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# MAURICE COHEN

A SUMMARY OF HIS SERVICE

WITH No. 35 SQUADRON

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Document prepared by:

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# PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

**Maurice Cohen<sup>1</sup> (655080)**  
**(Air Gunner)**



It is possible that Maurice is one of the unknowns in this photograph, which shows the Steinhauer crew  
Unknown, Steinhauer, Goodrum  
Unknown, Dunlop, Brown, Unknown

[Courtesy of Geoff Coates via Linzee Duncan]

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that some wartime records show M Cohen's surname as Cowan

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## Operational Service with No. 35 Squadron

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No. 35 Squadron's Operations Record Book does not show when Maurice Cohen (Air Gunner) was posted in to the Squadron, nor where he was posted from, but it is believed that he arrived during 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 1941.

Prior to this, he completed the three stages of his aircrew training<sup>2</sup> and possibly served with other operational squadron(s).

At the time of posting, No. 35 Squadron was a heavy bomber squadron, tasked with preparing and despatching aircraft and crews in accordance with instructions from Bomber Command

It was stationed at RAF Linton-On-Ouse, under the command of No. 4 Group, Bomber Command

The squadron was equipped with the Handley Page Halifax which (at the time) was typically crewed by a pilot, a 2<sup>nd</sup> pilot, an observer, two wireless operator / air gunners, an air gunner and a flight engineer.

As Air Gunner, Maurice's primary role was "to be the eyes and the sting of the aircraft, by warning the pilot of approaching enemy aircraft, telling him what tactics to adopt to evade action, and, if combat does develop, to destroy or drive off the enemy".

Maurice settled into the squadron routine of ground training, air tests, air training (such as high-level bombing, fighter affiliation and cross country) and operational sorties.

The squadron's Operations Record Book shows that he participated in the following operational sorties, with GH Steinhauer as his captain (unless otherwise stated):

1. 11/12/1941           Cologne (HA Williams)
2. 30/12/1941           Brest (MRM Pooles)
3. 06/01/1942           Brest
4. 08/01/1942           Brest
5. 10/01/1942           Wilhelmshaven<sup>3</sup>
6. 12/02/1942           English Channel / North Sea
7. 08/03/1942           Essen
8. 13/03/1942           Cologne
9. 30/03/1942           Battleship Tirpitz (Failed to Return)

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<sup>2</sup> The three stages were **Basic Training**, where he was introduced to the rigours of service life, **Trade Training**, where he learnt the skills of his air crew trade and **Operational Training**, where he learnt to work as part of a bomber crew.

<sup>3</sup> The squadron's Operations Record Book shows that on the night of the 10th / 11th January 1942 "Sgt Steinhauer succeeded in reaching the mainland but shortly after doing so his rear gunner's oxygen mask froze up and the rear gunner contracted frost bite and passed out, their height being 19,000 feet and the temperature -35°. The Flight Engineer was despatched to render first aid, but owing to having omitted to take his portable oxygen supply with him, failed to reach the rear turret and was only brought back to life after the captain had executed a rapid dive to 12,000ft." As a result, Maurice (the rear gunner) was non-operational for the remainder of January 1942.

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## The loss of Halifax W1015 (30<sup>th</sup> March 1942)

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Halifax W1015 was one of thirteen aircraft dispatched by No. 35 Squadron to a forward base at RAF Kinloss on 27th March 1942 in readiness for an attack on the Battleship Tirpitz, which was moored in Fættensfjord, Norway

On the night of 30th/ 31st March 1942 it was one of twelve aircraft which took part in a raid on the battleship.

Its seven-man crew consisted of:

- GH Steinhauer (Pilot)
- PG Brown (2nd Pilot)
- LE Goodrum (Observer)
- ET Meade (WOP / Air Gunner)
- DGJ Campbell (WOP / Air Gunner)
- M Cohen (Air Gunner)
- JB Dunlop (Flight Engineer)

W1015 failed to return and the squadron's Operations Record Book shows "This aircraft took part in a raid on the Norwegian Coast and is missing; no further details are given".

The following day, Maurice's family received a telegram to advise them that he was missing as a result of air operations on the previous night; this was followed by a letter from the commanding officer, confirming the contents of the telegram.

The Air Ministry Casualty Branch, which was responsible for investigating, monitoring and reporting on the status of missing aircraft and airmen, subsequently published the following information regarding the crew:

- Air Ministry Casualty Communique No. 134 (Flight 04/06/1942) reported GH Steinhauer, PG Brown, LE Goodrum, ET Meade, DGJ Campbell, M Cohen and JB Dunlop as "missing"

It is not known how much additional information regarding the loss of the aircraft and the recovery of the crew filtered back to the UK (from German sources and the International Red Cross) during the war<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Post war research carried out by Linzee Duncan and Morten Moe records that the body of Steinhauer was recovered from the crash site at Remmingskjæret, Norway and was buried at Trondheim (Stavne) Cemetery on 8th April 1942. The bodies of Brown, Meade and Cohen were subsequently recovered from the sea, one at Remmingen, one at Hellesfjorden and another at Lauvøya. The bodies of Goodrum, Campbell and Dunlop were never found.

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## Post War Reburial

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After the war, an investigation officer from the Royal Air Force Missing Research and Enquiry Service (MRES) was tasked with locating the remains of all missing airmen.

As part of the process, any remains that were located were exhumed, identified (wherever possible) and concentrated (reinterred) at one of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Cemeteries in the country that they fell, in accordance with Government policy at the time.

Graves were marked with a simple wooden cross, which was replaced by the familiar CWGC headstone during the 1950's.

The remains of Maurice Cohen were located at Kristiansund (Norway), identified and concentrated (reinterred) at TRONDHEIM (STAVNE) CEMETERY as follows:

- COHEN, MAURICE, Sergeant '655080' Grave A IV British. C. 6.



[Source: FindaGrave]