquito fighter crashed in France.

Sortie 27 20/21 February 1945

514 Lancasters and 14 Mosquitos of Nos 1, 3, 6 and 8 Groups attacked Dortmund in Bomber Command's last large-scale raid on this target. 14 Lancasters lost. The intention of this raid was to destroy the southern half of Dortmund and Bomber Command claimed that this was achieved.

173 aircraft - 156 Halifaxes, 11 Mosquitos, 6 Lancasters - of Nos 4 and 8 Groups attacked the Rhenania Ossag refinery in the Reisholz district of Düsseldorf. The raid was accurate and it was later established that all oil production was halted. 4 Halifaxes and 1 Lancaster lost.

128 aircraft - 112 Halifaxes, 10 Mosquitos, 6 Lancasters - of 6 and 8 Groups attacked the Rhenania Ossag refinery at Monheim with similar results to the Reisholz raid. 2 Halifaxes lost.

154 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos of No 5 Group were ordered to attack the **Mittelland Canal** near **Gravenhorst** but the raid was ordered to be abandoned by the Master Bomber because the area was covered by cloud. No aircraft lost.

Diversionsary and 91 aircraft from Heavy Conversion Units in a sweep over the North Sea, 66 Mosquitos to Berlin and 16 to Mannheim, 65 RCM sorties, 45 Mosquito patrols, 6 aircraft on Resistance operations. 1 aircraft of No 100 Group (type not recorded) lost.

Total effort for the night: 1,283 sorties, 22 aircraft (1.7 per cent) lost.

Sortie 28 11/12 March 1945

90 Mosquitos to Berlin and 6 each to Brunswick, Hannover and Magdeburg, 4 Mosquito patrols, 22 Lancasters minelaying in the **Kattegat** and off **Oslo**. No aircraft lost.

Sortie 29 14/15 March 1945

244 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked the Wintershall synthetic-oil refinery at **Lützkendorf**. Photographic reconnaissance showed that 'moderate damage' was caused. 18 Lancasters were lost, 7.4 per cent of the Lancaster force.

230 aircraft - 121 Lancasters, 98 Halifaxes, 11 Mosquitos - of Nos 6 and 8 Groups to Zweibrücken. No aircraft lost. This attack was directed on to the town area to block the passage through it of German troops and stores to the nearby front line. The raid took place in good visibility and was very effective. The local report shows that every public building and inn and 80 per cent of the houses in the town were destroyed or damaged. Most of the civilian population had been evacuated; those remaining took shelter in 2 large caves in the north and south of the town or in the normal basement shelters of their houses.

161 aircraft - 127 Halifaxes, 23 Lancasters, 11 Mosquitos - of 4 and 8 Groups on the same task as the Zweibrücken raid proceeded to Homburg. No local report is available but it is believed that this attack was equally successful. 2 Halifaxes lost.

75 Mosquitos to Berlin and 6 each to Bremen and Brunswick, 52 RCM sorties, 27 Mosquito patrols. No 100 Group lost 2 Mosquitos and 1 Fortress.

The last Stirling operation of Bomber Command was flown on this night when Stirling LJ516, from No 199 Squadron at North Creake, flew a Mandrel screen operation; Squadron Leader JJM Button, the Australian pilot, and his crew landed safely.

Total effort for the night: 812 sorties, 23 aircraft (2.8 per cent) lost.

Sortie 30 20/21 March 1945

224 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked the synthetic-oil plant near Böhlen. This accurate attack put the plant out of action and it was still inactive when captured by American troops several weeks later. 9 Lancasters lost.

166 Lancasters of Nos 1, 6 and 8 Groups carried out an equally effective attack upon the oil refinery at Hemmingstedt. 1 Lancaster lost.

Support and 70 training aircraft on a diversionsary sweep over France, 12 Lancasters in a feint raid on **Halle**, 38 Mosquitos to Berlin, 27 to Bremen and 16 to Kassel, 47 RCM sorties, 55 Mosquito patrols, 9 Lancasters minelaying off Heligoland. 3 aircraft lost - 1 Lancaster from the **Halle** raid and 1 Fortress and 1 Liberator RCM aircraft.

Total effort for the night: 675 sorties, 13 aircraft (1.9 per cent) lost.

Of 12 Lancaster bombers on this feint raid, one of which was Dad, 1 Lancaster bomber was shot down & lost.

Sortie 31 23/24 March 1944

195 Lancasters and 23 Mosquitos of Nos 5 and 8 Groups carried out the last raid on the unfortunate town of **Wesel**. No aircraft lost. **Wesel** claims to have been the most intensively bombed town, for its size, in Germany. 97 per cent of the buildings in the main town area were destroyed. The population, which had numbered nearly 25,000 on the outbreak of war, was only 1,900 in May 1945.

Support and 78 training aircraft on a sweep across France and as far as Mannheim, 65 Mosquitos to Berlin and 23 to Aschaffenburg, 41 RCM sorties, 39 Mosquito patrols. 2 Mosquitos lost from the Berlin raid.

24-Mar-45

The final phase of the land war opened on this day, with the amphibious crossing of the Rhine on the **Wesel** sector and the airborne landings among the enemy defences a few hours later. British Commandos captured **Wesel** in the early hours, just after the Bomber Command raid had left the defenders dead or too dazed to fight properly. The weather remained good for further Bomber Command operations. It is interesting to observe that the Ruhr was still supplying fuel and munitions for the fighting front which was now only 15 miles away and that tactical bombing and strategic bombing were taking place almost side by side.

Sortie 32 04-Apr-45

243 Lancasters and 1 Mosquito of No 5 Group, with 8 Pathfinder Mosquitos, attacked the barracks and the town of **Nordhausen**, which was severely damaged. 1 Lancaster lost.

Nordhausen, before and after



Sortie 33 7/8 April 1945

Last mission.

175 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos of No 5 Group attacked the benzol plant at **Molbis**, near Leipzig. The weather was clear and the bombing was so effective that all production at the plant ceased. No aircraft lost.

6 RCM sorties and 14 Mosquito patrols were flown by No 100 Group without loss