

Flight Sergeant Leonard Sumpter was a bomb aimer during the 1943 Dambusters raid attacking the Eder Dam

-
- He described the night as a 'satisfactory attack' on the Eder Dam at an average height of 100 feet
-
- On D-Day Sumpter flew a secret mission dropping 'Window' over Northern France to confuse German radar
-
- He was also involved on attacks on U-Boat Pens, viaducts and even strikes against V-rocket sites

The previously-unseen logbook kept by a Dambusters hero which documents the famous wartime raid has sold for nearly £9,000.

Flight Sergeant Leonard Sumpter was a bomb aimer on the mission to destroy a series of German dams using Barnes Wallis' ingenious 'bouncing bomb'.

His logbook, that has been owned by his family, dates from October 1941 to September 1945 and charts Operation Chastise - the official name for the Dams raid - on May 16, 1943.

Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times																	
						Day	Night																
13.5.43	1530	LANC. L 929.	F/L SHANNON	B/A	COUNTRY + BOMBING	1	20																
13.5.43	2105	LANC. L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	NIGHT + COUNTRY + BOMBING.	2	30																
14.5.43	1345	LANC. D 763	F/L SHANNON	B/A	BASE - MANSTON - BASE	2	30																
14.5.43	2140	LANC. L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	NIGHT EXERCISE.	1	30																
16.5.43	2150	LANC L 929 (P)	F/L SHANNON (D.F.C.) F/S SUMPTER F/O WALKER (M) D.F.C. F/O GODDLE (W/O) D.F.C. F/O BUCKLEY (R/O) SGT HENDERSON (H.E.) SGT JAGGER (H.C.) (KILLED DCS 4.5.44)	BOMB AIMER	OP. N° 14. VIA HOLLAND TO THE HUN. SATISFACTORY ATTACK ON EDER DAM 18. MILES WEST OF KASSEL. AVERAGE HT. 100 FEET.	6	30																
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SUMMARY FOR MAY 1943</td> <td>DAY.</td> <td>1</td> <td>14.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNIT A.F. 617 SQUADRON</td> <td>NIGHT.</td> <td>2</td> <td>15.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DATE 6.6.43</td> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>3</td> <td>29.55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SIGNATURE</td> <td>S/L</td> <td>4</td> <td>29.55</td> </tr> </table>						SUMMARY FOR MAY 1943	DAY.	1	14.40	UNIT A.F. 617 SQUADRON	NIGHT.	2	15.15	DATE 6.6.43	TOTAL	3	29.55	SIGNATURE	S/L	4	29.55		
SUMMARY FOR MAY 1943	DAY.	1	14.40																				
UNIT A.F. 617 SQUADRON	NIGHT.	2	15.15																				
DATE 6.6.43	TOTAL	3	29.55																				
SIGNATURE	S/L	4	29.55																				
<p>ONE "A" FLYER.</p> <p><i>Sumpter</i> for W. C. Sumpter.</p> <p>617 SQUADRON</p>																							
TOTAL TIME...						191	55																

This is the logbook entry for Flight Sergeant Leonard Sumpter's recollection of the Dambusters raid where he states quite dryly: 'Op No 14. Via Holland to the Hun. Satisfactory attack on Eder Dam 18 miles west of Kassel. Average ht 100 feet .According to his record,

the mission took six and a half hours to complete. What the log book fails to mention is the fact the crew of Sumpter's aircraft took seven attempts before releasing their bomb to ensure it struck its target

JUNE 1944					Time carried forward: 415/15 347/55		
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
5/6-6-44	23.15	LANC. Q	S/L SHANNON S/L MCCARTHY	SPECIAL.	38 D DAY. 6 TH JUNE OPERATIONS. SPECIAL DUTY.		4:35
8-6-44	23.15	MOS. C	S/L SHANNON	NAV.	40 EARLY RETURN. C.S.U. ON PORT ENGINE.		1:25.
14-6-44	19.30	MOS G 627	S/L SHANNON	NAV.	39 LE HAYRE U BOAT PENS.	2:30	
19-6-44	18.30	MOS Q 627	S/L SHANNON	NAV	40 WATTEN. 'P' PLANE NEST.	2:25.	
(43) 22-6-44	14.30	MOS C (627)	S/L SHANNON	NAV.	41 PAS DU CALAIS. WEATHER W. 1000 FT. 1000 FT. W/S FOR BOMBING.	2:10	
(44) 25-6-44	08.30	MOS L.	S/L SHANNON	NAV	42 PAS DU CALAIS AREA GOOD RAID ON ROCKET INSTALLATION	2:40	
TOTAL TIME...						425/00	352/55

On June 5, 1944 at 23.15, under the command of Squadron Leader David Shannon, Sumpter was involved in a 'special duty' on a mission which launched before the attack on June 6 in a flight which lasted four hours and 35 minutes. He was tasked with dropping 'Window' - small pieces of aluminium - designed to confuse enemy radar. On June 8, he and the squadron leader had switched to the two-seat Mosquito - aborting one mission due to an engine problem, but later attacking U-boat Pens, a Watten 'P' Plane nest and a 'good raid on a rocket installation



Instructions

1. This log book is an official document and the property of H.M. Government.
2. Observers and air gunners will maintain an accurate and detailed record of all flights undertaken on service aircraft.
3. Proficiency assessments will be recorded on the appropriate page at the back of the book annually on 31st December, on posting or on attachment to another unit for flying duties.
4. Bombing and Air Gunnery records will be entered in the appropriate pages at the back of the book annually on 31st December.
5. Monthly totals will be entered on a single line in red ink and initialed by the Commanding Officer or his deputy.

R.C.A.F. R.96
(R.A.F. 1267)
934-10-41 (1028)
H.Q. 1062-3-79

Certificates of Qualification

(to be filled in as appropriate)

CHARLOTTETOWN P.E.I. CANADA

1. This is to certify that 655673 LAC SUMPTER L.T.
has qualified as Observer (Armament)
with effect from 17.1.42 Sgd. [Signature] S/O.R.
Date 27.1.42 Unit 32 R.N.S.

PICTON ONTARIO CANADA

2. This is to certify that 655673 SUMPTER L.T. SGT.
has qualified as Air Observer (Armament)
with effect from 30.3.42 Sgd. [Signature] S/O.R.
Date 30.3.42 Unit 31 B.R.S.

3. This is to certify that _____
has qualified as _____
with effect from _____ Sgd. _____
Date _____ Unit _____

4. This is to certify that _____
has qualified as _____
with effect from _____ Sgd. _____
Date _____ Unit _____

•
Leonard Sumpter from Luton, Bedfordshire trained to be a bomb aimer on the Lancaster Bomber in Ontario, Canada



- Here Flt Sgt Sumpter has photographed a fellow Lancaster crew releasing a 10-tonne Grand Slam bomb over a target

His entry for the May 16, 1943, lists the seven crewmen on his plane which took off from RAF Scampton at 9.50pm. He stated: 'Op. No. 14 via Holland to the Hun. Satisfactory attack on Eder Dam 18 miles west of Kassel. Average ht. 100 feet.'

The incredibly risky mission involved 19 Lancaster bombers flying a low-level to avoid radar. FL SGT SUMPTER'S LANCASTER, CALL SIGN AG-L HIT THEIR TARGET BUT THEIR BOMB FAILED TO BREACH THE WALL.

There was one of 11 bombers that made it back to Britain after the attack, with eight others shot down resulting in the loss of 53 of the 133 men involved.

FEBRUARY.					1944	Time carried forward: 395/50 254/40	
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
8.2.44	21.25	L 403 LANC	F/L SHANNON	A/B	GNOME RHONE AERO ENGINE WORKS. LIMOGES SOUTHERN FRANCE. 12,000 ft. COMPLETE DEVASTATION.		7:35.
9.2.44	15.00	L 403	F/L SHANNON	A/B	BASE - SWINDERBY - BASE.	1:40	
12.2.44	16.00	L 403	F/L SHANNON	A/B	BASE - FORD.	1:00	
12.2.44	21.45	L 403	F/L SHANNON PASSENGER. ALCOMB, SHARP.	A/B	ANTHEOR VIADUCT FRENCH MED. COAST. HT 9,000' 12,000 ft.		7:10
13.2.44	0850	L 403	F/L SHANNON	A/B	FORD - BASE.	1:00	
TOTAL TIME...						398/30	269/25

Here Sumpter is outlining two missions over France using the five-tonne 'Tall Boy' bombs causing - complete devastation on the Gnome Rhone Aero Engine works in Limoges, while four days later they attacked the Antheor Viaduct on the French Mediterranean coast at a height of 9,000 feet with an air commodore Sharp travelling along as a passenger

OP HRS. 101.35.

Time carried forward: 177:15 162:55

Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS * (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
18.5.43		LANC L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/AIMER	* COUNTRY.	1	35
4.5.43	21.35	LANC. L 929	F/L SHANNON ^{DFC}	BOMB AIMER	* COUNTRY		.55
5.5.43	1530	L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	* COUNTRY BOMBING	2	45
6.5.43	1505	L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	* COUNTRY	2	50
7.5.43	1230	L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	AIR TEST		40
11.5.43	1105	L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	* COUNTRY + BOMBING.	3	00
11.5.43	20.00	L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	* COUNTRY.	1 50	1 50
12.5.43	1815	L 929	F/L SHANNON	B/A	* COUNTRY. 1 UPKEEP.	2	00
TOTAL TIME....						186:30	167 40

© IAA/BNPS

• The log bog shows the intensive nature of operations flown by the crews of Bomber Command during the Second World War

					Time carried forward:-	379/25	237/15
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
22.12.43	1800	LANC. V932	F/L WILSON	NAVIGATOR	19 OPS. <u>SPECIAL TARGET</u> 2 x 1,000 lb. 15 x 500 lb.		3:05.
30.12.43	11.30	L 403	F/L SHANNON	A:B.	BASE - MK. HARBOROUGH - BASE.	1:00	
30.12.43	1720	K 146	F/L SHANNON	A:B.	20 OPS. NR <u>DIEPPE.</u> 1 x 12,000 lb.		3:30
31.12.43	11.30	L 403	F/L SHANNON	A:B.	"LEAVE <u>SPECIAL.</u> - BASE - EXETER - S. WALES - BASE.	3:25	
HOURS FOR					DECEMBER.		
					DAY 15:05.		
					NIGHT 14:10.		
					TOTAL 29 15		
					APLuggitt O/C A FLIGHT. DEC. '43		
TOTAL TIME...						383/50	243:00

Interestingly, the logbook shows Sumpter spent much of his career flying with a Flight Lieutenant Shannon, who by the time D-Day happened, had been promoted to a Squadron Leader involved in 'special missions' against the Germans

•

The logbook was sold for £9,000 at auction, while a Flt Sgt Sumpter's scrapbook raised a further £3,850

The log also lists 617 Squadron's last sortie of the war in April 1945 - an attack on Berchtesgaden, Adolf Hitler's 'Eagles' Nest' in the Bavarian Alps, with a 12,000lbs Tallboy bomb.

It was sold at auction for a hammer price of £7,000 but with fees added on the total price paid was £8,890.

Also sold was a unique scrapbook kept by Ft Sgt Sumpter which contained never-before-seen images of the men of 617 Squadron.

The snaps include Guy Gibson's Lancaster on the runway with the bouncing bomb loaded underneath before taking off for the Dams raid, for which he won the Victoria Cross.



•

He also had a scrap book with details on the missions Flt Sgt Sumpter completed with his crew during his wartime service

Savannah east operation of war

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 1945

Berchtesgaden hit by 12,000lb bombs

HITLER'S hideout at Berchtesgaden, now the capital of the South German Redoubt, was shattered yesterday by R.A.F. Lancasters in the war's most dramatic pin-point raid. Photographs show large numbers of bombs, specially fused for deep penetration, bursting right on the Führer's chalet.

Other Lancasters attacked his "Eagle's Nest" mountain refuge five miles away—a target only 17 yards square—and the S.S. barracks in the chalet grounds.

A total of 350 bombers went to Berchtesgaden. There is strong probability that Hitler was there, despite German claims that he is leading the defence of Berlin.

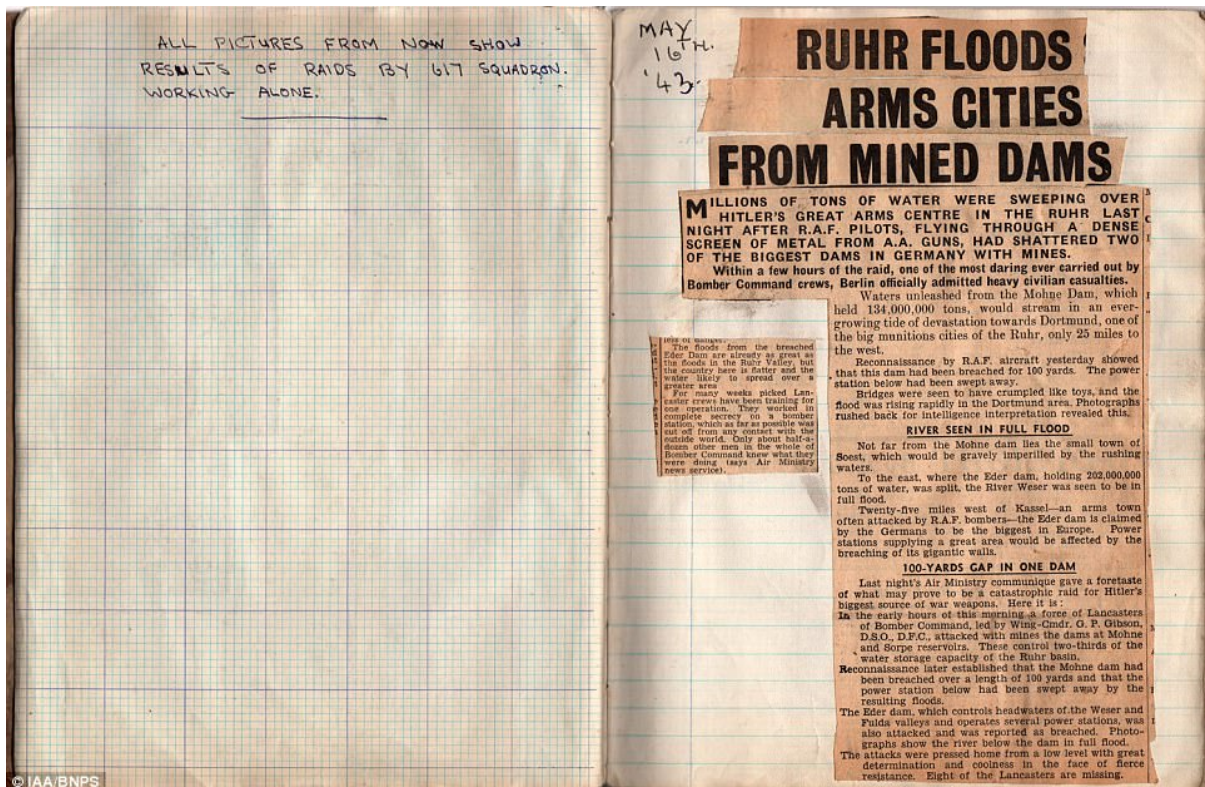
According to the Mayor of Gotha, captured by American troops, the German High Command moved in on March 31, and it is certain that there are many high Nazis in the area.

Crews bombing the Eagle's Nest had the most difficult job. It was in many ways the trickiest precision attack of the whole war. The roof of this eyrie, perched on top of the 5,000ft. Kehlstein is only 17 yards square, yet it covers practically the whole of the mountain top. No heavy bomber has ever had a smaller target.

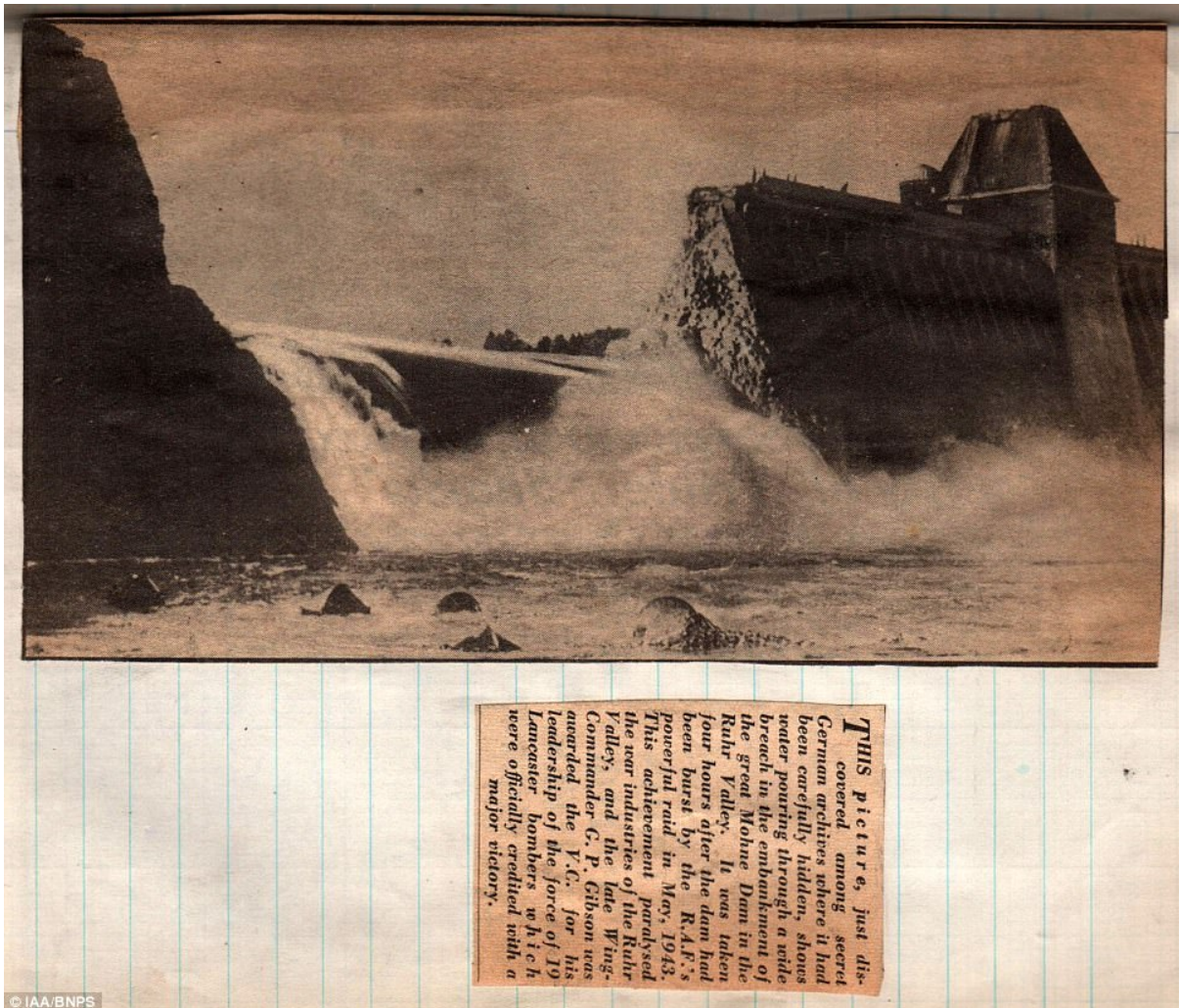
- As well as photographs from the missions, Flt Sgt Sumpter kept press clippings of their exploits in his scrap book, including his final mission - which was an effort to take out senior Nazis at Hitler's Eagle Nest refuge in Berchtesgaden



- Also included in Flt Sumpter's scrap book is a photograph of the very aircraft he was in during the daring Dambuster's raid
There are also aerial images showing other huge bombs dropped by Flt Sgt Sumpter towards enemy targets during his wartime career.
Two years after the war he did a tour of some of the sites he had bombed in France and Germany and his photos show the wrecked Mohne dam and a viaduct.
The scrapbook sold for a total of £3,850.
Richard Davie, of Nottingham-based International Autograph Auctions which sold the archive, said: 'The log book gives us an insight into what Bomber Command were concentrating on during the Second World War.'



- Days after the Dambusters raid, some of the details - including the loss of eight aircraft - were revealed to the public



- Sumpter's scrap book contained photographs of the damage caused by his squadron on the night of the infamous raid



- Sumpter visited the Mohné dam in 1947 and said he bought this photograph from a German of the damage for one cigarette
'The highlight was the Dambusters raid which was one of the most famous operations of the war.
'The logbook is an extremely rare and historically important.
'While the logbook is an official record Flt Sgt Sumpter had to comply with and fill in all the details, this scrapbook is a much more personal record of the war through his eyes and includes press cuttings with written comments besides them.'
Flt Sgt Sumpter, from Luton, Bedfordshire had served in the Grenadier Guards before transferring to the RAF in 1941.
After he was assigned to 617 Squadron, which was set up specifically for the Dams raid, he took part in numerous low-level night-time training exercises over the English countryside, according to his log.

The following year he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for his service in marking bombing targets while flying in Mosquito planes.

By the end of the war he had flown 35 operations. He died in 1993.

Wt. 22515/P1266 80,000 Pads 10/42 H.P. 51-5588

R.A.F. Form 1924 **POSTAGRAM.** Originator's Reference Number :—

To: 655673 P/Sgt. L.J. Sumpter,
No. 617 Squadron,
R.A.F. Station, Scampton. BC/S.23191/P.
Date:— 23rd May 1943.

From: The Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command.

My warmest congratulations on the award of your
Distinguished Flying Medal.

A. T. Harris
Air Chief Marshal.

Originator's Signature Time of Origin

• Sumpter received a telegram from the Air Chief Marshal Bomber Harris following the Dambuster's raid notifying him that he had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal for hitting the target during the daring mission

Bielfeld Viaduct.
Photographed by self.
May 1947. showing temporary repair
2½ years after raid



© IAA/BNPS

- Sumpter took a photograph in 1947 of the Bielfeld Viaduct, some two and a half years after the raid to show the damage



- On February 22, 1945, Sumpter attacked the Bielfeld Viaduct near Hanover with a Tallboy bomb demolishing nine spans

Nets on Mohne Dam erected
after repair to Dam. Taken April 47.
by self.



© IAA/BNPS

- Following the raid, Germans erected nets on the Mohne Dam to prevent any return Dambuster-style attacks

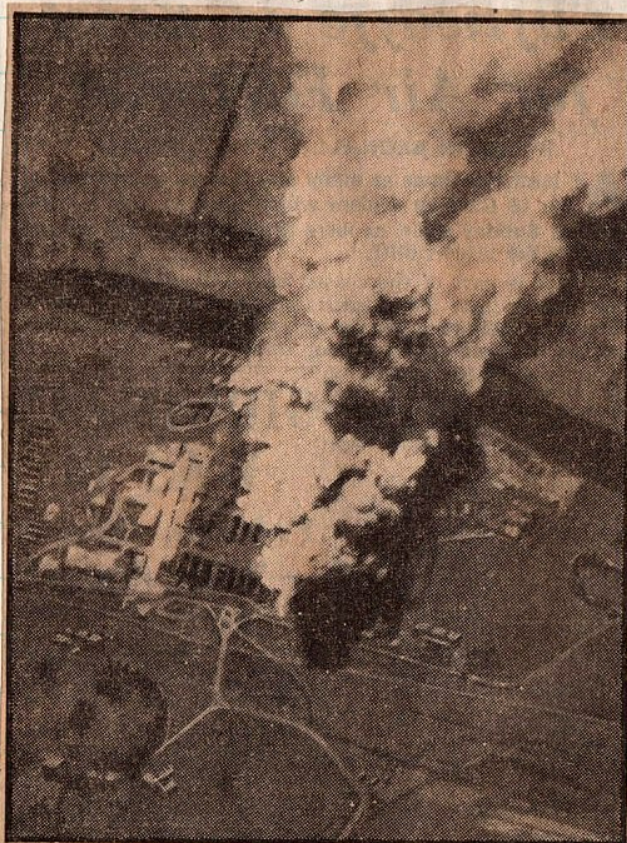
FEBRUARY

8TH

'44

**BOMB-AIMER'S VIEW
OF RAF TARGET**

LIMOGES.



AND this is what the bombs did. Halfway through the attack a huge column of smoke is pouring from the factory.

THEY WERE !!

French Development

GNOME AND RHONE the French aircraft engine company, is reported to be developing a 28-cylinder high-performance engine derived from the models 14R of 1,590 h.p. and 14-cylinders, and the 2,200 h.p. 18-cylinder 18R type.

In the new engine, which is composed

- Some photographs taken on the raids were released to the press to show the damage caused by 617 Squadron

SQUADRON PARTY JULY 18TH 1944.

PARTNERED BY DIANA MITCHELL-DAWSON
(CPL)



© IAA/BNPS

- Not all of the photographs contained in the collection were of military targets or involved missions of extreme courage

OCTOBER.						Time forward 323/30	222/45.
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
2.10.43	15.35	J 906 LANC.	F/L Shannon	A/B.	L.L. X Country	1:15	
3.10.43	07.30	D 763 LANC	F/L Shannon.	A/B.	H.L. Bombing 10,000' - 154*	2:20	
8.10.43	11.15	L 929.	F/O Clayton	Passenger	Base - Farnborough - Base.	1:40	
14.10.43	11.00	L 929.	F/L Shannon	A/B.	H.M. L.L. Bombing 200' - 50*	1:00.	
16.10.43	14.00	J 906	F/L Shannon	A/B	S.A. L.L. Bombing 300' - 39*	1:50.	
16.10.43	18.00	J 906	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. D.N.C.O.	1:00	
18.10.43	11.30	C 817	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. 12.B. . 125*	2:00	
18.10.43	15.45	R.	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. 6.B - 84*	3:30.	
19.10.43	09.45	B 131	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. 6.B - 97*	1:30	
19.10.43	16.00	L 929	F/L Shannon	A/B	L.L. X Country.	2:20	
20.10.43	05.10	J 906	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. 6.B. 73*	1:20.	
20.10.43	14.00	C 817	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. 6.B. 99*	1:45	
22.10.43	18.30	J. 906	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing 6.B. 144*	1:10.	
23.10.43	10.00	J. 906	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. D.N.C.O	45	
25.10.43	16.30	J. 906	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing 2.B. 88*	1:10.	
30.10.43	11.00	E	F/L Shannon	A/B	H.L. Bombing. D.N.C.O.	30	
HOURS FLOWN					OCTOBER 1943		
<i>Shannon F/Lt</i> <i>OC. 6 h 7. Sq.</i>					DAY	23	55
					NIGHT	1	10
					TOTAL	25	05.
					BOMBS. 68.	TOTAL TIME...	348/35
					H + L.L.	AVE. 103	224/05

In October 1943, Sumpter flew a total of 25 hours and five minutes attacking targets from altitudes of 200 feet to 10,000 feet

MARCH					1945.	Time carried forward: 451/30 352/55	
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
1.3.45	15.00	LANC. V.	F/L MARSHALL	A/B	DUMMY RUNS	1:45	
2.3.45	09.30	LANC. V	F/L MARSHALL	A/B	H.L.B. (D.N.CO)	1:55	
9.3.45	11.00	LANC Y.	F/L MARSHALL	AIR-BOMBER	OPS. BIELEFELD. WEATHER U/S. LOAD 1 x 22,000 LB.	3:40	
8.3.45	09.00	LANC. Y	F/L MARSHALL	A/B	H.L.B. 55' at 20,000'	1:45	
27.3.45	10.15	LANC YZ 'K.	F/L MARSHALL	AIR BOMBER	U-BOAT CONSTRUCTION WORKS AND SHELTERS AT FARGE. 10 MILES N.W OF BREMEN. SOME FLAK. A/C HOLED. LOAD. 1 x 10 TONS.	4:40	
HOURS FLOWN MARCH. 1945				DAY	14:10		
				NIGHT	NIL.		
				TOTAL	14:10.		
28.3.45.	14.30	LANC YZ 'T'	F/L MARSHALL	NAV.	AIR TEST	:25	
TOTAL TIME....						465/40	352/55

On March 27, 1945 while attacking a U-Boat construction work at Farge outside Bremen his aircraft was 'holed'

APRIL					1945.	Time carried forward: 465/40 352/55	
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times	
						Day	Night
4.4.45	20.00	LANC YZ X.	F/L MARSHALL	A/S	X COUNTRY		3.15
5.4.45	14.15	LANC PO 134 Y	F/L MARSHALL	AIR BOMBER	ITMUIDEN. SHIPPING.		
					WEATHER 4/5. 1 x 12,000 LB.	2.25	
		LANC. Y	F/L MARSHALL	AIR BOMBER.	ITMUIDEN. SHIPPING.		
					TARGET ATTACKED.		
7.4.45	18.30	PO 314			LIGHT PLAN. LOAD. 1 x 12,000 LB.	2.50	
25.4.45	04.15	LANC PO Y 134	F/L MARSHALL	AIR BOMBER	BERGHTESGADEN.		
					THE EAGLES NEST.		
					HITLER'S CHALET IN THE		
					BAVARIAN ALPS. AUSTRIA.	8.00	
					LOAD. 1 x 5 TONS.		
						HOURS FLOWN APRIL 1945.	
						DAY.	13.15
						NIGHT	3.15
						TOTAL	16.30
						TOTAL TIME.... 478/55 356/10	

On April 25, 1945 Sumpter attacked Hitler's Berghtesgaden retreat in the Bavarian Alps with a five-tonne bomb

13,400 lb. Bomb.

PENETRATION TYPE. SUBMARINE PEN 'BUSTER'.



PICTURE TAKEN OVER NORTHERN.
FRANCE. 24.6.44. JUST AFTER THE
RELEASE OF A 13,400 lb BOMB.
THIS TYPE WAS FIRST USED IN
MAY 1944. MAIN USE IS FOR
DESTROYING UNDERGROUND WORKS.

- This fascinating photograph shows a bunker buster bomb being dropped over northern France on June 24, 1944