

before sunrise so catching the enemy ships as they turned into the approaches to the anchorage.<sup>83</sup>

Drem was most appropriate for the open stretch of water between Stavanger and Kristiansund South, and was first used on 9 October 1944. Eight Beaufighters from No 404 armed with armour-piercing rockets, ten No 144 Squadron Beaufighters, six armed with cannon and four with torpedoes, and eight Mosquitoes armed with cannon flew in the predawn darkness and 'in loose order' to the Norwegian coast. At 0610 hours a Vickers Warwick that had left Banff forty minutes before the first of the strike aircraft began dropping a pattern of marine markers, flame floats, and drift lights in a circle about six miles in diameter, some twenty miles off Skudeneshavn. Assembling over it and forming into battle order, the wing then set course southeast, until a convoy of five merchant ships and six escorts was sighted in the faint dawn light twenty miles ahead, just off Egersund.

With three Mosquitoes providing fighter cover, the attack began with cannon fire from six No 144 Beaufighters and the other five Mosquitoes, closely followed by the eight Beaufighter crews of 404 Squadron, who released their rockets at ranges varying from 700 to 450 yards and heights between 400 and 500 feet. The Canadians claimed thirty-four 'dry' and sixteen 'wet' hits, on both escorts and merchant ships. Then came the four Torbeaus, which managed at least two hits. Five minutes after engaging the enemy the entire wing was on its way back to Banff with only three aircraft damaged by Flak, leaving behind it two sinking ships, the German merchantman *Rudolf Oldendorff*, of 1953 tons, and the escort *UJ 1711*, and a seriously damaged Norwegian *Sarp*, of 1116 tons.<sup>84</sup>

Since the weather throughout October was generally poor for flying, both in Scotland and off the Norwegian coast, operations on this scale could not be undertaken consistently. On five occasions, however, the wing managed to attack single escorted freighters with some success, No 404 Squadron sinking a merchantman and escort off Kristiansand South on 15 October and two more freighters on the 21st in Haugesund harbour.<sup>85</sup> 'From 3000 to 100 feet, range 400 to 1500 yards, our a/c attacked with cannon, and from 500 to 900 yds with RP. 'H' and 'J' attacked the smaller M[erchant]V[essel] and claimed 4 dry and 4 underwater hits with RP and concentrated cannon strikes. 'E,' 'M,' 'A,' 'Z' attacked large M/V and claimed 18 dry and 4 underwater hits. Concentrated cannon hits were also effected around bridge and amidships. These attacks together with those of other squadrons, set the 2 M/V well on fire. Considerable Flak ... experienced by our a/c, M/404 (S/L [W.R.] Christison & F/L [W.U.] Toon) returning with a large hole in the port tail plane.'<sup>86</sup> Both the German *Eckenheim*, of 1923 tons, and the Norwegian *Vestra*, of 1432 tons, were sunk.<sup>87</sup>

A decrease in shipping activity in the southern North Sea led to a further reorganization of No 18 Group's strike forces at the end of the month. A four-squadron Beaufighter wing was assembled by transferring two squadrons from Langham in No 16 Group, together with the two Beaufighter units from Banff, to Dallachy; but only four small convoys were attacked in daylight operations during November, resulting in five vessels sunk and five more damaged for the

loss of three aircraft. The Canadians participated in two of the attacks without loss.<sup>88</sup>

One feature of the December operations was the reappearance of German fighters off the Norwegian coast, estimated to number sixty-five single-engined and forty-five twin-engined aircraft.<sup>89</sup> A sweep by the combined Banff and Dallachy wings, escorted by twelve long-range Mustangs, was intercepted by enemy fighters north of Aalesund on 7 December. 'Due to an error, presumably in navigation, Banff [wing] leader led the formation over Gossen A[ir]/F[ield] and approximately 25 S[ingle] E[ngined] F[ighters], Me 109 and FW190s, came up to intercept. Mustang fighters intercepted and prevented serious damage to our a/c. 6 E[nemy]/A[ircraft] and 2 possibles was the Mustang score for the loss of one Mustang. 2 Mosquitoes, and 1 Beau[fighter] of 489 Sqdn. are also missing. S/404 was attacked by a single Me 109; P/O H.F. Flynn was uninjured but W/O M.H. Michael received minor wounds when a cannon shell exploded in the Navigator's cupola. No shipping was attacked and our formation s[et]/c[ourse] for base.'<sup>90</sup>

The group's only success that month came two days later, when the Dallachy wing came across the unescorted Norwegian coaster *Havda*, of 678 tons. Without opposition, the Beaufighters launched a rocket and cannon attack, with several aircraft circling to make a second strafing run. 'The ship was last seen ablaze from bridge to stern and two explosions were also observed. A reconnaissance a/c some 30 minutes later reported the vessel as beached and still burning fiercely.' But having miscalculated badly, Flying Officer A.K. Cooper of No 404 Squadron 'struck the ship's mast during the attack. The port wing fell off, the a/c turned over on its back, fell into the water and exploded.'<sup>91</sup>

The number of sorties flown, however, rose from 544 in October to 677 in November and 823 in December. Since resuming anti-shipping operations, No 18 Group aircraft had sunk thirty-six ships totalling 48,606 tons. Those results were achieved at the cost of twenty-eight aircraft, or an average of 1736 tons sunk per aircraft lost, a better ratio than that established between April 1943 and May 1944 and one that was comparable with the greatly improved results achieved by aerial mining since the beginning of Overlord. From June to December 1944 mines accounted for 124 ships, totalling 74,545 tons, and five U-boats at a cost of 31 aircraft, for a ratio of 2405 tons sunk per aircraft lost. The average size of ship sunk by mines, about 600 tons, was still only half that of No 18 Group's victims; but minefields had the added benefit of interfering with U-boat acceptance trials and training cruises in the Gulf of Danzig.<sup>92</sup>

The Germans' greatest shipping losses between June and December 1944 resulted from bombing raids against their ports, which accounted for 217 enemy vessels (totalling 252,536 tons) and twelve U-boats. Although that was more than five times the amount of tonnage sunk by No 18 Group during its shorter, four-month period of anti-shipping operations – and bombing also destroyed harbour facilities and shipyards – Coastal Command obtained its results with just 608 sorties while Bomber Command and the US Eighth Air Force mounted 15,716. On the basis of tonnage sunk per aircraft lost, No 18 Group accounted for 1736 tons of shipping for each crew, while the com-

parable figure for the combined bombing forces was 1006 tons for each of the 251 bombers lost. It must be pointed out, however, that the odds of surviving an attack were much better in bombers than they were in Coastal strike squadrons, one in twenty-two strike aircraft being shot down as opposed to one in sixty-two bombers.<sup>93</sup>

The strike wings' contribution would increase in 1945, when direct attacks at sea accounted for 37 per cent of German merchantmen lost to enemy action in Northwest Europe, despite the fact that their Beaufighters and (until March) RP-equipped Mosquitoes lacked the range to interfere with shipping bound for Oslo – through which the Wehrmacht was moving a larger proportion of its Norwegian-bound troops and supplies in order to reduce their exposure to air attack. Along the Norwegian coast, moreover, enemy convoys now moved almost exclusively at night, even in the narrow Inner Leads, sheltering during the short daylight hours under the steep cliff faces lining the fjords. Although that determined both the number of aircraft able to attack simultaneously and, often, the direction of their attacks, daylight operations continued and the risks involved were clearly demonstrated on 9 February when Beaufighters of the Dallachy wing struck a naval force in Forde Fjord composed of one Narvik class destroyer (Z.33), two M-class minesweepers, a Sperrbrecher, and at least two other Flak-ships.<sup>94</sup>

By 1400 hours thirty-two Beaufighters, including eleven from No 404 Squadron led by Squadron Leader W.R. Christison, were airborne for Peterhead where they rendezvoused with twelve long-range Mustangs and two air/sea rescue Vickers Warwicks. On reaching the target, the formation leader 'orbited the force twice to get into a suitable position to attack and then ordered the attack up fjord.' As the Beaufighters made their way in, they met 'an intense crossfire in the form of a box barrage' from the 'naval vessels and from some gun positions on the hill.' And, to compound the problem, no sooner had they completed their attack runs than 'ten to twelve' FW 190s suddenly attacked them.

[Beaufighter] T/404 [Squadron], F/O H.P. Flynn, had an inconclusive combat with 2 FW 190s when he attacked them as they were in pursuit of another Beau. G/404 was chased for some distance by 2 FW 190s and while the crew were uninjured, the a/c suffered considerable damage. S/404, F/O Nelson and W/O Gracie, saw 2 FW 190s on the tail of another Beau and F/O Nelson attacked one and destroyed it. The 2nd FW 190 then turned its attention to 'S' but W/O Gracie with his machine gun[s] got strikes on the enemy a/c and forced it to break off the combat. U/404 was at one time pursued by 3 FW 190s but managed to get away safely. Mustang escort destroyed 2 FW 190s and damaged 2 additional to our claim. In the attack, due to so many of our a/c being missing, it is difficult to assess the damage to the enemy naval force, but the destroyer did suffer some damage, a patrol vessel was set on fire and 2 other ships were smoking when last seen. Most of our missing a/c were seen to crash in the mountains but one, although on fire, made a belly landing on the ice and another was seen to ditch.<sup>95</sup>

According to German records, seven Beaufighters were shot down by Flak while the FW 190s destroyed two other Beaufighters and one of the Mustang escorts. Five of their own fighters were also shot down. The Canadians 'claimed 2 possible RP hits on the destroyer' and '5 dry and 2 possible wets on the E/V.' They had, indeed, damaged Z-33, which had to be towed into harbour, but their losses were severe: six of eleven crews failed to return, by far their blackest day of the war, and of the twelve airmen missing only Flying Officer R.J. Savard survived a crash landing to become a prisoner of war.<sup>96</sup>

Operations on 11 and 15 January had cost other squadrons six Mosquitoes and one Beaufighter, but it was the setback on 9 February that lent particular weight to Northwood's pleas for at least one additional Mustang squadron. Clearly, if German fighters, including many of the latest type of FW 190, were stationed in Norway at a time when they were also desperately needed over the Reich, the enemy was placing considerable importance on the protection of his shipping routes and further air battles were likely. Whitehall agreed, and a second Mustang squadron began flying escort duties from Peterhead in early March.<sup>97</sup>

Poor weather and lack of suitable targets reduced the number of sorties in January and February, No 18 Group mounting just 209 and sinking sixteen ships of 27,376 tons for the loss of twenty-six strike crews and three escorts. Improved weather in March brought a record 847 sorties, which accounted for another sixteen ships (23,315 tons) and damaged fourteen more (41,800 tons) for the loss of nineteen strike aircraft, three from No 404, and two escorts. The Canadians had particular success on the 24th, when a strike led by six crews from No 404 claimed two merchantmen sunk.<sup>98</sup>

In January Northwood had suggested that the 'obliteration of the light[houses] on selected stretches of the Inner Leads route might well interdict night sailings completely, or ... force them out to the open sea.'<sup>99</sup> After some opposition by the Norwegian government-in-exile in the United Kingdom, a policy of attacking these lighthouses was approved on 9 March. Three days later, six No 404 aircraft were detailed to destroy three lighthouses on Vaagso using rockets and cannon fire. The commanding officer, Wing Commander Pierce, and a second Beaufighter took out the light at the northeastern tip of Skongsnaes island. 'Light was located and both aircraft attacked with cannon and RP, concentrated cannon hits and 6 RP hits being claimed. Lighthouse was left smoking and much flying debris was seen. One RP from 'E' hit a ridge of rock in front of the light and resulting debris caused considerable damage to this aircraft. 'Z' also suffered some damage.'<sup>100</sup> By the end of the month up to fifteen lights had been put out of action, but the effect on the enemy movements was difficult to discern. With the approach of summer and short, northern nights, the policy was cancelled on 3 April.<sup>101</sup>

March was also the last month during which No 404 Squadron would fly Beaufighters on operations. Transferred to Banff at the beginning of April, the unit began converting to the longer-range Mosquito Mark VI, which was capable of operating in the Skagerrak and Kattegat, but by the time they resumed operations, on 22 April, the fighting was rapidly drawing to a close.

The total dislocation of the German war organization had brought a virtual halt to activity along the Norwegian coast and the southern North Sea, and the only shipping targets left were in the western Baltic and the Kattegat as the Germans evacuated ports threatened by the advancing Soviet armies.

At 0630 hours on 2 May 1945, thirty-five Banff wing Mosquitoes, including four from No 404 Squadron acting as fighter cover together with twenty-four Mustang fighters, left their Scottish bases and headed across the North Sea. The formation swept up the Skagerrak and into the Kattegat before sighting a flotilla of escorted U-boats northeast of Laeso Island. It sank U-2359, one of the dangerous new Type XXI boats, and a minesweeper for the loss of one RAF Mosquito. The following afternoon another strike force of forty-eight Mosquitos was forced to turn back after encountering poor visibility over Jutland.<sup>102</sup> The wing's final operation came on 4 May, when forty-one Mosquitoes, seven from No 404 Squadron, and eighteen Mustangs attacked a small convoy of two freighters and five escorts to the east of Aarhus Bay (500 miles from their base), sinking one merchantman and seriously damaging the other. Despite Germany's imminent collapse, the Flak defences in the Baltic remained strong, and the strike force lost three Mosquitoes and three Mustangs.<sup>103</sup>

The operations of Coastal Command's strike wings were only a minor part of the air war against Germany. Even in March 1945, when the number of squadrons had increased to nine, their total strength amounted to 176 aircraft compared with the 2145 available to Bomber Command. In only two years of operation, however, the strike wings sank about 300,000 tons of enemy shipping – or approximately 7 per cent of all German shipping lost from all causes in northern Europe over the course of the whole war – much of it in waters where mining (itself responsible for 20 per cent of losses) was impractical. The RCAF's contribution of three squadrons to this effort was an important one. Only with the unfortunate No 415 Squadron were Canadian expectations of a useful role denied. During the dark days of 1941–2, 407 Squadron was the most successful of the anti-shipping units, attacking and sinking more enemy vessels than any other squadron in No 16 Group, and its aggressive approach was maintained despite the extremely high casualties incurred. No 404 Squadron, which was fortunate enough to enter the campaign after Beaufighters had become the standard strike aircraft, was instrumental in developing the rocket projectile as a successful anti-ship weapon. The tactics worked out by the Canadians for its use were eventually adopted by all the other strike squadrons.<sup>104</sup>

PART FOUR

The Bomber War



Until the very end of the war the main rear defence provided for heavy bombers was a tail turret mounting four .303-inch machine guns. Although the installation was reliable and the guns could maintain a very high rate and volume of fire, they lacked range and destructive power. (PL 22001)



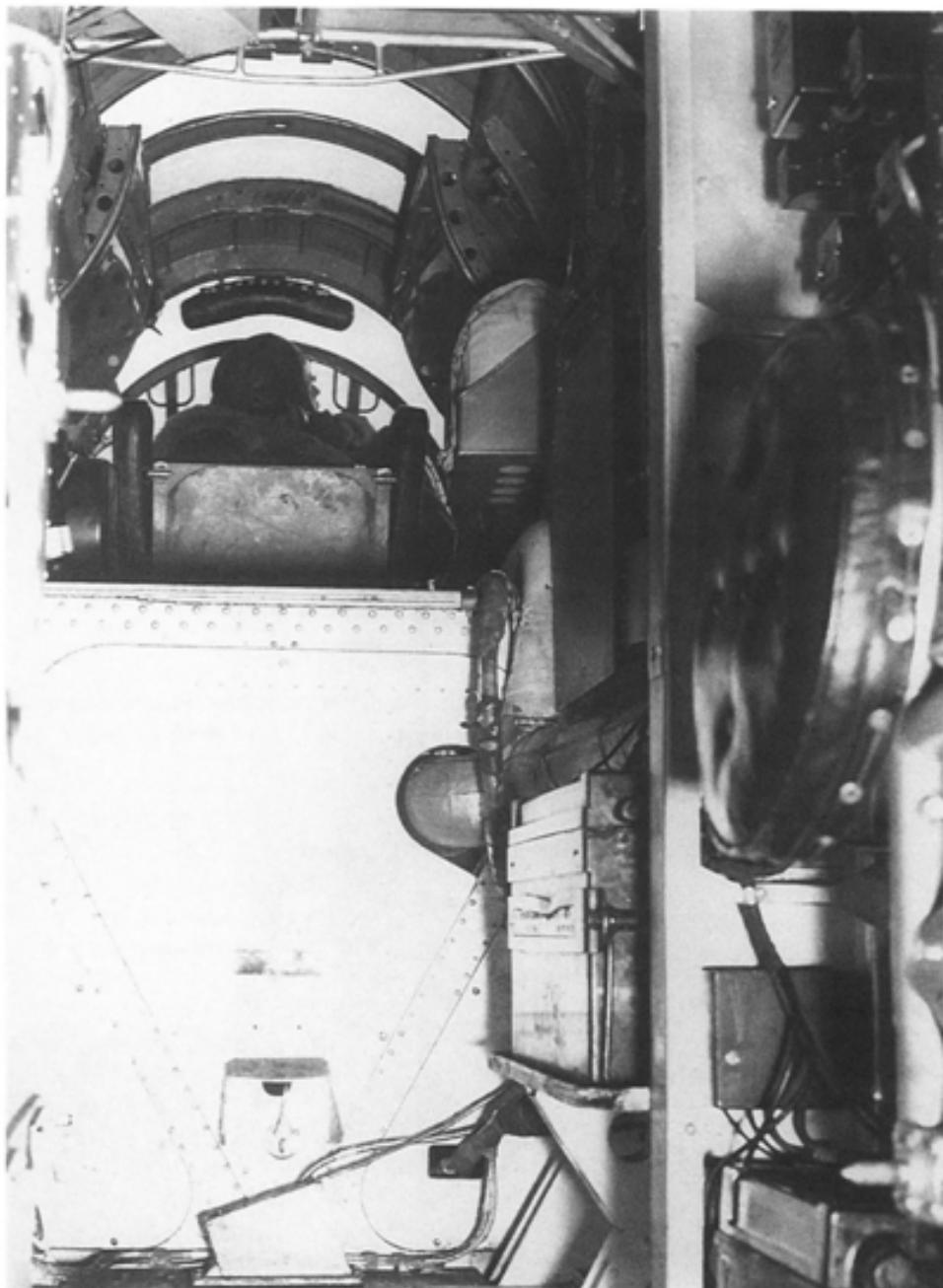
Preparing for minelaying operations on a Hampden squadron.



A typical bomber squadron operations room in 1941. (RE 74385)



Access to the rear turret was limited and difficult. (PL 4972)



Unquestionably the bomber with the most cramped crew accommodation employed by the RCAF Overseas was the Handley-Page Hampden which, at one time or another, was flown by Nos 408, 415, and 420 Squadrons. This interior view looks forward from the centre of the very narrow fuselage towards the pilot and shows, on the right, the folding seat in the wireless operator's position. (PL 4709)



Until the separate trade of bomb-aimer was introduced, it was the task of the observer to ensure accurate bombing. This is the bomb-aiming position in a No 408 Squadron Hampden. (PL 4708)



Aircrew of No 425 Squadron board the truck that will take them out to their dispersed Wellingtons. (PL 10811)



Air Vice-Marshal G.E. Brookes commanded No 6 (RCAF) Group from its formation in Bomber Command until February 1944. (PL 142657)



Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris (second from left, front row) and senior staff officers of Bomber Command examine bomb damage photos in the Conference Room at High Wycombe. (HU 43479)



A bomb-aimer at a Heavy Conversion Unit holds a Mark IX Course Setting Bombsight used by Bomber Command in the early years of the war. (PL 19336)



Examining the damage to the wing of a No 408 Squadron Hampden received during an attack on German ships, including the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, in the English Channel on 12 February 1942. (PL 7166)



Using the flare chute in a Wellington. The distinctive fabric-covered, geodetic construction of the Wellington's fuselage is prominent. (PL 4661)



Group Captain R. Slemon, senior air staff officer, No 6 (RCAF) Group, Bomber Command. (PL 15130)



A nursing sister speaks to two crew members of a No 434 Squadron Halifax rescued from their dinghy after ditching following a raid on Germany. (PL 31799)



Group Captain C.R. Dunlap, commanding No 331 (RCAF) Wing in Tunisia. (PL 18186)



The crew of a No 425 Squadron Wellington in North Africa who have just completed a tour of operations in the summer of 1943. For each operation, a musical note was added to the 'Blues in the Nite' on the aircraft's nose. (PL 1803)



A particularly busy part of any bomber station before an operation was the bomb dump. The first tractor is towing two 4000-lb high-capacity bombs, while the second pulls a train loaded with incendiary containers. (PL 26964)



Oxygen was vitally important to Bomber Command aircrew. Here, groundcrew from No 434 Squadron are about to instal fresh oxygen cylinders in a Halifax in the fall of 1943. (PL 22425)



Groundcrew of No 426 Squadron engaged in changing the propellers on the Hercules engines of a Lancaster II. (PL 26008)



Leaning over the tracks supplying ammunition to the guns in the rear turret, a technician adjusts the elevator balance bars of a Halifax. (PL 22921)



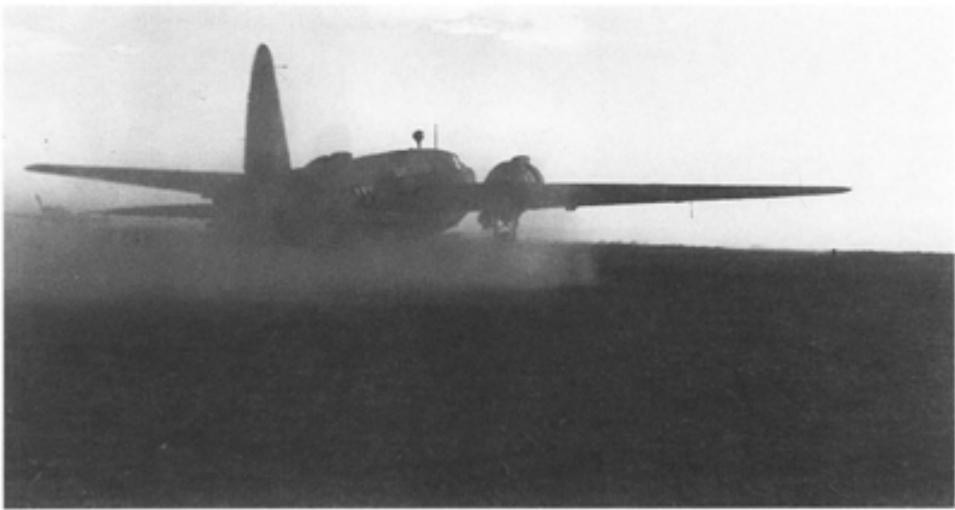
Three aircrew from No 426 Squadron examine the damage done to their Lancaster II during a raid on Leipzig on 25 October 1943. (PL 22172)



The burial of three members of No 424 Squadron – Sergeant R.M. Buie, Flight Sergeant L.R. Taylor, and Sergeant A.W. Kennedy – who died in the crash of their Wellington on 11 April 1943. (PMR 93-293)



Part of a typical wartime bomber station, Skipton-on-Swale, Yorkshire, showing the ubiquitous rounded Nissen huts used as living quarters, the ablution huts, and, in the foreground, a 'Static Water Supply,' intended to combat fires, being used as a swimming hole. (PL 45597)



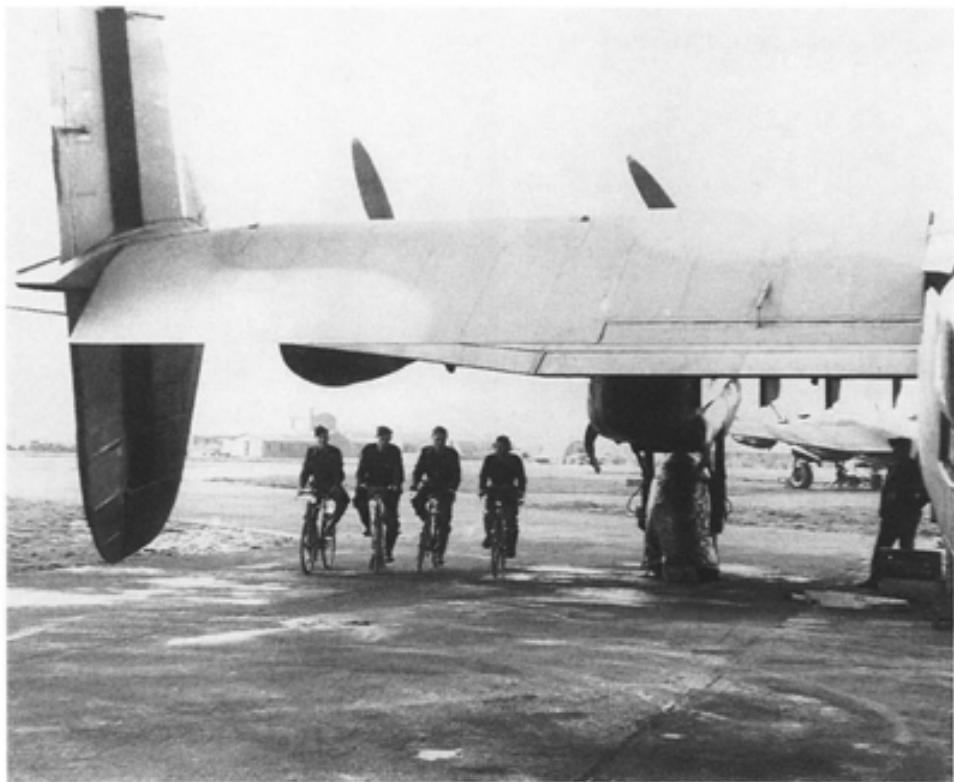
A 331 Wing Wellington taxis through a cloud of North African dust and sand in the late summer of 1943. (PL 18308)



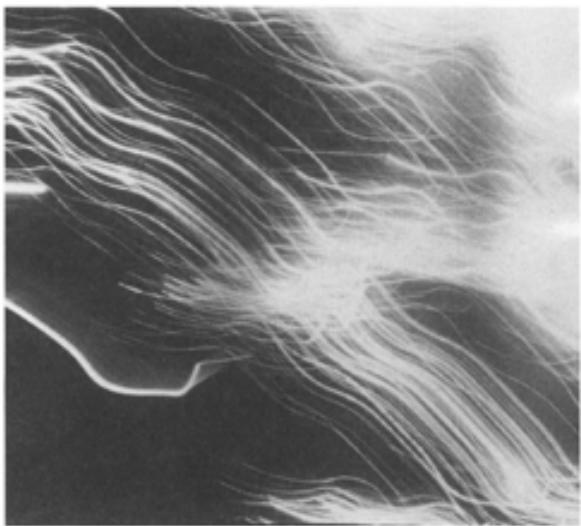
While the dinghy drill to which bomber aircrew were subjected might be viewed as annoying or amusing, on occasion its lessons could be a matter of life and death. This photo shows aircrew from No 425 Squadron undergoing dinghy training. (PL 42464)



Groundcrew swarm over a Halifax II of No 408 Squadron at Leeming, Yorkshire, in August 1943. (PL 19509)



These RCAF men, about to pass under the wing of a Halifax, are employing a common means of transportation for both air- and groundcrew in fuel-starved Britain. (PL 20000)



A crew from No 429 Squadron photographed these markers, searchlights, and Flak over Kassel on 22/23 October 1943. It was after this raid that Sir Arthur Harris asked the Air Ministry to state unambiguously that Bomber Command's objective was to attack the German civilian population 'as such.' (LMG 1051)



Cardinal Villeneuve talks with groundcrew of No 425 Squadron during his overseas tour in October 1944. Note the preponderance of day (20) over night (9) operations flown by this Halifax III at this stage of the war. (PL 33476)



Pilot Officer A.C. Mynarski of No 419 Squadron was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his heroism during a raid on Cambrai, France, on 12 June 1944. (PL 38261)



Members of a No 433 Squadron Halifax crew at Skipton-on-Swale are debriefed after an attack on V-1 installations. The two crew members seated on the right are Flight Sergeant N.D. Dixon and Flying Officer T.J. Kelly. At top centre, with his left hand on his cheek, is Group Captain F.R. Miller, the station commander, who would become Canada's first chief of the defence staff, 1964-6. (PL 32767)



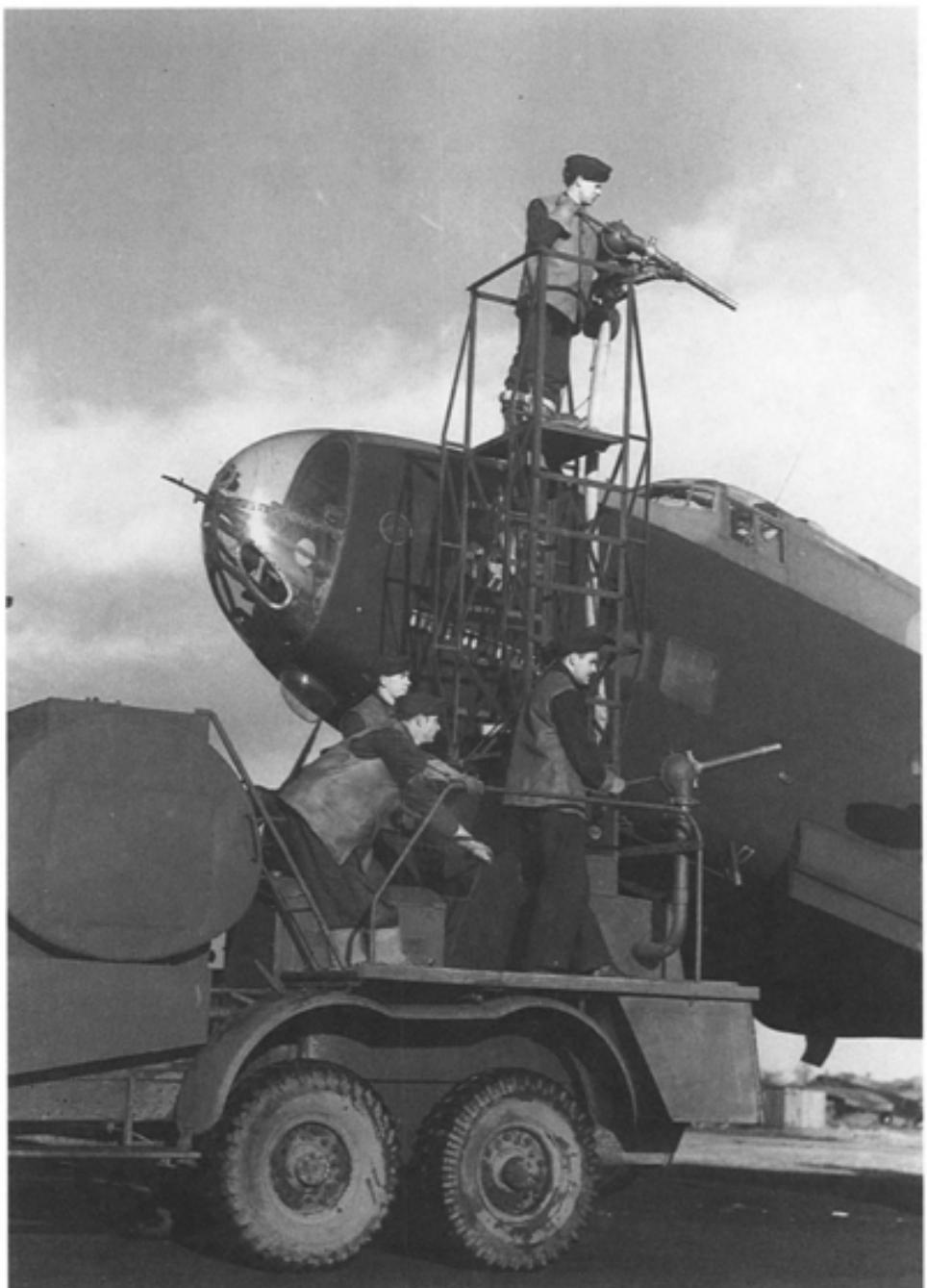
Nos 431 and 434 Squadrons are briefed before one of the two very heavy and effective raids mounted by Bomber Command against Essen in October 1944. (PL 33941)



Group Captain J.E. Fauquier, DSO and Bar, DFC, who commanded No 405 Squadron in 1942 and then again in 1944, when it was part of No 8 (Pathfinder) Group, was also the last wartime commander of the RAF's famous No 617 Squadron – the Dambusters. He is standing by one of the 22,000-lb 'Grand Slam' bombs employed by this unit in the last months of the war. (PL 44700)



The pilot and bomb-aimer of a No 428 Squadron Lancaster X stand beneath the open bomb bay of their aircraft prior to an attack on an oil refinery in the Ruhr late in 1944. The comparatively short range to the target allowed a full load to be carried, in this case 500-lb general purpose high-explosive bombs. The dome of the H2S radar installation is visible immediately behind the bomb bay. (PL 40683)



As the war progressed, firefighting equipment at the RCAF's bases in Yorkshire became increasingly efficient. Canadians man a monitor firetender at Linton-on-Ouse in late 1944. (PL 40571)



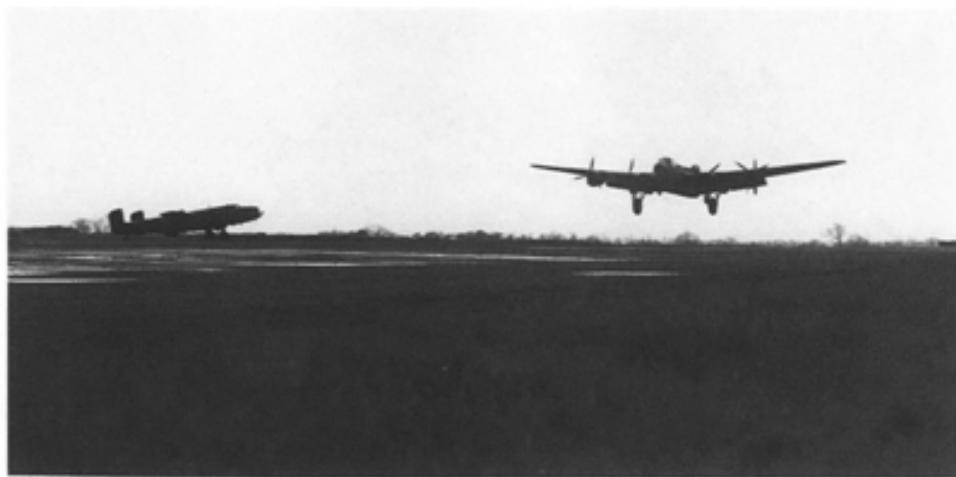
Fitters of No 420 Squadron work on the Hercules engine of a Halifax in the summer of 1944. (PL 30746)



The rear turret of a No 408 Squadron Lancaster II, badly damaged in a duel with a German night-fighter. (PL 26856)



In March 1944 No 419 Squadron, based at Middleton St George, became the first to be equipped with the Canadian-built Lancaster X. This lineup shows the enlarged bomb-bay doors designed to allow these machines to carry an 8000-lb bomb. KB 711, whose tail can be seen in the foreground, was the first Lancaster X to be lost on operations, going down on the night of 1/2 May 1944 during a raid on the railway yards at St Ghislain, France. (PL 29474)



One of the first Canadian-built Lancaster Xs of No 419 Squadron lands at Middleton St George in April 1944. On the ground is a Halifax II, which No 419 had flown previously and which was still on strength of No 428 Squadron. (PL 29083)



A bombing photo taken during a No 6 Group attack on V-1 launching sites in France in July 1944, showing a Halifax over the craters from previous raids. Flying bomb sites were extremely difficult to destroy. (PL 30780)



General Sir Bernard Montgomery examines the damage to a village caused by a Bomber Command raid mounted to support his army's advance in Normandy. (B 6932)



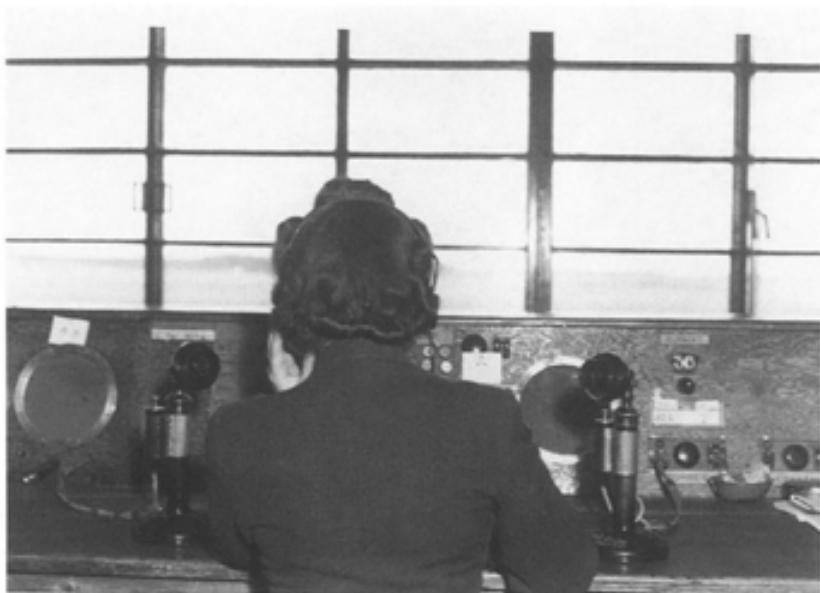
Damage to Frankfurt caused by Allied raids conducted on the city between 18 and 24 March 1944. (CL 4276)



No 5 Group destroyed the rail yards at Juvisy, France, on 19 April 1944, one of the most successful transportation raids attempted before D-Day. (C4297)



A parachutist rigger with an RCAF squadron in the delicate task of straightening the cords of the parachute before repacking. (PL 4915)



A member of the RCAF's Women's Division in the control tower of an airfield in the United Kingdom, maintaining communications with both aircraft and ground control. (PL 22891)



The smoke and fireball caused by the explosion of a Lancaster loaded with a 4000-lb bomb and incendiaries after it crashed while taking off from the RCAF base at Croft, Yorkshire, in early 1944. The crew were fortunate enough to get clear before the aircraft exploded. (PL 44939)



A No 6 Group Halifax photographed during a raid on the French city of Le Havre, which was occupied by the Germans until 11 September 1944. (PL 32846)



Halifax IIIIs of No 425 Squadron at Tholthorpe, Yorkshire, late in 1944. (PL 40185)



A direct hit on a bridge with a 22,000-lb bomb – part of the Transportation Plan. The Lancaster is from No 617 Squadron. (PL 144260)



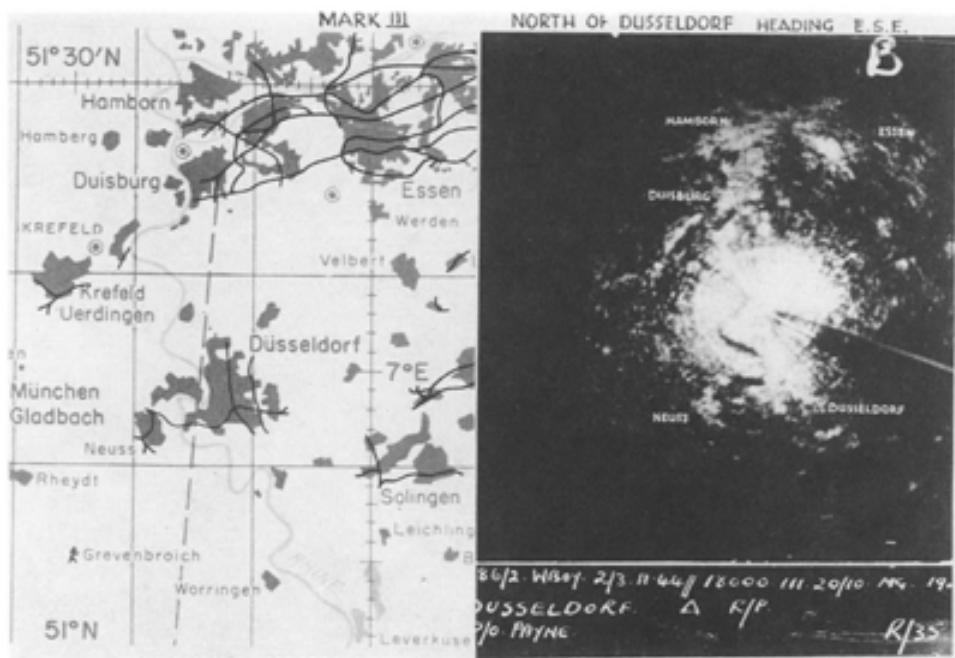
A concentrated mass of Window falls over Münster on 12 September 1944 to confuse the German Flak-control radars. The smoke prevented accurate damage assessments, but the fires burned for several hours. (PL 144263)



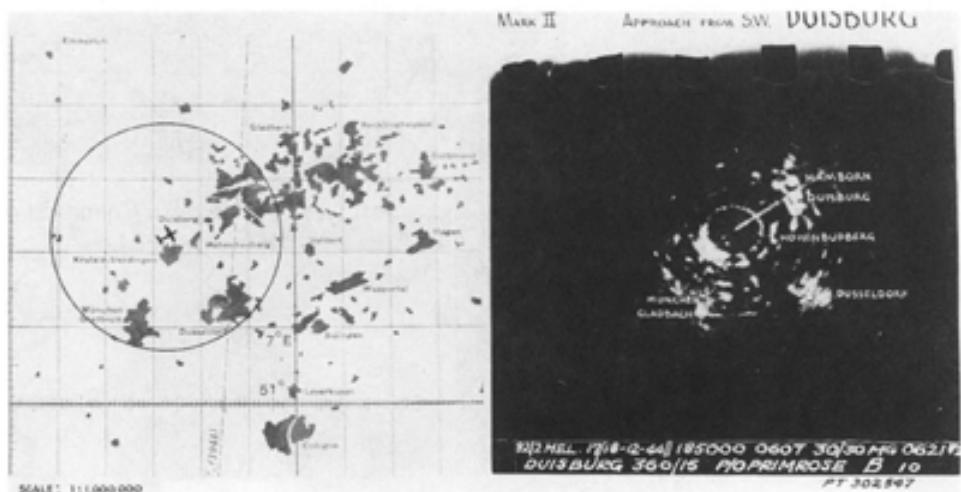
The German night-fighter base at Deelen, in Holland, was attacked by day on 15 August 1944. When weather conditions like this prevailed, daylight bombing could be extremely accurate. (PL 144254)



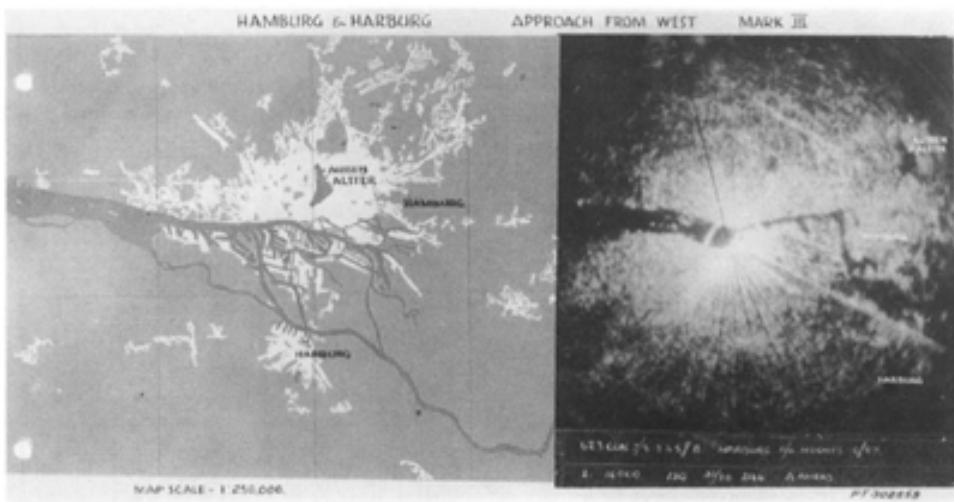
Vokel airfield after an attack by No 6 Group on 3 September 1944. Bomber Command made a number of successful raids against Luftwaffe bases in France and the Low Countries in August and September 1944. (PL 32218)



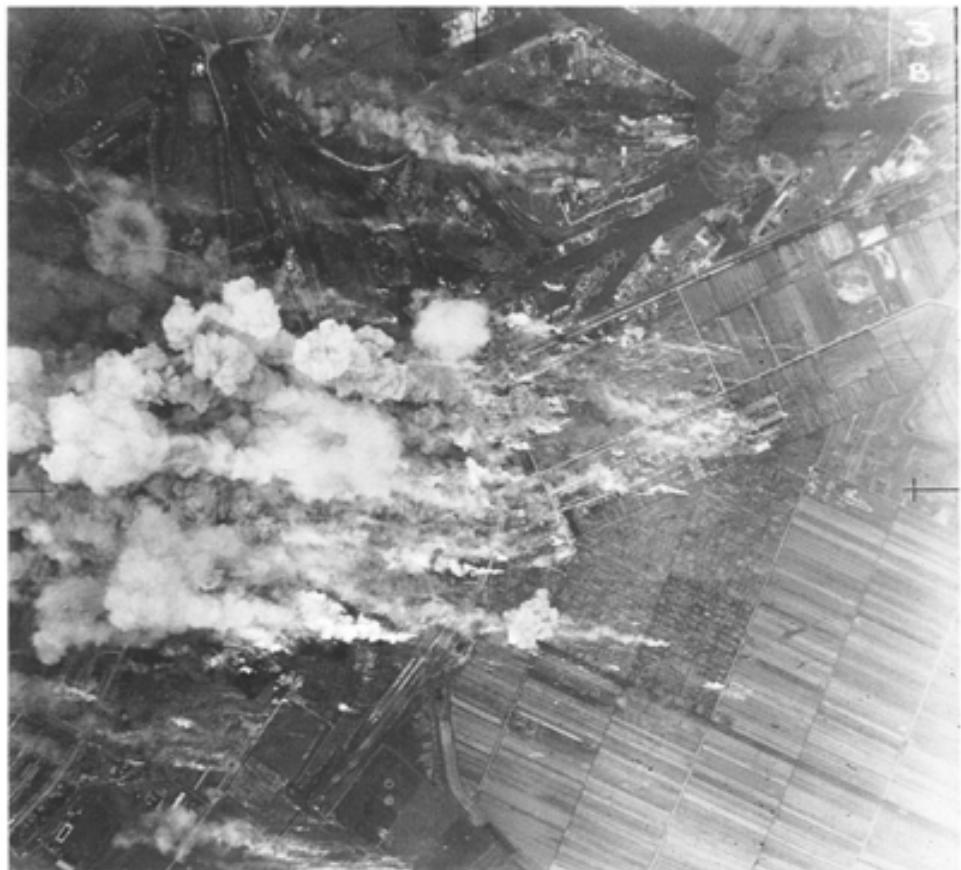
A map and H2S image of Düsseldorf, 2/3 November 1944. All too often, the H2S return over the Ruhr was little more than an unhelpful blob. (PT 302550)



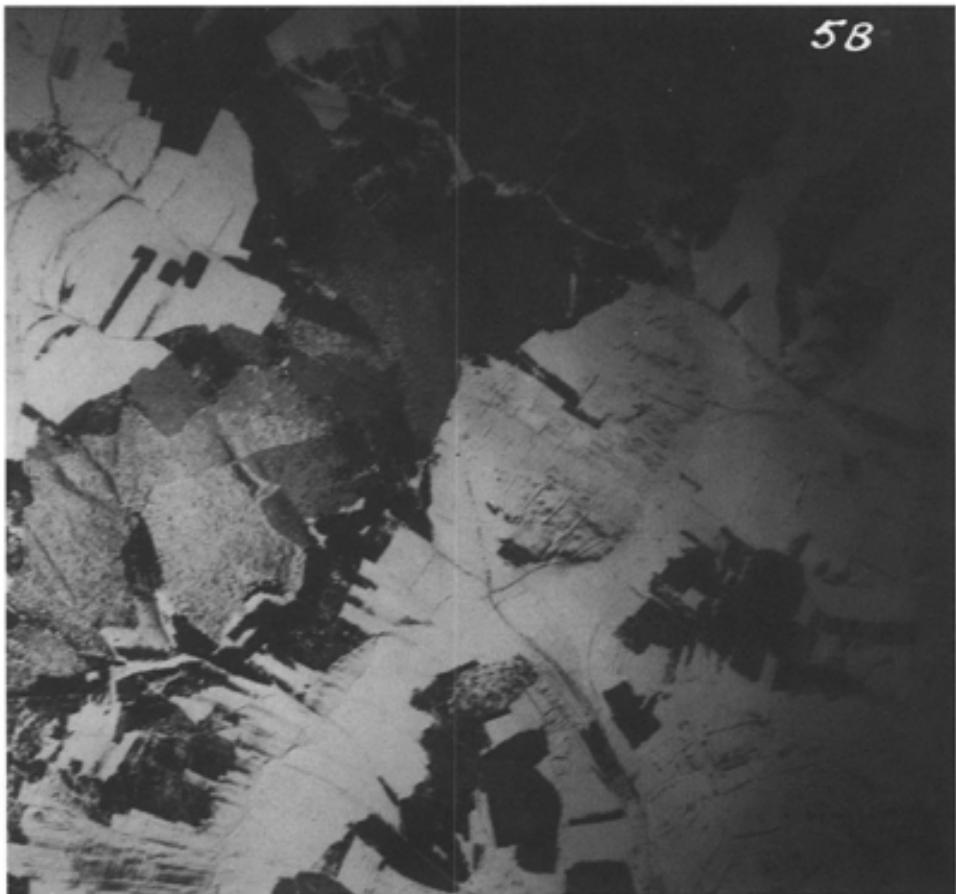
On the night of 17/18 December 1944 the towns of the Ruhr stood out well on the H2S cathode ray screen. (PT 302547)



Near the coast, and with the Elbe River, Aussen Alster, and docklands giving a distinctive return, Hamburg was a good H2S target. (PT 302558)



Emden, photographed by a No 419 Squadron crew on the daylight raid of 6 September 1944 – an attack which bothered more than a few crews because, for the first time, they could see the destruction they were causing. (MSG 3996)



Bomber Command lost 95 of the 795 crews dispatched to Nuremberg on 30/31 March 1944, primarily because of the wonderfully clear skies illustrated here in the bombing photo taken by Flight Sergeant H. Menzies of No 432 Squadron. (EMR 843)



Wing Commander R.J. Gray of No 420 Squadron (centre) with Air Commodore J.L. Hurley, Group Captain P.Y. Davoud, Air Vice-Marshal C.M. McEwen, and Group Captain J. Lecomte on the occasion of the squadron's departure for Canada, June 1945.  
(PL 44838)



Some of the bomb damage in Munchen-Gladbach, early 1945. (PL 42341)



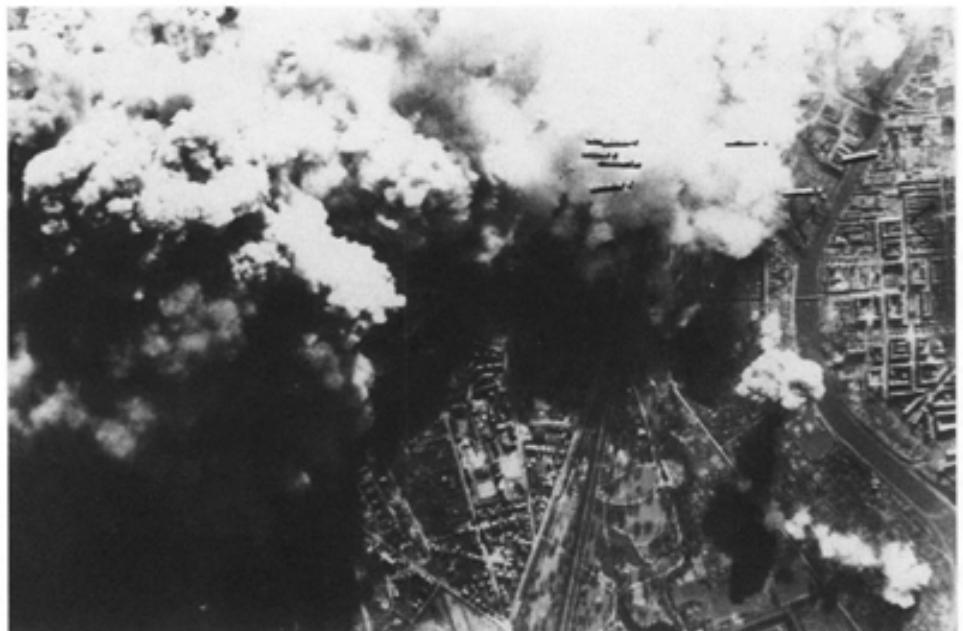
Bomb damage to the south of Cologne cathedral. (PL 42536)



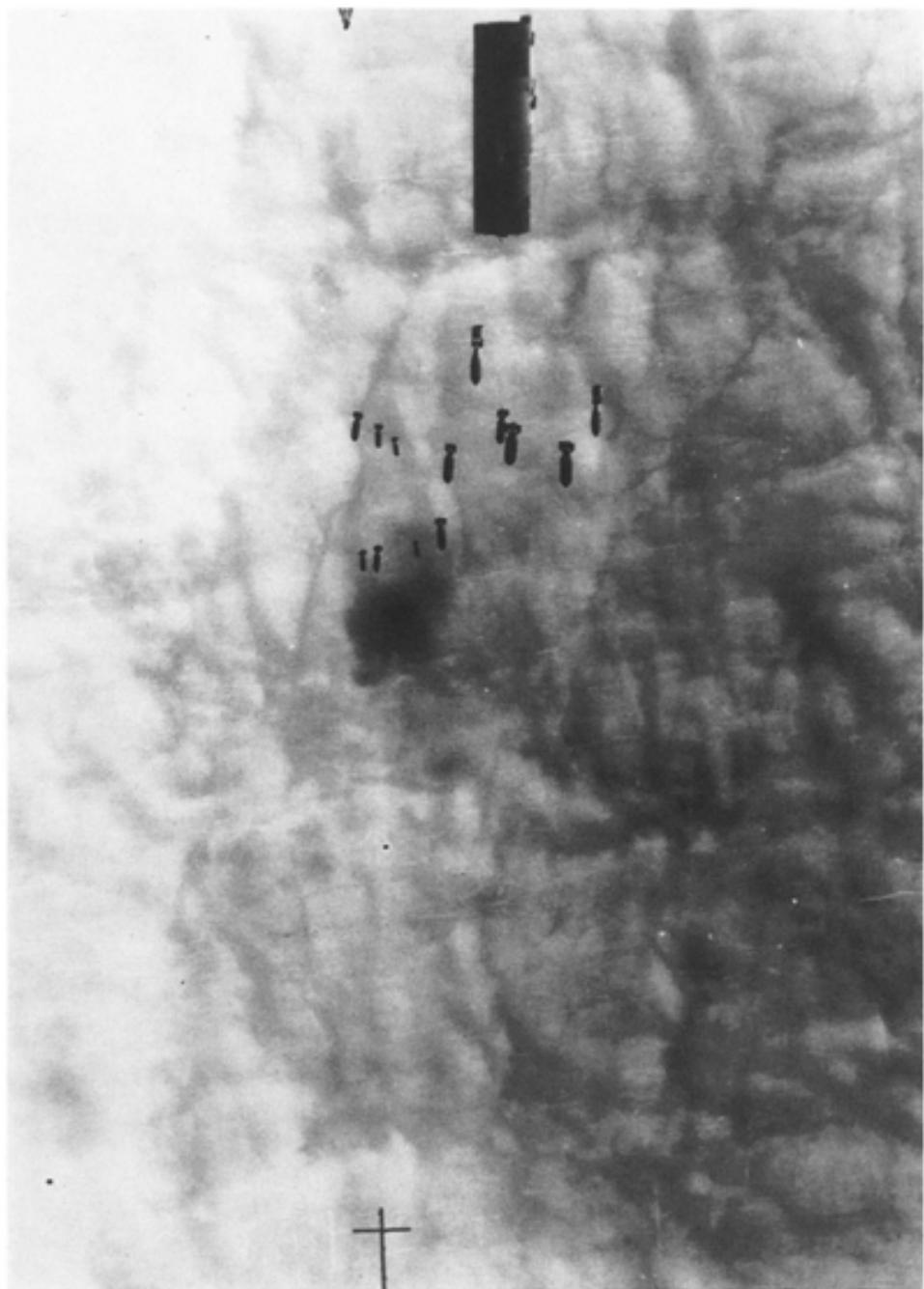
Destruction, mainly by aerial bombing, in the German city of Cologne. (PL 42542)



Groundcrew clear snow from the wing of a Lancaster during the winter of 1944–5 at Middleton St George. (PL 41650)



No 6 Group participated in the heavy attack made on Hannover on 25 March 1945 in order to cut the rail lines and roads running through the city and so slow German reinforcement of the Rhine battle area. (PL 144266)



A 4000-lb bomb and a load of incendiaries in the very cloudy sky over Dortmund on 12 March 1945. A total of 1108 aircraft were dispatched to the target (a record), 192 of them from No 6 Group. The 'cookie's' lack of aerodynamic form (and therefore inherent inaccuracy) is obvious. (PL 144267)