



*Dedicated to P/O Donald Irving, RAAF & His Gallant, But Luckless Crew.....  
And To All Who Did Not Return From Nuremberg.*



### **INTRODUCTION**

This manuscript chapter first came my way many years ago. Although it is known to have originated in Australia, it was in fact given to me by a British airman, then serving with RAF Germany, and its route from Down Under to Deutschland remains a mystery to this day.

It is written on pages taken from what appears to be a foolscap notebook, and the passage appearing below is entitled *Chapter V. NUREMBERG – THE BIG SELL-OUT*. After much digging and cross-checking of various printed, electronic and other material, it was possible with some certainty to identify the crew concerned.

With as much accuracy as is possible, a full identification of all mentioned will be found appended immediately following this account. However, certain incidents described have eluded positive verification, as have other facets of this story.

It is felt that before revealing their identities, and those of some others referred to below, it may be preferable to read the manuscript as presented. In this way, no preconceptions or opinions which may arise if more details were known are allowed to detract from any intrinsic value this offering undoubtedly has. Please – read the manuscript first.

Apart from some minor additions of punctuation, the text has been left unaltered. It will be found liberally peppered with much RAF slang, many oaths, and may be thought highly controversial in content. There is also a degree of blasphemy present. Also, many of the sentiments expressed – especially the author's opinion of and feelings towards the enemy – may be thought out of synch with certain modern liberal thinking.

As ever, the caution that history happened then and not now applies, and it should

ever be remembered that this airman was then just over half way through a gruelling tour of operations, being carried out at the most dangerous period of the Bomber Offensive – The Battle of Berlin. 'Dig' is doing no more than using both the coinage of his day and of the Air Force.

There is much evident interest in the operations and personnel of No. 101 Squadron. The very nature of its contribution to the Radio Counter Measures war and the presence on the Squadron of many German-speaking Special Operators – some of them Jews of Teutonic origin - have all led to the aura of mystery that has long surrounded Ludford and its ABC Lancasters.

The Squadron's higher than average losses, felt by many to be as a direct result of its special equipment providing convenient means for their detection and destruction by the enemy, has long been a byword and led to even further interest in this Squadron.

So, it is hoped that the publication of this manuscript may encourage those who have a deeper knowledge of No. 101 to perhaps come forward and explain that which I have so far found inexplicable.

This offering is presented with deep respect for this and other crews mentioned therein, and it is of some regret that I have no photographic evidence of any others than P/O Irving's Crew in my files. Again, it is a sincere hope that this also may find a remedy if the attention of a relative or comrade with such material is attracted to these pages.

So, we fly with this Crew to Nuremberg – and back.

### **NUREMBERG – THE BIG SELL-OUT.**

The day was the thirtieth of March 1944. I'd sent Dianne a telegram and a letter on her birthday, the twenty-sixth. I didn't send her a present as I couldn't find anything suitable up in this neck of the woods. Have to go to London for cigarettes. I was just about out, although I still had that carton stashed away in 'T'-Tare. I didn't want to touch them though. They may be a good omen. I hoped I never needed them urgently. I could get her a present there, and I also had something else on my mind. Hell, a guy in Boston (USA) had wanted to sell me an engagement ring on the way over. Ten bloody dollars he wanted and he reckoned it was worth seventy. I happened to be with a little guy who was a jeweller in Melbourne. He tried it on a plate-glass shop window and reckoned it was the real McCoy. What the bloody hell did I want with an engagement ring at that time though? It sure would have come in handy now.

We were on the Battle Order again and the usual chores were carried out during the day. Briefing was at seven p.m. and the usual supper at six. 'Bloody cheese and Goddam jap tucker again!' said Canada.

'Well' I said, 'at least we've got a bloody egg with it this time.'

'Yeah', he said, 'I guess a man should be thankful for small mercies!'

We finished our supper and went to Briefing. The target was a place called Nuremberg, to become famous in later years, but not for bombing raids. 'Never bloody heard of it', I told Wally.

He had, he assured me.

'Should be better than bloody Berlin', Ginger remarked.

The trip would take seven-odd hours and all the rest of the gen was passed on to us

by the various group leaders. In the crew room there was laughter and swearing as usual.

Over in one corner of the room, quietly gathered together, were seven Australians. They'd only been here a couple of weeks. I hadn't had a chance to have a good yarn to them, as I never saw them in the ante-room at the Mess or in the pub. They were a pretty 'churchy' mob, which was uncommon. Maybe I should have gone and met them there. They didn't appear to drink at all and definitely weren't the rowdy types. They were gathered around one of the crew at the moment. I sauntered over and Wally followed me. It was the wireless operator they were apparently worried about. He was really in a bad way. He was scared and reckoned he had a premonition that they weren't coming back.

Wally and I both tried to console him with a few chosen words. He was as white as a sheet. He said he'd probably be OK once they got into the air. I sincerely hoped so, as a guy in that frame of mind wouldn't be much good on ops. That scary feeling can be contagious, and spread to the rest of the crew. We wished them the best of luck and left them, as it was time to go. There were only two crews in front of us now as far as ops went, except of course for the three Fight Commanders. Neither of those two crews made the elusive bloody thirty.

We took off and climbed for height, again through cloud. I had *Monica* switched on and it worked well under these conditions. Not a plane came close enough to worry us before we broke the tops of that cloud. Besides, this climbing through cloud wasn't as hairy now. We didn't just circle around base anymore, but flew three sides or courses, predetermined by the navigational wizards, of an equilateral triangle, measured in such a manner to have us track back over base at the correct time and height to set course out over the Wash. Each squadron had, in theory, its own piece of sky. It was supposed to be almost impossible to be on a collision course with other aircraft. How well it worked I don't know, but at least it made our minds a bit easier.

We broke cloud at fourteen thousand, and, as predicted the further we flew in an easterly direction the thinner the cloud became. There was none at all up to our north. Our route took us in just south of or skirting the Ruhr Valley, where the Dambusters had caused such havoc. We were to learn later it hadn't affected those bloody searchlights to any degree.

We crossed the enemy coast at twenty-two thousand feet. As we approached the Ruhr, every searchlight in the south of the Valley was switched on. They weren't searching and wavering in the usual manner; they weren't close enough for that, but they certainly lit up the night sky. They just pointed in our direction, or along our route. Then the fighter flares appeared along our course as well. That was bloody unusual this far away from the target. Something bloody very funny going on here.

'Hey, Len', Wally said, 'How would it affect you if I veered seven or eight degrees to the south?'

'Wait a minute', Len said. I moved so he could have a look at the situation. 'A good idea by the look of things', Len reported when he got back to his table.

Wally started to slowly edge to the south.

'Keep your eyes open for other kites,' Wally said.

We did, but the only other aircraft we saw were Lancs and they were below us. There were plenty where we'd just left though, to our port, easily seen against those stinking searchlights and fighter flares. We turned back on our original course and

Len gave a slight change in that.

'That's the best bloody idea he's had for a month, Len', I said.

'Yes', he said, 'I think so too!'

'How are you gunners going down there? We may need you shortly by the bloody look of things', I said.

They were both OK.

All hell had broken loose to the north. Tracer bullets were whizzing across the night sky in all directions. I saw a couple of Lancs go up already. They disappeared down into the cloud like flaming meteors. Eddie, the special, reported the biggest babble of words on German radio he had ever heard. Within the space of five minutes I must have seen another ten Lancs go up like those first two to go the same way. The bloody fighters were well and truly into the stream of bombers. Twice we were attacked, but as they came in from our starboard to catch us against the light, we corkscrewed in that direction. The fighters kept bearing towards those lights, looking for easier prey. Ginge and Jack helped speed them on their way with heavy bursts from their guns. One was a Focke Wulf 190; the other a Me 109. Those corkscrews had been pretty violent and my gear was scattered all over – but bugger it. I was too busy watching what was going on.

Eddie reported again: 'They know our course and everything, Wally.'

'Oh well', Wally said, 'Can't be helped now. We're doing alright so far.' Paddy then piped in: 'That must be those new rockets the gunners are using.'

'What do you mean, Paddy?' I asked him.

'Those meteor-like lights you see going along and down into the cloud.'

'Use your bloody noggin, Paddy; they're burning bloody Lancs or Hallies. That's what that is! Rockets my aching arse!'

'Yes, I think you are right, Dig, looking again', he said.

'Course he's bloody right', interrupted Ginge.

'OK, you chaps', from Wally, 'Less yapping and more looking for bloody fighters. Concentrate on our starboard, you gunners. You, Dig, will have to look into those lights. Have you tried that visual *Monica*, Dig?'

'A couple of times, Wally', I told him. 'Not worth a bellyful of piss!'

'OK, Dig', he said.

We all kept quiet now. Hell, they were sure getting the shit kicked out of them to our north. Some bastard had dropped his guts, or German Intelligence had found out something they shouldn't have. It was a bloody trap if ever there was one. Or a bloody sell-out. Every fighter Hitler had at his disposal for bloody miles around was up here. They were shutting that trap and how. That change of course was paying off dividends for us. But, we weren't half way to the target yet! If they know our course, the German bastards may even know our target. I asked Eddie, but he hadn't heard it mentioned. They knew we had these specials up here with us, though, so if they did know the target they weren't about to let us know they did. It would be bloody lovely if they met us over the target as well! Gradually we left the carnage behind us and droned on into the welcome darkness.

Len gave us the thumb when it was twenty minutes to ETA target. Not a light or a flare in front of us. Hope he hadn't made a blue in his navigation. However, we were now, thank Christ, right at the head of the main force on ops. Zero hour minus two minutes. That was our time for bombing now that we had the experience. Hope those Pathfinder boys had got through back there.

With only a couple of minutes to go, Canada yelled: 'I see the markers, Wally. Five degrees to starboard.'

'Yes, I see them now, Canada', Wally said.

'Bloody hell, they're scattered. I'll aim for the thickest clump I can see.'

'OK', Wally said. 'Talk me in, Canada.'

'OK, Wally', from Canada.

'Two degrees to port. Bomb bay doors open.'

Then a few searchlights, but scattered also. I couldn't see another bloody plane.

Canada said:

'I can see a couple more Lancs below us. This must be the bloody joint'.

Canada gave a few more small corrections of course. I was down over the Cookie.

Then "bombs gone" from Canada. I waited for the photoflash to go off. I got an instant glimpse of built-up area, I think, before the bomb-bays closed. Shit – where was every other bastard? They may be late owing to that shemozzle back there. Jesus, this was the most sporadic attack we'd ever seen, we all reckoned. "Piss-poor" Canada described it. There were no fighters. The bastards were all back at the Ruhr. They wouldn't have the range to follow us without refuelling and rearming; also, by the amount of tracer they had let loose near the Ruhr. By the look of things, though, those bloody fighters had done a good job for the Fatherland. They had broken up the Bomber Command attack. Bugger their luck.

We changed course south, then westwards and headed home. We'd miss that Ruhr Valley on the way home, but as Eddie pointed out; if they knew our way in, they may know our way out. By the time we reached the enemy coast, they would have had time to land, refuel, rearm and be waiting for us again. Couldn't be as bad though. They'd be without those searchlights to see us against. They still had their fighter planes, but we could dodge them; put our nose down and get out of Germany like a bat out of hell, now we'd got rid of the bombs. We'd be a bit more bloody versatile on the way out, and that was for sure.

The trip back, as it turned out, was long, dark and uneventful. Ten minutes from base, Wally called *Millpond*. The husky female voice answered and sounded relieved. She even asked if we needed any aid on landing, and Wally assured her we did not. Something was wrong for sure. There wasn't another Lanc in the circuit and the airwaves were conspicuously quiet. We got our landing instructions. The runway was No. 1, north to south. Winds were gusting up to forty miles an hour and would cause a drift to port. That wouldn't worry us – we were home.

Then, as we were on the downwind leg, we heard a male voice and it sounded very bloody worried. He requested emergency landing procedure and also an ambulance. We were told to go round again. We did just that, and Wally said, 'That's bloody old Screwie. He told me he was taking a sprog crew in 'S-Sugar'.' He must have troubles to request an ambulance.' We caught sight of his navigation lights as he made his final approach. We weren't a minute behind him, and taxied round to our dispersal. He was in the next bay. We got quickly out of 'T-Tare' and there were bods running everywhere. We scrambled straight across to their dispersal and wished we hadn't been so bloody inquisitive. Lights were now focused on the back of the plane. The tail plane and the turret were a tangled mass of bloody scrap metal. Half the rear turret was missing, as was the rear gunner.

'Oh Jesus', I thought and could have easily spewed.

My guts heaved. We all moved away, except Wally. There was absolutely nothing we

could do. Wally rescued Screwy from the mob around the plane. He took him aside. Another vehicle pulled up near the rear of the plane. We knew what that would be. After about five minutes, Wally left Screwy and came across to us. They took Screwy to the ambulance and the rest of the crew also.

'Anyone else hurt?' we all asked Wally at the same time.

'No', said Wally.

'They are all shook up a bit, that's all. They're taking them to Sick bay. Probably give them a sedative or something. The wireless operator may need more. By what Screwy was able to tell me, they had a pretty rough bloody trip. They got off course approaching the Ruhr, and it had to be north of track. The navigator blames himself for the lot. Screwy can't recall as yet how many times they were attacked by fighters. He tried to scramble out of it to the south. The rear gunner claimed he blew a Me 109 to pieces, verified by the mid-upper gunner and the wireless operator. They were almost out of strife when the last attack caught them unawares. The rear gunner, as you saw, was killed instantly by a cannon shell. The wireless operator went back to assess the damage. When he saw the mess the gunner was in, he just spewed into his oxygen mask. He chewed it up and swallowed it, he told Screwy. No one else got a scratch and as the kite was handling alright, they decided to press on. Nothing they could do for the rear gunner anyhow.'

We were all silent for a minute, and then Canada said:

'Fancy swallowing your own Goddam spew.' He spat on the ground.

'Aw shut up, Canada', said Ginge. 'You big, gruesome Canadian bastard!'

'Bloody hell', I said; 'I nearly threw up myself, Ginger. Let's shut up about it.'

'Come on', Wally said, 'The crew truck's waiting for us.'

We went back to our own dispersal, climbed aboard the truck and it took us round to the Flights.

Everyone around here seemed to be in a helluva flap. We got out of our flying gear in a hurry and the two Flight Commanders, who hadn't been on the trip, were waiting for us. They ushered us into the big interrogation room with its separate cubicles. We wouldn't have had to worry about getting a cubicle tonight, as no other bastard was in the place except us and the interrogation officers. There were the Flight Commanders and a couple of other officers as well. We had a good audience.

One of them asked: 'What's been going on over there? You're only the tenth to land. Six of them didn't reach the target. Four more don't know if they did or not. That's fourteen out of a total of twenty-eight. Where's the rest of them?'

'Yes, you must have reached the target, Wally', one of the Flight Commanders said.

The other one said: 'The first six had to abort; they were home two hours ago. You're the first one that may be able to tell us the full story.'

Shit – they weren't giving us a chance to say anything. But now they shut up, and Wally told them the story. During Wally's description of the raid, an officer came in a couple of times and whispered into one of the seated officer's ears. Wally raised those dark eyebrows in question, and the officer said:

'I guess you boys should know. Three more of our planes have landed safely at other 'dromes.'

He looked at his watch and went on: 'Anyone that's not back now is either in the drink or else...'

He didn't complete the sentence. He didn't have to. We knew the bloody score now. They asked the rest of us to verify Wally's statements now and again. Wally told them

how he had veered south, as he had an idea everything was not as it should be. They reckon it was probably a good move; otherwise we may be still over there with the rest of them. The questions went on. It was like a bad dream. Then I said, more or less to myself; 'A bloody stinking sell-out if you ask me.'

'What did you say, Flight?' one of them asked.

'Er, I was just talking to myself', I told him.

'Saying what?' he asked.

'Well', I said, 'I've had plenty of time to think on the way home. It could have been a sell-out. The Huns knew our track. The action of those searchlights. The number of fighters, and those fighter flares. You don't see those until you're close to the target usually. It sure stinks to me. Our special here, Eddie, he will verify me as to the fighter strength. We were lucky we were only attacked a couple of times. But as I was looking back to the north, towards those searchlights, I could see as many fighters at some stages as I could see Lancs and Hallies.'

Eddie verified me on the fighter strength. One of the Flight Commanders said to me a bit more casually – he knew me – 'That's a very interesting theory of yours, Dig. A sell-out, eh? What does the rest of the crew think?'

'I don't know, Sir, ask them.'

He did and they all backed me up. Wally said he thought it stunk a bit before he made up his mind to veer south. Eddie had heard the German controller giving our course on the radio. It couldn't all be set up in ten minutes. Where did all the fighters come from? There weren't a fifth that many in that area normally. Jesus, it must have been a set-up, I reckoned. I looked at my watch. Five-thirty a.m. bloody near ten hours since take-off and we had been in the air for eight of them. Jesus, it seemed like ten days to me since we took off. As we were leaving, one of the interrogation officers said:

'Well, we can't accept your ideas at the moment. But, we'll wait until later and find out what the final result of this show is. It may be worth investigating, but they wouldn't like to admit to such a flaw in their security.'

I didn't like to admit it either. Shit – it was bad enough without those German bastards knowing your route, the colour of your ground markers, maybe your target and so forth. It was OK going over there; you expected what you ran into at the target, but definitely didn't like the idea of meeting those bloody fighters head-on more than once. But these targets, our routes, the colours of the markers of the day were supposed to be top secret. Whoever was dropping their guts was someone high up in the business. Still, the Germans had some pretty smart operators. The bastards had known when we first landed at Bournemouth. They knew what squadron you came from, from your dog-tags. All this was making me feel just a bit more uneasy.

We hung around for half an hour, but no more planes came in. They weren't likely to now. It certainly shook us up. Shit – eleven lost out of twenty-eight. That Australian crew was one of the ones that didn't come back. That wireless operator's premonition had been right. Thank Christ I didn't believe in them. Christ – eighty-eight lads gone for a Burton. We went to the mess and had our breakfast. No one said much, not even the ground staff or the WAAFs. The message had soon got round the squadron. We then went to our billets and flopped on our cots. I was the first one to speak. 'I don't know about you boys', I said, 'But I'm for the bed proper.'

I got undressed, and it was cold now. Never mind – pull my flying suit on over the pyjamas. That's all I used it for anyhow. The rest of the boys soon followed suit.

I was absolutely exhausted and soon fell off to sleep, but it was a fitful one. Now was the time you wanted about four double-headed scotches in quick succession. Bloody silly dreams, but not about flying – always about some stupid thing you would never think of in your waking hours. In the waking hours I thought about Dianne and home. Would I ever see them again? It was Wally's voice that eventually woke me properly – and everyone else.

'Come on, chaps', he said.

'On your feet, or sit on your beds will do. But wake up. I've been up to the Flights and I've got news for you, and some of it is bad.'

I could bloody well imagine that!

'Go on, Wally', Ginge said, 'give us the Griff.'

Wally went on, 'So far as they know, we had about the worst losses of any single squadron. There's no more news of any of the missing Lancs.'

Eleven missing out of twenty-eight is still the score. The total losses come to ninety-six; the Germans claim one hundred and six and are those bastards happy! Our mob is still in a flap. Naturally, there's no ops tonight. It's not only the kites that are missing, but half the ones that did get back are damaged and will take a week to repair or replace. 'T-Tare' is OK, luckily. We could go in her again tonight.'

'Yeah, but we're bloody well not', I thought.

I also thought other things. What a proper bastard. Just when we thought we were getting on top of the Germans, this had to happen. Shit – it would take Bomber Command weeks to recover. Still, they had sent a thousand planes to Frankfurt a week ago. We'd still have plenty of punch left.

'What's the bloody good news, Wally?' Canada asked, 'That's if you've got any!'

'I've got it all right', said Wally breaking into a big grin.

'We go on leave tomorrow any time we like!'

That did it, we all smiled. Then we all laughed.

'You bloody bobby-dazzler', I said, 'How about that, Canada?'

'You son of a butcher beauty', he said.

The tension was broken until the next time. After last night I'd made up my mind on one thing that had worried me at times. There'd be no more compassion from here hence for those bloody German bastards. I found out later that almost twelve hundred men were either killed or injured on that one bloody operation, that to us had looked a piece of cake. Then I found my voice again.

'Well', I said, 'I don't know about you blokes, but I'm going to pack my gear, then head for the White Hart for a bloody grog. Too late for lunch, so we've got to get some vitamins into us somehow!'

'How about we all go?' said Wally.

'The first couple of rounds are on me!'

'Yeah', volunteered Canada, 'and the next couple are on me!'

'The bloody dough they pay you, Canada', Ginger said, 'You ought to shout four times! You don't even earn it, laying on your guts all the time in that Lanc. Now look at Digger, he has to earn his bloody money. He has to stand up in that astrodome all the time!'

'Good for you, Ginge', I said, 'If that's the way you feel, I won't ever bloody well shout at all! My turn to rest the old wallet!'

'Come on you bunch of nuts,' said Wally. 'I'll pick up Eddie on the way – see you at the Inn.'



That afternoon and night were pretty torrid at the pub. The place was crowded, and everyone was trying to drown their sorrows. Trying to forget. Not a word was said about Nuremberg; not among our crew anyhow. Eddie and Len left early. I saw Jenny about eight o'clock, and had to go and say hello to her. She was very glad to see me, and told me she had been worried until she saw me. I told her the reason was we'd been in bed for most of the day. She had a feeling, she said, that she knew somehow I'd get through operations. Bugger the crowd. I pecked her on the cheek and said thanks for the encouragement. I told her I was going on leave tomorrow, to Edinburgh, and her jaw dropped. She said she wished she was coming with me. That would be bloody awkward. I gave her another peck on the cheek and told her I would see her when I got back.

I wouldn't have got drunk tonight, no matter how much I drank. I went back to the table and copped a hell of a ribbing from the boys. Not satisfied with one Sheilah, they told me, I had to go after one of the best little sorts on the squadron. She wouldn't look at anyone else, they reckoned.

'Ah, bullshit', I told them.

We decided to go home – Jock, as usual, was asleep in his chair. Canada hoisted him over his shoulder like a bag of bloody spuds and the six of us piled into Wally's car. When we reached the billet, Canada again had to carry Jock. He dumped him unceremoniously on to his cot, and he was still there, fully dressed, the next morning. We all went straight to bed that night, and after the session we'd had, I slept like a top. Usually, we would stay awake and yarn for a while, but not that night, brother!

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## **IDENTITIES & ANOMALIES; MITIGATION, YET A MYSTERY**

### **IDENTITIES: 'DIG' & HIS CREW.**

55016	F/O Edward Wallis, RAFVR. (Later DFC). Pilot.	'Wally'.
175830	F/Sgt. Philip Langley Walker CAIRNS, RAFVR. Nav. (Later P/O DFC).	'Len'.
1661466	Sgt. Patrick MORRISEY, RAFVR. (Later DFM). F/E.	'Paddy'.
A421248	F/Sgt. Leslie Francis CONDON, RAAF. (Later DFM). W/Op.	'Dig'.
J/86582	F/Sgt Harvey Elliot CUTHBERT, RCAF. (Later P/O DFC). A/B.	'Canada'.
1821447	Sgt. John Wilson DUNBAR, RAFVR. (Later DFM). M/U.	'Ginge'.
1002414	Sgt. John Edwin POWNEY, RAFVR. (Later DFM). R/G.	'Jock'.
146833	F/O Clyde Frank Adams CLOTHIER, RAFVR. (Later DFC). Spec. Op.	'Eddie'.

Nuremberg was the Wallis Crew's 19<sup>th</sup> of a 29-operation tour - including six to Berlin - completed from Ludford. A full list of which is given below, with certain comments made at interrogation appended.

Night ops - all shown in red.

22-23/11/43; Berlin.  
 2-3/12/43; Berlin.  
 3-4/12/43; Leipzig.  
 20-21/12/43; Frankfurt.  
 29-30/12/43; Berlin. *Quiet trip. Well directed attack.*  
 1-2/1/44; Berlin. *Heavy flak over target. Many fires seen through breaks in cloud.*  
 14-15/1/44; Brunswick. *Many searchlights on route, but attack appeared concentrated.*  
 20-21/1/44; Berlin. *Heavy attack. Many large fires with smoke rising to 23,000ft.*  
 21-22/1/44; Magdeburg.  
 15-16/2/44; Berlin. *Many large fires and explosions in a successful and heavy attack.*  
 19-20/2/44; Leipzig. *Attacked target on three engines. 10/10 cloud. Glow of fires seen through clouds.*  
 20-21/2/44; Stuttgart. *Two very large dull red explosions seen prior to, and after bombing.*  
 24-25/2/44; Schweinfurt. *Engaged by enemy fighters on route without damage. Observed many fires and explosions in the target area.*  
 25-26/2/44; Augsburg. *The heaviest concentration appeared to be east of the target. Clear visibility for good observations.*  
 15-16/3/44; Stuttgart. *Very scattered attack. Two large fires seen to south-east of target.*  
 18-19/3/44; Frankfurt. *Haze over target. Well-placed markers directed a good attack.*  
 22-23/3/44; Frankfurt. *Clear visibility over target. Heavy attack caused widespread fires and damage.*  
 30-31/3/44; Nuremberg. *Bright moonlight assisted enemy fighters causing fairly scattered attack.*  
 11-12/4/44; Aachen. *Very quiet trip. Attack strong and effective. Many large fires and explosions.*  
 18-19/4/44; Rouen. *Concentrated marking. Ground detail clearly seen showing excellent results of attack.*  
 20-21/4/44; Cologne. *Cloud over target. Fair amount of flak. Bombed sky-markers.*  
 22-23/4/44; Brunswick. *Successful attack. Target well marked.*  
 24-25/4/44; Munich. *Heavy defences and many searchlights. Heavy attack showed very good results.*  
 26-27/4/44; Essen. *Many fires and large explosions observed. Strong enemy defences.*  
 27-28/4/44; Friedrichshafen. *Quiet trip except over target.*  
 19-20/5/44; Mardyck. *Very short and quiet trip. Markers accurate and on time.*  
 27-28/5/44; Bourg Leopold. *No opposition. A good attack.*  
 31/5-1/6/44; Trappes. *Excellent visibility enabled accurate bombing.*

**2-3/6/44. Berneval-le-Grand. A good attack with little opposition.**

**IDENTIFIED ANOMALIES**

**Page 1.**

Although 'Dig' Condon refers to Lancaster 'T-Tare' as his cigarette stash hiding place, and she was indeed their regular mount, she did not operate that night. The Wallis crew took DV407; SR-V2 in her place.

**Page 2.**

The all-Australian Crew he describes has proved impossible to trace. The nearest candidate is that led by 26-year-old P/O D. J. Irving, RAAF, of Bondi, NSW. In fact it comprised six Australians, one Canadian and an English lad. It is almost certainly this Crew 'Dig' recounts as having some concern for one of their number before Nuremberg, and their full complement is listed below.

This is given for no other reason than to pay full Tribute both to them and their gallant Wireless Operator, who, despite the certainty in his heart that he would not return, flew with his crew into eternity, for none survived.

P/O Donald James IRVING, RAAF. Details Above.

Sgt. Frank PHILLIPS, RAFVR. F/E. Age 20, of Harborne, Birmingham.

F/Sgt. Stanley George Richard KING, RAAF. Nav. Age 23, of Lithgow, NSW.

F/Sgt. Norman Grenfell HUGGETT, RAAF. A/B. Age 27, of Young, NSW.

F/Sgt. John Alfred NOSKE, RAAF. W/Op. Age 21, of Williams, W. Australia.

P/O Ralph Frank LITCHFIELD, RCAF. Spec/Op. Age 27, of Burnaby, BC.

F/Sgt. John Bede NEWMAN, RAAF. M/U. age 20, of Warwick, Queensland.

F/Sgt. Walter Joseph ADAM, RAAF. R/G. Age 25, of Bundalong, Victoria.

They were the 49<sup>th</sup> crew to go down on this dreadful night; victims of a night-fighter whilst outbound to the target. LL861; SR-H exploded with such force that only two of the above were found, identified and buried. The remaining six are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, at Egham, in Surrey.

"Dig" Condon states that they had only been on the Squadron a couple of weeks; in fact they arrived at Ludford in early January 1944. They were on their 9<sup>th</sup> operation. *Through his superlative 101 Squadron and 156 Squadron websites, contact was established with Robin Riley, the son of P/O D.J. Irving's cousin, Gerald Riley, DFC, who survived No. 156 Squadron and the war.*

*During the course of a most informative and enjoyable conversation, I told him of this manuscript and its mention of the Irving Crew, and sought his blessing for publication of this particular passage and the Crew photograph. He was kind enough to agree, and I publicly thank him for his time and consideration in responding positively to these requests.*

*If you are not familiar with his websites, then do please go to: [www.156squadron.com/default.htm](http://www.156squadron.com/default.htm) and all will be revealed.*

*It has proved of inestimable value in cross-checking many details of 'Dig's' story. You will see immediately why the Australian War Memorial has archived this site in perpetuity, as a resource for the education and assistance of all who consult it.*

*Thank You, Robin.*

Page 6.

On this page is mentioned a Pilot known only as "Screwy". It appears that this is almost certainly P/O Harold Davies, RAFVR, (later DFC), who took DV245; SR-S to Nuremberg that night. Known as 'The Saint', she was his usual mount, but did not take a sprog crew deep into Germany on this occasion. P/O Davies did, however, have a 'spare bod' on board; Sgt. F.W. Balge, RCAF, a Special Operator, who appears to have survived 11 trips on No. 101, and the war.

Page 7.

Despite the statement that no Flight Commanders took part in this operation, in fact, two did. S/Ldr Bruce Morton, DFC, OC 'C' Flight, and S/Ldr R.C.G. 'Rosy' Rosevear, DFM. He was a Navigator Flight Commander in command of 'B' Flight and flew that night with F/Lt Douglas Todd, RNZAF, (later DFC)..

The Nuremberg "Sell-Out" theory is dealt with at length below.

Page 8.

The number of kites stated by 'Dig' Condon as aborting is incorrect. He says six failed to get off, when in fact none were left behind.

He is also adrift regarding Squadron losses. He gives 11 out of 28; the true figures being 5 FTR and 1 crashed at Welford, near Newbury on return out of 26 on the Battle Order.

MITIGATION, BUT STILL ONE MYSTERY

Although 'Dig' Condon's account appears to be at certain odds with recorded events, the fact that he did a full tour of operations on No. 101 with the crew as listed is beyond doubt or question. In common with the other crew members, he was decorated at the end of it - in his case a DFM, Gazetted on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

It may have helped shed some light on matters if the precise stage at which this opus was written could be ascertained. There is some conflict in my mind regarding the answer to this, and two very contradictory factors cause that conflict.

He recounts dialogue with a clarity and immediacy that leads to the thought that it was penned in the early years or even months following his departure from Ludford when such details would still be etched sharply on his memory. Conversely, his inaccuracy regarding losses and aborts; the composition of brother crews and the "Screwy" saga, lends weight to the idea that he may have sat down to chronicle these events many years after they happened.

Whichever may be the case, it must be acknowledged that many of his statements do have a basis in fact, or are so close as to be a trick that anyone's mind could play with the passage of time; for none can claim infallibility of memory.

It does remain something of a mystery as to why he should describe the violent end of "Screwys" Rear Gunner – or indeed the incident at all – if it did not happen. Despite the fact that it cannot be traced as an event taking place on return from Nuremberg that night, it gives rise to the thought that he has transposed incidents/operations and it actually occurred on some other night after some other target. Sprog crew or not.

It is felt inconceivable that 'Dig' Condon, or anyone else who survived a tour in

Bomber Command, would need to invent a drama having lived through days and nights of nothing but for months on end. Whatever the truth, the actual date this tragedy may have transpired eludes me still.

There is, of course, one last possibility which should not be overlooked. It may well be that 'Dig' Condon simply sat down and wrote a deliberate work of part fact, part fiction, in an attempt to rid his mind of memories that may have been haunting him. It should be remembered that his account of the Nuremberg Raid, its prelude and aftermath is but one Chapter of a much longer script, the remainder of which even now may be lying, gathering dust and time in someone's drawer or filing cabinet on the other side of the world. Perhaps the public airing of this extract may lead to his original manuscript being reunited after more than 40 years. Let us hope this may be so, for its discovery may answer many questions.

With much sincerity it is hoped that someone with a specialist knowledge of No. 101 Squadron, or even a relative or comrade of 'Dig' Condon may read this, and, as has been previously mentioned, come forward and shine some light on these pages of history and so put the record straight.

### [P/O H.E. CUTHBERT \('CANADA'\): SERVICE CAREER & DFC CITATION](#)

*CUTHBERT, P/O Harvey Elliot (J87682) - Distinguished Flying Cross - No.101 Squadron - Award effective 1 September 1944 as per London Gazette dated 19 September 1944 and AFRO 2373/44 dated 3 November 1944. Born 1913 in Pierson, Manitoba; home in Edmonton or McLennan, Alberta; enlisted Edmonton, 5 June 1942. Trained at No.2 ITS (graduated 24 October 1942), No.2 BGS (graduated 19 March 1943) and No.2 AOS (graduated 10 February 1943). Commissioned 1944. Award presented 29 November 1947. No citation other than "completed...many successful operations during which [he has] displayed high skill, fortitude and devotion to duty." Public Records Office Air 2/9276 has recommendation dated 30 May 1944 when he had flown 28 sorties (178 hours 20 minutes). This is an interesting document because at every level from squadron to group it is for a DFM and he is referred to as "Flight Sergeant Cuthbert", with the rank being typed over and "Pilot Officer" substituted.*

Pilot Officer Cuthbert, a Canadian, has completed 28 very successful operations with this squadron. He is a member of an exceptionally fine crew whose outstanding determination to press home their attacks in the face of the strongest opposition has been materially assisted by this Air Bomber. He has proved himself to be an Air Bomber of unerring skill and determination who possesses great coolness and displays great cheerfulness in the face of danger. Pilot Officer Cuthbert's cheerful confidence and fine example is an inspiration to all with whom he has come in contact, while his co-operation and team spirit is in keeping with the particularly fine crew of which he is a member. It is recommended that this officer's record of achievement and devotion to duty be recognised by an award of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

## **NUREMBERG – CONSPIRACY OR COVER-UP?**

Of continuing interest, not to say on-going concern, is the 'conspiracy' theory still surrounding the Nuremberg operation of 30<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> March 1944. Many hold the belief that, despite our ability to decrypt Enigma traffic, certain events were allowed – even encouraged - to happen, in order to prevent the enemy from knowing that we knew.

This operation and the Luftwaffe attack on Coventry of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1940 are usually held as prime examples of this theory.

Apparently there are other, probably far more sinister explanations for Bomber Command's most disastrous night of the war. Paramount among these being the perceived absolute necessity to encourage the enemy to believe the intelligence he was being fed from his agents operating in Britain. Some of these people had been 'turned' and were in fact working for British Intelligence. If they were to be believed, then, periodically, they must 'produce the goods'. In other words, they were told to transmit *true* intelligence to the enemy.

The publication of Anthony Cave Brown's *Bodyguard Of Lies* in 1976 did much to encourage this line of thought, as he confidently propounded the hypothesis that these, and certain other apparent disasters, were allowed - or made - to happen in order to protect the *Overlord* (D-Day) secret. These nefarious operations were all part of an overall deception plan codenamed *Operation Bodyguard*.

In March 1976, the *Sunday Express* serialised Cave Brown's controversial book, two months ahead of its May publication date. Their edition of 7<sup>th</sup> March published in its entirety the chapter dealing with the Nuremberg operation, and it is felt that its reproduction in full below will allow a far better appraisal of its worth than any précis provided by a third party.

Whilst lengthy, detailed, and giving much food for thought, any deep knowledge of Bomber Command, its personnel, equipment or operations appears circumspect, to say the least.

On close perusal of the following narrative, there are a number of glaring errors supporting this statement to be found, and the most obvious of these have been *italicised in green* to aid immediate identification. Other passages, which appear to support the "Sell-Out" theory, will found *italicised in red* for similar purposes. All other italics are Cave Brown's. Although not a great personal fan of footnotes, they have been pressed into service below for reasons of expediency and no other.

'Dig' Condon, if Anthony Cave Brown is to be believed, may have been nearer to the truth when he called it a 'Sell-Out' than he knew.

A final word about Enigma decrypts. Recently, W/Cdr John Stubbington published his superlative *Kept In The Dark - The Denial To Bomber Command of Vital Enigma and Other Intelligence Information During World War II*. The extract from a review of this book, by AVM Sandy Hunter reproduced below, may well prove something of an eye-opener if unfamiliar with W/Cdr Stubbington's work:

*Bomber Command was denied direct access to high grade, ULTRA, Sigint information, except as filtered through Air Intelligence in the Air Ministry. W/Cdr Stubbington paints a picture of 'Nanny knows best', in the dogmatic denial by Air*

*Intelligence of direct liaison between High Wycombe and the Air section of the Government Codes and Ciphers School at Bletchley Park. That was only achieved later in the war. By contrast, HQ 8th USAAF enjoyed such access, as part of the RAF's provision of Sigint and other intelligence material. Interestingly similar constraints were imposed on other home commands, Fighter and Coastal, although the latter was able to work around this by virtue of its close working with the RN.*

However, if G/Capt. F.W. Winterbotham's *The Ultra Secret*, published way back in 1974 is to be believed, this was not the case. He was Chief of the Air Department of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) for the duration of the war, and on page 124 he categorically states:

*General Spaatz.....was not directly responsible to Overlord, but his force was, when necessary, to be at Eisenhower's disposal. He was therefore very much involved .....His headquarters were not very far from Bomber Command, so I arranged that they both had a direct line from Hut 3 (at Bletchley Park). When Spaatz later moved on to SHAEF in France he was served directly by their Special Liaison Unit.*

Interesting....On the one hand we have;  
*except as filtered through Air Intelligence in the Air Ministry,*  
and on the other;  
*a direct line (from Bomber Command HQ) to Hut 3.*

**Note at this juncture:**

It has subsequently been my great good fortune to have contact with W/Cdr John Stubbington regarding a separate matter. During the course of this, he kindly agreed to read this entire article, and has provided expert clarification of this perceived anomaly with regard to the direct provision of *Ultra* signals traffic to HQ Bomber Command.

I am more than happy to follow John Stubbington's expert guidance, and his recommended revisions appear in red below. It is a great pleasure to thank him publicly for his kindness and for making his all-encompassing knowledge of this shadowy area of intelligence gathering and its subsequent dissemination available to me.

**“G/Capt. F.W. Winterbotham's *The Ultra Secret*, published way back in 1974, states on page 124 that both Bomber Command and the 8<sup>th</sup> USAAF were in receipt of ULTRA signals traffic:**

*General Spaatz.....was not directly responsible to Overlord, but his force was, when necessary, to be at Eisenhower's disposal. He was therefore very much involved .....His headquarters were not very far from Bomber Command, so I arranged that they both had a direct line from Hut 3 (at Bletchley Park). When Spaatz later moved on to SHAEF in France he was served directly by their Special Liaison Unit.*

"G/Capt Winterbotham held the appointment of AI 1c within the Air Ministry, responsible for Liaison Duties. However, his statement is incomplete: the Special Liaison Unit was installed at the 8<sup>th</sup> USAAF HQ at Pinetree, (Wycombe Abbey), in May 1944 just before the start of Operation OVERLORD. No such unit was ever installed at HQ Bomber Command; but a separate signals address for HQ Bomber Command was set up (identified as MI) using the same Special Liaison Unit as for 8<sup>th</sup> USAAF (identified as DL).

That is by no means the end of the matter; the question remains as to the release of ULTRA traffic from Hut 3 at Bletchley Park? Ralph Bennett, in *Behind the Battle* at page 162 agrees that HQ Bomber Command had a direct service from Hut 3, albeit via the 8<sup>th</sup> USAAF at Pinetree, but that it did not appear to have been taken very seriously. It seems that Hut 3 was not instructed by the Air Ministry to route ULTRA traffic to HQ Bomber Command; and that the Command did not have an Intelligence Section that was authorised to use such information. Compare that with the USAAF which was using ULTRA and to good effect."

Should your appetite for further knowledge of the above now be whetted, I can but wholeheartedly recommend purchase of John Stubbington's *Kept In The Dark: The Denial To Bomber Command Of Vital Ultra And Other Intelligence Information During World War Two*. Published by Pen & Sword in 2010.

And also: *Bletchley Park Air Section Signals Intelligence Support to RAF Bomber Command: Combined Bombing Offensive 1943-1945, with the 8th US Army Air Force*. Published by Minerva Associates in 2007.

Both titles are readily available from Amazon.

Now that point is clear, if Nuremberg was indeed a "Sell-Out", then it is certain that Enigma decrypts were not available to the AOC-in-C on the morning of 30<sup>th</sup> March. If such intelligence, derived from that or indeed any source, had found its way onto his desk, it is strongly felt the target would doubtless have been changed to a city unaware we were coming. Unless, that is, Harris was under a direct order from Churchill.

When it is remembered how indifferently Sir Arthur Harris and thus Bomber Command were sometimes treated by those who should have known better; that they were, in effect, denied direct access to Enigma decrypts has hardly come as a surprise!

Couple this with the apparent fact that double-agents, "Garbo" or "Brutus", (see below), were ordered to divulge correct details of the Nuremberg operation to their German controllers, so that any subsequent information passed would be believed, then the fate of 97 kites, the 545 aircrew who died; the 154 POWs and the 26 found injured on return was sealed probably days before they embarked upon the raid.

On this night there is a possibility that Bomber Command was the lamb chosen for sacrifice on the altar of what were euphemistically known as "black operations".

Irrespective of whether such measures could ever be thought necessary, let alone justified, those responsible should have been strongly 'invited' to sit down on the morning of the 31st and write each one of the 699 letters that were sent to the families of their RAF victims.



In the event, as always, this sad task fell to Squadron Commanders and their Adjutants on Bomber Command's Bases and Stations stretching from Suffolk all the way up to County Durham - to say nothing of sending those dreaded Telegrams.

***DESTINATION DEATH:  
WERE THESE AIRMEN SACRIFICED TO WIN  
THE UNDER-COVER WAR?***

**Deception helps to win wars.  
But how far did Britain's 'lie-factory' go?  
Were British lives sacrificed to bolster a spy's reputation?**

**From: Bodyguard Of Lies, by Anthony Cave Brown.  
W.H. Allen, 1976.**

**IN WARTIME, said Winston Churchill, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies. And to put this policy into effect he established within his personal headquarters, a secret bureau whose task was to deceive Hitler about Britain's military intentions.**

**This was the L.C.S.—the London Controlling Section, whose members appeared to have one thing in common: class.**

**Deception was the pursuit of gentlemen. Colonel John Bevan, chief of the L.C.S., was a son-in-law of the Earl of Lucan and a grandson of the founder of Barclays Bank.**

**Bevan's deputy, Colonel Sir Ronald Evelyn Leslie Wingate, was the son of Wingate Pasha of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and a cousin of both Lawrence of Arabia and Wingate of Burma. The other members of the L.C.S. and of the secret agencies associated with it included financiers, politicians, diplomats, scientists, writers and artists.**

**Bevan's personal assistant, the one woman who attended meetings of the L.C.S., was Lady Jane Pleydell Bouverie.**

**"Bevan and his boys" Colonel William Baumer, the one American associated with the team was to write after the war "were extraordinary clever".**

**"They knew that if what they did became public property in later years they might all earn public opprobrium. But they were quite academic about this at the time. They were playing for the highest stakes imaginable, and there was no time for squeamishness."**

**The L.C.S. had various functions. But above all, it was a lie factory.**

**And the biggest lie of all which the L.C.S. had to plant on the Germans concerned the place chosen for the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944. It was essential that Hitler be led to believe that the Allies intended to attack not in Normandy, but elsewhere in France.**

**On the success of this deception would depend the fate of the whole operation - and the lives of thousands of British, Canadian and American soldiers on the beaches.**

**One major ruse was the creation of "phantom armies." Such a force had been established in the South-East of England, to give the impression that the invasion**

would be in the Calais area. A headquarters was set up and began a busy and apparently authentic wireless traffic. Low-grade troops were moved into the area. From the air, it appeared that military Installations - tank parks, petrol dumps, hospitals, pipelines - to service a million men were being set up. In fact, these changes to the landscape had been fabricated out of cardboard, wire and waste materials.

The L.C.S. knew that while the real invasion forces were assembling elsewhere, constant reports about this "army group" apparently poised to Invade near Calais, were being sent to Germany by German agents in Britain - in some cases by "double agents" acting under British control.

But how strongly did the German Intelligence services believe these reports? How long could the fiction be maintained?

In fact the Germans believed much of what their agents told them. They had good reason to do so. The agents' reports were verified by aerial reconnaissance and by wireless Intelligence.

**And furthermore true information had on occasions been deliberately fed to German agents In order that their credibility with their masters should be high.**

Only in that way could the Germans be made eventually to believe the elaborate fiction that the Invasion forces were massing in the South-East of England for a Channel crossing in the Calais region. Only in that way could the Normandy landings be spared the onslaught of large German forces held to meet the threat at Calais.

*Just how much true Intelligence were the Allies - and particularly the British - willing to reveal to ensure the success of the invasion?*

*Were the Allies willing to leak information, which, in the short-term, would be detrimental to their own cause?*

*Were they willing to risk or even sacrifice their own men to set up a deception scheme? Were some men and operations considered expendable in order that larger, decisive operations might succeed?*

After the war, John C. Masterman, an Oxford don who had been closely involved in controlling "double agents" wrote: "We never gave the enemy information that would have cost Allied lives."

But Masterman's military master for the Invasion, General Sir Francis de Guingand Montgomery's Chief of Staff and the 21st Army Group officer who ensured that deception conformed to strategy and tactics, disagreed.

The British High Command' he said, did indeed make such sacrifices.

*"On at least one occasion," de Guingand recalled, "the deception people were authorised to reveal the target of a major air attack on a German city to the Germans beforehand in order to reinforce the credibility of an agent who was to be used to mislead the German High Command during Neptune,"*

"Neptune" was the code word for the Normandy landings.

*De Guingand said he seemed to remember that the city was Stuttgart and the month in which the stratagem took place was March 1944. But he could not be sure that it was not Nuremberg in that same month. He was certain, however, that the incident took place just before the Allied heavy bomber forces were switched to tactical*

*support of Neptune, which occurred on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1944.*

It is a fact that there was one raid in the period indicated by de Guingand which might suggest that the Germans had foreknowledge.

It was the attack on Nuremberg on the night of March 30 and 31.

It was Bomber Command's most calamitous night of the war.

The Nuremberg raid was an awesome operation; an assault by 90<sup>(1)</sup> squadrons on a city of half a million in the heart of Germany.

*The circumstances of the raid were most unusual, and it was suggested, both at the time and later, that it might have been betrayed.*

*The Royal Institute of International Affairs' Chronology of the Second World War used the word "ambush" in its report of the attack - with all that word's connotations of lying In wait and foreknowledge.*

Flight Lieutenant Alfred Price, a serving officer of the RAF, and the author of *Instruments of Darkness*, a study of electronic deception In the Second World War, was not prevented by the Ministry of Defence from recording:

*Since the war there have been suggestions that the Germans had some foreknowledge that the night's target was to be Nuremberg and had arranged their defences accordingly.*

Then even the official British air campaign historians. Sir Charles Webster, the president of the Royal Academy, and Dr. Noble Frankland, a director of studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, found something strange about the strategy employed in the attack.

*This was, they wrote In *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany 1939-1945*, Indeed a curious operation.*

*The plan of action abandoned most of the tactical precepts which for a long time had governed Bomber Command operations.....The normal ruses seemed to give way to a straightforward declaration of intention and the German fighter force was presented with a unique opportunity.....*

Just what was the purpose of attacking this distant difficult target at that moment in the war?

One factor was that although in daylight the Allied air forces had achieved aerial superiority in the skies over France and the Low Countries, in darkness air superiority still had to be won. And it was expected that heavy German air attacks on the invasion forces would be made by night crews.

*Therefore, it was vital to bring about an immense night battle where the best of the German night fighters might be destroyed. That, certainly, was a principal Intention of the raid. (2)*

*The choice of Nuremberg as the target reinforced that intention.*

For while Nuremberg was an important military target, it also had a special political and psychological significance. It was at Nuremberg in 1934 that Hitler had proclaimed that: "The German form of life is definitely determined for the next thousand years"; and there, every year since then, the Nazi hierarchy, amid a vast Teutonic ceremonial, had dedicated Itself anew.

A successful raid against this Nazi shrine would demonstrate the impotence and the looming destruction of the Third Reich. The Luftwaffe could therefore be expected to defend the city with determination.

*But to bait the Luftwaffe, were the British willing to expose RAF air crews to even greater dangers than those normally associated with such a raid?  
And to ensure that the Luftwaffe took the bait, and to establish the credibility of a double agent, were they willing to forewarn the Germans of the raid? These were the central mysteries of the Nuremberg attack.*

The mystery began from the moment Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, the AOC-in-C of Bomber Command, took the chair at his routine morning conference on March 30, 1944, at his headquarters near High Wycombe.

Mr. Magnus Spence, the Command Meteorological Officer, presented his forecast; and while he was hesitant about making a positive prediction, he did say enough to suggest that the weather over Germany that night might not favour Bomber Command, it might favour the defence. The half-moon might be very brilliant, high winds might break up the bomber stream, and he could not guarantee that there would be cloud to hide the bombers from the night fighters.

In short, weather conditions might be the direct opposite of those in which the Command preferred to operate - pitch-black, windless, cloudy nights.

Despite this forecast, Harris proceeded to announce the target for that night; Nuremberg. His announcement caused some surprise. For Nuremberg was not one of the targets on his current directive. Moreover, it was far inside Germany.

Even if weather conditions favoured the raid the bomber stream would be over enemy territory for so long that a major air battle was almost inevitable.

*There was cause for even greater surprise when Harris announced the route<sup>(3)</sup>* the Command was to take to reach the target. His plan was to gather almost the entire might of the Command over The Naze, the East Anglian headland, proceed to and cross the Belgian coast near Bruges, and fly directly to Charleroi in Belgium.

At Charleroi the bomber stream was to proceed in a straight line some 265 miles to Fulda, across the German frontier near Frankfurt and at Fulda, it was to change course again and fly directly to Nuremberg.

It was this route - and particularly the "long leg" from Charleroi to Fulda - that provoked in Air Marshal Sir Robert Saundby, Deputy AOC-in-C of Bomber Command, what would be called his "mounting apprehension" about the raid. Harris himself had recently ordered that, because of the heavy casualties suffered in the Leipzig and Berlin raids earlier that month, bomber streams should henceforward be split up to approach their targets from different directions in order to confuse and split night-fighter defences.

Now he proposed to send a single stream to Nuremberg. Moreover, it would follow a route that would take it close to the thick concentration at German night-fighter bases around the Ruhr, and directly over the fighters' assembly beacons at Aachen (code named "Ida") and Frankfurt ("Otto").

These tactics, as well as the distance of the target, *seemed to confirm that luring the Luftwaffe to battle was a primary objective of the raid.*<sup>(4)</sup> But Saundby was concerned about the extraordinary dangers of the route and when the conference ended he voiced his concern to Harris. Harris replied merely that if the weather did turn definitely against Bomber Command, the operation could always be cancelled at the last moment.

Reports from Spence's meteorological flights that afternoon confirmed his earlier predictions. There would be no high cloud over Germany, and weather conditions were such that the bomber stream would leave contrails - those tell-tale trails of frozen vapour that would pinpoint the location of every airplane.

Furthermore over Nuremberg itself there would be thick cloud at bombing altitude, which meant that the Pathfinders would not be able to mark the city accurately, and therefore the bombers might not be able to bomb effectively. Plainly, the weather would favour the defence, and all concerned with the planning of the raid were now convinced that Harris would call it off.

But the raid was not cancelled. *Harris, it seemed, was determined to mount the operation however vulnerable the bomber stream would be by reason of the route and the weather.*

*Apparently, an attempt to destroy the Luftwaffe night-fighter force warranted such risks. (5)*

*But had it also warranted the added risk of deliberately forewarning the Germans of the attack?*

Whatever the answer to that question, the bomber crews would soon discover that the Germans were ready and waiting for them.

Shortly before 10 o'clock that night, the quiet of the English countryside was shattered *as thousands of Koffman(6) starters exploded in clouds of acrid blue smoke;* propellers began to revolve and *898(7) British and 10(8) American* aircraft connected with the raid began to move.

Fifty-five, of the aircraft soon "aborted" through technical failure and returned to base, leaving 843 flying towards Germany. Once airborne, the main force clawed for the operational altitude and formed into the great bomber stream.

As the main force neared the Belgian coast, 50 Halifaxes in a diversionary force approached the German coast of Heligoland *Bay(9)*, feigning a raid either against Hamburg or Berlin. The German ground controllers were not deceived. Their technicians were able to say that the northern force was not equipped with the precision bombing device known as H2S, which was used on all major raids. Therefore, this was a diversionary force. The main force was heading towards Central Germany. All the fighter squadrons were concentrating along the exact route that the bomber stream would take.

*Coincidence? Or the result of foreknowledge of the route and destination?*

It was the Luftwaffe's customary strategy to intercept a bomber stream long before it reached its target, but on that night the German fighters were among the stream exceptionally early. Flight Sergeant Ronald Gardner of 103 Squadron would recall:-

"The fighters were waiting for us shortly after we crossed the coast, as if they already knew our target and route. And they were in force. Never have I seen so many gathered at one point during my tour of operations (the sky) was full of Me 109s and 110s. Normally, flying in the leading wave, we were seldom attacked by fighters until well into France or Germany. . . Usually the fighters took at least half-an-hour to get among us."

Other factors now intruded into the looming catastrophe. The RAF used giant radio transmitters to jam the voice communications between the German ground controllers and the Luftwaffe pilots. The transmitters poured out the sounds of

ringing bells, massed bands, and long speeches by Hitler. More often than not, the ground controller's voices were submerged. But on this night the jamming was not fully effective.

The Bomber Command Signals Officer would report:

"The enemy displayed unusual subtlety (in avoiding the RAF's jamming transmissions) in that he appeared to be making his frequency changes in step with our Group Broadcast times."

How the Germans were able to do this would remain a mystery, for it was not yet technically possible to scan and locate an open frequency automatically.

*Was it, again, a coincidence, or did they have some foreknowledge of the main force's signals plan?*

And that night, the German fighters used, for the first time, a new type of radar to direct them to their targets.

The weather completed the tragedy. The bomber stream was flying in brilliant moonlight at an altitude that produced luminous contrails. Flight Sergeant Robert Truman of 625 Squadron would recount: "You could see them clearly; the sky was full of contrails I remember thinking that if they were so clear to us then they must be equally clear to the night fighters and that, if the fighters were anywhere about, they could not fail to get on to us."

The night fighters *were* all about by the time the stream reached the first of the two beacons which acted as assembly points for the German fighters. Between 200 and 250 fighters were in the area; they were up in strength and "fresh": each had a full fuel load and could stay in the stream, *falling upon the bombers like falcons on disordered geese.*<sup>(10)</sup>

The night sky was filled with deadly beauty as the fighters dropped their flares, which were hardly necessary in the bright moonlight, and opened fire with cannon tracer.

Flying Officer George Foley, a radar operator in one of the Pathfinders, would remember:

"I knew things were going very badly when I heard the captain call cut over the intercom, 'Better put your parachutes on, chaps, as I have just seen the 42<sup>nd</sup> go down.'<sup>(11)</sup>

By the time the main force had reached the end of the long leg at Fulda, the landscape below was marked by a necklace of 59 crashed and burning bombers.

Flying Officer L. Young<sup>(12)</sup> of 103 Squadron later recalled: "...one could navigate on the blazing wrecks below."

Flight Sergeant Ronald Holder of 460 Squadron, who had flown 86 missions over Germany before this one – an almost unheard of number – recorded:-

"It was a story of the perfect air ambush.....The ground controllers had to guess where we were making for, and they guessed correctly. There were enemy fighters everywhere. We were sitting ducks with no cloud cover to shield us...."

On the final run in to Nuremberg there were 643 bombers left in the stream: casualties and aborts had removed one out of every five aircraft that had taken off from England. But still - if all went well - *the force approaching Nuremberg was big enough to wipe the city off the map.*<sup>(13)</sup>

Furthermore, the Pathfinder force *and the force responsible for marking the target*<sup>(14)</sup> were virtually intact. But all did not go well. Light, white clouds began to appear

below, making the bombers, as one pilot put it, appear to the night fighters above like flies on a white tablecloth.

By the time the marker force reached Nuremberg, the cloud cover was nearly two miles thick and totally obscured the city.

The marker flares - red and green cascades called "Christmas trees" and huge mushrooming ground flares - disappeared into the thick cloud and could not be seen by the bomb-aimers aboard the main force. But other flares, inaccurately dropped, could be seen, and it was on these that the main force bombed. Some damage was caused to the industrial areas of the city but in general damage to the rest of Nuremberg was slight

Then came the flight back to England. The night fighters had shot their bolt, but they did muster enough force to catch and shoot down more bombers on the way home. How many would not be clear, for although 10 heavy bombers were lost on the return flight some were aircraft that had been disabled in attacks before they reached the target, or while they were over it.

But these casualties did not mark the end of the agony that night. More aircraft were lost over the English countryside, or in the Channel, *crashing either through the miscalculation of exhausted pilots or because they had been shot to pieces and simply fell apart in the turbulence.*<sup>(15)</sup>

When the aircraft did get down, many of the crews were extremely angry, bitter and suspicious. Flight Lieutenant Stephen Burrows would recall the debriefing at Dunholme Lodge base:

"It certainly appeared to me that Jerry was waiting for us, and there were rumours that the raid had been leaked. In fact, it was said quite openly (during debriefing) – with lots of derogatory remarks being made.

Flight Sergeant Ronald Gardner, *a Pathfinder with 103 Squadron,*<sup>(16)</sup> would recall: "Everyone I talked to after the raid was sure it had been leaked."

Pilot Officer Merrill<sup>(17)</sup> of 463 Squadron summed up the general opinion when he wrote in his debriefing report: "Fighter activity from leaving position B (Charleroi) to the target was such that enemy may have been aware of the route taken by the main force."

Now came the reckoning. The raid was a disaster for Bomber Command, yet the dimension of that disaster would remain obscure. All that was said about losses on the main B.B.C. newscast on March 31 was that ninety-six bombers had failed to return,

When two of the missing aircraft turned up, the total was reduced to ninety-four: but an official analysis would show that ninety-five bombers had been lost, a further were total losses upon crashing in England, one was scrapped because of the severity of its battle damage; and seventy more sustained damage that put them out action for between six hours and six months.

Furthermore, a Halifax taking SOE agents to Belgium that night had been shot down, as well as a Mosquito taking part in airfield attack operations supporting the Nuremberg raid.

That brought the known total to 108 aircraft for the entire night's operations. In all, 745 crewmen were killed or wounded and a further 150, some of whom were wounded were taken prisoner.

But that may not have been the end of the casualty list - Intelligence documents

which were not intended for general circulation are said to have revealed that 53 bombers had in fact, crashed in England, bringing the total aircraft to 161; while yet another source, one that was only semi-official, would increase the number of crashes to 66 and the total to 174.

Whatever the actual total, the RAF had suffered its heaviest casualties of the war, and the crew loss was higher than for the entire Battle of Britain. German losses, on the other hand, totalled five aircraft, with five more damaged seriously and three less seriously. German dead, civil as well as military, totalled 129.

The city of Nuremberg had hardly been touched.

Everything had gone wrong: the weather, the miscalculation of German reaction to the novel tactics of the raid, the failure of the “spoof” raids - all contributed to the tragedy.

But what of the contention that the Germans were given forewarning of the raid?

There were several indications that the Germans knew of Bomber Command's plans in advance - the early appreciation of the size of the raid, the fact that the German night fighters were concentrated at exactly the right place and the right altitude for an ambush, the fact that alerts had been passed to Nuremberg before the bomber stream turned into the final leg of its run.

*Moreover, British airmen who had been shot down on previous raids, and who were being held prisoner at the time of the Nuremberg operation would state after the war that during the afternoon of the 30<sup>th</sup> - about five hours before the bomber stream took off - they were told by Luftwaffe Intelligence interrogators at the main interrogation centre at Oberursel, near Frankfurt, that the target for the raid that night was Nuremberg.*

*At least one prisoner claimed that he saw that someone in the Luftwaffe had marked the route to be taken, with the target, on a wall map in the room where he was questioned. Prisoners taken after the raid would state that they were told by their interrogators at Oberursel that the route and target were known to the Luftwaffe at four o'clock in the afternoon on March 30.*

*The suggestion that the Germans were given foreknowledge of the raid as an additional incentive to come up and fight - and, at the same time, to establish the credibility of a double agent - cannot be discounted, particularly in light of de Guingand's remark.*

If this was, in fact, what happened, *it seems quite clear that Harris was not privy to the stratagem.* It was Churchill who appeared to occupy the centre of the web.

Once it had been decided to undertake such an operation - and Churchill as Minister of Defence was one of two or three men who were informed of Bomber Command's targets in advance - *it may have been decided to add one of the sinister touches to which Churchill was addicted.*<sup>(18)</sup>

It is possible that Churchill thought that the Germans would disbelieve, and fail to act upon, a forewarning. Furthermore, a double agent could not tell the Germans very much more beforehand than they would learn for themselves from radar and radio intelligence once the main force was airborne.

*The advantages of such a stratagem, however, were numerous.*<sup>(19)</sup> Any agent, who could provide such information, would soar in the estimation of the German



Intelligence services.

Who, in the future, would dare disbelieve reports from an agent who had specifically warned of a major allied attack?

His information had merely to be true: it need not have been so detailed and specific that the Luftwaffe would be able to thwart the attack or inflict severe casualties.

If a "double agent" was, in fact, used to warn the Germans, there were two obvious choices. One had the code-name "Garbo." He was a Spaniard who had originally worked for the Germans but who had changed sides and had been brought to England where he operated under the cover of being the employee of a fruit and vegetable importer who did much business with Spain and Portugal from Covent Garden. The other, code-named "Brutus," was a former officer of the Polish General Staff who had been captured by the Germans in Paris. He had deceived the Germans into thinking he was willing to work for them. He had been sent to London via Lisbon, had become a "double agent" and been given a "cover" post as a liaison officer between the Polish and British air forces.

Miscalculation, misfortune, coincidence, perhaps even foreknowledge, had combined to provide Goering with a major victory. In an Order of the Day he proclaimed triumphantly: "The enemy has been dealt the heaviest nocturnal defeat so far in his criminal attack on our beloved homeland."

In Germany, the night fighter pilots were the heroes of the hour, while among the pilots and crews of Bomber Command there was a profound bitterness against those who had planned and ordered the attack.

There were too many empty seats at breakfast the morning after the raid, *too many "chop girls" - the girlfriends of missing airmen who were, through superstition, shunned by the survivors.*<sup>(20)</sup>

There they stood, at Flying Control, at the ends of runways, in the messes, at the bars, lonely, disconsolate, silent reminders of the lives that had been lost in an operation that was intended to save lives on D-Day.

-----End-----

## Footnotes.

- 1:** Most published sources are in conflict as to the number of squadrons actually involved in the attack on the *city* of Nuremberg.
- 2:** If this had not been achieved in the previous two years of Harris's tenure as AOC-in-C Bomber Command, then it is highly unlikely it would be achieved in one single night!
- 3:** It is known that AVM D.C.T. Bennett of No. 8 Group (Pathfinders) rejected the route as given from Bomber Command HQ and, with his Navigational Staff, immediately plotted an alternative. This was passed to BCHQ & put to the other Group Commanders. On a majority they rejected it.

Below are more precise details of the briefed route to and from Nuremberg, as originally plotted by BCHQ Staff and duly flown:

### **OUT**

**Posn 'A' – Bomber Command RV Point; 51.50 N. – 02.30 E.**

**Approx. mid-point, Gt. Yarmouth – Bruges.**

**Posn 'B' – Overhead navigational pinpoint 5 miles NE Charleroi & 10 miles SE Brussels.**

**Distance from Posn 'A' = 130 miles SE.**

**Posn 'C' – Pinpoint 20,000ft overhead Thuringerwald Forest; 10 miles SE Meiningen & mid-point Erfurt-Schweinfurt.**

**Route Posn 'B' – Posn 'C': 10 miles S of Liege – 20 miles S of Aachen – 25 miles S of Cologne – cross Rhine – 20 miles SE of Bonn, skirting Wetzlar, Giessen, Fulda, Meiningen.**

**Distance from Posn 'B' = 270 miles due E.**

**Posn 'D' – TARGET**

**Route Posn 'C' – Posn 'D': Overfly Bamberg & Erlangen heading SE.**

**Distance from Posn 'C' = 75 miles.**

### **BACK**

**Posn 'E' - Pinpoint overhead mountainous & forested terrain 7 miles S Weissenburg.**

**Route Posn 'D' – Posn 'E': Heading due S.**

**Distance from Posn 'D' = 30 miles.**

**Posn 'F' - Overhead pinpoint 25 miles S of Stuttgart.**

**Route Posn 'E' – Pos 'F': Heading SW.**

**Distance from Posn 'E' = 80 miles.**

**Posn 'G' – Overhead pinpoint 5 miles N of Epernay & 50 miles from Paris.**

**Route Posn 'F' – Posn 'G': Cross Rhine 10 miles N of Strasbourg – pass between Metz & Nancy.**

**Distance from Posn 'F' = 300 miles. ('Long Leg' out also!).**

**Posn 'H' – Pinpoint over French Coast, mid-way Dieppe & Le Treport.**

**Route Posn 'G' – Posn 'H': Pass between Compeigne & Beauvais – Amiens – 25 miles SW Abbeville.**

**Distance from Posn 'G' = 15 miles.**

**Would in theory bring returning bombers in over Selsey Bill and from there to their respective bases.**

- 4: It is thought inconceivable that a force whose prime aim was to subdue the enemy by strategic bombing would defeat its own object by offering itself for possible destruction any more than it was already doing; and certainly not by deliberately entering a set battle in which the enemy held all the cards!
- 5: It is apparent that attempts to portray Sir Arthur Harris as a cold-blooded fanatic, bent only on the 'murdering' of enemy civilians, no matter what the cost to his Crews, will never cease. In truth, the very opposite was the case, and he grieved privately on a daily basis for the losses his Command suffered. This continued until his dying day.
- 6: Koffman starters - or cartridges - were NOT used to start bomber engines. This was achieved by the use of external batteries mounted on a wheeled cart – universally known as a 'trolley-acc'.
- 7: This figure includes *all* aircraft committed that night. 782 of this number were apparently tasked to attack the main target.
- 8: The USAAF involvement did not include any direct attack on Nuremberg. These 10 aircraft were made up of 4 on Intruder Duties with No. 100 (Bomber Support) Group; and 6 Fortresses on Night Leaflet operations. They suffered no losses.
- 9: Bight.
- 10: This phrase is felt to be sensational journalese and quite unnecessary.
- 11: Detachment of this order, which allowed for accurate counting of losses on a night such as Nuremberg, is unique to say the least! Many Captains gave specific orders to their Gunners to cease reporting air combats and kites going down and concentrate solely on the safety of their own aeroplane.
- 12: See *The Nuremberg Raid*, page 158.
- 13: Had there been a bomber force then with anything near the capability of wiping a German city 'off the map' in one night, then the war would have most certainly been won by bombing alone long before Nuremberg became necessary.
- 14: The force responsible for marking the target was - as is well known – the Pathfinder Force!
- 15: *All* were exhausted, not just the Pilots. Any 'miscalculation' on anyone's part as a result of tiredness is felt entirely understandable. It is *extremely* unlikely that there would be sufficient 'turbulence' present anywhere along the route home to shake a bomber to pieces in the air!
- 16: 103 Squadron were *not* Pathfinders, but a main force Squadron in No. 1 Group.
- 17: See *The Nuremberg Raid*, page 250.
- 18: It is possibly some leap of faith to believe that Churchill would allow his 'addictions' to outweigh his common sense!
- 19: But numerous casualties, not 'advantages' to Bomber Command.
- 20: Only if a WAAF made a *habit* of losing boyfriends in this manner was she so-called.

It should be noted that in the 1980 (revised) edition of Martin Middlebrook's *The Nuremberg Raid*, Chapter 18 is replaced with an alternative containing a spirited rebuttal of Cave Brown's allegations.

30/31 March 1944;

NUREMBERG

*The Bomber Command War Diaries,  
Martin Middlebrook*

&

*Chris Everitt.*

This would normally have been the moon stand-down period for the Main Force, but a raid to the distant target of Nuremberg was planned on the basis of an early forecast that there would be protective high cloud on the outward route, when the moon would be up, but that the target area would be clear for ground-marked bombing. A Meteorological Flight Mosquito carried out a reconnaissance and reported that the protective cloud was unlikely to be present and that there could be cloud over the target, but the raid was not cancelled.

795 aircraft were dispatched — 572 Lancasters, 214 Halifaxes and 9 Mosquitoes. The German controller ignored all the diversions and assembled his fighters at 2 radio beacons which happened to be astride the route to Nuremberg. The first fighters appeared just before the bombers reached the Belgian border and a fierce battle in the moonlight lasted for the next hour. 82 bombers were lost on the outward route and near the target. The action was much reduced on the return flight, when most of the German fighters had to land, but 9 bombers were lost in all — 64 Lancasters and 31 Halifaxes, 11.9 per cent of the force dispatched. It was the biggest Bomber Command loss of the war.

Most of the returning crews reported that they had bombed Nuremberg but subsequent research showed that approximately 120 aircraft had bombed Schweinfurt, 50 miles north-west of Nuremberg. This mistake was a result of badly forecast winds causing navigational difficulties. 2 Pathfinder aircraft dropped markers at Schweinfurt. Much of the bombing in the Schweinfurt area fell outside the town and only 2 people were killed in that area.

The main raid at Nuremberg was a failure. The city was covered by thick cloud and a fierce cross-wind which developed on the final approach to the target caused many of the Pathfinder aircraft to mark too far to the east. A to-mile-long creepback also developed into the countryside north of Nuremberg. Both Pathfinders and Main Force aircraft were under heavy fighter attack throughout the raid. Little damage was caused in Nuremberg; 69 people were killed in the city and the surrounding villages.

#### DIVERSION AND SUPPORT OPERATIONS

49 Halifaxes minelaying in the Heligoland area, 13 Mosquitoes to night-fighter air fields, 34 Mosquitoes on diversions to Aachen, Cologne and Kassel, 5 R.C.M. sorties, 19 Serrate patrols. No aircraft lost.

Minor Operations: 3 Oboe Mosquitoes to Oberhausen (where 23 Germans waiting to go into a public shelter were killed by a bomb) and 1 Mosquito to Dortmund, 6 Stirlings minelaying off Texel and Le Havre, 17 aircraft on Resistance operations, 8 O.T.U. sorties. 1 Halifax shot down dropping Resistance agents over Belgium.

Total effort for the night. 950 sorties, 96 aircraft (10.1 per cent) lost.

The Battle of Berlin had now officially ended.

## QUOTED PERFORMANCE & CASUALTY FIGURES

It appears that whichever source is consulted regarding this aspect of the Nuremberg operation, conflicting figures and statements will be found. The following are considered the most reliable and are offered without comment, save that of identifying their source.

### The Nuremberg Raid, Martin Middlebrook, 1973. Chapter 15: The Cost.

#### Aircraft Losses Page 275

Crashed on Take-Off:	1
Shot down by night fighter:	79
Shot down by flak:	13
Hit by both fighter and flak:	2
Collision:	2
Shot down by 'friendly' bomber:	1
Crashed or crash-landed in England:	9
Written off after battle damage:	1

Total: 109

Above figures include the Special Operations Halifax & the Intruder Mosquito.  
13.6% Total loss.

#### Statistics by Group Page 277

Group	Dispatched	Aborted	Missing	Bombed	
1	180 Lancasters	8		21 (12.2%)	151 (88.9%)
3	56 Lancasters	6		8 (16.0%)	42 (75.0%)
4	119 Halifaxes	22		20 (20.6%)	81(68.1%)
5	202 Lancasters	10		21 (10.9%)	168 (88.2%)
6 (R.C.A.F.)	(93 Halifaxes	8		1 (19.9%)	76 (81.7%)
	(25 Lancasters	0		3(12.0%)	22 (88.0%)
8 (Pathfinder)	107 Lancasters	1		11 (10.4%)	96 (89.7%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>55</b>		<b>95(13.1%)</b>	<b>636 (81.3%)</b>

The aborted total includes three aircraft that crashed or were damaged on take-off. The missing percentage is of those aircraft that took part in the operation after those with technical trouble had turned back but the percentage bombed is of all aircraft that had taken off.

Aircrew Losses

Page 279

UK	369
Canada	109
Australia	47
New Zealand	11
United States	2
Norway	2
Eire	2
India	1
Nigeria	1
Bahamas	1
Total:	545

POW 154

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**THE LAST WORD.**

Perhaps it is will be found fitting that the last word should lie with the AOC-in-C Bomber Command. It is clear from the letter extract given below, that Sir Arthur Harris, if indeed he did have any knowledge of deception or conspiracy surrounding the Nuremberg operation, was certainly never going to allow himself to become involved in any public discussion of the matter.

For myself, I find it a moral impossibility to believe that a commander who had such a deep and evident life-long compassion for his affectionately-termed 'Old Lags' could ever be a party to engineering their deaths. EVER.

'It was a perpetual source of astonishment to me during my three and a half years as Commander-in-Chief; Bomber Command, that we did not suffer many more heavy reverses of the Nuremberg type and I cannot understand why the German defences did not improve much more rapidly and effectively as the bomber war developed over three long and terrible years.

'In Bomber Command we had to lay on and, more often than not, carry through, at least one and occasionally more than one major battle every twenty-four hours. That was a situation which no naval or military command has ever had to compete with. Navies fight two or three major battles per war. Armies, maybe a dozen. We had to lay on, during my three and a half years, well over a *thousand*. Naturally enough, we occasionally got a badly bloodied nose—but nothing like what we gave the Boche.

'There was a limit—and a small one—to the choice of tactical changes which we could introduce from time to time and occasionally such tactical changes had therefore to include doing something which the enemy would probably think so obvious that it would be the last thing we would ever choose to do.

'In the Nuremberg show we chose wrong and the Boche, aided by unexpectedly bad weather, guessed right.

'It is a wonder that coincidence did not occur more often during the thousand and more major battles which we fought. . .'

Letter from Sir Arthur Harris to Geoff Taylor; ex-207 Squadron Lancaster Pilot (POW) and author: *The Nuremberg Massacre*. The above is given on page 166.

## GLOSSARY

**A/B:** Air Bomber.

**ABC:** Airborne Cigar – A VHF transmitter/receiver for jamming German radio frequencies.

**AFRO:** Air Force Routine Orders (RCAF).

**AOS:** Air Observer School.

**AOC:** Air Officer Commanding.

**AOC-in-C:** Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

**AVM:** Air Vice Marshal.

**BCHQ:** Bomber Command Headquarters.

**BGS:** Bombing & Gunnery School.

**DFC:** Distinguished Flying Cross.

**DFM:** Distinguished Flying Medal.

**ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival.

**FTR:** Failed To Return.

**F/E:** Flight Engineer.

**F/Lt:** Flight Lieutenant.

**F/Sgt:** Flight Sergeant.

**F/O:** Flying Officer.

**Gen:** Information.

**Griff:** As Above.

**G/Capt:** Group Captain.

**ITS:** Initial Training School.

**Me:** Messerschmitt.

**M/U:** Mid-Upper Gunner.

**Millpond:** Callsign of Ludford Watch Office.

**Monica:** RAF Range-only tail warning bomber radar.

**Nav:** Navigator.

**P/O:** Pilot Officer.

**Posn:** Position.

**POWs:** Prisoners of War.

**RAAF:** Royal Australian Air Force.

**RAFVR:** Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

**RCAF:** Royal Canadian Air Force.

**RNZAF:** Royal New Zealand Air Force.

RCM: Radio Counter Measures.  
RV: Rendezvous.  
R/G: Rear Gunner.

Sgt: Sergeant.  
Serrate: RAF Radar detection & homing device.  
SHAEF: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces.  
Sigint: Signals Intelligence.  
Special: Special Operator aboard a No. 101 Squadron Lancaster.  
Spec. Op: As Above.  
SOE: Special Operations Executive.  
Sprog: Raw and inexperienced airman.  
S/Ldr: Squadron Leader.

USAAF: United States Army Air Forces.

WAAF: Women's Auxiliary Air Force.  
W/Cdr: Wing Commander.  
W/Op: Wireless Operator.

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