

Operational Records 460 Squadron

September 1943

1) 22/23rd Sept 1943 - Target Hannover - Crosby was flying second pilot to ****J.H.J. English 413843 DFC RAAF KIA 2/12/1943** Up 18:49h Down 00:06h Attacked target at 21:30h. Small patch of cloud but visibility good, target seen with the aid of green Tl's. The pilot said: - Many fires centre of town. PFF good. Really successful attack.

The first major raid to Hannover for 2 years.

2) 27/28th Sept 1943 - JA680 Target Hannover Up 19:49h Down 03:20h This aircraft attacked the target at 22:17h from 20,000ft. Clear over target which was seen with the aid of red, green and yellow Tl's Bombed centre of greens. Good concentration of fires right among greens - huge volume of smoke "Hannover was well pranged" said the pilot. Heavy iced and static over the sea on homeward journey. Visibility over land nil. GEE and H.F. were u/s - eventually contacted Base - circling round for twenty minutes. We were lost and pilot ordered crew to prepare to abandon immediately. Afterwards heard Base instruction to descend to 400ft - we estimated we were over Base and descended - visibility atrocious. Navigator fired Yellow Cartridge and we saw the ground 10ft below, we were travelling too slow to climb - a/c belly landed, this was at 03:20h and was at Alderborough, Yorkshire.

October 1943

3) 2/3rd Oct 1943 - JA863 Target Munich (* F/Sgt **Charles Gordon Howie (414938)** took the place of Hodge on this operation) Up 18:56h Down 03:10h Bombed target 22:35h from 20,000ft. Target was clear and it was seen with the aid of red and green TIs. Bombed reds. Many small fires well concentrated on aiming point. Several bomb bursts seemed to be a mile or two short of the target. Fairly well concentrated attack.

8 Lancasters lost. Visibility over the target was good but initial marking was scattered.

4) 3/4th Oct 1943 - ED658 Target Kassel (Robb not flying on this op) Up 18:57h Down 00:55h Bombed Kassel at 21:39h from 20,000ft - clear over target which was seen with the aid of red, yellow and green Tl's. Bombed on reds. Concentration of fires with heavy smoke - terrific red explosion which lit up the whole of the countryside. On his return to base the pilot said: - A very good show, the explosion which we saw was very impressive.

German decoy markers may have been present. Main attack fell on the western suburbs and outlying towns and villages.

5) 22/23rd Oct 1943 - JA683 Target Kassel (Robb returned to fly on this op) Up 18:20h Down 23:58h This aircraft attacked the target at 21:13h. Visibility good. Target seen with the aid of red, yellow and green Tl's - bombed between red and greens. Bombing area scattered. "Pathfinders were scarce towards the end of the attack, good fires at centre of town" said the pilot.

18 Lancasters were lost. 8 out of the 9 visual markers correctly identified the centre of Kassel. The main raid, despite the German decoy fires, was exceptionally accurate. There was a firestorm, but not as extensive as in Hamburg.

November 1943

6) 3rd Nov 1943 - W42? Target Dusseldorf Up 17:21h Down 21:51h This aircraft attacked the target at 19:54h from 20,000ft. Target seen with aid of red and green TIs. Bombed reds. Fairly concentrated fires, but some small fires were scattered short of the target. Very few PFF markings before bombing, but more went down afterwards.

7) 26/27th Nov 1943 - JB606 Target Berlin * Additional crew member on this operation was ***F/O Bruce Prout (427024) born 13 Feb 1924 Perth WA** Up 16:58h Down 00:52h Berlin bombed at 21:13h on red/green flares, igniting over large area from 22,000ft. Several small fires scattered over wide area, probably from previous raid.

Only a few fighters appeared over Berlin, where flak was the main danger, but bombers were caught by fighters on the return journey. 28 Lancasters were lost and 14 crashed in England. The Berlin Zoo was bombed that night. Many of the animals had already been evacuated to zoos in other parts of Germany, however several dangerous animals escaped, like leopards, panthers and jaguars and had to be hunted down and shot.

December 1943

8) 16th Dec 1943 - JB738 Target Berlin Up 16: ?? Down 23:41h Berlin was attacked at 20:02h from 22,000ft. Target identified by red/green flares, TI Reds, TI Greens later. Bombed red/green flares. Fair red glow developed later. On landing the pilot said: - PFF markings were rather short according to the Navigator.

The bomber route was across Holland and Northern Germany. The Germans plotted the course with great accuracy and many night fighters met the bomber stream at the Dutch coast and throughout the approach to the target, where more night fighters were waiting. The bombers managed to shake them off on the return journey by taking a northerly route via Denmark. Berlin was cloud covered but PFF marking was quite accurate with much of the bombing hitting the city. Damage to the Berlin railway system and rolling stock had a cumulative effect on the transport of supplies to the Russian front. 1,000 wagon loads of war material was held up for 6 days.

9) 23/24th Dec 1944 - JB738 Target Berlin Up 00:05(?) Down 07:47h Berlin was attacked at 04:04h from 22,000ft Target identified by red/green flares which were bombed. No results observed except large yellow explosion 04:23h. On returning the pilot said: - Last route markers were too late to be of use.

Diversions raid on Leipzig kept night fighters away from the main force as did the weather. 16 bombers were lost. Berlin was covered by cloud and more than half of the PFF aircraft had trouble with their H2S sets. Markers were sparse and scattered.

January 1944

10) 5/6th Jan 1944 - JB3?? Target Stettin Up 23:51h Down 08:33h Stettin was attacked at 03:53h. Target identified by red and green TI's, red/green flares and visually. Bombed TI greens. Fires east and west of centre of built up area clearly seen. On landing the pilot said: - A very well concentrated attack, I do not think we will have to go there again.

This was the first raid on Stettin since September 1941. A diversion raid on Berlin kept most of the German night fighters away from the main force. 14 aircraft lost.

11) 14th Jan 1944 - JB743 Target Brunswick Up 16:32h Down 22:02h Brunswick was attacked from 23,000ft. Target identified by red/green skymarkers. Bombed centre of scattered skymarkers. Marking very scattered, a fair glow of fires. On returning the pilot reported: - Not an impressive show, absence of ground marking spoils the attack.

This was the first major attack on Brunswick. 38 aircraft were lost. (11 were Pathfinders) Many German fighters entered the RAF bomber stream near Bremen. Enemy fighters were very successful until the RAF bomber force was on the return journey and crossing the Dutch coast. The raid was not a success.

February 1944

12) 19/20th Feb 1944 - JB743 Target Leipzig. Up 23:24h Down 06:35h Leipzig was attacked at 04:01h from 22,000ft. Target identified by green/red flares and green TIs. Bombed centre of two green TIs. Good concentration seen in target area. On his return Pilot said: - Winds being less than forecast made difficulty in time and eventually we had to ?? near target area. PFF were well concentrated and aircraft were bombing on every conceivable heading.

The German controllers only sent part of their force of night fighters to a Kiel minelaying diversion raid. The bombers were under attack all the way to the target. Many aircraft reached the target before the Pathfinders due to winds and were forced to orbit. 4 aircraft collided and 20 shot down by flak. 79 aircraft were lost in total.

13) 20/21st Feb 1944 - JB743 Target Stuttgart. *Sgt WJ Martin 424319 replaces Robb on this operation. Up 00:?? Down 07:00h Stuttgart was attacked at 03:59h bombing from 21,000ft. Target identified by H2S, Green/Red flare, TI red. Bombed green/red flares. Bombing was accurate, at 04:03h built up area was burning strongly as streets were clearly alight. On landing the pilot said: - H2S took us right on to target. Good route. A/c burned navigational lights to 10 miles beyond Beachy Head and several cookies jettisoned in prohibited area. Several a/c fired ??? cartridges approaching the English coast

A diversionary raid on Munich successfully drew the German fighters up 2 hours before the main force reached the main target. Only 9 aircraft were lost

14) 25/26th Feb 1944 - JB743 Target Augsburg Up 21:31h Down 04:25h Augsburg was attacked at 01:12h from 22,000ft. Target identified visually by H2S. Bombed visually at aiming point. Many good fires in centre of town, particularly large one around the aiming point. TI's green at 01:13h, TI reds later. Red/orange explosion east of aiming point. Press headlines should read "BIGGEST EVER!!!" said the Pilot.

21 aircraft lost with at least 4 due to collision. The bombing of Augsburg was executed in clear weather conditions and under weak flak defences. PFF marking was extremely accurate. The centre of the town was completely destroyed. The Germans described it as an extreme example of 'terror bombing'.

March 1944

15) 15th March 1944 - JB744 Target Stuttgart Up 18:53h Down 02:50h. Stuttgart was attacked at 23:19h from 21,000ft Target identified and identified by H2S. Large yellow red explosion at 23:23h lit up sky for 5 seconds and lingered brighter yellow for several further seconds. Pilot reported: Another disappointing show. PFF conspicuous by their absence, suggest north east approach for better HS2 reception, quiet route.

The bomber force flew over France towards the Swiss frontier before turning north-east to Stuttgart. They met strong resistance from enemy fighters and 37 bombers were lost.

16) 18th March 1944 - JB743 Target Frankfurt (additional crew member **F/S Russell Allen A5182*** 2nd pilot - killed 22/4/1944) Up 19:26h Down 01:20h Frankfurt was attacked at 21:55h from 22,000ft. Target identified by HS2 and T.I. Greens, 1 red and white flame. Bombed HS2 and greens. Two large red explosions. No other results seen. On his return the pilot said: Ground haze obscured target but PFF was accurate.

Enemy fighters met the bomber stream just before the target was reached, but cloud hampered their success. 22 bombers were lost. The bombing was accurate in the east, central and western districts of Frankfurt.

17) 22nd March 1944 - JB743 Target Frankfurt Up 18:58h Down 00:25h Frankfurt was attacked at 22:55h from 22,000ft. Bombed centre of T.I.s PFF was consistent and checked up with on HS2. Two red explosions at 22:58h and 22:??h

The bomber stream crossed the Dutch coast north of the Zuider Zee then due south to Frankfurt. Only a few enemy fighters met the force but nevertheless 33 aircraft were lost. The bombing was accurate, and damage was greater than that of the raid of the 18/19th March. Half of the city was without any utilities for a long time. There was severe damage to the industrial area along the main road to Mainz.

18) 24/25th March 1944 - JB743 Target Berlin. Up 18:45 Down 01:24 Berlin was attacked on red/yellow flares which were bombed at 22:49h - large explosion. Many a/c south of ?? several in difficulties over Sylt and Flensburg. Winds changeable. Undoubtedly damage done to Berlin, but no concentration was achieved as skymarkers and mixed salvos did not coincide.

This operation became known as 'the night of the strong winds'. The bomber stream became very scattered, particularly on the route homeward and enemy radar predicted flak batteries were reasonably successful. Unfortunately, part of the bomber force strayed over the Ruhr defences on the return journey. 50 out the 72 aircraft that were lost on this raid were shot down by flak, the rest fell victim to night fighters. This was the last major RAF raid on Berlin.

19) 26/27th March 1944 - JB743 Target Essen. Up 19:49h Down 00:45h Essen was attacked at 22:15h from 21,000ft. Target identified by TI's - red and greens. Bombed TI greens. No results seen. On his return the Pilot said: - Arrived over target at 22:00h. Possible red TI 2 miles to north, this was doubtful, we made wide orbit east. TI greens went down regularly just above, so we bombed these on second run.

Essen was covered by cloud, but the Oboe Mosquitos Pathfinders marked the target well and this attack was successful. 9 aircraft lost.

April 1944

20) 9th April 1944 - Lancaster ME663 Mining Danzig Bay Up 21:13h No news after Take Off.

9 Lancasters on this mission were lost.