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Vickers Wellington Mk. XIV N.2887

THE LAST FLIGHT OF:

WELLINGTON HF.246

A narrative of the last flight of Vickers Wellington Mk. XIV, HF.246, which was flown by F/L Wilfred JOHNSON that crashed at R.A.F. Chivenor on 17 August 1944, resulting in the deaths of two air crew.

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The Last Flight of Wellington HF.246

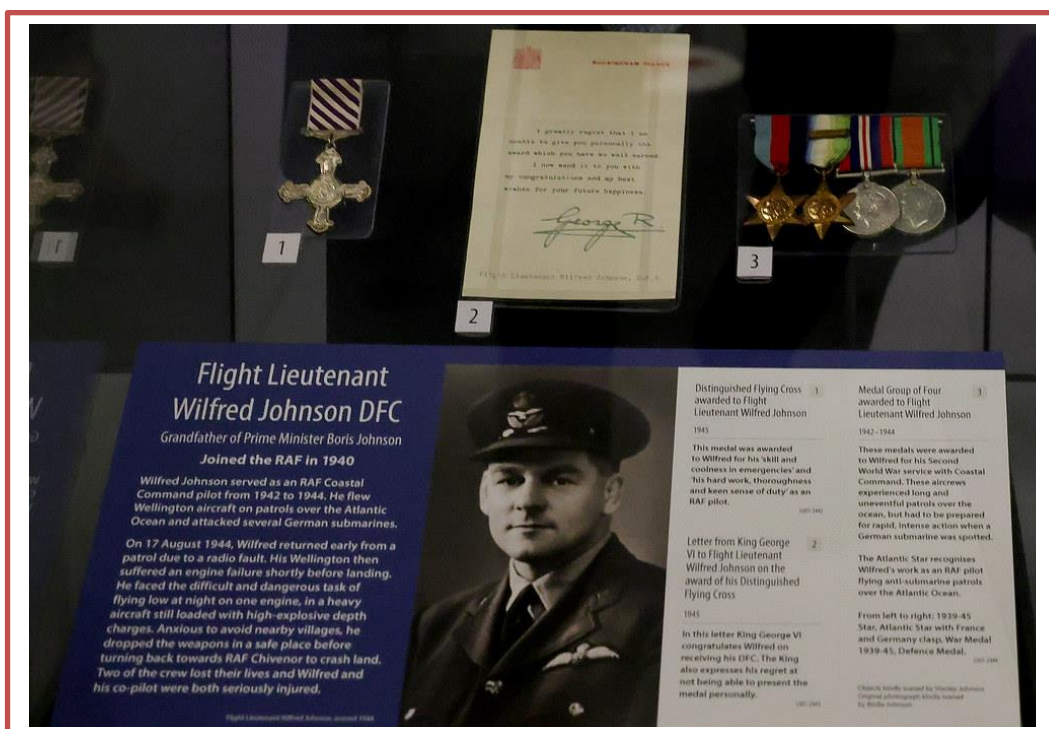
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Foreword – by Stanley JOHNSON

One of my earliest memories is of being woken, on the eve of my fourth birthday, by my mother. ‘Come quickly.’ She hustled me to the window. ‘There’s a fire on the runway, a plane has crashed.’ This was during the Second World War, and we were living in a cottage in Braunton, North Devon, overlooking the runway of the R.A.F. base at Chivenor. My father, Wilfred Johnson, known as ‘Johnny’, was a pilot with R.A.F. Coastal Command. Chivenor played a key role in the Battle of the Atlantic. The squadrons based there patrolled the seas, searching for and aiming to destroy the German U-boats that were devastating Britain’s shipping and supply routes.

Most of the pilots — mainly men in their 20’s — were quartered on the base. But as my father was over thirty at the outbreak of war, married with three children, we lived outside it. My mother would never have expected my father to be in the crash: he had taken off for a ten-hour patrol at 10.30 p.m., and the crash had occurred at 11.20 p.m. But the next morning — my fourth birthday, 18 August 1944 — the ‘padre’ or R.A.F. chaplain came to our door. There was bad news. My father had been flying that crashed plane. He had broken a leg and suffered severe burns, but he would live. However, he would never fly on operations again. Tragically, two of the crew had died.

Until a few years ago I knew only the barest details of these events. After the war, my parents bought a hill-farm on Exmoor. Growing up surrounded by dogs, sheep and cattle, I do not recall that listening to my father’s war-time reminiscences was a major feature of my life. In any case, he was not a talkative man. Nor did my parents bring with them to Exmoor many mementoes of those wartime years at Chivenor. There was an orange rubber dinghy (issued to aircrew in case they had to ‘ditch’) which my siblings and I would sometimes deploy on the river which ran through our farm, and an airplane cockpit clock that stood on the mantelpiece. But one item has survived, and it is sitting on the desk in front of me even as I write. Experts have identified this twisted piece of metal as having once been the vital throttle controls of the plane my father crashed: Wellington HF 246.

In 2016, out of the blue, I received a letter written by a man named Lew Wilding — Flight Sergeant Wilding — who said he had been in the plane my father was flying that night as one of the wireless operators. He lived near Nottingham and, when I went to meet him in his house a few weeks later, I learnt he was over 90 but still fighting fit. His married daughter, Carolyn, joined us. Trauma can distort the memory, but Lew’s recall seemed perfect. ‘Soon after we took off,’ he told me, ‘the wireless failed, so your father decided to return to base. But then the port engine failed. We had depth charges still on board, so he had to go around and drop the depth charges in a safe place. But he couldn’t make it all the way back, not on just one engine, and losing height all the time. We clipped a telegraph pole as we came in.’

Carolyn, amazingly, had been able to locate her father’s logbook and had brought it with her. She turned the pages until she came to the relevant entry. There it was: *‘Ret base w/t failure. Pt Eng cut. A/C crashed and was burned out. Two of crew killed. Pilots injured, c/o pilot lost arm.’*

In plain English, this meant the aircraft had tried to return to base with wireless transmission failure but had crashed and was burned out. Two of the crew had been killed. The pilot (my father) had been injured; the co-pilot had lost an arm. 'Two of crew killed.'

The words jumped out at me. Until that moment, I had had no idea anyone had died in the crash. Sadly, Lew Wilding, the last survivor of the six-man crew that flew in HF.246 on that fateful day is today no longer with us. But the memory of those brave men has not died. In fact, thanks to the amazing work of Barnstaple's British Military History Group, it burns brighter than ever.

In March 2019, I was invited to a public meeting held in Barnstaple Library organised by that group. Rob Palmer, a leading light in the group, and the author of the current publication, gave the audience a progress report. '*Over 5,500 operational sorties were flown from R.A.F. Chivenor during the war,*' he told us, '*and 73 Wellingtons were lost. That's about 400 men. The Leigh Light helped the air crews spot the U-boats on the surface at night. But remember the U-boats were armed. They could, and did, fire back, sometimes with deadly effect. There were 137 sightings of U-boat, and eight U-boats confirmed sunk,*' Rob continued. '*By 1943, the U-boats were on the defensive and, crucially, the cross-Channel invasion of June 1944 — the D-Day landings — was not disrupted.*'

As I left the meeting, Rob asked me to return in August, when, he said, 'we are going to hold a special event at Chivenor to commemorate your father's crash'. Well, I did return to North Devon that year, on Saturday 17 August, the 75th anniversary of the last flight of Wellington HF246. Barnstaple's British Military History Group had managed to find and contact relatives of almost all the crew of my father's Wellington. It was so good to meet Lew Wilding's daughter, Carolyn, again, as well as Sylvia and Sally March, the daughters of the second pilot, Bill Broadley, who lost his arm in the crash, and other members of their family.

The ceremony began at noon on a bright sunny day in Chivenor Memorial Gardens. After the service and the presentation of wreaths, we were escorted to the crash site itself, on the road outside the entrance to the camp. I had brought the old fire-twisted throttle to Chivenor and took it with me as we walked to the very spot where my father had been forced to crash-land 75 years earlier. We gathered round while Rob took us through the last minutes of that fatal day. '*Flying on one engine meant the Wellington was sinking all the time, but the depth charges had to be dropped first over Saunton Sands. It was too dangerous to land with them on board. There was a dance being held at the base that night, and most of the buildings were wooden huts that would have been seriously damaged by an explosion, with probably a heavy loss of life.*'

Rob explained that my father tried to line up the aircraft towards the runway, but since it wasn't responding normally because of its failed engine, he couldn't turn tight enough without stalling. So, he decided to aim for open ground at the entrance to the base. '*At 23.20 hours, Wellington HF.246 crashed at R.A.F. Chivenor,*' said Rob. '*It was coming in at a height of 20 feet or less and hit a telegraph pole, then slid across the road to end up against the wall of the chapel.*'

Later that day, we went to the churchyard of St Augustine at Heanton Punchardon. It is a beautiful place with an amazing view. You can look down at Chivenor immediately below, and the Taw Estuary beyond. In my mind's eye, I could trace the whole of HF 246's last flight. We had come to the churchyard to pay our respects to 'Butch' Butchart, a Canadian who had served with the R.A.F. during the war, as so many of his countrymen did. He was the navigator on the Wellington that night and is buried in the cemetery there. We said a prayer, too, for Flight Sergeant Wilson, who died on 17 August and was buried, not in the cemetery at Heanton Punchardon, but in his hometown of Urmston, Greater Manchester. Finally, we remembered Flight Sergeant Jim Milne, also a crew member on my father's plane, who went back to printing after the war and died in October 1993, aged 83.

My father himself died in May 1992, aged 82. In 2020 his medals, including the D.F.C. and the accompanying letter from King George VI, were put on display at the R.A.F. Museum, Hendon. I was tremendously touched to receive a personal message from Air Chief Marshal and Chief of Air Staff Sir Mike Wigston, K.C.B., C.B.E., A.D.C. Sir Mike wrote: *'We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the generation of people like Wilfred who fought selflessly for our freedom in the Second World War. Their courage and resilience inspire the Royal Air Force to this day.'* Later, Sir Mike Wigston wrote to me again, enclosing a copy of the book the R.A.F. had produced and published: *'The Wartime Service of Flight Lieutenant Wilfred Johnson DFC.'*

I wrote to thank him, and Sir Mike answered my email on 18 August 2021. *'Thank you for your kind words and for sharing your fascinating, moving article which I hadn't seen before. I reiterate how grateful we are for the loan of Wilfred's medals, and it was a delight to show the display to Boris, Carrie and Wilfred and share the family pride.'* I should explain that the 'Boris' mentioned by Sir Mike Wigston is my oldest son, then Prime Minister. Carrie is his wife and the 'Wilfred' in question is Boris and Carrie's older son 'Wilf' (Flight Lieutenant Wilfred Johnson's great grandson).

Rob Palmer's book 'The Last Flight of Wellington HF.246' covers a vital aspect of British Military history. R.A.F. Coastal Command squadrons based at R.A.F. Chivenor had a dramatic and long-lasting impact on U-boat operations in the Battle of the Atlantic. Rob Palmer's book, like the one Air Chief Marshall Wigston sent me and other members of the family, means a lot to me personally. I have learned so much about my father, and the role he and his comrades in arms played during the war. In saying this, I am sure I speak not just for my own family, but for all the families and friends who were touched by – and who still remember – the events of 17 August 1944.

I also enclose a link to the article which I had written for the Daily Mail:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7396829/STANLEY-JOHNSON-learned-true-meaning-courage-witnessing-bombers-crash-landing.html>

Introduction

It can be said that people can be judged on how they respond to events, but there are two different categories of events. There are those over which we have control; we decide what to do, when we do it, how, and where it will be done. Perhaps a greater test is how to respond to events that are not within our control. These are events that happen TO us, sometimes suddenly and unexpectedly, and are often difficult to handle and traumatic.

Flying in the Second World War was a challenge, not just because of the threat of enemy action, but by other issues brought about by the demands of total war. None of the modern computer aids that exist today were in place during the war, and the demands of war production also meant that standards that can be enjoyed in peacetime were not achievable. Having said that, engine failures were rare in Coastal Command, so for an air crew to suffer not one, but two, such failures within one month was unusual. On the first occasion, all six men survived although the aircraft was destroyed, but on the second, two of them died, two were seriously injured, and just two escaped with minor injuries.

This second crash on 17 August 1944, displays several factors that are worthy of comment. The coolness and judgement of the pilot and captain, F/L Wilfred JOHNSON, was justly rewarded by the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (D.F.C.). It was not solely down to his actions, as no doubt the other five air crew played their part in the outcome. This is their story.

The Vickers Wellington

The Air Ministry issued Specification B.9/32, in 1932, for the design of a heavy bomber. Vickers developed a design, using the geodetic structure designed by Barnes WALLIS, who was a senior engineer for the company. The airframe was constructed with a metal structure and covered with fabric. Vickers used this method for the single engine Wellesley bomber, which was then entering service with the Royal Air Force. The prototype Wellington made its first flight, at the company's airfield at Weybridge, Surrey, on 15 June 1936.

The first production Wellington Mk. I aircraft were delivered to No. 9 Squadron in October 1938. They were fitted with two 1,050 Bristol Pegasus Mk. XVIII engines. These aircraft had a turret in the nose and tail, and a retractable Nash & Thompson ventral turret under the aircraft. The Mk IA Wellington had powered Nash & Thompson turrets instead of the original Vickers design, and in the Mk. IC, the ventral turret was discarded, but two beam guns were added.

The Wellington Mk. II had two, Rolls-Royce Merlin Mk. X engines, each developing 1,145 hp, as the Bristol Aircraft Company anticipated a shortage of Pegasus engines. In fact, the shortage arose in the supply of Merlin engines, so the Mk. III design had two Bristol Hercules Mk. III or XI engines, each developing 1,370 hp, a marked improvement over the Merlins. The Merlins were liquid cooled, in-line engines, while the Hercules were air cooled radials.

The Mk. IV Wellington was fitted with American Pratt & Whitney R-1830-S3C4GT Twin Wasp radial engines. The Wellington Mk. V and VI were experimental, high-altitude versions, and the Mk. VII was cancelled. The final bomber version was the Mk. X, which was delivered to the R.A.F. from July 1942 onwards. These were constructed of light alloy instead of mild steel, so the geodetic structure was lighter, yet stronger, than its predecessors were. The Mk. X had two Bristol Hercules Mk. VI or XVI engines, which developed 1,615 hp. This was the Mark of the Wellington built in greatest numbers, with 3,803 constructed.

At the beginning of the Second World War, Bomber Command had eight squadrons equipped with Wellingtons. Very early in the war, the R.A.F. found that daylight bombing operations against Germany were not feasible, as they resulted in heavy losses of aircraft and crew. Simply, British bomber aircraft were too vulnerable to German fighters and air defences to operate effectively. The British switched to night-time attacks, with the Wellington becoming the main aircraft used by Bomber Command, until the four-engine 'heavy bombers' began to make an appearance in 1942. By the autumn of 1943, the Wellington had been replaced in R.A.F. Bomber Command operations over Germany, but it remained in use by training units. The Wellington continued in effective use as a bomber in the Mediterranean, and South-East Asia. The first Wellingtons arrived in Egypt in the autumn of 1940, and they remained operational in the bombing role until the end of 1944. Wellingtons flew more operational hours in the Middle and Far East than in Western Europe.

The threat posed by German mines around the coast of the United Kingdom grew to serious proportions by early 1940, in particular, the advent of magnetic mines became a major problem. One of the British responses involved a Wellington Mk. I bomber being fitted with a ring around the entire aircraft, which was magnetised by a generator on-board the Wellington. This created the Wellington DWI Mk. I aircraft, which proved to be of limited effect operationally. The use of Wellingtons in the maritime role had commenced, with No. 221 Squadron being the first equipped with Wellingtons for the maritime reconnaissance and strike role.

The Germans and Italians both had large submarine fleets within their navies. These submarines were known to the British as U-boats. The term U-boat is an anglicised version of the German word U-boot, a shortening of the German Unterseeboot, which literally means 'underseaboat'. The U-boats commenced operating in the Atlantic from French bases shortly after the collapse of France in June 1940. They could operate on the surface with impunity at night, as they were virtually undetectable by British aircraft and warships because of their low silhouette. The scientific development by the British of Air-to-Surface Vessel (A.S.V.) radar meant that enemy ships, including U-boats, could be detected on the surface at night. Although A.S.V. could detect a surfaced U-boat from up to twelve miles away, as the aircraft closed in for an attack, the background returns from the surface of the sea obscured the location of the U-boat within a mile of the target.

Squadron Leader LEIGH invented a mechanism by which a searchlight could be fitted in the vacant space left by the former retractable ventral turret underneath a Wellington aircraft.

Using the generator fitted to a DWI Mk I aircraft to power the searchlight, a Wellington was modified to carry the A.S.V. Mk. II radar and searchlight (known as a Leigh Light). The initial trials proved successful, so other aircraft were modified and designated as General Reconnaissance Mark VIII versions. No. 1417 Flight was formed at R.A.F. Chivenor equipped with G.R. Mk. VIII aircraft to develop these aircraft for operational use. This Flight grew into No. 172 Squadron in early 1942, and the first operational sorties in June 1942 resulted in an Italian U-boat being located, illuminated, and attacked. The impact on the U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic was dramatic and long-lasting.

The Wellington G.R. Mk. XI was a maritime version of the Mk. X aircraft fitted with the A.S.V. Mk. II radar. These aircraft were used for shipping strikes, particularly in the Mediterranean region. 180 Mk XI aircraft were built. The invention of the centimetric A.S.V. Mk. III radar, with a revolving scanner, led to the Mk. XII Wellington, another maritime version of the aircraft. This had the new radar installed in the nose, covered by a blister.

The Mk XII was still powered by the Bristol Hercules Mk. VI or XVI engines, which developed 1,615 hp. The Mk XII Wellington was equipped with the retractable Leigh Light, and 58 were built. The development of the Hercules Mk. XVII engines, which was designed for low-altitude flying and developed 1,725 hp, led to two further G.R. versions of the Wellington. Both the G.R. XIII and G.R. XIV had the new radar installed in the nose in the same manner as the Mk. XII. The Mk. XIII was used for shipping strikes, and could carry two 18" torpedoes, and the G.R. Mk. XIV was fitted with the Leigh Light and armed with depth charges to attack U-boats. 844 Mk XIII aircraft were built, and 841 of the Mk XIV version. It is believed that the maritime versions of the Wellington accounted for in whole, or in part, the sinking of twenty-seven U-boats.

All versions of the Wellington were 60 feet, 6 inches in length, with a wingspan of 85 feet, 10 inches. The engines became more powerful, from the 1,000 hp Bristol Pegasus Mk. XX fitted to the Mark I aircraft, to the 1,725 hp Bristol Hercules Mk. XVI engines in the Mk. XIII and Mk. XIV. The maximum speed of 245 mph for the Mk. I rose to 254 mph with the Mk. X and derivatives. The ceiling increased slightly from 21,600 feet to about 22,000 feet, but this was irrelevant in the maritime reconnaissance roles, as the usual operating height was only about 1,500 feet. A total of 11,461 Wellingtons were built at Weybridge, and satellite factories at Chester and Blackpool. The last Wellington built by Vickers was delivered to the R.A.F. on 25 October 1945, one of the few R.A.F. aircraft to be built throughout the six years of the Second World War. The last Wellingtons used by the R.A.F. were retired from their training role in 1953.

The Wellington usually had a crew of five: the pilot, observer/navigator, wireless operator, air bomber, and air gunner. Those Wellingtons operated by Coastal Command usually had an air crew of six, with a second pilot, no air bomber (the second pilot operated the Leigh Light, and the pilot dropped the depth charges), and three dual-rolled wireless operators/air gunners. These three men would rotate around between the W/T (wireless telegraphy), S/E (special equipment, or radar set) and rear turret seats about every hour during the ten-hour long sorties.

No. 172 Squadron

This squadron was the pioneer in the operational deployment of the Leigh Light and A.S.V. radar in night-time operations against the U-boats in the Bay of Biscay. In addition, it was the longest serving squadron based at R.A.F. Chivenor during the Second World War, being based there from April 1942 (when it formed), until September 1944, when it moved to R.A.F. Limavady in Northern Ireland where it remained until the end of the Second World War.

At 00.23 hours, on Thursday, 8 January 1942, R.A.F. Chivenor received a signal from the Air Ministry (07) authorising the formation of No. 1417 Flight in 19 Group, to be based at R.A.F. Chivenor. The signal stated that the flight would be equipped with four (plus two reserves) Wellington aircraft, Mark VIII, fitted with Leigh Lights in addition to the normal equipment. The purpose of the flight was to develop knowledge of, and experience with the Leigh Lights, under the control of No. 19 Group, in order to undertake operational sorties when ready.¹ On 18 January 1942, the War Establishment for the Flight was issued by the Air Ministry, with a Squadron Leader as officer commanding, one Flight Lieutenant and four Flying or Pilot Officers as pilots, and one Flying Officer and two Flying or Pilot Officers as observers. There were to be five Sergeant pilots, two Sergeant observers and fifteen Sergeant wireless operators/air gunners. The ground personnel included Aircraft Hands, Maintenance Assistants, Armourers (Bombs), Armourers (Guns), Clerks General Duties, Electricians Class I and II, Equipment Assistants, Fitters Class I, II (A) and II (E), Fitter (Armourer), Fitter (Armourer Bombs) and Fitter (Armourer Guns), Flight Mechanics (A) and (E), Instrument Repairers Class I and Class II, Radio Mechanics, and Wireless Mechanics. In total, No. 1417 Flight comprised nine officers and eighty-four airmen.

On 26 January 1942, Squadron Leader (S/L) J. H. GRESWELL transferred officially from the Coastal Command Development Unit at R.A.F. Carew Cheriton, to assume command of No. 1417 Flight at R.A.F. Chivenor.^{2, 3} Four Wellington Mk IC aircraft, not fitted with Leigh Lights, were allocated to the Flight for training purposes, and the Flight Commander had to prepare a training programme for the three pilots, one observer and eight wireless operators/air gunners who were to join the Flight having flown Hudson aircraft across the Atlantic from Canada where they had been trained. By the 24 January, the Flight comprised only fifteen personnel, but by the thirty-first of the month, five pilots (one a Sergeant), two observers (one officer and one sergeant), eight wireless operators/air gunners and three air gunners had arrived and joined the Flight.⁴

In February, the strength of the Flight built up steadily. On 2 February, Pilot Officer (P/O) A. W. R. TRIGGS was appointed to be responsible for flight stores, P/O H. W. RUSS for navigation, and P/O G. V. SYER for the armoury. Flight Sergeant (F/Sgt) CARTWRIGHT was made responsible for signals.

¹ The National Archives, Kew (TNA), Air Ministry Files (AIR) 29 868 – *Miscellaneous Flights* (London, Air Ministry 1945)

² *Ibid.*

³ Rawlings gives the date of formation of 1417 Flight as 18 March 1942.

⁴ The National Archives, Kew (TNA), Air Ministry Files (AIR) 29 868 – *Miscellaneous Flights* (London, Air Ministry 1945)

On 8 February, the first operational aircraft, Wellington W.5733 arrived, with the first training aircraft, P.9223 arriving on 13 February, the latter aircraft being the one in which S/L LEIGH carried out his original searchlight experiments. Two more aircraft arrived before the end of the month, L.4319 on 20 February, and R.1231 on 24 February, both Wellington's Mk. IC from R.A.F. Cranwell.⁵

At 09.00 hours on Thursday, 26 February 1942, a signal was received from the Air Ministry stating that No. 1417 Flight was to be expanded to a squadron of sixteen Wellington Mk. VIII aircraft, with four reserves. The squadron was to be known as 172 Squadron, and it was to be based at R.A.F. Chivenor, but was to come under No. 19 Group (an operational group), even though R.A.F. Chivenor was still primarily a training base under No. 17 Group. The allotment and issue of the specially equipped Vickers Wellingtons Mk. VIII was to be carried out by No. 41 Group.⁶

The Operations Record Book (R.A.F. Form 540) commences from the month of March 1942. On 8 March, Wellington W.3657 arrived at R.A.F. Chivenor for 172 Squadron to use as a training aircraft. At 09.00 hours, on Monday, 9 March 1942, H.Q. Coastal Command signalled R.A.F. Chivenor to inform them that S/L J. B. RUSSELL, of No. 502 Squadron based at R.A.F. St. Eval, was to assume command of No. 172 Squadron from S/L J. H. GRESWELL with effect from 11 March 1942, and that on that date he would assume the rank of Wing Commander (W/C). On 17 March, the inventor of the Leigh Light, S/L LEIGH arrived at R.A.F. Chivenor on a liaison visit to meet Wing Commander RUSSELL and the Squadron, staying for two nights. On the day of his arrival, the promotion of W/C RUSSELL was announced in the London Gazette.

On 9 April 1942, P/O NOBLE and P/O Le BON arrived on being posted from 233 Squadron at R.A.F. St. Eval. Four days later, S/L GRESWELL asked P/O RUSS, a Canadian, to take a crew and fly down to R.A.F. St. Eval to collect W/C RUSSELL. He took off in a Wellington Mk. VIII, Z.8721, at about 14.00 hours for the short flight to R.A.F. St. Eval. His crew comprised P/O E. A. BLAIR, a New Zealander, as second pilot, P/O L. NOBLE as navigator, and two wireless operators/air gunners, P/O Le BON and Sergeant (Sgt) C. T. DANIEL. After the aircraft took off, nothing further was heard from the crew, and the aircraft did not arrive at R.A.F. St. Eval. At 16.00 hours on 21 April, news was received by No. 172 Squadron that a pilot from No. 5 (C) O.T.U. had located the remains of Wellington Z.8721, which had crashed on the cliff-side at a point midway between Clovelly and Hartland Point. W/C RUSSELL immediately formed a search party, which included the Medical Officer, F/O W. S. NOBLE.

The coast was searched at the area indicated by the pilot, and after some difficulty, the wreckage was found by P/O A. W. R. TRIGGS scattered over a charred area at a most remote and unfrequented spot at about 21.00 hours. Little more could be done that night, other than reporting the location of the crash site to P.C. NORCOMBE at Hartland, so the party returned to R.A.F. Chivenor. At 09.00 hours the next day, W/C RUSSELL organised a party to descend the cliffs and recover the five bodies. All five deceased were badly burned and crushed but were recovered safely and were identified as the five air crew of Wellington Z.8721.

⁵ The National Archives, Kew (TNA), Air Ministry Files (AIR) 29 868 – *Miscellaneous Flights* (London, Air Ministry 1945)

⁶ The National Archives, Kew (TNA), Air Ministry Files (AIR) 29 868 – *Miscellaneous Flights* (London, Air Ministry 1945)

An inquest was held at 17.00 hours on 23 April at the S.S.Q. at R.A.F. Chivenor. The verdict was one of accidental death due to the crashing of an aircraft. The five deceased air crew were all interned in the local cemetery at St. Augustine's Church, Heanton Punchardon at 15.00 hours on 26 April. Full services honours were extended to the five men, and relatives of P/O F. LE BON, P/O L. NOBLE and Sgt DANIEL attended the service. They were met on their arrival at R.A.F. Chivenor by the Squadron Adjutant, who accompanied them up the hill to the church for the service.

June 1942 saw the first operations in the Bay of Biscay for the new squadron. A signal arrived from H.Q. 19 Group on 2 June, requiring four aircraft to be operational from 15.00 hours. This marked the climax of all the training for the embryonic squadron and was greeted with enthusiasm. This was dashed when the night's operations were cancelled due to the weather, but they were back on for the night of 3 June. Air Vice Marshal G. R. BROMET, C.B.E., D.S.O., the Air Officer Commanding 19 Group, arrived by air to confer with the Station Commander, Group Captain (G/C) P. D. CRACROFT, A.F.C., and W/C RUSSELL. He attended the briefing, after which the four aircraft took off at approximately five-minute intervals. The first away was D/172 (BB.503), captained by P/O F. BLACKMORE, which became airborne at 20.33 hours. At 20.37 hours, W/C RUSSELL lifted off in C/172 (HF.828) with his crew, followed by the third crew to take off captained by F/L SOUTHALL in D/172 (BB.503), which left at 20.44 hours. Finally, at 20.54 hours, F/172 (ES.986) took off, flown by S/L J. H. GRESWELL.

The first to land at 05.11 hours was D/172 and F/L SOUTHALL, who had an uneventful patrol but had sighted some fishing vessels and used their S/E to locate and illuminate some Spanish trawlers. Next back at 05.16 was B/172 with P/O BLACKMORE as Captain; another aircraft to have completed an uneventful patrol. Then at 05.20 hours, W/C RUSSELL landed having sighted a merchant vessel of about 1,000 tons but had little else to report. At 05.57 hours, S/L GRESWELL landed in F/172, with much to report. This aircraft had opened the scoring for 172 Squadron at 01.44 hours. F/172 obtained a contact on the search aerials six and half miles to starboard. The subsequent homing procedure produced another and separate contact. A run up to one of these contacts was made, and the Leigh Light was switched on about one-mile distance from the contact. A U-boat was sighted on the surface, three-quarters of a mile dead ahead. After a couple of runs, the Leigh Light was switched on again at one-mile distance, and the U-boat was illuminated at three-quarters of a mile. The aircraft descended to 50 feet, and four depth charges were dropped, three of which were seen to explode and straddle the U-boat. This notable success on the first operational effort was hailed with great enthusiasm throughout the Squadron as it had proved the whole 'outfit' to have been an outstanding success. W/C J. B. RUSSELL, S/L H. de V. LEIGH and S/L J. H. GRESWELL all felt immensely satisfied with this initial and surprising achievement.

Three crews returned to operational duties on the night of **6 June**, with more sightings of U-Boats being made. S/L GRESWELL and his crew took off at 22.09 hours in F/172, followed at 22.25 hours by W/C RUSSELL and his crew in C/172, and then one minute later, P/O BLACKMORE and his crew in B/172. W/C RUSSELL had an uneventful flight and landed at 06.56 hours, but both S/L GRESWELL and P/O BLACKMORE obtained contacts on their S/E.

S/L GRESWELL's crew obtained their contact at the range of seven and a half miles, and attacked, but the altimeter was set incorrectly and on the first run the Leigh Light beam was trained inaccurately. The U-boat dived as the Wellington approached, making any attack pointless.⁷ P/O BLACKMORE gained a contact at eleven miles range, sighted a U-boat near to that sighted by S/L GRESWELL (which could have been the same submarine), and made a run in but was unable to drop the depth charges. The rear gunner fired two-hundred rounds at the U-boat as it dived.

Five planes were detailed for operations overnight 19/20 June. This night turned out to be eventful for more than one crew. F/L SOUTHALL lifted off at 22.30 hours in D/172, F/Sgt VIRGO in A/172 at 22.32, W/C RUSSELL took off at 22.40 hours in C/172, P/O BLACKMORE in B/172 at 22.47 hours. At 01.47 hours on the outward track, D/172 obtained an S/E contact as the A.S.V. operator was dropping a flame float. The aircraft homed towards the contact with its Leigh Light exposed, and a U-boat was illuminated to starboard. The aircraft approached two points on the starboard quarter of the U-boat, and depth charges were released from a height of approximately 100 feet.

At about 02.30 hours, A/172 received a message to attack a submarine reported nearby. It proceeded to the position given and obtained an S/E contact but lost the contact and could not regain it; although the rear gunner saw a swirl of foam on the sea as if a submarine was diving. They searched for a further forty-five minutes then set course for base. At about 06.15 hours, the port engine cylinders gave a shower of sparks and then blew off followed by the engine cowling. The aircraft sent an S.O.S. and F/Sgt VIRGO managed to ditch it safely at about 06.42 hours, in a position about one-hundred and twenty miles south of the Scillies and one-hundred miles west of Ushant. The crew of six took to the dinghy and were sighted by Whitley F/502 at between 10.00 and 12.00 hours. The aircraft circled but then headed off to the west where it appeared to attack a U-boat. This aircraft did not reappear although the men in the dinghy could hear the sounds of an aircraft in the vicinity for about another two hours.

At about 15.00 hours, on 21 June, the dinghy was sighted by Whitley G/58, which dropped some smoke floats. A Sunderland flying boat, Y/10 R.A.A.F. from R.A.F. Mount Batten appeared on the scene as well, and the crew of A/172 in the dinghy fired a signal flare. Then two German Arado 196 float planes came onto the scene, and bursts of cannon fire were heard, resulting in the Sunderland losing height rapidly. Smoke was seen issuing from the position where the Sunderland was last seen, followed by a large explosion. During this exchange, the Whitley made off, and the two enemy aircraft circled over the dinghy at about two miles radius. The crew of A/172 were picked up safely by a motor launch at about 22.30 hours and landed at St. Mary's on the Scilly Islands at about 08.45 hours on 22 June. Apart from a few scratches, the crew were fine after their ordeal.

⁷ This problem was not unusual in the early days of operation. The altimeter was set according to the barometric pressure at R.A.F. Chivenor, which could be very different to that encountered in the Bay of Biscay. Unless the altimeter was recalibrated over the Bay, it could give a false reading of the aircraft's height above the water.

On 6 July 1942, F/L SOUTHALL and his crew took off at 21.42 hours in D/172 and were the first to sight a U-boat that night. At 01.23 hours, while on patrol in the Bay of Biscay, D/172 was flying at 3,500 feet when an S/E contact was obtained at a range of eight miles, 15 degrees to starboard. SOUTHALL turned towards the contact and homed to three miles, when the contact disappeared owing to returns on the radar from the surface of the sea. D/172 turned on a reciprocal course, lost height, and a second contact was registered two and half miles ahead, with the aircraft now flying at 600 feet. D/172 homed and the Leigh Light was exposed at three-quarters of a mile, and a fully surfaced U-boat appeared in the beam. SOUTHALL made an attack that was delivered from three points on the port bow of the U-boat. Four, 269 lb Torpex filled Depth Charges were released from 100 feet and were estimated to have straddled the U-boat's track twenty yards ahead of the bow, and at an angle of 130 degrees to its track. Flame floats were dropped, one being seen to ignite with the depth charge explosions by the rear gunner, who observed a sheet of flame lasting about one second, in the position of the explosion. The rear gunner fired one burst of 30 rounds from each gun, just over the explosion. D/172 continued to circle the area, but no further contacts were obtained. At 01.54 hours, D/172 left the position, returning at 02.59 hrs when two contacts were homed on but proved inconclusive. D/172 remained in the vicinity until 04.00 hrs and then set course for base. During the patrol, three fishing vessels were also sighted. The radio altimeter had been showing intermittent faults throughout the patrol but during the attack functioned correctly.

At 04.55 hours, in a nearby location, the crew of H/172 gained a contact on their Special Equipment homing aerials seven miles ahead. The Leigh Light was switched on when the target was one mile ahead, and HOWELL released four Torpex depth charges at a height of 50 feet, while flying across the bows of the U-boat from starboard to port as it was diving. Due to the eruption of the water as the depth charges exploded, the rear gunner was not able to see where the four landed, but the crew estimated that at least two were within lethal range. The rear gunner fired 400 rounds into the explosions, and as the spray subsided, he saw a mass of swirling water.

HOWELL turned H/172 around to fly back over the scene and dropped a flame float into the mass of swirling water, which was extending and becoming darker. The aircraft remained in the area until 05.13 hours but observed nothing else of interest. They flew back to R.A.F. Chivenor, arriving back at 07.45 hours after a patrol of nine hours and six minutes. During the patrol, H/172 also sighted a small, single merchant vessel, and medium sized convoy. Subsequently, the assessment by the Admiralty, confirmed by recent research by Neistle, was that the attack by H/172 had sunk the Type IXC U-boat U-502. Laid down on 2 April 1940 at Deutsche Werft AG in Hamburg, it was launched on 18 February 1941, and commissioned on 31 May 1941 under the command of Kapitanleutnant Jurgen von ROSENTSTIEL. U-502 joined 2 Flottille under training until 1 September 1941, when it commenced active service.

The U-boat undertook four war patrols, sinking fourteen ships of 78,843 G.R.T., and damaging two others, serving with the Reissewolf wolfpack between 21 and 30 October 1941. U-502 was lost with all fifty-two crew dying in the attack. This was the first successful attack by an A.S.V., Leigh Light equipped Wellington during the Second World War.

In August 1942, a detachment was sent to R.A.F. Skitten in Northern Scotland. In September, this detachment expanded to become 179 Squadron. In December 1942, the squadron upgraded to the new Wellington Mk. XII. The second successful attack came on 19 February 1943 with the sinking of U-268 in the Bay of Biscay. In March 1943, the squadron commenced receiving the improved A.S.V. Mk. III radar sets, and this proved effective with the third successful attack, on U-665, taking place on 20 March 1943. This came only two days after Coastal Command launched Operation 'Enclose', its first large scale operation to seek and destroy U-boats in the Bay of Biscay.

Further successes came on 10 April 1943 with the sinking of U-376 in the Bay of Biscay, followed by U-119 on 24 June 1943 north-west of Cape Ortegal. On 24 July 1943, U-459 was sunk in the same location, with U-126 being sunk on 3 July 1943 and U-614 on 29 July 1943. In August 1943, the squadron began to receive new Wellington Mk. XIV aircraft, with improved engines, and equipped with A.S.V. Mk. III and a Leigh Light. When R.A.F. Chivenor suffered severe flooding in September 1943, this squadron remained at Chivenor, although 304 and 407 Squadrons were both transferred to R.A.F. St. Eval.

In January 1944, the squadron had two further successes, with the sinking of U-364 on 30 January, and U-231 the next day; the first to the west of Bordeaux and the second north of the Azores, where a detachment from the squadron was then based. In May and June 1944, the squadron was heavily involved in the operation to blockade the English Channel against U-Boats attacking the invasion fleet. By September 1944, there were fewer sightings of U-boats as the German Navy had lost control of the key French bases as the Allies advanced through France. In consequence, the squadron moved for the only time in its operational life, transferring to R.A.F. Limavady in Northern Ireland. From September 1944 until the end of hostilities, the squadron operated from Limavady, but with the U-boat threat over, the squadron disbanded on 4 June 1945.

No. 179 Squadron

The second squadron in Coastal Command equipped with the Leigh Light Wellington aircraft, No. 179 Squadron was formed on 1 September 1942 around a detached flight from No. 172 Squadron. Its first base was R.A.F. Skitten, in Caithness, close to the town of Wick, and the aircraft were Vickers Wellington Mk. VIII, allocated from No. 172 Squadron.

In November 1942, the squadron moved to R.A.F. North Front, Gibraltar, in order to cover the coast of Portugal and southern Spain, and the approaches to the Mediterranean. In August 1943, the Squadron began to receive new Wellington Mk. XIV aircraft. In April 1944, No. 179 Squadron returned to the U.K. to be based at R.A.F. Predannack in Cornwall.

The reason for this move was because their area of operations had become quieter, and the squadron was required to bolster the Coastal Command commitment to the forthcoming invasion of France. In September 1944, the Squadron moved to R.A.F. Chivenor in North Devon, but later that same month, it moved again to R.A.F. Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides. In October, the squadron returned to R.A.F. Chivenor, but the following month, it moved to R.A.F. St. Eval in Cornwall and converted to Vickers Warwick Mk V aircraft, the only unit in Coastal Command to re-equip with the Warwick aircraft, which were intended as an updated version of the Wellington.

With the end of the Second World War, No. 179 Squadron remained in being, still based at R.A.F. St. Eval. In February 1946, it received its first Avro Lancaster A.S.R. Mk. III aircraft, the conversion being completed by May, when the last Warwick was retired. During this period, 179 Y Flight kept the Warwicks, while 179 X Flight received the Lancasters. Once the entire squadron was using Lancasters, No. 179 Y Flight became No. 210 Squadron. No. 179 Squadron was disbanded in September 1946.

The Circumstances of the Crash

In early May 1944, Sgt WILDING, together with Gordon BUTCHART, and George WILSON gained a new pilot in the form of F/L Wilfred JOHNSON. They flew their first operational sortie together on 15 May 1944 over the Bay of Biscay. On 29 July 1944, at 04.51 hours, they took off in Wellington Q/172 for an anti-submarine patrol. The starboard engine cut on take-off, and the heavily laden Wellington crashed on the curtilage of R.A.F. Chivenor. The aircraft was burnt out, but the six air crew managed to escape without injury. The same air crew were up in an aircraft again on 31 July 1944 for an air test.

At 22.30 hours, on 17 August 1944, Wellington Mk. XIV, HF.246, took off from R.A.F. Chivenor on a routine operational sortie over the Western Approaches. The air crew were:

111579	F/L. W. JOHNSON, R.A.F.V.R.	Pilot & Captain
178054	P/O W. BROADLEY, R.A.F.V.R.	Second Pilot
R/127929	W/O G. V. BUTCHART, R.C.A.F.	Navigator (B)
1230405	F/Sgt G. A. WILSON, R.A.F.V.R.	WOp/AG
1230175	F/Sgt L. WILDING, R.A.F.V.R.	WOp/AG
1366073	F/Sgt J. MILNE, R.A.F.V.R.	WOp/AG

Soon after setting course, the wireless failed, so the Captain, F/L JOHNSON, decided to return to base. As they approached R.A.F. Chivenor to land, the port engine failed. The depth charges and some fuel was jettisoned, and then at 23.20 hours, Wellington HF.246 crashed at R.A.F. Chivenor.

The Navigator, W/O G. V. BUTCHART, R.C.A.F., and WOp/AG, F/Sgt G. A. WILSON, both died in the crash, with the other four air crew injured. The two pilots were seriously injured, with P/O BROADLEY being blown out of the aircraft, losing his flying boots and an arm in the process. F/L JOHNSON sustained a broken leg and serious burns. An unknown W.A.A.F. ran to the scene and pulled P/O BROADLEY away from the aircraft before it exploded. F/Sgt MILNE found that the aircraft had broken up, so he managed to escape through a broken section of the fuselage as the flames took hold, as did F/Sgt WILDING.

Police Constable RICHARDS was on duty at Braunton Police Station, in Exeter Road, when at about 11.20 pm he saw a bright glow in the sky in the direction of Barnstaple. He realised that that glow originated from a fire in the vicinity of R.A.F. Chivenor. At the same time, he received a telephone call from Constable BROWNSCOMBE at Barnstaple Police Station, then in Castle Street, to the effect that the Barnstaple contingent of the National Fire Service had left to attend a plane crash at Chivenor. Together with Constable THORNING, RICHARDS made his way to the front gate of R.A.F. Chivenor near Duckpool Level Crossing and saw the wreckage of an aircraft burning furiously near the Station gymnasium on Air Ministry property. The road leading into the base ran parallel to the Southern Railway line from Barnstaple to Ilfracombe, and the wreckage was strewn along this roadway. By the time the two police officers arrived, fire crews and R.A.F. personnel were already in attendance. Constable RICHARDS and his colleague examined the railway lines, and found wreckage lying on the tracks, and also that the telephone lines were down. An employee of the Southern Railway, a Mr. KITE from Barnstaple Junction, was in attendance and he assumed responsibility for advising the Station Master at Braunton and the Traffic Inspector so that trains would be stopped until the line was cleared and repaired.

Both the pilots were taken to the North Devon Infirmary in Barnstaple. F/Sgt MILNE was slightly injured and treated in the Station Sick Quarters. After a period in the North Devon Infirmary, P/O BROADLEY was transferred to the hospital at R.A.F. Halton for further treatment, which included more operations on his damaged limb. It was found that W/O BUTCHART had suffered a fractured skull, other multiple injuries and burns, and had died instantly in the crash. W/O BUTCHART was laid to rest at 3.00 pm on 22 August 1944, in the churchyard of St. Augustine at Heanton Punchardon, North Devon.

Court of Inquiry

A Court of Inquiry opened at R.A.F. Chivenor on 23 August 1944 to inquire into the cause of the engine failure of Wellington XIV HF.246 and the subsequent crash with injury to the crew. The President of the Court was S/L R. B. FLEMING of No. 547 Squadron, with the two members being F/L C. A. GROVES from No. 152 G.R. Wing, and F/O J. S. DICK, also from No. 547 Squadron. P/O BROADLEY was unable to attend the Court due to the extent of his injuries, but the other survivors did attend. Witnesses were called from No. 172 Squadron, and R.A.F. Chivenor.

The aircraft had flown a total of two-hundred and thirteen hours, and both engines had also run for the same period.⁸ The Court determined that the aircraft was fit to fly. They found that F/L JOHNSON was flying the aircraft and was occupying the 1st Pilot's seat. P/O BROADLEY and F/Sgt J. MILNE were seated at the main spar, with W/O BUTCHART sat at his navigator's table, Sgt G. A. WILSON sat in the wireless operator's seat, and F/Sgt L. WILDING was sat in the S/E (radar) seat. W/O BUTCHART and F/Sgt WILSON were fatally injured; with F/L JOHNSON and P/O BROADLEY being seriously injured, and F/Sgt WILDING and F/Sgt MILNE being slightly injured.

The Court found that it was a dark night, with visibility of 25 miles. The cloud cover was 4/10 at 1,200 feet, and the wind was a breeze at ten miles per hour and was coming from 202° True. The cloud base had descended since HF.246 had taken off, and the visibility had reduced. The exact location of the crash was given as the R.A.F. Station Chivenor, two-hundred yards west of Chivenor railway crossing. The aircraft had struck a twenty feet high telegraph pole alongside the railway line prior to crashing. It then hit a hedge by the railway and slithered across the camp road where it crashed into the end of the chapel and burnt out.

The conclusions of the Court were:

- A. *The aircraft took off on an operational sortie at 22.30 hours on the 17th August 1944. Approximately 10 minutes after becoming airborne intercommunications and W/T failure occurred, but pilot carried on for further 15 minutes while attempts were made to rectify faults. This was unsuccessful and owing to unfavourable weather forecasts the pilot decided to return to the vicinity of base and notify Flying Control, by visual signals of his predicament. While commencing to circle base at 800 – 1000 feet and signalling to ground all power was lost from the port engine and propeller was observed to turn very slowly. The immediate action of the pilot was to check cockpit and pull 'Balance Cock A' to the 'On' position. The pilot then feathered port propeller.*

The propeller did not feather until the third attempt, at the same time the pilot increased power on starboard engine to 'plus six pounds manifold pressure and twenty six hundred and fifty R.P.M.' and flew towards Saunton Sands where the pilot jettisoned Depth Charges also starting to jettison petrol. The aircraft was then flying at 300 feet and the pilot turned port back towards the airfield. The pilot could not safely turn starboard because of the high ground. On the downwind leg the pilot flew up the river and attempted to turn in on runway 28. The pilot overshot the runway because of close circuit, closed throttles and crash landed. The aircraft caught fire on impact. Two members of the crew were fatally injured, two seriously and two slightly.

⁸ The two engines were Bristol Hercules Mk. XVII, that on the Port side being 388117 and that on the Starboard being 224867. As the two engines had both run for the same length of time that the airframe had flown, it is safe to assume that they were the original two engines installed at construction.

- B. *The primary cause of this accident was the failure of the port engine for reasons which are obscure. Lack of fuel was not a contributory factor and engine shows no sign of seizure, but it was not 'windmilling' freely. Ignition trouble would have given warning. Owing to the burnt-out condition of the aircraft it has not been possible to find any cause for engine failure.*

The secondary cause of the accident was due to not maintaining height on one engine. When the engine failed, aircraft was almost fully loaded and pilot was concerned with the danger of dropping depth charges near airfield, so flew to Saunton Sands losing height to 300 feet. When depth charges were jettisoned, owing to high ground to starboard the pilot could not turn in this direction as was normal but had to turn port towards 'dead engine'. On the downwind leg of his approach, the fact that the pilot was making a close circuit put the aircraft in such a position that the pilot was unable to land on runway 28. Although the pilot had opened the starboard engine to maximum boost and R.P.M. by closing throttle slightly while turning to port on to runway, the aircraft lost further height and left the pilot no alternative but to close throttles and land straight ahead. Before the aircraft straightened out of turn it hit an obstruction.

The Court finds that in extenuating circumstances Flight Lieutenant JOHNSON made an error of judgement by overshooting the end of the runway, leaving him no alternative but to crash land in darkness.

The Court commends Flight Lieutenant JOHNSON on his action in proceeding to Saunton Sands before jettisoning the depth charges.

The report was submitted to the Station Commander, Wing Commander J. RAMSAY-SMITH, who was also the Commanding Officer of No. 172 Squadron. He stated:

- 1. I agree with the conclusions of the Court.*
- 2. The cause of the failure of the port engine must, unfortunately, remain obscure. An exhaustive examination of the wreckage by the C.T.O. (Technical Officer) has, due to fire damage, failed to reveal any certain cause of failure.*

The Captain, Flight Lieutenant JOHNSON undoubtedly remained cool and fully weighed up all the conditions – confident in his ability to land the aircraft safely on one engine. It seems clear, however, that he overshot by a narrow margin on the downwind leg leaving insufficient height to turn quickly on to the runway.

- 3. I support the commendation of the Court regarding jettisoning of the depth charges. Had he jettisoned earlier, although probably saving the aircraft, it is possible that the D.C's would have dropped either on Fremington Hospital or the living quarters of the Camp.*

W/C RAMSAY-SMITH forwarded the report to the Group Commander, Air Vice-Marshal B. E. BAKER. On 3 September 1944, he wrote: 'I concur with the findings and Station Commander's remarks'. This was endorsed by the Commander-in-Chief of Coastal Command.

Accidents Investigation Branch

The accident was not referred to the Accident Investigation Branch for investigation.

The Air Crew

111579 Flight Lieutenant Wilfred JOHNSON, R.A.F.V.R.

Wilfred JOHNSON was born on 4 September 1909 in Bournemouth, which was then in Hampshire. He was the son of Ali KEMAL, a minister in the Ottoman government in what is now Turkey, who was assassinated in 1922. Wilfred was named Osman Wilfred KEMAL, and he had an elder sister, Selma, who had been born in Cairo three and a half years earlier than him. Their Anglo-Swiss mother, Winifred, died shortly after giving birth to Wilfred, and so Osman Wilfred and Selma went to live with their English grandmother, Margaret BRUN (nee JOHNSON), at 18, Bernard Gardens, Wimbledon, in south-west London. Margaret is shown in the 1911 Census with the surname of Brun JOHNSON, with Selma and Osman Wilfred with the surname of KEMAL. Ali KEMAL returned to Turkey in 1912, and around this time, Selma and Osman Wilfred both took Margaret's maiden name of JOHNSON, and Osman Wilfred dropped his first name and became Wilfred JOHNSON.

After leaving school, Wilfred JOHNSON became a timber broker, and he married on 3 October 1936 in Bromley, Kent. In September 1939, he and his wife were living at 14, Highland Road, Bromley, and they had Basil and Emily ALDER living at the same address, with their son Roy. Basil was employed as a gardener, and Emily was employed on domestic duties for the JOHNSON family. Shortly after war was declared, Wilfred and his wife moved to Trevoise View, Carbis Bay, Cornwall.

Wilfred JOHNSON enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (R.A.F.V.R.) on 6 May 1940 at No. 1 Recruiting Centre at R.A.F. Uxbridge in Middlesex. The next day, he was placed on the Reserve as there were not enough vacancies in the training programme for the number of men volunteering to join the R.A.F. as air crew. JOHNSON was given the rank of Aircraftman 2nd Class and the service number 924429. He was recalled to R.A.F. Uxbridge on 12 July 1940 and on 22 July 1940, he was posted to No. 4 Recruit Centre at R.A.F. Bridgnorth. Here he would have been issued with his uniform, learned basic drill, attended lectures on the R.A.F. and aeronautics, and undertaken fitness training at the hands of the Physical Training Instructors.

On 9 August 1940, AC2 JOHNSON was posted to No.946 (City of Glasgow) Balloon Squadron, R.A.F.. This was a balloon squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force based in and around Glasgow. Their role was to deploy the barrage balloons protecting locations vulnerable to air attack by the enemy. The reason for JOHNSON's posting to this squadron was to familiarise himself with the day-to-day routine of the R.A.F. and learn the basic duties required of him. On 6 September 1940, JOHNSON was posted to No. 10 (Signals) Recruits Centre at R.A.F. Blackpool, which suggests that it was originally intended that he would train as a wireless operator.

On 31 December 1940, he was remustered as a Pilot under training (u/t), and on 6 March 1941, he was posted to No. 9 Recruiting Wing at R.A.F. Stratford. Within the month, he commenced his training en-route to becoming a pilot with his posting to No. 11 Initial Training Wing at R.A.F. Scarborough. This training establishment, based in the hotels in this seaside resort, focused on the initial training of potential pilots and observers with lectures, exams, drill and exercises. After successfully completing his initial training, AC2 JOHNSON was posted to the Personnel Dispatch Centre at R.A.F. West Kirby on the Wirral in Cheshire to await a passage to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, it was arranged that potential pilots and observers would receive their elementary and advanced flying training in Canada, South Africa and Rhodesia. In these countries, the weather was better and more consistent, there was no blackout and no enemy to contend with. As a pilot under training, JOHNSON was promoted to the rank of Leading Aircraftman (LAC) on 29 May 1941.

On his arrival in Canada, LAC JOHNSON was posted to R.C.A.F. De Winton in Alberta, Canada, with effect from 10 June 1941 to train at No. 31 Elementary Flying Training School. This school was equipped with single engine biplane trainers, including the Tiger Moth and its Canadian equivalents. On 8 August 1941, JOHNSON was posted to No. 34 Service Flying Training School at R.C.A.F. Medicine Hat, also in Canada. At this base he learned to fly twin-engine Airspeed Oxford aircraft as he had been streamed for multi-engine training. With the successful completion of his course, on 24 October 1941, JOHNSON was awarded his Flying Badge ('Wings') and was promoted to the rank of Temporary Sergeant, and then immediately (on the same day) commissioned as 111579 Pilot Officer (P/O) Wilfred JOHNSON, on probation, in the General Duties Branch of the R.A.F.V.R..

P/O JOHNSON returned to the U.K. arriving at No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre at R.A.F. Bournemouth on 2 November 1941. On 9 December 1941, he was posted to No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit at R.A.F. Cranwell in Lincolnshire as a Staff Pilot. This implies that he had performed well during his flying training in Canada and was selected to become a Staff Pilot on his return to the U.K. At this stage of the war, there were not enough experienced pilots that had survived a tour of operations to fill all the posts as Staff Pilots, so pilots who had shown significant ability during training were used to fill the vacancies. On 15 May 1942, P/O JOHNSON was detached to undertake a Blind Approach Course at the Blind Approach School at R.A.F. Watchfield in Oxfordshire. This week-long course taught pilots how to use the new radio equipment to enable them to land an aircraft in poor visibility by use of the instruments.

On 25 August 1942, P/O JOHNSON was posted to No. 172 Squadron at R.A.F. Chivenor as a second pilot to fly the Wellington aircraft on night-time anti-submarine sorties over the Bay of Biscay. He arrived at R.A.F. Chivenor at 14.00 hours the next day. No 172 Squadron had only recently been formed, so P/O JOHNSON was one of the early pilots to refine the tactics of using the Air-to-Surface Vessel (A.S.V.) radar (known as Special Equipment or S/E) and the Leigh Light to locate and attack surfaced U-boats at night. Prior to the development of the radar and Leigh Light, U-boats had been virtually undetectable at night on the surface of the sea. JOHNSON was promoted to the rank of War Substantive Flying Officer, on probation, with effect from 1 October 1942.

F/O JOHNSON flew his first operational sortie on 30 November 1942 as the second pilot to the Australian F/O Allan TRIGGS, an experienced pilot and captain with the squadron. He did not accompany F/O TRIGGS on his next sortie on 5 November, but JOHNSON flew with him again on 5 December. Both these sorties were uneventful. He flew with F/O TRIGGS on five more sorties during the month of December, all of which were uneventful apart from one when the S/E failed.

Their first sortie in 1943 was a notable one. TRIGGS and JOHNSON took off at 23.25 hours in a Wellington Mk. VIII, code A/172, with F/O C. BADHAM as the Air Observer, and Sgt J. BURNS, Sgt G. R. KNIGHT and Sgt E. A. WALKER as the Wireless Operators/Air Gunners. A/172 was flying at about 1,700 feet above sea level, when at 04.28 hours, the S/E operator saw a contact 90° to port at a distance of four and a half miles. A/172 turned to port towards the contact, conducting what was called a 'homing procedure', and the Leigh Light was switched on at one and half miles from the target when the aircraft was at a height of 600 feet. In front of the crew of A/172 was a U-boat on the surface, dead ahead, travelling at 12 knots. The Wellington continued to dive and at 04.30 hours released depth charges from just 30 feet above the U-boat, crossing the submarine from starboard to port. The depth charges fell in a salvo, hitting the water on the starboard side halfway between the bow and conning tower of the U-boat. The German submarine was starting to dive but was still on the surface when the depth charges exploded. One of the depth charges possibly hit the hull itself, and at least two were believed to be in lethal range. As the Wellington flew over the U-boat, the rear gunner fired 200 rounds of ammunition at the conning tower of the submarine.

After the attack, A/172 circled the area for twenty minutes, but no further contacts or visual evidence was obtained. The sea state was very rough. Another Wellington from the Squadron, C/172 came to join A/172 and passed over the area without making any contact. At 06.54 hours, A/172 began to experience engine trouble, so F/O TRIGGS decided to return to base, where they landed safely at 08.30 hours. As was so often the case, the result of the attack was, as was so often the case, inconclusive. Post-war research has not identified any German U-boat that was sunk on this date, but there is little doubt that the U-boat attacked was damaged. In addition, the psychological effect on the crew was significant. Proceeding at night, in a rough sea, as if out of nowhere, the U-boat was located and attacked by a British aircraft. Although just one small incident, this attack and the role of No. 172 Squadron was part of the ongoing campaign that soon defeated the U-boats in the Bay of Biscay. This was F/O JOHNSON's eighth operational sortie.

The next sortie that TRIGGS and JOHNSON flew on 5 January 1943 was uneventful. On 6 January, their aircraft suffered an engine failure, with the starboard propellor falling off, followed by the engine itself. In a great feat of airmanship, the two pilots maintained control of the Wellington, and they landed safely at R.A.F. Portreath in Cornwall. They had engine failure again on 22 January, so aborted their sortie and returned early. TRIGGS and JOHNSON only flew one sortie in February, but seven in March 1943. On 2 March, they had to avoid an unidentified aircraft, and their Wellington suffered engine trouble on 6 March forcing them to return early. The other sorties were uneventful.

F/O JOHNSON's twentieth operational sortie was on 2 April 1943, and on the next one, on 5 April, TRIGGS and JOHNSON sighted another U-boat, but they were unable to make an attack on it. On 8 April, TRIGGS and JOHNSON with the same air crew sighted and shadowed a German blockade runner merchant ship. There were two more sorties for JOHNSON as a second pilot on 16 and 19 April. 22 April 1943 was an important day for F/O JOHNSON, for he was promoted to captain an aircraft with his own crew. He had Sgt G. M. BOON as his second pilot, with F/O E. C. CARR as the Navigator, and Sgt H. S. SMITH, Sgt H. J. JONES, and Sgt B. TODD as the three Wireless Operators/Air Gunners. They took off at 22.17 hours in Wellington Mk. VIII, R/172, and at 00.54 hours, while flying at 1,400 feet above sea level, the S/E operator obtained a contact at seven miles distance. F/O JOHNSON homed the aircraft as the S/E operator switched to the forward-facing aerials on the radar. The Leigh Light was switched on at half a mile from the target, but the sea haze just reflected the beam back, so it was switched off. They then sighted visually a U-boat fully surfaced and travelling at about 17 knots. JOHNSON attacked at an angle of 60° to the track of the U-boat, and he released the depth charges at 50 feet above the sea level. The depth charges straddled the U-boat, and a bright flash was observed in the centre of the explosion. R/172 remained in the vicinity for fifteen minutes after the attack, but no further contact was obtained. Having expended his depth charges, JOHNSON flew back to R.A.F. Chivenor where R/172 landed safely at 03.20 hours. Again, post-war research does not indicate that any U-boat was lost on this date.

Having made an auspicious start to his career as a Wellington captain, on 27 April, JOHNSON flew his twenty-seventh mission and second as a captain. They obtained a contact but could not locate any U-boat on the surface. Then came an incident that could have ended his career. On 29 April, F/O W. JOHNSON and his crew swung off the runway during take-off, and their Wellington hit a stationary aircraft. No-one was injured, but both aircraft were badly damaged. F/L NOBLE, the Medical Officer of the Squadron wrote: *'Very lucky'*.

The sortie on 2 May 1943 was uneventful, and for the sortie on 5 May, W/O R. O. ADDISON replaced F/O CARR as the Navigator, and Sgt JAPP replaced Sgt TODD. On 16 May, F/O J. F. MORRIS became F/O JOHNSON's navigator, as they were destined to remain together for the rest of JOHNSON's first tour. On 7 June, there was a change in the Wireless Operator/Air Gunners, but for the next sortie on 13 June, it settled down as Sgt H. S. SMITH, Sgt F. WILSON, and Sgt S. A. MARTIN. Sgt BOON was the second pilot and F/O MORRIS the navigator. The new crew flew two more sorties in June 1943, but both were uneventful. Five more sorties were undertaken in July 1943, but unknown to No. 172 Squadrons, the number of U-boats at sea had declined considerably. The British with the Allies had, in effect, defeated the U-boat, and it was never again to pose a strategic threat to the security of the United Kingdom and its supply routes. JOHNSON and his crew flew five more sorties in August 1943, and three in September. They had to return to base early on 9 September due to the weather conditions. JOHNSON's forty-ninth operation sortie on 19 October 1943 was the last in his first tour of operations.

Having completed his first tour of operations with No. 172 Squadron, F/O JOHNSON was posted to the Telecommunications Flying Unit (T.F.U.) at R.A.F. Defford in Worcestershire. This unit worked closely with the Telecommunications Research Establishment at nearby Malvern, and the air crew of the T.F.U. were required to fly scientists and R.A.F. technical officers to test new radio and radar equipment for the air force. Given F/O JOHNSON's experience with No. 172 Squadron, he would have been useful to the T.F.U., and probably helped in the development of A.S.V. radar.

On 24 October 1943, two years after being commissioned, he was promoted to the rank of Flight Lieutenant (war substantive). On 25 April 1944, F/L JOHNSON was posted back to R.A.F. Chivenor to rejoin No. 172 Squadron, this time as a Captain of an aircraft. He moved his family to Braunton to be with him during this posting. In early May 1944, F/L JOHNSON gained a new air crew with F/Sgt R. HENDERSON as his second pilot, Canadian Gordon BUTCHART as his Navigator, and the three Wireless Operators/Air Gunners were Sgts F. NUCKLEY, George WILSON and Lew WILDING. They flew their first operational sortie together on 15 May 1944, taking off at 21.10 hours for a patrol over the Bay of Biscay. Their first patrol lasted nine hours and fifty minutes. Their next patrol was flown on 18 May 1944, which was also uneventful. Details of the sorties flown by F/L JOHNSON can be seen from the Flying Log Book of F/Sgt WILDING (see Pages 61 and 62). This includes a crash on 29 July 1944, when an engine failed as their Wellington was taking off causing F/L JOHNSON to crash land the aircraft within the boundary of the airfield.

By the date of accident on 17 August 1944, F/L JOHNSON had flown a total of one-thousand, three-hundred and seventy-seven hours, of which, eight hundred and twenty were on the Wellington. Of the total number of flying hours, four-hundred and fifty-three were flown at night; all but three were flown at night on the Wellington aircraft. Living in Braunton, the family heard the crash, but only later that morning, was Wilfred's wife formally notified that her husband had been involved and was seriously injured. Following the accident, F/L Wilfred JOHNSON spent a period recuperating from his injuries. On 6 February 1945, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (D.F.C.) for his flying skill in bringing his Wellington into Chivenor avoiding the villages of Fremington and Bickington, and the many accommodation buildings at the base, where there was a dance taking place. His citation reads:

Flight Lieutenant Wilfred JOHNSON (111579) R.A.F.V.R. No. 172 Squadron

Flight Lieutenant JOHNSON has been employed as 2nd pilot and later as captain of aircraft on a large number of anti-submarine and anti-shipping sorties. On three occasions, he has taken part in attacks on enemy submarines, and several times his skill and coolness in emergencies have resulted in the safe return of his aircraft to base.

During his second tour of duty, Flight Lieutenant JOHNSON has continued to display the utmost enthusiasm for his flying. His hard work, thoroughness and keen sense of duty have always been highly commendable.

The local newspaper, the North Devon Journal-Herald reported the award in February 1945 and referred to the fact that Flight Lieutenant JOHNSON was still living in Braunton in Park Cottage, in Park Road. This house is now called Prospect Cottage and is in Lower Park Road.

After the war, Wilfred JOHNSON remained in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, and on 4 September 1954, he was confirmed as a Flight Lieutenant retaining his rank. Wilfred had married Yvonne Eileen Irene WILLIAMS (of British, German, and French descent), in October 1936 in Bromley, Kent. They had two sons and two daughters together, namely:

- Peter Michael, who was born on 29 November 1937,
- Hilary Anne JOHNSON, who was born on 15 January 1939
- Stanley Patrick, who was born on 18 August 1940 in Penzance, Cornwall,
- Gillian Marie-Louise, who was born on 27 December 1944.

In 1948, the family were living at Parley Brook House, Carthouse Lane, Horsell, near Woking in Surrey. Wilfred had loved living in North Devon, and in 1951, he bought a farm near Winsford on Exmoor, which is still owned by the family. When he died on 9 May 1992, he was cremated, and his ashes scattered on his beloved farm on Exmoor.

178054 Pilot Officer William BROADLEY, R.A.F.V.R.

William BROADLEY was born in Collyhurst, Manchester, Lancashire, on 24 November 1921. He was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. J. BROADLEY of 24, Ruskin Road, Droylsden, Manchester. He was educated at the Manchester Road Council School, and after leaving school, he gained employment with the Manchester Corporation as a clerk in their Transport Department Offices. He became one of the official photographers for the Department. Bill was keen to fly from a young age, and joined the Droylsden Squadron of the Air Training Corps.

He enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve at No. 3 Reception Centre, R.A.F. Padgate in Lancashire on 9 April 1941. Bill was described as being 5' 6" tall, with black hair, brown eyes and a fresh complexion. He was placed on the Reserve the next day awaiting space on the appropriate training courses for his chosen trade as a pilot. Bill had to wait for ten months until 14 February 1942 when, at last, he was posted to No. 8 Initial Training Wing at R.A.F. Newquay in Cornwall. On completion of his initial training, Bill was posted to Canada to commence his flying training in the safer skies in that Dominion. At this stage, Bill held the rank of Aircraftman Second Class and on his arrival in Canada, he started his elementary flying training. He completed this element of his training on 31 December 1942 and was promoted to the rank of Leading Aircraftman.

The next stage was to undertake a course at a Service Flying Training School where he would have learned to fly twin-engine aircraft. This part of his training lasted a couple of months, and he gained his Flying Badge ('Wings') and promotion to the rank of Temporary Sergeant on 19 February 1943. Sgt Bill BROADLEY returned to the United Kingdom and was sent to No. 7 Personnel Reception Centre at R.A.F. Harrogate in Yorkshire where he arrived on 18 March 1943.

On 14 April 1943, he was transferred to R.A.F. Whitley Bay, a personnel holding centre, and later to R.A.F. Bridgnorth. This was a period when the number of air crew arriving back in the U.K. was high, and even the expanded training programme could not cope with Empire Air Training Scheme's success in producing air crew.

On 20 July 1943, Sgt BROADLEY was posted to No. 3 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit at R.A.F. South Cerney, Gloucestershire. This course was to familiarise pilots with the reality of flying in Western Europe, in variable weather, in conditions of the blackout, and with enemy aircraft likely to be around. During this course, Bill BROADLEY completed a week-long course at No. 1532 Blind Approach Training Unit at R.A.F. Hullavington.

Finally, Sgt Bill BROADLEY reached an operational squadron, and he joined No. 172 Squadron at R.A.F. Chivenor in North Devon as one of four second pilots posted from No. 3 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit. He began his operational tour as a Second Pilot with the squadron on 2 October 1943, flying with Sgt (later Pilot Officer) J. MUNDY. The other air crew were: P/O (later F/O) R. COOPER, R.A.A.F., P/O W. LIDDELL, Sgt (later F/Sgt) C. WHEELER and Sgt (later F/Sgt) J. McANDREW.

Their first sortie was uneventful, as was their second on 14 October. They flew again on the nights of 17 October, 20 October, and 24 October, and on the latter of those three sorties, they had to return early as the rudder was malfunctioning. In November, they flew one sortie, during which P/O MUNDY and Sgt BROADLEY decided to attack a target. Once again, the result was inconclusive. On 5 February 1944, as they were taking off, the starboard engine became useless, and the aircraft crashed off the runway, fortunately without any of the air crew sustaining any significant injuries.

Twelve months after being promoted to the rank of Sergeant, Bill BROADLEY was promoted to the rank of Flight Sergeant with effect from 20 February 1944. On 4 June 1944, 1495777 Flight Sergeant William BROADLEY was granted an emergency commission as a Pilot Officer, on probation, in the General Duties Branch of the Royal Air Force.⁹ At the time of the crash on 17 August, P/O BROADLEY had flown one-hundred and eighty hours on all types of aircraft, of which, only twenty-nine were flown at night. Bill BROADLEY transferred to the Administrative and Special Duties Branch of the Royal Air Force and on 5 December 1944, he was confirmed in his appointment and promoted to the rank of Flying Officer (war substantive). On 25 December 1945, F/O William BROADLEY resigned his commission on account of his medical unfitness for Air Force service and was discharged from the Royal Air Force due to his injuries; his hope of becoming a commercial pilot was over. Instead, he went into business and raised a family of three children.

On 17 November 1943, Bill BROADLEY had married Gertie JAFFE (who was known as 'Trudy') at the parish church of St. James, Birch-in-Rusholme, Manchester. They had three children together, his wife being pregnant with their first child when the crash occurred.

⁹ The term 'emergency' commission meant that his commission only had effect during the Second World War, and it was not a permanent commission in the Royal Air Force.

When Bill was posted to R.A.F. Chivenor, Gertrude came down to North Devon to live in a rented property at 1 Park Villas, Braunton. Bill BROADLEY took time to recover from his injuries, and he did not fly again. After this demobilisation, he settled in Stockport, Cheshire, where he raised his family. He died in Stockport, Greater Manchester on 4 February 1993.¹⁰

R/127929 Warrant Officer Gordon Vanallen BUTCHART, R.C.A.F.

Gordon Vanallen BUTCHART was born on 13 June 1915 in Blenheim, Ontario, Canada. He was the only son of Lloyd Royce and Martha Isobel BUTCHART, who lived at 505, Durie Street, Toronto, Ontario, and had married on 2 June 1914 in Hamilton, Ontario.

Gordon was the eldest of the three children, as his sisters, Dorothy Mary (who later became Mrs. BRUCE) was aged twenty-seven years in 1944, and Helen Bernice (who later became Mrs. BOWERS) was aged twenty-two years. Both lived at the family's home in Toronto, and Lloyd BUTCHART worked as a commercial traveller. Gordon went to school at the Westdale Technical School from 1930 until 1935. He completed his Junior matriculation, with the exception of the French qualification. He studied radio, drafting, woodworking, machine and motor mechanics while a pupil at Westdale school. On leaving school in July 1935, he went to work at the Hamilton Credit Exchange as a clerk, but on 26 March 1936, moved to the T. H. & B. Railway Company at Hamilton as an information and ticket clerk. BUTCHART stated on his application form that he played golf, and also went swimming. His only flying experience was as a passenger for just two hours.

He lived at 77, Myrtle Avenue, Hamilton, Ontario. He was described as being *'fairly fit'* during his medical examination. The report went on to state: *'He is rather soft and needs physical training. He seems to have average intelligence and in our opinion is satisfactory for training as a pilot or observer.'* He was shown as being 5' 10" in height, weighing 135 pounds, with a medium complexion, grey eyes, and medium brown hair.

He was appointed an Aircraftman 2nd Class with effect from 23 August 1941, as he started his time in the Royal Canadian Air Force (R.C.A.F.) at No. 1 Manning Depot, Toronto. In order to familiarise new members of the R.C.A.F., they were posted to operational bases for a period of time. AC2 BUTCHART was sent to No. 31 Bombing and Gunnery School at R.C.A.F. Picton for two months between 14 September and 11 November 1941. On 11 November 1941, he was sent to No. 1 Initial Training School and joined Course No. 40. He passed the course but finished last out of the twenty-five students. He was graded, however, as being above average. On 10 October 1941, AC2 BUTCHART was found drunk in the Guardroom at his base. He was charged with being drunk and causing a disturbance. He was fined \$1 11 cents and sentenced to twenty hours detention.

He was promoted to the rank of Leading Aircraftman on 2 January 1942 and spent a short period back at No. 1 Manning Depot awaiting the next element of his training. He was posted to No. 3 Air Observers' School at R.C.A.F. Regina on 19 January 1942, as a member of Course No. 42.

He was assessed as producing neat work, and although slow to grasp new ideas, once he had grasped them, he grew to be very confident. He was, however, deemed to be weak in signals. He qualified on 25 April 1942. After completing his basic navigation training, he was posted to No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School at R.C.A.F. Mossbank in Saskatchewan. He was training there from 10 May until 4 July 1942 and completed his first flights there. At Mossbank, he learnt the techniques of an air bomber, as he would undertake that role as well as navigating the aircraft.

LAC BUTCHART was posted to No. 1 Air Navigation School at R.C.A.F. Rivers, Manitoba, on Advanced Air Observer's Course No. 44, which ran from 20 July until 21 August 1942. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Sergeant on 21 August 1942 on qualifying as an Air Observer at the end of his course. His final assessment states: *'Average type – has possibilities, neat, very friendly.'* He finished two-hundred and third out of the total course numbers of two-hundred and fifty-seven. He was then posted to No. 31 General Reconnaissance School at R.C.A.F. Charlottetown from 25 September until 7 November, although the dates of the course were 28 September until 24 October 1942. He was assessed as an average pupil, who could be inaccurate and at times over-confident. The conclusion of the instructors was that his results had been disappointing during the course, and again highlighted his over-confidence.

On 7 November 1942, Sgt BUTCHART was posted to No. 1 'Y' Depot pending his posting overseas. He embarked on 23 November and arrived in the U.K. seven days later. He was posted to No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre on 1 December 1942 and had to wait three months before being allocated to No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit with effect from 30 March 1943. During this period, he was promoted to the rank of Flight Sergeant on 21 February 1943. BUTCHART was attached to No. 16 Elementary Flying Training School prior to commencing his operational training at R.A.F. Cranwell. On 10 May 1943, Sgt BUTCHART was charged with refusing to leave the Saracen's Head public house at 22.45 hours when asked to leave by the management, and assaulting Mr. J. M. JAMIESON by striking him with his hand. BUTCHART was awarded a Severe Reprimand as punishment for this offence.

On 6 June 1943, F/Sgt BUTCHART was posted to No. 179 Squadron, but was attached to R.A.F. Chivenor for familiarisation on the Leigh Light Wellingtons. He was promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer 2nd Class on 21 August 1943. On 6 September 1943, W/O BUTCHART and his colleagues transferred to No. 172 Squadron at R.A.F. Chivenor, however, he spent a period detached to R.A.F. Lagens on the Azores from 24 December 1943 until 11 February 1944, and then spent another period operating out of R.A.F. North Front at Gibraltar. He went back to R.A.F. Lagens on 19 February and served there until 14 March 1944.

BUTCHART was granted sixteen days leave between 11 and 26 November 1943, ten days in March 1944, and again between 28 April and 7 May 1944, and fourteen days from 1 August until 14 August 1944. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Warrant Officer 1st Class on 21 February 1944. It appears that he was due to be commissioned at the time of his death, the authority for which is dated 8 July 1944, although it was not due to be effective until 20 November 1944.

By this date, he was dead. His new service number was to be J/89259. His commission made a small difference to his War Service Gratuity, which came to \$620.35 and was paid to his parents. They received the Ministerial Card on 14 September 1944, the Royal Message on 17 November 1944, and the Memorial Cross on or about 15 November 1944. On 24 August 1944, the Officiating Commanding Officer of No. 172 Squadron, S/L H. F. COX, wrote to Mr BUTCHART, the father of Gordon, to express his deep regret over the sad loss of his son. He details the brief circumstances of the crash and states: *'there is no doubt that death was instantaneous'*. He goes on to state that with the approval of R.C.A.F. Headquarters in London, Gordon was buried on 22 August 1944 with full military honours in Heanton churchyard which was adjacent to the station. S/L COX explained that having the ceremony at Heanton instead of the R.C.A.F. official cemetery near London allowed Gordon's Service and civilian friends to attend, which they appreciated greatly. He enclosed some photographs of the ceremony.

He added: *'Your son had been with this Squadron for eleven months and had proved himself to be a keen and capable member of his crew, in addition to executing fine work with the Squadron in the Azores when flying with the late Squadron Commander, Wing Commander K. PETRIE.'*

1230405 Flight Sergeant George Arthur WILSON, R.A.F.V.R.

George Arthur WILSON was born on 27 September 1920 in Chorlton, Lancashire, the only son of George and Mary WILSON. His parents had married on 21 April 1920 in Chorlton. In 1939, he was living with his parents at 76, Westmoreland Road, Urmston, Lancashire, and was employed as a sorting clerk and telegraphist with the Post Office.

George WILSON enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve at R.A.F. Cardington, Bedfordshire, at some date after April 1940. He trained as a wireless operator and air gunner in the U.K., being posted to Coastal Command when he qualified. At some stage of his training, George WILSON met up with Lew WILDING, who he knew from Urmston. It is possible that they enlisted together, and trained throughout their service together, but they were definitely crewed together by the time they joined No. 179 Squadron. Following his death at Chivenor, George WILSON's body was repatriated to his home in Lancashire, and he is buried in the cemetery at Urmston. He left an estate of £363 16s 6d to his mother.

1230175 Flight Sergeant Lewis WILDING, R.A.F.V.R

Lewis WILDING also originates from Urmston, Lancashire. He was the son of Charles and Phoebe WILDING, who in 1939, lived at 189 Higher Road, Urmston. His father was a switchboard painter. Charles had enlisted in the 4th (Salford) Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers in 1914, just short of his twenty-third birthday. He served in France and Flanders, and was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal. He was discharged on 1 September 1917, having sustained a gunshot wound to the head, and lived at 1 Albert Avenue, Higher Road, Urmston. He received a weekly pension of 22 shillings.

Lew WILDING enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve at R.A.F. Cardington, Bedfordshire, at some date after April 1940, probably together with George WILSON. His signals training commenced at No. 4 Signals School, at R.A.F. Madley in Herefordshire. The airfield had a grass runway, and by 1943 had grown to house about five thousand personnel, including trainees. Sgt WILDING's next posting was to No. 11 Radio School at R.A.F. Hooton Park in Cheshire. It was in early 1940 that Coastal Command began the specialised training for the operators of the Air to Surface Vessel (A.S.V.) radar which was then entering service with the Command.

The school used the Blackburn Botha aircraft, a type designed as a torpedo bomber, but found to be unsuitable for its intended role. The Botha had been relegated to that of a navigation and bombing training aircraft and was modified to become an A.S.V. operator trainer. The Telecommunications Research Establishment (T.R.E.) fitted the first two aircraft, Bothas L.6158 and L.6168, with the A.S.V. installation and they entered service with No. 3 Radio Direction Finding School at R.A.F. Prestwick in May 1941. It was found that two A.S.V. displays could be fitted in the navigation compartment, with the pupils sat on a padded bench, and a third under the coaming on the starboard side of the pilot's instrument panel. On 19 December 1942, fifty Bothas of No. 3 Radio School flew in formation from R.A.F. Prestwick to their new home at R.A.F. Hooton Park. On the same date, No. 11 Radio School came into being at the Cheshire base. At its peak, No. 11 Radio School would dispatch about twenty Botha aircraft daily, which would fly out over Liverpool Bay and the Irish Sea on exercises. Every morning, each of the aircraft listed to fly would be the subject of a daily inspection, which included removing the side panels to check the engines and the pipe work. The ground crew signed the Form 700, the aircraft log-book, to affirm that they had completed their checks, and everything was in order. The ground crew would start the engines to warm them up, and then they were left idling until the pilot arrived. The pilot would complete a visual check of the aircraft, and then sign to accept the aircraft for the sortie.

The morning sorties would be completed by lunchtime, after which a second sortie would be flown by the aircraft in the afternoon with different trainees. The aircraft were refuelled at lunchtime and in the evening with about 840 gallons of aviation fuel, and the oil tanks for each engine would be topped up at the same time. In April 1943, the first Avro Anson aircraft began to arrive to replace the Bothas, which struggled to fly on one engine, and suffered in their reputation accordingly. One Botha, W.5163, clocked up 1,073 flying hours before retirement. In March 1944, No. 11 Radio School had twenty-six Botha and twenty-six Anson aircraft on its establishment. It closed on 31 August 1944, with radar training being incorporated into other courses run by Coastal Command.

Sgt WILDING moved on to No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit, which was based at R.A.F. Cranwell in Lincolnshire. He started his training there at the beginning of April 1943, and initially trained with the other wireless operators/air gunners being brought up to speed on the operational realities of wartime flying in Coastal Command. Sometime on 27 or 28 April, the process of forming the new air crews took place. The R.A.F. had a simple concept for forming new air crews, men who would come to rely on each other for their lives, by taking a group of pilots, navigators, and wireless operators/air gunners into a room, often a hanger, and telling them to form up as a crew.

The men would circulate, and talk with the others present, and then decide who would fly with whom. The men would assess each other, and then team up based on whether they knew each other already, what country or town they came from, or other intrinsic values. Sgt WILDING joined the air crew of Sgt BLACKBURN, together with the Canadian Navigator, Sgt Gordon BUTCHART, and probably Sgt George WILSON. The new air crew flew for the first time together on 29 April 1943 on an air firing and wireless exercise. Sgt BLACKBURN and his crew finished their training at No. 3 (C) O.T.U., and on 6 June 1943, they were posted to No. 179 Squadron. They were attached to No. 1 Air-to-Surface Vessel (A.S.V.) Training Section at R.A.F. Chivenor to learn to use the A.S.V. radar and Leigh Light operationally. They flew eleven training flights together from R.A.F. Chivenor, before returning to No. 179 Squadron. Sgt BLACKBURN flew eight more training sorties with his air crew in July 1943, but he died in an air crash at R.A.F. Chivenor on 31 July 1943, together with 1145880 Sgt J. MARTIN, R.A.F.V.R., who was probably one of the three WOp/AGs in his crew.

Following Sgt BLACKBURN's death, BUTCHART, WILDING and WILSON gained a new pilot in the form of S/L PETRIE. With their new pilot, the crew flew to R.A.F. Haverfordwest on 14 August 1943, and then on 6 September 1943, they were transferred to No. 172 Squadron at R.A.F. Chivenor. They flew their first operational patrol together on 25 September 1943, with a night-time anti-submarine patrol over the Bay of Biscay.

They spent a period detached to R.A.F. Lagens on the Azores from 24 December 1943 until 11 February 1944, and they flew out to Gibraltar on 24 December 1943. S/L PETRIE and his air crew flew on to the Azores on Christmas Day 1943, a seven-hour trip from Gibraltar. They flew six operational sorties from R.A.F. Lagens, and then on 11 February 1944, they flew back to Gibraltar. On 19 February, S/L PETRIE flew them back to the Azores where they flew two more operational sorties. On 13 March 1944, S/L PETRIE and his air crew flew from R.A.F. Lagens to R.A.F. Chivenor, a ten-hour flight. On 27 March, they flew a special anti-submarine patrol and made contact with three enemy motor vessels. S/L PETRIE and his colleagues were met with heavy flak (anti-aircraft fire), and Sgt WILDING returned fire from the rear turret. In April 1944, there were two more operational sorties; one from Chivenor to Lagens on 5 April, and a return flight on 20 April.

In early May 1944, Sgt WILDING, it is presumed together with Gordon BUTCHART and George WILSON, gained a new pilot in the form of F/L Wilfred JOHNSON. They flew their first operational sortie together on 15 May 1944 over the Bay of Biscay. Following the crash at R.A.F. Chivenor, Lew WILDING returned to flying duties at No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance, based at R.A.F. Squires Gate, Blackpool. After the war, he settled in Nottinghamshire, married and raised his family.

1366073 Flight Sergeant James MILNE, R.A.F.V.R.

James MILNE was born on 4 July 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland; a son of James and Eliza Jane MILNE (nee PURDIE). James had six sisters and one brother. He joined the Air Cadets at Drem before enlisting in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in Edinburgh at some date after August 1940.

MILNE was selected for training as a wireless operator and air gunner, following his initial training (probably at Blackpool), he was posted to No. 2 Signals School at R.A.F. Yatesbury in Wiltshire. Here he learnt the basics of wireless telegraphy as required by the Royal Air Force, which included learning Morse Code up to an acceptable standard. The training consisted of a mixture of ground-based classroom learning, and practical training in the air. His first flight was in a De Havilland Dominie aircraft on 6 August 1942, and later in the course he flew in Percival Proctor light aircraft. He completed his course on 17 September 1942 as a qualified wireless operator.

James MILNE progressed on to No. 1 Air Gunners School at R.A.F. Pembrey in Carmarthenshire. His course ran from 18 October to 21 November 1942. Again, the training consisted of lectures and ground training, including a gun turret mounted on railway tracks for the aspiring air gunners to practice on. The flying time was limited to eight hours flown in Bristol Blenheim light bombers, which were now being phased out of operational use. MILNE obtained a mark of 60% in the examination, and 4.83% in the final average number of hits to rounds fired, which was a fair result. He passed the course with the Chief Instructor's remarks stating: *'Has tried very hard but has difficulty in learning'*.

Now promoted to the rank of Sergeant and wearing the Air Gunner's brevet with the Wireless Operator's flash on his shoulder, James MILNE was posted to No. 11 Radio Direction Finding School at R.A.F. Prestwick in Renfrewshire. The purpose of this course was to learn how to use the Air to Surface Vessel (A.S.V.). This school used Blackburn Botha aircraft, which were designed as torpedo bombers, but were relegated to training roles early in the war. He was a pupil on Course No. 68, which was held between 26 November 1942 and 6 January 1943. He passed the course with a flying assessment of 65%, a ground assessment of 63% and an overall assessment of 64%.

In mid-February 1943, Sgt MILNE was posted to No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit based at R.A.F. Cranwell in Lincolnshire. This was the unit to which air crew were posted who had been selected to fly the anti-submarine Wellington aircraft within Coastal Command. The first part of the course was to check and confirm his skills as a wireless operator, but on 30 March 1943 he flew with his new pilot, F/Sgt Ken BEASTALL, and his new air crew in a Wellington aircraft. They completed all their operational training tasks successfully and safely and then between 13 and 20 May 1943, Sgt MILNE was attached to 'C' Flight at No. 3 (C) O.T.U. This was to gain experience of the A.S.V. (Special Equipment) in operational conditions. F/Sgt BEASTALL and his air crew, including Sgt MILNE, arrived at R.A.F. Chivenor at the end of May 1943 to commence their operational tour of duty. On their very first sortie, which took place on 12 June 1943, they were attacked by a German Ju 88 twin-engine fighter. They survived and landed safely. Sgt MILNE completed thirty-seven operational sorties with Ken BEASTALL, during which he was promoted to the rank of Flight Sergeant. They ended their first tour on 5 April 1944, by which time Ken BEASTALL had received a commission as a Pilot Officer. F/Sgt MILNE flew two operational sorties with F/L WALLACE before the fateful crash on 17 August 1944 while he was flying with F/L JOHNSON, possibly as a last-minute replacement for another wireless operator/air gunner.

F/L WALLACE and Jim's friend, George HOLLAND, both had died on 15 June 1944 in the loss of Wellington HF.446. The aircraft had been flown by the commanding officer of the Squadron, W/C Kenneth PETRIE, who came from Rochdale. They took off at 22.10 hours in HF.446 (S/172) for a routine anti-submarine patrol over the Western Approaches, and at 02.45 hours, S/172 radioed to state that they had a radar contact in the northern part of the Bay of Biscay. Nothing further was heard from the aircraft, which failed to return to base. W/C PETRIE is commemorated on Panel 200 of the Runnymede Memorial, while J/17372 F/L Donald WALLACE, R.C.A.F., is commemorated on Panel 244. Twenty-two-year-old 1314940 F/Sgt George Samuel HOLLAND, who came from Drayton, Hampshire, is commemorated on Panel 218.

James MILNE was in hospital from 17 August until 15 September 1944. His first tour of operations was deemed to be completed, so he was posted to No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance at R.A.F. Squires Gate, Blackpool. He was posted to 'D' Flight as a Staff Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, which meant that he was responsible for training and assessing student pilots and wireless operators/air gunners who were undertaking courses at the base. During his posting here, Jim MILNE was promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer.

Shortly after the end of hostilities in the Second World War, W/O Jim MILNE was released from his R.A.F. service and returned to civilian life. He married Isabella JAMIESON, and they had three sons: James, Kenneth, and Douglas, of which only James is deceased in 2020.

Conclusions

There is a fine dividing line between success and failure, and between life and death. F/L JOHNSON and his air crew suffered an engine failure on take-off on 29 July 1944, and then less than a month later, on 17 August, they suffered another engine failure while on patrol. This time, the consequences resulted in the loss of life of two air crew, with F/L JOHNSON and his Second Pilot P/O BROADLEY being seriously injured. It can be seen in the official reports, that the consequences could have been much more serious. Due to the undoubted flying skill of F/L JOHNSON, no doubt aided by P/O BROADLEY and the other air crew, they managed to fly around to Saunton Sands to drop the depth charges they still had on board, and to dump some fuel.

The circuit over R.A.F. Chivenor took the aircraft over the villages of Fremington and Bickington. At the former, was a large U.S. forces hospital. Dropping the depth charges over Chivenor was not an option either, as the wooden accommodation buildings were vulnerable to damage. In addition, there was a dance taking place at the base. F/L JOHNSON and his air crew decided to fly around and back out to Saunton Sands, a large area of sand dunes, which is where they dropped the depth charges. No doubt, the heavy Wellington was steadily losing height. This was made worse by the fact that a twin-engine aircraft with an engine failure should turn in the direction of the working engine. F/L JOHNSON should have turned to starboard over Saunton Sands, but the high ground to the north of R.A.F. Chivenor prevented this. He had to turn to port, but the aircraft would not have turned sharply, and it would have been a struggle to maintain control without stalling.

On flying past the airfield, F/L JOHNSON had to make another turn to port to line up with the main runway and land into wind. Due to the failed engine, it was not possible for F/L JOHNSON to make the turn to line up on the runway, and with the height of the aircraft now down to about twenty feet, he took the decision to crash land in an open area at the entrance to the R.A.F. base.

David HOWELLS, a former R.A.F. officer who was based at R.A.F. Chivenor, has examined in more detail the dilemma faced by F/L JOHNSON and his air crew. He writes:

Given their height of 300 feet coming off the Braunton Burrows depth charge jettison point onto a low downwind leg, we assume a left hand turn for Runway 28 – the main east west runway. The pilot is likely to be making a good airmanship decision to keep tight in circuit due to the 400 feet high hills south of Chivenor, however this will ultimately work against him for a Runway 28 final approach due to the closing surface wind of 202 Degrees at 10 mph. (This was perhaps a little stronger and slightly less backed at 300 feet).

Whichever way you look at it, 300 feet is very low height from which to start the final turn. As he turns, there may also be a tendency to pitch the nose up to maintain height in the turn, which in turn slows the aircraft down further, and requires more rudder, hence more drag, but as the speed falls below a specific threshold for the aircraft, the rate of descent also increases; below that, he is going down. He has an asymmetric engine failure – one working and one not, and so, arguably, his most important primary control surface is rudder to maintain the aircraft in balanced flight – very difficult if the remaining engine is at full power due to attempting to maintain height! He therefore has increased drag from the PORT engine and increased aerodynamic drag from using a boot-full of right rudder to keep straight. In addition, if the nose is even slightly high due to the reducing airspeed, and hence induces a higher angle of attack on the wing and propeller blades, he then has an asymmetric blade effect from the STARBOARD engine – i.e. it is generating more power on the down-sweep than the up-sweep of the blade if the engine is rotating clockwise. (Vice-versa if anti-clockwise rotation.)

The overall effect appears to be of losing height due to these combined factors. I wonder if it would have been possible for him to roll the wings level and climb straight ahead on one engine? It is not clear if there was an option to depart the circuit and climb on one engine after the jettisoning of the depth charges, and then make a safer approach after reaching 1,000 feet. Perhaps that is the 'error of judgement' they hint at in the accident report? It could be that half-way around the low final turn, and seeing that he was overshooting the Runway 28 centreline by a wide margin, that he was trying to extend and line up for Runway 22, although I doubt this personally because he would know the hills north side are 400 feet plus and closer to Runway 22! Also, given the cloud base, I doubt if Runway 22 was lit, and so not in use. Given the urgency of the situation, perhaps he saw it as a final option if the ambient light level was sufficient that he could see the airfield outline in the darkness.

It was a testament to the skill and coolness under very trying circumstances that F/L JOHNSON, assisted by P/O BROADLEY and the other four air crew, managed to complete two circuits, and drop the depth charges safely. Handling the heavy Wellington on one engine, at night, would have been pushing the limits of any pilot's experience, and having to turn three times to port against the failed engine without stalling is a remarkable feat of flying. The finding of the Court of Enquiry that F/L JOHNSON made an 'error of judgement' can be considered under the circumstances a harsh opinion.

The Commanding Officer of No. 172 Squadron appears to support his pilot, stating any overshoot of the circuit was by a narrow margin, and commends him for his coolness and decision making in this crisis. F/L JOHNSON could have been selfish and saved his aircraft by dropping the depth charges over Fremington or R.A.F. Chivenor, but he unselfishly and bravely flew around a second time to ensure they were dropped without incident or casualties. The award of the Distinguished Flying Cross amplifies his skill and coolness in emergencies and is a fitting outcome for his service during the Second World War.

Sadly, despite the efforts of the pilots, two men died, and the two pilots were themselves seriously injured. Aside from the physical injuries, the four survivors must have suffered significant mental anguish. It is a sign of his resolve that Lew WILDING did fly again while serving with No. 3 General Reconnaissance School at R.A.F. Squires Gate near Blackpool, as did James MILNE. All six men deserve our respect, and it is worth placing in context their service during the Second World War. Much has changed in terms of society and technology over the past seventy-five years, and it is easy to forget the challenges these men faced in flying in wartime. They were ordinary men from across the U.K. and its then Empire, but they achieved extraordinary outcomes.

All six of the air crew were remembered at a service held at the memorial just outside the gates of R.M.B. Chivenor, close to the scene of the crash seventy-five years previously. On Saturday, 17 August 2019, several members of the families of F/L JOHNSON, P/O BROADLEY, and F/Sgt WILDING were present, as representatives of the R.A.F. and Royal Marines. Wreathes were laid at that memorial, after which, the attendees walked the short distance to the crash site along the entrance road. The families then adjourned to St. Augustine's church at Heanton Punchardon, and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves in the churchyard, where another short service was held at the grave of P/O BUTCHART, with relatives participating from Canada. The Canadian national anthem was played in an emotional tribute to two deceased air crew.

As relayed in his Foreword, the Distinguished Flying Cross awarded to F/L JOHNSON was displayed by the R.A.F. Museum in the period that his grandson, Boris, was the Prime Minister. Young Wilfred was taken to view his great-grandfather's medal, which one day will pass to his care.

Another, short, memorial service was held on Friday 16 August 2024 at St. Augustine's churchyard, to which Stanley JOHNSON attended. This service was recorded, and it is available on the Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2919607224753491/>

In Memoriam

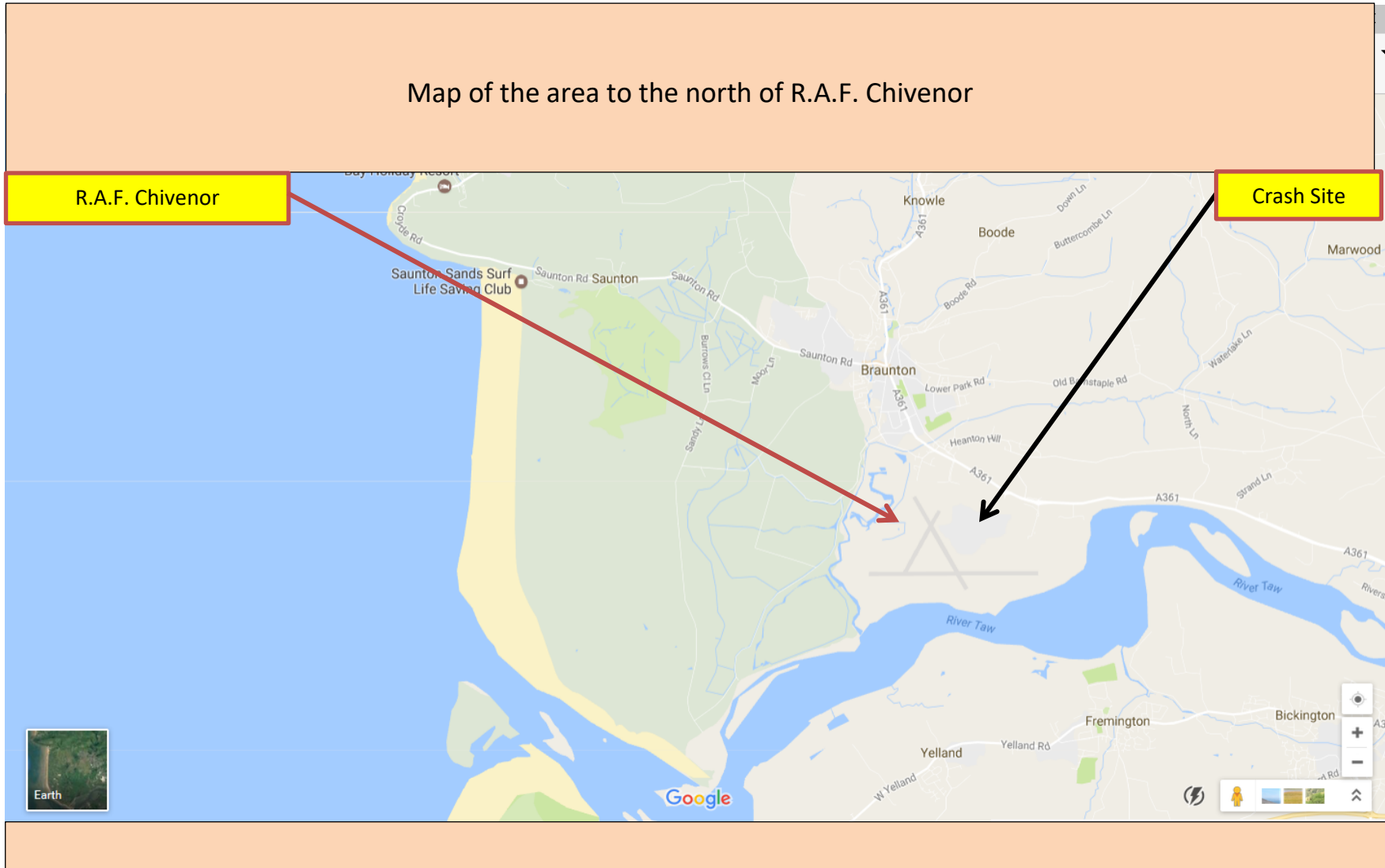
17 August 1944 – Vickers Wellington Mk. XIV – HF.246

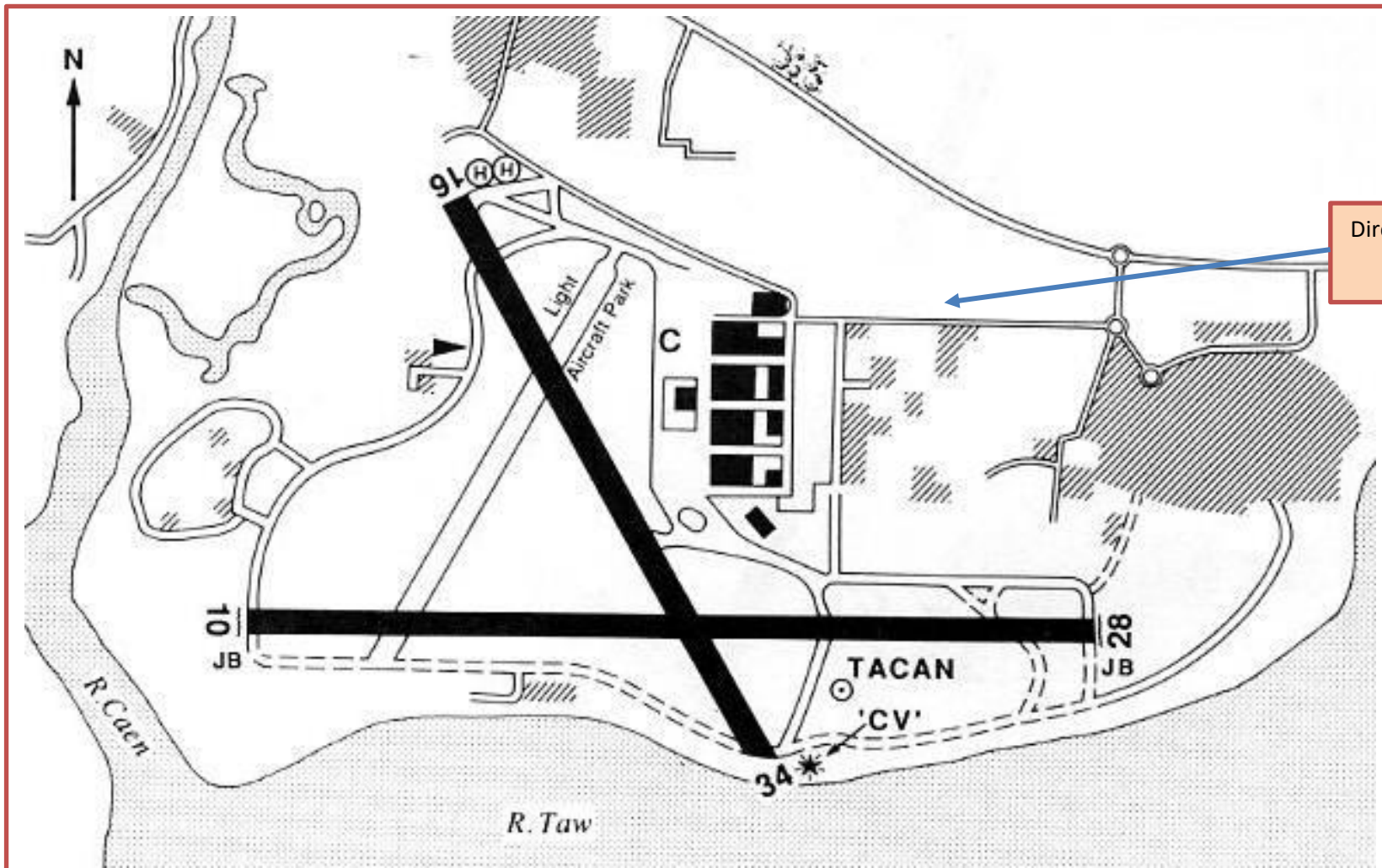
No.	Surname	Forenames(s)	Age	Date of Death	Rank	Role	Service	Service Number	Place of Burial	Grave
1.	BUTCHART ¹¹	Gordon Vanallen	29	17/08/44	Pilot Officer	Navigator (B)	R.C.A.F.	J/89259	Heanton Punchardon	Row P. Grave 20.
2.	WILSON ¹²	George Arthur	23	17/08/44	Flight Sergeant	WOP/AG	R.A.F.V.R.	1230405	Urmston Cemetery	Sec. B. Grave 304

¹¹ Son of Lloyd Royce and Martha Isobel BUTCHART, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. INSCRIPTION: 'DEARLY BELOVED ONLY SON OF L.R. AND M.I. BUTCHART BROTHER OF DOROTHY MARY AND HELEN BERNICE'.

¹² Son of George and Mary WILSON, of Urmston, Lancashire.

Map of the area to the north of R.A.F. Chivenor





Direction of Approach
and Crash site

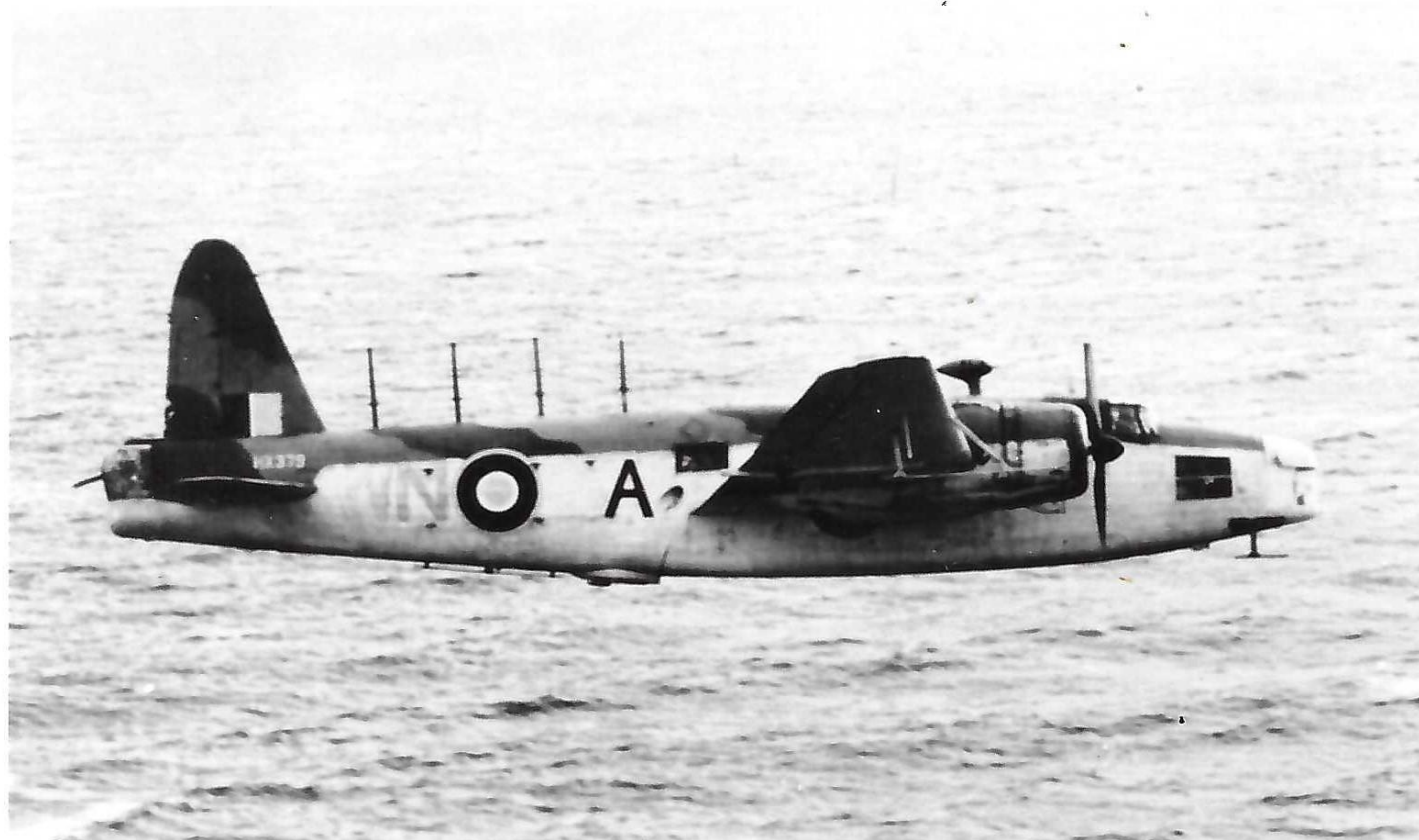
Above – Chivenor airfield circa 1980. By this date, the third runway (Runway 22 – 04) was out of use and is shown as ‘Light Aircraft Park’. The main runway used was Runway 28 when the wind was westerly and Runway 10 if the wind was easterly.

Courtesy of: <http://www.ukairfieldguide.net/airfields/Chivenor>



Above – R.A.F. Chivenor taken circa 1944. The photograph is taken from an aircraft probably flying in circuit in an easterly direction parallel with the River Taw (in foreground). Runway 28 – 10 can be seen parallel to the river on its northern bank, with Runway 34 – 16 in the centre. The hangars are to the right of centre, with the wooden huts ('lines') on the right. The railway line can be seen curving alongside the northern perimeter of the base and into the village of Braunton.

Courtesy of: <http://www.ukairfieldguide.net/airfields/Chivenor>



Above – Vickers Wellington Mk. VIII, HX.379 (A/172) which is probably the aircraft flown by F/O TRIGGS and F/O JOHNSON on 2 January 1943 when the attacked a U-boat in the Bay of Biscay.

Author's Collection



*Above – Vickers Wellington Mk. XIV MP.764 without any squadron markings.
Above Right – A Wellington Mk. XIV of No. 407 Squadron, R.C.A.F., which was
photographed for identification purposes, showing the Leigh Light lowered.*

Author's Collection

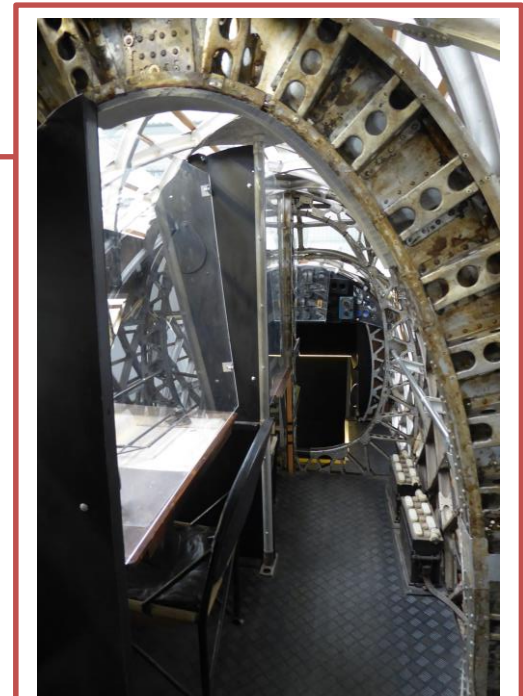


Above –The Vickers Wellington aircraft at the Brooklands Museum, Weybridge, Surrey.

Right – The pilot’s cockpit in the Wellington.

Far Right – Looking forward with the Navigator’s station to the left, followed by the wireless operator’s station and then the cockpit.

Taken by: The Author January 2020.





Above – A picture taken of the flying personnel of No. 172 Squadron, probably taken in early 1944. F/Sgt Jim MILNE is highlighted by the black arrow, with F/L JOHNSON highlighted by the blue arrow. The other air crew are contained in this photograph.

Courtesy of: The North Devon Athenaeum



Above Left – A portrait of F/L Johnnie JOHNSON with his pilot's wings but before the award of his D.F.C..

Above Right – A photograph of JOHNSON while still in training.

Courtesy of: The JOHNSON family



Above – A montage showing Stanley JOHNSON wearing his father’s Distinguished Flying Cross while holding the throttle controls from the aircraft, the letter from the King congratulating Wilfred on his award, and the same picture of Wilfred JOHNSON in his uniform.



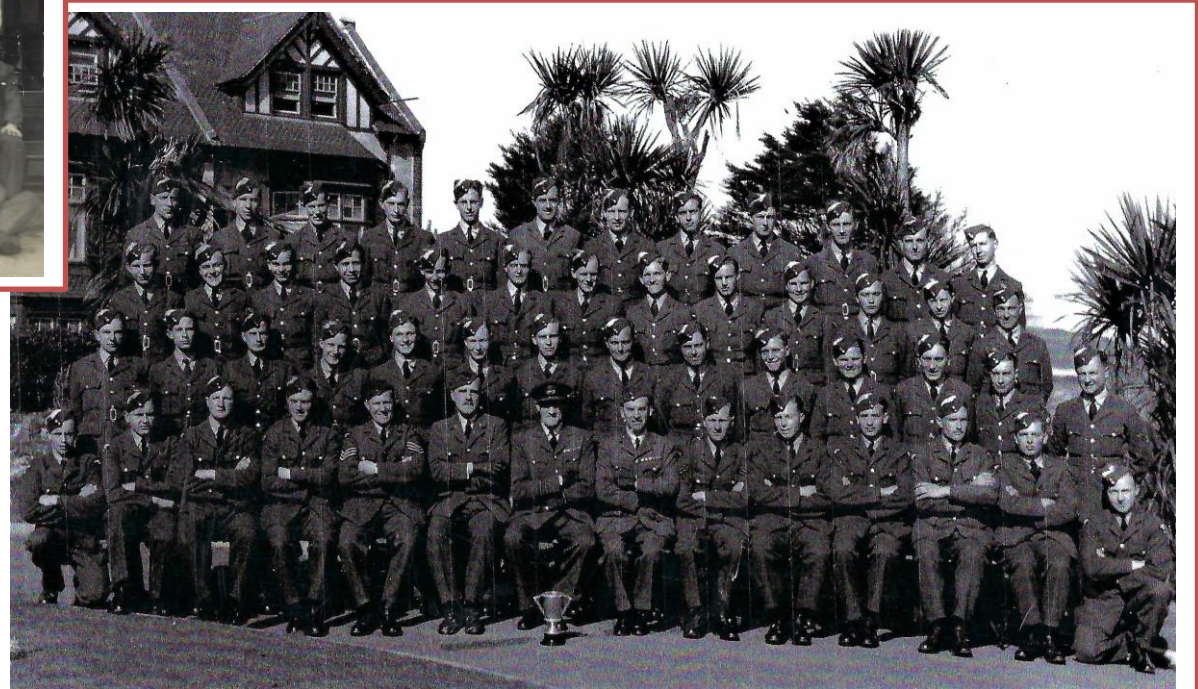
Above – Bill BROADLEY's identity card.
 Right – Bill BOADLEY and his air crew standing in front of a Wellington aircraft.
 Courtesy of: The BROADLEY family



Above – The Air Cadet squadron in which Bill BROADLEY was a member prior to joining the R.A.F.

Right – A group shot of an intake at No. 11 Initial Training Wing at R.A.F. Newquay featuring Bill BROADLEY.

Courtesy of: The BROADLEY family





Above Left – An official photograph of Gordon BUTCHART shortly after his enlistment.

Courtesy of: Canada, WWII Service Files of War Dead – BUTCHART

Above Centre – A portrait of BUTCHART after he had qualified as an Air Observer, with his half-wing Brevet clearly visible, and his Sergeant's stripes.

Above Right – The Roll of Honour certificate for Gordon BUTCHART.

Courtesy of: The BUTCHART family



Above Left – A photograph of Butch BUTCHART (Left), Lew WILDING (second from left) George WILSON (front – second from right) and a pilot taken outside a hut at R.A.F. Chivenor before they teamed up with F/L JOHNSON.

Above Right – The grave of P/O BUTCHART at Heanton Punchardon churchyard.

*Courtesy of: Carolyn BACON
Taken by the Author (2019)*



Above Left – A photograph of (L- R) Lew WILDING, George WILSON and the Canadian ‘Butch’ BUTCHART

Courtesy of: Carolyn BACON

Above Right – George WILSON’s grave at Urmston.

Courtesy of: Find a Grave website.



Left – Jim MILNE as a Warrant Officer towards the end of his service in the R.A.F.

Above – Jim MILNE (standing second from right) with his air crew between some huts at R.A.F. Chivenor.

Right – ‘The Happy Gang’. L – R Bill RUSHWORTH, 176412 Edward TEED, Ken BEASTALL, front row L – R Jim MILNE, 1314940 George HOLLAND and 1332910 Raymond ELDERKIN.

Courtesy of: The MILNE family



Above – A Percival Proctor aircraft as flown in by all three wireless operators while under training.

Right – A De Havilland Dominie biplane as used by No. 2 and No. 4 Signals School for training wireless operators.

Courtesy of: The Imperial War Museum under licence.





Above – The participants at the Commemoration service held on Saturday 17 August 2019.

Courtesy of: Tony GUSSIN, North Devon Gazette



Above – Paying our respects at the grave of Gordon BUTCHART at Heanton Punchardon churchyard.

Taken by the Author (2019)

Appendix 'A'

ACCOUNT OF THE CRASH OF WELLINGTON XIV HF246, 17.8.1944 (Johnny's crash)]

Park Cottage, Braunton. Buster to 'Dear Troops'

9 Sept 1944

[earlier letter to her father telling him about Johnny's crash missing]

Johnny's hands were burnt, but are getting on very well and he can hold a pencil, fill his pipe and has now made such good progress that he can shave himself. He writes that it will not be necessary for him to have any skin grafted on them. He has been moved to Ward 3 [RAF Hospital, Halton, Bucks] which is the ward which specialises in burn treatment. His leg is also getting on very well. [...] For nine days he was on the 'dangerously ill' list at the Barnstaple Infirmary and there was a question at first of amputating his leg. But all that is now a thing of the past and he is making splendid strides and will be patched up as good as new. However, the patching up process will take months (thank God!) and there is little chance of his flying again this war.

The cause of the accident was that an engine suddenly gave out when he was fully loaded with petrol and depth charges at a low altitude right over the camp. He lost height like a stone and was in no position to land. In any case it would have been too risky to try to land on one engine without first jettisoning his depth charges because of the possibility of blowing up. He might have managed some sort of a landing on the aerodrome had he been able to drop his depth charges where he was, but it was not to be contemplated as he might have done God knows what damage down below. So he had deliberately to turn his crippled aircraft away from the aerodrome and creep away to Saunton to drop his DCs harmlessly. He tried to get back again but had lost so much height that it was impossible. He crash landed just inside the camp gates and the aircraft caught fire. They were thrown out and I came to lying in a pool of blazing petrol and crawled out. He had a compound fracture of the right leg and various burns, cuts and bruises. He was very lucky to get away with his life.

Incidentally, Daddy, the following detail will amuse you. His hair was so matted and clogged with blood and mud that it was impossible to get a comb through it. He therefore got the Infirmary porter to shave it all off level with his scalp! I nearly had a fit when I saw him. He looked like some frightful escaped convict wanted for murder!

Park Cottage, Braunton. Buster to 'Dear Troops'

Weds evening, 20th Sept 1944 (EXTRACT)

I don't know whether I told you, but I watched Johnny's last aircraft burning and never knew it was his. Little did I suspect the last crash as I knew the time he had taken off and in fact Celma (Johnny's sister, who was staying with them) and I had watched him take off and disappear into the blue and we thought he was miles away. I was in bed when I heard the ammunition exploding, a sound which is quite unmistakable if you have once heard it. I sat up in bed and saw the glare of a fire on the aerodrome. I woke Celma and together we stood at the bedroom window, watching the events unfold. The fact that there were no depth charges (as there was no major explosion) made me all the more certain that it couldn't be a plane on operations. And a few hours later there was the RAF Padre standing on the doorstep!

Appendix 'A'

Personal Effects of W/O BUTCHART

- 1 Carton containing
- 1 Blue slipover
- 11 prs socks
- 1 Rolls Razor in Case with Hone Strop
- 1 Blue Stain Scarf
- 1 Blue wool pullover
- 1 pr Red Slippers
- 1 Canvas Holdall with Leather Handle, empty
- 1 pr Football Socks
- 3 Towels
- 13 Handkerchiefs
- 1 pr Pyjamas
- 1 Shirt
- 1 Pants
- 3 Blue Trunks
- 2 Vests
- 1 Pyjama Trousers only
- 1 Pr Braces
- 1 Comb and Case
- 1 Playing Cards
- 1 Notebook
- 1 Blue Macintosh
- 1 Grey Flannel Trousers

1 Cigarette Lighter, unserviceable

1 Pr Garters

1 Wool Cardigan

3 Pipes in Bag

1 Pr Wool Gloves

1 Balaclava

1 Football Shorts

1 Leather Case with 2 Portraits

1 Shaving Brush

1 Notecase, empty

1 Corkscrew

1 Photo in case

1 Envelope containing Photos

He also had two Post Office Savings Books with an account in Barnstaple.

Appendix 'B' – Flying Log Book of F/Sgt L. WILDING

Glossary

A.S.R.	Air Sea Rescue.
A.U.	Anti U-boat Patrol.
D.C.O.	Duty Carried Out.
D.N.C.O.	Duty Not Carried out.
F/L	Flight Lieutenant.
F/O	Flying Officer
F/Sgt	Flight Sergeant.
L.L.	Low Level.
P/O	Pilot Officer
R.T.B.	Return to Base.
S.E.	Special Equipment, the name by which the Air to Surface Vessel (A.S.V.) radar was known in the R.A.F. during the Second World War.
Sgt	Sergeant.
W/O	Warrant Officer (Class 1 only in the R.A.F., Class 1 or 2 in the R.C.A.F. and R.A.A.F.).
W/T	Wireless Telegraphy.

N.B. – Operational sorties are highlighted in Yellow.

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 4 Signals School						
24/09/42	13.45	Dominie X.7444	P/O LANGILLIE	Rec. Tuning & Syko	1.35	
24/09/42	15.40	Dominie X.7444	P/O LANGILLIE	Tuning by Calibration & Syko	1.20	
26/09/42	08.30	Dominie X.7444	P/O MURRELL	D.F. Loop	1.35	
26/09/42	10.45	Dominie X.7444	P/O MURRELL	Back Tuning	1.20	
30/09/42	10.15	Proctor HM.290	Sgt DAVIES	Rec Tuning & Syko	1.00	
03/10/42	14.45	Proctor L.7562	Sgt HEMMINS	Back Tuning & Q Code	1.00	
03/10/42	17.20	Proctor Z.7250	Sgt PEARMAIN	Tuning by Calibration & Changing	0.45	
04/10/42	11.00	Dominie X.7485	F/O MCKENZIE	D.F. Loop	1.10	
05/10/42	15.20	Proctor DX.191	F/O ABBOTT	Back Tuning, homing & fixes	1.20	
08/10/42	11.05	Proctor DX.220	Sgt JENKINS	Rec. Tuning & Syko 1 & 2	0.55	
11/10/42	16.20	Proctor R.7564	Sgt COLE	No Exercise	0.50	
12/10/42	13.45	Proctor DX.226	Sgt DAVIES	Back Tuning & Q Code	1.05	
16/10/42	15.45	Proctor DX.183	Sgt DYER	Tuning by Calib & Freq Changing	0.50	
21/10/42	09.40	Proctor R.7218	Sgt COLE	Back Tuning Homing & Fixes	1.00	
21/10/42	13.10	Proctor HM.288	Sgt COLEMAN	Back Tuning & Freq Changing	1.00	
21/10/42	15.15	Proctor HM.296	Sgt WHITE	Back Tuning & Freq Changing	0.40	
TOTAL					17.25	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration	Day	Night
No. 8 Air Gunners School – R.A.F. Evanton							
25/11/42	11.05	Botha L.6408	F/Sgt FERRIS	Bullet Trail Exercise	0.40		
25/11/42	14.35	Botha L.6408	S/L CROMPTON	Beam Exercise	1.20		
27/11/42	13.35	Botha W.5069	P/O McLEOD	Cine Camera Gun Exercise	1.00		
29/11/42	09.45	Botha L.6181	F/Sgt PAUL	Relative Speed Exercise	0.40		
29/11/42	15.15	Botha W.5045	P/O McLEOD	Relative Speed Tracer Exercise	0.55		
03/12/42	13.45	Botha L.6164	F/Sgt COOK	Cine Camera Gun Exercise	1.05		
10/12/42	09.25	Botha L.6307	F/L BRETT	Air to Ground Exercise	0.50		
10/12/42	12.30	Botha L.6359	F/Sgt PAUL	Quarter Crossover Exercise	0.55		
13/12/42	11.10	Botha L.6526	F/Sgt PAUL	Quarter Crossover Exercise (Night)	0.55		
13/12/42	13.55	Botha L.6411	F/Sgt PAUL	Cine Camera Gun Exercise	1.10		
14/12/42	09.35	Botha L.6534	W/O NIEPIEKLER	Quarter Crossover Exercise	1.20		
14/12/42	13.00	Botha L.6534	F/O RAMSON	Quarter Crossover Exercise	1.10		
14/12/42	15.25	Botha L.6461	F/O HORNER	Cine Camera Gun Exercise	0.45		
TOTAL					12.45		
No. 11 Radio School – Hooton Park							
17/01/43	15.35	Botha L.6162	Sgt OGDEN	S.S. Demonstration	1.25		
23/01/43	11.05	Botha W.5073	Sgt MENSER	S.I. D.C.O.	1.10		
27/01/43	13.40	Botha L.6248	Sgt JONES	S.I. D.C.O.	1.35		
28/01/43	15.45	Botha L.6187	Sgt STONELEY	S.I. D.C.O.	1.30		
30/01/43	14.00	Botha L.6216	W/O WALKER	S.I. D.C.O.	1.35		
TOTAL					7.15		

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit						
06/04/43	14.20	Anson AX.636	F/O WARD	W/T Exercise	1.45	
11/04/43	14.10	Anson W.1882	Sgt WILSON	W/T Exercise	2.20	
14/04/43	14.15	Anson EG.553	Sgt BOYLE	W/T Exercise	2.45	
18/04/43	14.30		Sgt SMITH	W/T Exercise	0.30	
20/04/43	14.05	Anson DJ.616	P/O YARWOOD	W/T Exercise	3.00	
21/04/43	09.45	Anson EG.440	F/O STITZEL	W/T Exercise	2.15	
26/04/43	09.40	Anson DJ.616	F/O PISTORIOUS	W/T Exercise	1.00	
29/04/43	14.15	Wellington LB.313	Sgt BLACKBURN	Air Firing & W/T Exercise	2.35	
01/05/43	10.25	Wellington HX.782	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T Exercise & Nav Trip	5.10	
02/05/43	18.00	Wellington LB.220	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T & Air Firing Exercise	1.10	
03/05/43	19.15	Wellington HX.444	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T Bombing Exercise	2.00	
04/05/43	11.05	Wellington W.5717	Sgt BLACKBURN	Fighter Affiliation	0.50	
05/05/43	14.25	Wellington HX.444	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T and Nav Exercise	5.10	
06/05/43	11.40	Wellington LB.140	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T & Bombing	1.30	
08/05/43	14.30	Wellington LB.220	Sgt BLACKBURN	S.E. Exercise	1.30	
12/05/43	06.25	Wellington LB.140	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T & Nav Exercise	8.00	
12/05/43	24.00	Wellington LA.982	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T and Nav Exercise		3.40
13/05/43	14.55	Wellington LB.221	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T and Bombing	2.20	
14/05/43	13.50	Wellington LB.221	Sgt BLACKBURN	Photographic Exercise	2.15	
14/05/43	22.20	Wellington LB.185	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T and Nav Exercise		3.40
16/05/43	22.00	Wellington LB.140	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T and Nav Exercise		4.25
17/05/43	15.40	Wellington LB.242	Sgt BLACKBURN	Fighter Affiliation	1.00	
18/05/43	11.35	Wellington HX.444	Sgt BLACKBURN	Loop Homing	0.30	
19/05/43	22.30	Wellington LB.185	Sgt BLACKBURN	W/T and Nav Exercise		7.00
21/05/43	10.15	Wellington LB.140	Sgt BLACKBURN	Loop Homing and Photo	1.45	
TOTAL					49.20	18.45

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 1 Air to Surface Vessel Training Section – R.A.F. Chivenor						
04/07/43	10.10	Wellington MP.750 'G'	W/O CHAMBERS	SE Instruction	1.30	
17/07/43	09.30	Wellington HF.117 'G'	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	2.35	
18/07/43	14.20	Wellington HF.117	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	1.10	
18/07/43	15.35	Wellington HF.117	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	1.55	
19/07/43	09.30	Wellington HF.117	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction (Flight Cancelled)	0.15	
19/07/43	14.20	Wellington HF.117	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	1.30	
20/07/43	10.30	Wellington MP.750	P/O MARTIN	SE Instruction	2.00	
20/07/43	14.30	Wellington HF.117	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	2.30	
21/07/43	10.05	Wellington HF.123	P/O MARTIN	SE Instruction	2.00	
21/07/43	13.35	Wellington MP.750	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	3.00	
22/07/43	14.20	Wellington MP.750	F/O WHITELY	SE Instruction	2.10	
TOTAL					20.35	
No. 179 Squadron						
14/07/43	11.45	Wellington 'K'	Sgt BLACKBURN	Transit Chivenor to Silloth	3.00	
15/07/43	18.55	Wellington 'K'	Sgt BLACKBURN	Silloth to Chivenor	2.35	
25/07/43		Wellington HF.132	Sgt BLACKBURN	T.T.B. D.C.O.	0.40	
25/07/43		Wellington HF.117	Sgt BLACKBURN	T.T.B. D.C.O.	1.15	
25/07/43		Wellington HF.132	Sgt CORNISH	T.T.B. D.C.O.	0.50	
27/07/43	14.00	Wellington 'C'	Sgt BLACKBURN	Air to Ground Firing D.C.O.	1.00	
29/07/43	17.05	Wellington 'N'	Sgt BLACKBURN	T.T.B. D.C.O.	1.10	
30/07/43	23.55	Wellington 'C'	Sgt BLACKBURN	S.E. & L.L. Procedure		2.00
14/08/43	11.15	Wellington 'D'	S/L PETRIE	Base – Haverfordwest – Base	1.40	
18/08/43		Wellington HE.925	S/L PETRIE	Circuits and Landing	1.00	
31/08/43	16.00	Wellington 'P'	S/L PETRIE	SE Practice QGH	0.40	
TOTAL					13.50	2.00

NOTE: 31 July 1943 – 1220625 Sgt F. BLACKBURN, R.A.F.V.R. and 1145880 Sgt J. MARTIN, R.A.F.V.R. killed in crash of Wellington Mk. VIII – MP.716 at Chivenor.

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron						
<u>September 1943</u>						
10/09/43	20.00	Wellington 'S'	S/L PETRIE	Navigation Exercise		5.35
13/09/43	13.30	Wellington 'M'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.30	
14/09/43	16.00	Wellington 'M'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.30	
16/09/43	15.30	Wellington 'P'	S/L PETRIE	T.T.B.	0.30	
17/09/43	14.00	Wellington 'A'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test QGH	1.30	
19/09/43	14.00	Wellington 'M'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.30	
25/09/43	11.30	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.40	
25/09/43	21.50	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol (Bay Area)		8.35
TOTAL					4.10	14.20

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
<u>October 1943</u>						
01/10/43	14.30	Wellington 'A'	S/L PETRIE	Fixed Target Bombing	0.30	
02/10/43	15.00	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	Towed Target Bombing	0.45	
06/10/43	10.30	Wellington 'M';	F/L FITZGERALD	Air Test	0.40	
06/10/43		Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.40	
08/10/43	01.05	Wellington 'H'	F/O FELTES	A/S Patrol D.N.C.O.		0.40
14/10/43	11.00	Wellington 'B'	S/L PETRIE	Towed Target Bombing	0.40	
14/10/43	20.30	Wellington 'B'	S/L PETRIE	Towed Target Bombing		0.30
15/10/43	10.00	Wellington 'G'	F/O FELTES	Air Test		
11/10/43	20.40	Wellington 'D'	F/O FELTES	Towed Target Bombing		0.40
14/10/43	10.25	Wellington 'B'	F/O FELTES	Towed Target Bombing	0.25	
15/10/43	15.00	Wellington 'M'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.35	
16/10/43	21.50	Wellington 'M'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol		8.50
18/10/43	00.10	Wellington 'H'	F/O FELTES	A/S Patrol		8.30
21/10/43	10.00	Wellington 'O'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.50	
23/10/43	11.00	Wellington 'H'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.30	
23/10/43	21.15	Wellington 'H'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol		10.45
25/10/43	10.15	Wellington 'K'	F/O FELTES	Air Test	0.30	
26/10/43	14.10	Wellington 'D'	F/O ELLSTOCK	S/E Instructor S/E Training Flight	2.10	
TOTAL – Operational Hours						28.45
Non Operational Hours					8.15	1.10
<u>November 1943</u>						
04/11/43	11.50	Wellington 'C'	S/L PETRIE	F.T.B.	0.45	
06/11/43	14.45	Wellington 'D'	S/L PETRIE	Base – White Waltham	1.00	
06/11/43	16.50	Wellington 'D'	S/L PETRIE	White Waltham – Base	1.10	
09/11/43	10.00	Wellington 'P'	S/L PETRIE	Fighter Affiliation	1.10	
Operational Hours TOTAL					Nil	
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					4.05	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
December 1943						
02/12/43	10.00	Wellington 'K'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test and Tour of ??	3.10	
02/12/43	20.00	Wellington 'K'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol D.C.O.		12.30
09/12/43	11.45	Wellington 'K'	S/L PETRIE	F.T.B.	0.45	
16/12/43	14.30	Wellington 'P'	Sgt BEILBY	A/S Patrol D.C.O.	04.00	06.30
19/12/43	10.30	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test SE Homing QGH	2.00	
20/12/43	10.15	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test SE Homing QGH	2.00	
24/12/43	00.50	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol & Transit U.K. to Gib		07.45
25/12/43	06.57	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol & Transit Gib to Azores	07.15	

172 Squadron Detachment – Azores

December 1943

30/12/43	17.30	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.15	
30/12/43	21.20	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	A/S Patrol & Convoy Escort		10.45
Operational Hours TOTAL					11.15	37.30
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					09.30	

January 1944

02/01/44	11.00	Wellington 'H'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.20	
04/01/44	11.30	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.30	
07/01/44	23.45	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	U/A/S Patrol		10.25
13/01/44	01.55	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Convoy Escort & A/S Patrol		10.45
13/01/44	22.05	Wellington 'L'	S/L PETRIE	U/A/S Patrol		10.20
22/01/44	15.00	Wellington 'C'	S/L PETRIE	U/A/S Patrol	3.00	6.05
24/01/44	23.00	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	U/A/S/ Patrol		10.00
26/01/44	14.35	Wellington 'L'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.55	
Operational Hours TOTAL					3.00	47.35
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					1.45	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
February 1944						
04/02/44	11.55	Wellington 'N'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test Photography	2.15	
05/02/44	11.00	Wellington 'L'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.25	
05/02/44	23.59	Wellington 'L'	S/L PETRIE	U A/S Patrol		10.50
09/02/44	01.00	Wellington 'C'	S/L PETRIE	U A/S Patrol		10.35
11/02/44	17.00	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	S. A/Ship Patrol Lagens to Gibraltar	3.00	6.00

No. 172 Squadron Detachment – Gibraltar

February 1944

14/02/44	19.00	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	U & S A/S Patrol Med		10.45
17/02/44	23.00	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	U A/S Patrol. Returned engine trouble		3.50

No. 172 Squadron Detachment – Azores

February 1944

19/02/44	02.00	Wellington 'N' 179	S/L PETRIE	S. A/S Patrol Gib to Lagens		7.15
22/02/44	11.00	Wellington 'D'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.25	
25/02/44	10.30	Wellington 'C'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	1.00	
25/02/44	15.36	Wellington 'C'	S/L PETRIE	U A/S Patrol	3.00	7.20
Operational Hours TOTAL					6.00	56.35
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					4.05	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
March 1944						
02/03/44	11.00	Wellington 'B'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.40	
08/03/44	10.30	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.45	
08/03/44	19.30	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	Convoy Escort & A/S Patrol		10.00
10/03/44	17.20	Wellington 'O'	F/L SWIFT	U A/S Patrol	2.00	8.45
12/03/44	10.30	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.25	
13/03/44	19.45	Wellington 'J'	S/L PETRIE	S A/S Patrol Lagens to Chivenor		10.00
25/03/44	10.30	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	1.20	
27/03/44	04.00	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Special A/S Patrol Contacted 3 enemy		
				M/S Heavy Flak – Returned fire		4.10
28/03/44	11.05	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	F.T.B. S.E. & GEE Homings Air Test	1.10	
28/03/44	21.15	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	T.T. Bombing S.E. Homings		1.15
29/03/44	10.30	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test P.B.	0.45	
31/03/44	12.05	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test P.B.	0.30	
				Operational Hours TOTAL	2.00	32.55
				Non-Operational Hours TOTAL	5.35	1.15
April 1944						
03/04/44	11.45	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test & GEE Homings	1.00	
05/04/44	11.30	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.15	
05/04/44	21.50	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	S A/S Patrol Chivenor to Lagens		8.30
13/04/44	10.30	Wellington 'Q'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	1.10	
18/04/44	11.00	Wellington 'O'	S/L PETRIE	Air Test	0.30	
20/04/44	17.05	Wellington 'O'	S/L PETRIE	U A/S Patrol Lagens to Chivenor	3.30	4.45
				Operational Hours TOTAL	0.30	13.15
				Non-Operational Hours TOTAL	2.55	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
May 1944						
09/05/44	01.30	Wellington J/172	F/L JOHNSON	S/E Homings F.T. Bombing		1.10
09/05/44	16.55	Wellington G/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.35	
12/05/44	15.30	Wellington J/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test & Transit to Haverf'dwest	1.30	
15/05/44	10.25	Wellington M/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	1.00	
15/05/44	21.10	Wellington M/172	F/L JOHNSON	S A/S Patrol Bay of Biscay	3.00	6.50
18/05/44	20.09	Wellington G/172	F/L JOHNSON	U A/S Patrol Bay of Biscay	3.00	7.00
18/05/44	09.30	Wellington M/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.40	
20/05/44	10.30	Wellington Y/172	F/L JOHNSON	S/E Homings D.N.C.O.	1.00	
21/05/44	09.45	Wellington Y/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	1.00	
21/05/44	23.00	Wellington Y/172	F/L JOHNSON	A/S Patrol Returned Inst Fail		2.35
22/05/44	02.35	Wellington P/172	F/L JOHNSON	E A/S Patrol		4.05
23/05/44	14.00	Wellington P/172	F/L JOHNSON	S/E Homings F.T.B.	2.40	
24/05/44	10.00	Wellington P/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.35	
24/05/44	23.00	Wellington P/172	F/L JOHNSON	E. A/S Patrol		8.00
27/05/44	09.45	Wellington C/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air to Ground D.N.C.O. Q.G.H.	1.35	
28/05/44	11.20	Wellington J/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.30	
31/05/44	10.30	Wellington Z/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.35	
Operational Hours TOTAL					6.00	28.30
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					11.40	1.10

June						
11/06/44	23.27	Wellington Z/172	F/L JOHNSON	A/S Patrol	2.00	5.40
15/06/44	10.30	Wellington F/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.35	
15/06/44	22.07	Wellington F/172	F/L JOHNSON	A/S Patrol	4.00	5.55
23/06/44	22.16	Wellington M/172	F/L JOHNSON	A/S Patrol	4.00	6.15
25/06/44	10.30	Wellington B/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air to Ground Firing	0.55	
Operational Hours TOTAL					10.00	17.50
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					1.30	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
July						
03/07/44	11.00	Wellington Y/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air to Air Firing, D.N.C.O.	0.25	
04/07/44	10.30	Wellington O/172	F/L JOHNSON	T.T.B.	0.25	
05/07/44	22.00	Wellington M/172	F/L JOHNSON	E A/S Patrol	4.00	6.05
08/07/44	10.30	Wellington G/172	F/L JOHNSON	F.T.B.	0.30	
09/07/44	22.02	Wellington B/172	F/L JOHNSON	A/S Patrol	4.00	6.50
11/07/44	09.40	Wellington U/172	F/L JOHNSON	'Live' DC Dropping	0.25	
20/07/44	10.00	Wellington B/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.25	
21/07/44	11.37	Wellington U/172	F/L JOHNSON	E A/S Patrol	7.35	
24/07/44	10.40	Wellington A/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.40	
25/07/44	05.23	Wellington A/172	F/L JOHNSON	E A/S Patrol	10.25	
29/07/44	04.51	Wellington Q/172	F/L JOHNSON	Stbd Eg Cut on take off Crashed A/C Burnt Out		
31/07/44	14.45	Wellington Z/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.25	
Operational Hours TOTAL					26.00	12.55
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					3.15	
August						
16/08/44	02.45	Wellington A/172	F/L JOHNSON	Air Test	0.25	
18/08/44	22.28	Wellington X/172	F/L JOHNSON	Ret Base W/T Failure Air Test	1.00	
					Pt En Cut A/C Crashed was burned out two of crew killed.	
					Pilot's injured C/O Pilot lost arm	
Operational Hours TOTAL					1.00	
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					0.25	

First Tour Expired

Total Operational Hours for first tour: 353.10 hours – 42 Sorties.

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance						
<u>November 1944 – Staff Wireless Operator</u>						
01/11/44	13.50	416	P/O CLARK	G.R. D.C.O.	3.25	
01/11/44	19.25	410	W/O LEACH	G.R. D.C.O.		2.20
02/11/44	14.50	414	F/L WEIR	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.40	
03/11/44	13.50	405	S/L DOWNER	W. D.C.O.	2.50	
03/11/44	19.45	413	F/L WEIR	G.R. D.C.O.		2.30
04/11/44	08.55	416	P/O WALSH	W. D.C.O.	3.00	
06/11/44	08.55	404	P/O GREENWOOD	G.R. D.C.O.	3.00	
08/11/44	11.05	403	F/O BURROWS	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.30	
09/11/44	13.50	406	F/L WEIR	G. R. D.C.O.	2.50	
10/11/44	11.40	405	P/O ATKINSON	Air Test	0.25	
10/11/44	15.15	412	F/O BURROWS	Air Test	0.45	
13/11/44	13.50	406	P/O ATKINSON	W. D.C.O.	3.00	
14/11/44	08.58	410	W/O LEACH	G.R. D.C.O.	3.05	
15/11/44	09.00	415	F/O BURROWS	G.R. D.C.O.	3.25	
15/11/44	19.20	404	P/O ATKINSON	G.R. D.C.O.		2.15
16/11/44	14.00	412	F/O BURROWS	W. R.T.B.	2.15	
20/11/44	14.00	413	F/O HUGHES	W. D.C.O.	2.40	
20/11/44	19.50	405	F/O OIE	G.R. D.N.C.O. Tx on fire		2.10
21/11/44	08.50	403	S/L MORTON	W & QGH D.C.O.	2.25	
21/11/44	13.50	405	F/O HUGHES	G. R. D.C.O.	2.50	
23/11/44	13.55	401	W/O LEACH	G.R. D.C.O.	2.35	
24/11/44	09.05	404	F/O BURROWS	W. D.C.O.	2.40	
24/11/44	14.00	412	P/O ATKINSON	G.R. D.C.O.	3.00	
25/11/44	14.45	405	F/O MERRILEES	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.10	
Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night

25/11/44	15.10	413	F/O MERRILEES	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.15	
25/11/44	15.35	407	F/O MERRILEES	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.10	
25/11/44	19.30	414	P/O ATKINSON	G.R. D.C.O.		2.15
28/11/44	14.40	401	W/O SMITH	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.35	
28/11/44	19.25	413	F/O MERRILEES	G.R. D.C.O.		2.30
29/11/44	08.55	412	P/O CLARK	G.R. D.C.O.	3.00	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					49.30	14.00

December 1944

18/12/44	09.50	Anson 'AG'	F/O CROXFORD	Transit R.B. Bad Weather	0.45	
18/12/44	14.40	Anson 'DJ'	P/O CLARK	Air Test	0.20	
20/12/44	09.15	Anson 'DO'	W/O HARRIS	W QGH D.C.O.	2.50	
21/12/44	09.05	Anson 'DO'	F/O HUGHES	G.R. D.C.O.	3.05	
21/12/44	16.05	Anson 'DS'	F/O CHURCHILL	Air Test	0.30	
22/12/44	09.15	Anson 'DJ'	F/O MERRILEES	G.R. D.C.O.	2.45	
27/12/44	14.30	Anson 'DK'	P/O HOLLAND	W & QGH D.C.O.	2.35	
27/12/44	20.00	Anson 'DR'	F/O HUGHES	G.R. D.C.O.		2.35
28/12/44	09.10	Anson 'DO'	F/O PAVLESON	G.R. D.C.O.	3.30	
28/12/44	20.10	Anson 'DL'	W/O SMITH	G. R. Recalled to Base		0.50
29/12/44		Anson 'DR'	F/L DEE	N.F.T.	0.10	
30/12/44		Anson 'DK'	P/O PAULSON	W & QGH	2.30	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					19.00	3.25

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
January 1945						
02/01/45	08.55	Anson 'DJ'	F/L JARRATT	G.R. D.C.O.	3.00	
02/01/45	14.00	Anson 'DS'	F/O PAULSON	W. D.C.O.	2.50	
02/01/45	19.25	Anson 'DJ'	W/O BARRINGTON	G.R. D.C.O.		2.50
04/01/45	09.00	Anson 'DB'	P/O HOLLAND	G.R. D.C.O.	3.15	
04/01/45	19.40	Anson 'DA'	F/O HUGHES	G.R. D.C.O.		2.30
05/01/45	09.15	Anson 'DA'	F/L GRANT	W. D.C.O.	2.45	
06/01/45	12.00	Anson 'DC'	F/L MITCHELL	Air Swing D.N.C.O.	0.10	
08/01/45	08.55	Anson 'DA'	F/O CHURCHILL	G.R. D.C.O.	3.05	
08/01/45	19.25	Anson 'DM'	F/O CHRUCHILL	G.R. D.C.O.		2.55
09/01/45	08.55	Anson 'DR'	W/O SMITH	G.R. D.C.O.	2.35	
09/01/45	13.50	Anson 'DP'	W/O POND	W. D.C.O.	2.50	
10/01/45	09.20	Anson 'DP'	P/O HOLLAND	W. D.C.O.	2.20	
10/01/45	19.35	Anson 'DP'	P/O HOLLAND	G.R. D.C.O.		2.20
11/01/45	08.55	Anson 'DR'	P/O HOLLAND	W. D.C.O.	3.00	
11/01/45	13.55	Anson 'DR'	W/O HOWITT	G.R. D.C.O.	3.10	
15/01/45	14.05	Anson 'DC'	F/O HUGHES	G.R. D.C.O.	3.05	
16/01/45	16.10	Anson 'DO'	W/O BARRINGTON	N.F.T.	0.25	
17/01/45	13.50	Anson 'DJ'	F/L SINCLAIR	G.R. D.N.C.O. R/B Weather	1.15	
19/01/45	09.50	Anson 'DK'	F/O OIE	W. & QGH D.C.O.	2.40	
22/01/45	09.00	Anson 'DC'	W/O HOPKINSON	G.R. D.C.O.	2.45	
23/01/45	13.55	Anson 'DK'	W/O POND	W. D.C.O.	2.45	
27/01/45	09.25	Anson 'DB'	F/O MATTHEW	W. D.C.O.	2.50	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					44.40	10.35

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
February 1945						
01/02/45	09.00	Anson 'DC'	F/O PEEL	G.R. D.C.O.	3.05	
02/02/45	14.00	Anson 'DM'	F/O MATTHEW	W. D.C.O.	3.00	
03/02/45	09.00	Anson 'DB'	F/O MATTHEW	G.R. D.C.O.	3.45	
04/02/45	09.10	Anson 'DB'	F/O CRICK	G.R. D.C.O.	3.15	
09/02/45	14.00	Anson 'DN'	P/O WALSH	W. Forced Landed Valley Stb Gen u/s	2.10	
10/02/45	10.30	Anson 'DN'	P/O WALSH	W. Valley – Bishop Ct. – Base D.C.O.	1.45	
10/02/45	13.55	Anson 'DO'	F/O MERRILEES	G.R. D.C.O.	3.00	
11/02/45	10.45	Anson 'DA'	F/O PEEL	N.F.T. D.C.O.	0.15	
13/02/45	13.55	Anson 'DN'	F/L SINCLAIR	G.R. D.C.O.	3.00	
14/02/45	09.00	Anson 'DA'	F/O MATTHEW	W. D.C.O.	2.45	
15/02/45	14.30	Anson 'BS'	F/L RUGG	Compass Swing	0.45	
20/02/45	08.55	Anson 'DN'	W/O HOWITT	G.R. D.C.O.	2.45	
20/02/45	20.00	Anson 'DR'	P/O WALSH	G.R. D.C.O.		2.25
21/02/45	08.50	Anson 'DA'	W/O BARRINGTON	G.R. D.C.O.	2.45	
23/02/45	09.00	Anson 'DJ'	F/L SINCLAIR	W. D.C.O.	2.55	
23/02/45	20.00	Anson 'DS'	F/O MATTHEW	G.R. D.C.O.		1.50
24/02/45	09.00	Anson 'DK'	F/L SINCLAIR	W. D.C.O.	2.25	
26/02/45	09.05	Anson 'DP'	F/O MATTHEW	G.R. D.C.O.	2.55	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					40.30	3.15

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
<u>March 1945</u>						
01/03/45	09.00	Anson 'DK'	F/O HOLLAND	W. D.C.O.	2.50	
01/03/45	13.50	Anson 'DS'	W/O HOWITT	W. D.C.O.	3.05	
02/03/45	00.35	Anson 'AR'	P/O WALSH	G.R. D.C.O.		2.15
02/03/45	19.30	Anson 'DM'	F/O MERRILEES	W. D.C.O.		2.10
03/03/45	09.20	Anson 'DM'	F/L RUGG	W. D.C.O.	3.00	
06/03/45	13.55	Anson 'CJ'	F/L THOMPSON	G.R. D.C.O.	2.35	
06/03/45	20.35	Anson 'CL'	F/Sgt WILSON	G.R. D.C.O.		2.50
07/03/45	09.15	Anson 'CB'	F/L THOMPSON	G.R. D.C.O.	2.20	
07/03/45	20.35	Anson 'CD'	F/L SMITH	G.R. D.C.O.		1.45
08/03/45	14.25	Anson 'BH'	F/Sgt WILSON	W. D.C.O.	2.05	
30/03/45	14.45	Anson 'CD'	F/L DICKSON	W. D.C.O.	3.00	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					18.55	9.00

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
<u>April 1945</u>						
02/04/45	21.50	Anson 'CB'	F/L SMITH	W8 D.C.O.		2.15
03/04/45	21.20	Anson 'CB'	F/L SMITH	G.R. D.C.O.		2.40
04/04/45	15.00	Anson 'CS'	W/O JOHNSTON	W5 Q.G.H. D.C.O.	2.30	
05/04/45	09.30	Anson 'CS'	F/O PARKINSON	W6 D.C.O.	2.00	
12/04/45	14.50	Anson 'CF'	P/O HARRIS	Air Test	0.20	
18/04/45	11.05	Anson 'CD'	P/O HARRIS	Air Test	0.35	
18/04/45	22.07	Anson 'CK'	P/O HARRIS	G.R. D.C.O.		3.20
19/04/45	14.00	Anson 'CM'	F/L MITCHELL	G.R. D.C.O.	2.45	
20/04/45	14.00	Anson 'CK'	F/L FRASER	W7 D.C.O.	3.00	
20/04/45	18.00	Anson 'CS'	F/L LIGHT	W6 D.C.O.	2.20	
21/04/45	08.45	Anson 'CJ'	F/O WARRINOR	G.R. D.C.O.	3.10	
23/04/45	08.50	Anson 'CD'	W/O NEDOMA	G.R. D.C.O.	2.50	
25/04/45	08.55	Anson 'CD'	F/L SMITH	W. D.C.O.	3.10	
26/04/45	16.10	Anson 'CL'	W/O NEDOMA	Air Test	0.15	
30/04/45	14.40	Anson 'CG'	F/O WARRINOR	W2 D.C.O.	2.50	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					25.45	8.15
<u>May 1945</u>						
No Flying						
<u>June 1945</u>						
01/06/45	15.05	Anson 'CA'	P/O THRELFALL	Air Test	0.50	
04/06/45	09.00	Anson 'CA'	P/O THRELFALL	G.R.7 D.C.O.	3.00	
06/06/45	14.00	Anson 'DH'	F/L PEERS	Ex 18	2.35	
Operational Hours TOTAL						
Non-Operational Hours TOTAL					6.25	
TOTAL HOURS					478.05	338.50

Appendix 'C' – Flying Log Book of W/O J. MILNE

Glossary

A.S.R.	Air Sea Rescue.
A.U.	Anti U-boat Patrol.
D.C.O.	Duty Carried Out.
D.N.C.O.	Duty Not Carried out.
F/L	Flight Lieutenant.
F/O	Flying Officer
F/Sgt	Flight Sergeant.
L.L.	Low Level.
P/O	Pilot Officer
R.T.B.	Return to Base.
S.E.	Special Equipment, the name by which the Air to Surface Vessel (A.S.V.) radar was known in the R.A.F. during the Second World War.
Sgt	Sergeant.
W/O	Warrant Officer (Class 1 only in the R.A.F., Class 1 or 2 in the R.C.A.F. and R.A.A.F.).
W/T	Wireless Telegraphy.

N.B. – Operational sorties are highlighted in Yellow.

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration	Day	Night
No. 2 Signals School, R.A.F. Yatesbury							
06/08/42	09.05	Dominie 5921	F/O WILTSHIRE	RX Tuning & Reception	1.30		
06/08/42	11.05	Dominie 5921	F/O WILTSHIRE	Air Experience	1.05		
12/08/42	09.00	Dominie X.7576	Mr. NICHOLSON	O.F. Loop	1.40		
12/08/42	11.00	Dominie X.7576	Mr. NICHOLSON	Verification & 'G' Message	1.15		
14/08/42	09.00	Dominie X.7503	Mr. FORSYTH	B/L Tuning	1.30		
14/08/42	11.00	Dominie X.7503	Mr. FORSYTH	Freq Changing & D.F. Bearings	1.00		
17/08/42	09.05	Dominie X.7503	F/L WHELDON	Homing 'Q' Code	1.35		
17/08/42	11.00	Dominie X.7503	F/O WALKER	D/F Ex	1.15		
02/09/42	09.15	Proctor Z.7194	F/O HILLS	RX Tuning	0.15		
02/09/42	10.30	Proctor R.7536	F/Sgt RAY	RX Tuning	0.55		
03/09/42	14.10	Proctor Z.7194	F/O HILLS	RX Tuning	0.30		
03/09/42	15.50	Proctor Z.7196	Sgt MACKEY	Air Experience	0.15		
04/09/42	09.25	Proctor Z.7206	Sgt McKENZIE	BR Tuning	0.55		
06/09/42	09.00	Proctor P.6191	F/Sgt LAWSON	BR Tuning	0.55		
06/09/42	10.45	Proctor HM.282	Sgt RYALL	BR Tuning	0.40		
06/09/42	14.00	Proctor P.6191	F/Sgt LAWSON	BR Tuning	1.15		
07/09/42	08.55	Proctor Z.7196	Sgt ALLCOPP	D/F Bearing	0.55		
07/09/42	10.55	Proctor HM.280	Sgt McKENZIE	D/F Bearing	1.05		
08/09/42	13.50	Proctor Z.7194	Sgt CROUCH	D/F Bearing	1.15		
08/09/42	16.10	Proctor Z.7206	S/L ROCHFORD	Homing & Controlled Approach thro Cloud	0.30		
08/09/42	17.50	Proctor Z.7203	Sgt JONES	Homing & Controlled approach thro Cloud	1.25		
TOTAL					21.40		

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 1 Air Gunners School, R.A.F. Pembrey						
07/11/42	14.35	Blenheim 9461	P/O JONES	KGI Exercise of 25 ft.	0.50	
08/11/42	08.55	Blenheim 6346	F/L TOWSEY	Air Tracer Dem – Gun u/s	1.00	
08/11/42	11.50	Blenheim 6337	F/Sgt McKENZIE	Air Tracer Dem 200 rds 1:4 Tracer	1.25	
08/11/42	16.15	Blenheim 6346	P/O JONES	FR Beam 2 exercises of 100 rds Score 8.5%	1.00	
09/11/42	15.00	Blenheim 6345	Sgt ELLISON	FR Rel Beam insufficient time	1.10	
11/11/42	16.25	Blenheim 6176	W/O McDANIEL	FR Rel Beam 2 exercises 100 rds Score 4.5%	1.05	
12/11/42	13.20	Blenheim 6172	W/O McDANIEL	FRUT 2 exercises of 100 rds. Score 1.5%	1.00	
15/11/42	11.55	Blenheim 5804	F/Sgt PIPER	FRGG 2 exercises of 100 rds Splash (Sea)	0.50	
TOTAL					8.20	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					30.00	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 11 Radio Direction Finding School, R.A.F. Prestwick.						
24/12/42	10.00	Botha 14	Sgt RICHTER	S.I. Coastal D.C.O.	2.20	
28/12/42	13.15	Botha 20	Sgt RICHTER	S.I. Coastal D.C.O.	1.10	
28/12/42	15.25	Botha 20	Sgt RICHTER	S.I. Coastal D.C.O.	1.00	
29/12/42	09.30	Botha LG.474	Sgt JONES	S.I. Coastal D.C.O.	1.20	
29/12/42	11.05	Botha LG.474	Sgt JONES	S.I. Coastal D.C.O.	1.00	
31/12/42	15.00	Botha 20	Sgt GLOVER	S.I. Coastal D.C.O.	1.55	
TOTAL					8.45	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					38.45	

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit, R.A.F. Cranwell 'D' Flight						
25/02/43	10.35	Anson 'K'	F/O PENDREY	W/T D.C.O.	1.35	
09/03/43	11.05	Anson 'R'	Sgt HAINE	W/T D.C.O.	2.25	
13/03/43	12.10	Anson 'J'	F/O RICHARDS	W/T D.C.O.	1.25	
14/03/43	10.05	Anson 'R'	F/L BENNET	W/T D.C.O.	1.15	
26/03/43	16.45	Anson 'Q'	P/O YARWOOD	W/T D.C.O.	2.30	
30/03/43	14.45	Wellington Y1	Sgt BEASTALL	D.T.C. Transit Cranwell to Docking	0.30	
30/03/43	15.47	Wellington Y1	Sgt BEASTALL	D.T.C. Landed Docking D.T.C.	2.00	
31/03/43	08.27	Wellington L2	Sgt BEASTALL	O.F.E. 1 Results good	4.30	
31/03/43	15.27	Wellington Y2	Sgt BEASTALL	Bomb & Photo Bombing 50'	1.40	
02/04/43	07.42	Wellington Y2	Sgt BEASTALL	O.F.E. 2 Creeping Line Ahead	4.20	
03/04/43	19.42	Wellington C2	Sgt BEASTALL	O.F.E. 1 Night D.C.O.		5.30
04/04/43	21.05	Wellington V2	Sgt BEASTALL	O.F.E. 1 Night D.C.O.		4.40
05/04/43	13.40	Wellington U2	Sgt BEASTALL	Gun & Photo	2.30	
05/04/43	00.25	Wellington V2	Sgt BEASTALL	O.F.E. 3 Night		4.40
06/04/43	14.27	Wellington E2	Sgt BEASTALL	O.F.E. 4 R.T.B. trailing aerial damaged	4.00	
11/04/43	09.55	Wellington B1	Sgt BEASTALL	F/A D.C.O.	1.00	
11/04/43	14.00	Wellington U2	Sgt BEASTALL	BABS	1.30	
12/04/43	11.15	Wellington Z2	Sgt BEASTALL	B + P BABS	3.50	
14/04/43	15.45	Wellington T2	Sgt BEASTALL	L.L.	1.15	
15/04/43	01.55	Wellington X3	Sgt BEASTALL	L.L.		1.55
15/04/43	16.00	Wellington 'N'	Sgt BEASTALL	F/A D.C.O.	1.15	
16/04/43	23.50	Wellington 'T'	Sgt BEASTALL	L.L. D.C.O.		2.30
16/04/43	14.50	Wellington 'L'	Sgt BEASTALL	Bomb D.C.O.	1.50	
18/04/43	09.15	Wellington 'F'	Sgt BEASTALL	Photo	1.50	
19/04/43	03.40	Wellington 'X'	Sgt BEASTALL	L.L. D.C.O.		2.10
19/04/43	21.50	Wellington 'X'	Sgt BEASTALL	L.L. D.C.O.		1.45
20/04/43	14.45	Wellington 'J'	Sgt BEASTALL	W/T Shad	1.00	
TOTAL					42.10	23.10
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					80.55	23.10

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 3 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit, R.A.F. Cranwell 'C' Flight						
13/05/43	10.45	Anson DJ.616	Sgt BATEUP	W/T D.C.O.	1.55	
14/05/43	10.35	Anson AX.296	Sgt LESLIE	W/T D.C.O.	1.55	
16/05/43	10.30	Anson EG.440	Sgt LESLIE	W/T D.C.O.	1.50	
17/05/43	13.45	Anson EG.440	F/O PISTORIUS	W/T D.C.O.	3.00	
18/05/43	10.40	Anson EG.440	F/O PISTORIUS	W/T D.C.O.	1.45	
19/05/43	10.35	Anson LS.999	Sgt BATEUP	W/T D.C.O.	1.40	
20/05/43	10.30	Anson DJ.616	F/O PENDREY	W/T D.C.O.	2.00	
TOTAL					14.05	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					95.00	23.10

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
01/06/43	18.00	Wellington FG.590 'Z'	Sgt BEASTALL	S.I Operator Air Test	00.15	
02/06/43	13.45	Wellington MP.680 'N'	Sgt BEASTALL	S.I. Operator D.C.O.	3.00	
03/06/43	10.40	Wellington MP.680 'N'	Sgt BEASTALL	S.I. Operator D.C.O.	1.40	
03/06/43	23.00	Wellington MP.593 'R'	Sgt BEASTALL	WOp/AG Nav Ex D.C.O.		5.55
05/06/43	09.50	Wellington MP.575 'S'	P/O ROUNCE	S.I Operator D.C.O.	1.20	
06/06/43	09.45	Wellington MP.686 'P'	F/O JOHNSON	S.I. Operator D.C.O.	1.35	
07/06/43	10.20	Wellington MP.539 'G'	Sgt BEASTALL	WOp/AG Air Test	0.45	
11/06/43	15.25	Wellington MP.686 'C'	Sgt BEASTALL	WOp/AG Air Test	0.30	
12/06/43	04.27	Wellington MP.686 'C'	Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Ju 88 Attack	8.10	
14/06/43	22.30	Wellington MP.686 'C'	Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		8.10
16/06/43	10.55	Wellington MP.686 'C'	Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
21/06/43	10.30	Wellington HF.113 'P'	Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test Photo & Q.G.H.	0.30	
21/06/43	22.44	Wellington HF.113 'P'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol R.T.B. W/T u/s		1.15
22/06/43	00.59	Wellington MP.513 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		7.20
24/06/43	17.15	Wellington FG.590 'Z'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
25/06/43	23.50	Wellington MP.686 'C'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		8.15
28/06/43	15.40	Wellington MP.630 'H'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.40	
28/06/43	22.35	Wellington MP.512 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		7.40
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				8.10	32.40
	Non-Operational Hours				11.15	5.55
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					114.25	61.45

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
20/07/43	14.40	Wellington MP.575 'S'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	T.T.B.	00.30	
22/07/43	11.55	Wellington MP.575 'S'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	T.T.B.	0.30	
27/07/43	14.35	Wellington MP.575 'S'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test Q.G.H.	1.10	
28/07/43	04.25	Wellington MP.575 'S'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay	8.05	
30/07/43	08.00	Wellington MP.636 'U'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Firing	1.15	
30/07/43	18.45	Wellington MP.509 'D'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
31/07/43	04.10	Wellington MP.509 'D'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay	9.15	
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				17.20	
	Non-Operational Hours				3.55	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL						

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
02/08/43	16.05	Wellington MP.539 'G'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
04/08/43	17.00	Wellington MP.630 'H'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.20	
05/08/43	09.45	Wellington MP.590 'Z'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air to Ground Firing	0.50	
05/08/43	11.20	Wellington MP.590 'Z'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air to Ground Firing	0.45	
06/08/43	14.05	Wellington MP.513 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test & Q.G.H.	0.55	
06/08/43	22.00	Wellington MP.513 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		8.25
09/08/43	09.35	Wellington MP.630 'H'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.25	
11/08/43	09.00	Wellington MP.791 'Q'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air to Ground	0.40	
11/08/43	10.25	Wellington MP.791 'Q'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air to Ground	0.35	
11/08/43	22.15	Wellington MP.686 'C'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	S.E. Homing		0.45
12/08/43	11.30	Wellington MP.509 'D'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.35	
12/08/43	19.20	Wellington MP.509 'D'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol R.T.B. S/E u/s		3.50
14/08/43	17.35	Wellington MP.636 'U'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.20	
15/08/43	10.35	Wellington MP.636 'U'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol & Dinghy Search	8.25	
20/08/43	15.05	Wellington MP.593 'R'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.45	
22/08/43	22.20	Wellington HF.174 'F'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		8.40
26/08/43	15.10	Wellington MP.507 'T'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
26/08/43	19.50	Wellington MP.507 'T'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		8.05
29/08/43	10.30	Wellington MP.513 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.45	
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				8.25	29.00
	Non-Operational Hours				7.55	0.45
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					155.45	61.40

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
02/08/43	16.05	Wellington MP.539 'G'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
TOTAL – Operational Hours					8.25	29.00
Non-Operational Hours					7.55	0.45
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					155.45	61.40

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
02/09/43	13.20	Wellington HF.186 'M'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	F.T. Bombing	0.25	
02/09/42	17.00	Wellington MP.509 'D'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
04/09/43	14.15	Wellington MP.513 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test & Q.G.H.	1.00	
04/09/43	20.40	Wellington HF.113 'P'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol – Recalled weather		6.15
07/09/43	10.00	Wellington MP.686 'C'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	1.05	
07/09/43	17.30	Wellington MP.686 'C'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol – Observed D/172 shot down by U-boat.		8.45
09/09/43	10.50	Wellington MP.512 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	F.T. Bombing	0.20	
10/09/43	10.25	Wellington MP.686 'C'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.55	
15/09/43	10.05	Wellington MP.536 'B'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.50	
17/09/43	10.45	Wellington MP.680 'N'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Recalled W/T u/s	0.10	
17/09/43	12.20	Wellington MP.680 'N'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test Q.G.H. Splash Firing	1.05	
18/09/43	16.05	Wellington HF.186 'M'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test – Q.G.H.	0.50	
19/09/43	11.35	Wellington MP.686 'C'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.25	
21/09/43	11.35	Wellington MP.581 'W'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Q.G.H.	1.00	
23/09/43	09.20	Wellington MP.536 'B'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air to Air Firing	1.05	
25/09/43	11.55	Wellington HF.197 'D'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	F.T. Bombing	0.25	
26/09/43	14.35	Wellington MP.536 'B'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	D.C. Dropping & Photo	0.45	
27/09/43	11.55	Wellington MP.791 'Q'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.50	
TOTAL –		Operational Hours				15.00
		Non-Operational Hours			11.40	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					167.25	76.40

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
23/10/43	11.20	Wellington MP.724 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.25	
23/10/43	19.30	Wellington MP.724 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		10.55
26/10/43	10.20	Wellington HF.141 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.40	
26/10/43	17.00	Wellington HF.141 'E'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol – Recalled		6.40
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				1.05	
	Non-Operational Hours					17.35
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					168.30	132.30

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
01/11/43	11.00	Wellington HF.183 'B'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
02/11/43	00.30	Wellington HF.183 'B'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol to Gibraltar		8.25
05/11/43	14.15	Wellington HF.186 'M'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Local Flying	1.00	
09/11/43	09.55	Wellington HF.168 'L'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.50	
09/11/43	22.30	Wellington HF.168 'L'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Biscay		11.05
14/11/43	15.45	Wellington MP.769 'G'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.25	
20/11/43	15.45	Wellington HF.168 'L'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
29/11/43	23.55	Dakota	Capt JUDE	Transit Gib – U.K.		9.20
TOTAL –	Operational Hours					19.30
	Non-Operational Hours				3.15	9.20
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					171.45	161.20

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
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No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor

11/12/43	14.30	Wellington MP.724 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A.S.P. Returned Base Engine u/s	2.40	
15/12/43	12.40	Wellington MP.724 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test F.T.B. Radar Homing	1.20	
15/12/43	21.00	Wellington MP.724 'A'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		10.10
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				2.40	10.10
	Non-Operational Hours				1.20	0.45
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					175.45	171.3n0

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
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No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor

05/01/44	16.25	Wellington HF.167 'P'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
06/01/44	09.30	Wellington JA.264 'T'	F/Sgt BEASTALL	T.T.B.	0.40	
08/01/44	09.30	Wellington JA.264 'T'	P/O REYNOLDS	Splash Firing	0.50	
14/01/44	20.45	Wellington MP.669 'G'	W/C PALMER	Demonstration Sub Attack		0.45
15/01/44	14.00	Wellington JA.264 'T'	P/O REYNOLDS	T.T.B.	0.30	
15/01/44	15.50	Wellington JA.264 'T'	P/O REYNOLDS	T.T.B.	0.30	
19/01/44	10.30	Wellington MP.769 'G'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
19/01/44	18.40	Wellington HF.127 'C'	P/O BEASTALL	T.T.B. & Lucero		0.45
21/01/44	10.35	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.25	
21/01/44	23.50	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol U.K. to Gib.		10.45
25/01/44	08.10	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Gibraltar to Azores – Recalled	5.20	
29/01/44	15/25	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				5.20	10.45
	Non-Operational Hours				4.25	1.30
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					185.30	134.35

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
01/02/44	06.25	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol Gib to Lagens Diverted to San Miguel	7.15	
01/02/44	14.30	Wellington HF.135 'N';	P/O BEASTALL	San Miguel – Lagens	1.05	
04/02/44	11.00	Wellington HF.168 'L'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.15	
05/02/44	09.50	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.40	
05/02/44	20.55	Wellington HF.135 'N'	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		10.20
08/02/44	14.30	Wellington HF.168 'L'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.15	
08/02/44	22.55	Wellington HF.168 'L'	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		10.30
11/02/44	10.50	Wellington HF.149 'C'	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.40	
11/02/44	15.00	Wellington HF.149 'C'	P/O BEASTALL	A/Ship Patrol Lagens – Gib	2.40	7.20
14/02/44	21.55	Wellington HF.149 'C'	P/O BEASTALL	A.S.P. from Gib		11.45
16/02/44	11.40	Wellington HF.149 'C'	P/O BEASTALL	A.S.P. from Gib		11.40
20/02/44	00.25	Wellington HF.307 'L'	P/O BEASTALL	A.S.P. from Gib & Search for Dinghy		11.15
24/02/44	10.15	Wellington HF.149 'C'	P/O BEASTALL	A/Ship Patrol Gib – Azores	8.30	
27/02/44	19.55	Wellington HF.276 'D'	P/O BEASTALL	A.S.P. from Azores		11.00
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				19.30	73.50
	Non-Operational Hours				1.50	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					206.50	257.25

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
02/03/44	11.45	Wellington PG.769 ‘M’	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
06/03/44	10.15	Wellington FJ.147 ‘H’	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.30	
09/03/44	10.00	Wellington PG.769 ‘M’	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.45	
11/03/44	17.45	Wellington FB.280 ‘H’	P/O BEASTALL	A.S.R. & A/S Patrol		11.35
14/03/44	09.55	Wellington HF.363 ‘P’	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	1.00	
15/03/44	00.55	Wellington HF.363 ‘P’	P/O BEASTALL	A/C Shad Dem S/E Homing		2.20
23/03/44	23.30	Wellington HF.382 ‘L’	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		10.05
26/03/44	11.20	Wellington HF.276 ‘O’	P/O BEASTALL	Air Test	0.25	
31/03/44	21.05	Wellington HF.276 ‘O’	P/O BEASTALL	A/S Patrol		11.25
TOTAL –	Operational Hours					33.05
	Non-Operational Hours				3.10	2.20
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					210.00	293.00

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
03/04/44	09.15	Wellington HF.276 ‘O’	P/O BEASTALL	Homing Exercise	3.10	
05/04/44	20.20	Wellington HF.382 ‘L’	P/O BEASTALL	A/U Patrol		12.10
14/04/44	19.35	C54 137269	Capt GARDNER	Passenger – Azores to Prestwick		9.25
15/04/44	15.10	DC 118441	Lt. MARSH	Prestwick – Langford Lodge	0.40	
15/04/44	16.10	DC 118441	Lt. MARSH	Langford Lodge – Heston	2.20	
TOTAL –	Operational Hours					12.10
	Non-Operational Hours				6.10	9.25
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					216.10	314.35

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
05/05/44	13.50	Wellington HF.285 'R'	F/L WALLACE	Radar BABS & F.T.B.	2.40	
05/05/44	19.25	Wellington HF.197 'D'	F/L WALLACE	Radar – Bombing	1.55	
05/05/44	22.20	Wellington HF.197 'D'	F/L WALLACE	BABS		1.45
06/05/44	13.55	Wellington HF.197 'D'	F/L WALLACE	A-G Firing – Radar	2.40	
06/05/44	18.55	Wellington HF.197 'D'	F/L WALLACE	D.C. Dropping – Radar	2.10	
07/05/44	13.05	Wellington HF.412 'H'	F/L WALLACE	F.T.B.	0.30	
07/05/44	22.15	Wellington HF.412 'H'	F/L WALLACE	F.T.B. Radar		1.50
12/05/44	17.30	Wellington HF.282 'M'	F/L WALLACE	A.S.P. Port Eng U/S R.T.B. escorted by Warwick & 2 x Beaufighters	3.30	2.20
17/05/44	09.35	Wellington HF.446 'S'	F/L WALLACE	Radar B-U Bombs	2.50	
18/05/44	10.05	Wellington HF.282 'L'	F/L WALLACE	Air Test F.T.B.	0.55	
20/05/44	18.50	Wellington HF.282 'L'	F/L WALLACE	QGH – Radar	2.30	
22/05/44	22.55	Wellington HF.449 'J'	F/L WALLACE	Channel Patrol U/B Sighted No attack – 4 E/A Sighted		7.50
25/05/44	10.35	Wellington HF.446 'S'	F/L WALLACE	Air Test	0.50	
TOTAL –	Operational Hours				3.30	10.10
	Non-Operational Hours				6.00	3.35
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					225.40	328.20

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 172 Squadron – R.A.F. Chivenor						
June and July – No Flying Activity recorded.						
18/08/44	22.30	Wellington HF.411 'G'	F/L JOHNSON	A/S Patrol. Port engine cut. Crashed at base. Navigator and WOp Killed		1.00
MONTHLY TOTAL –	Operational Hours					1.00
	Non-Operational Hours					
CUMULATIVE TOTAL	Operational Hours				64.55	264.50
	Total Flying Time				255.40	329.20

MILNE in hospital from 18/08/44 (actually 17/08/44) until 15/09/44

Date	Time	Aircraft	Pilot	Purpose of Flight	Duration Day	Night
No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate						
<u>October 1944</u>						
23/10/44	14.00	Anson 403	P/O CLARKE	Staff WOp – GR7 D.C.O.	3.00	
24/10/44	08.55	Anson 413	F/O ATKINSON	Staff WOp – GR 4 D.C.O.	3.00	
25/10/44	08.58	Anson 412	F/O BOWMAN	Staff WOp – GR5 D.C.O.	3.00	
27/10/44	08.55	Anson 402	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – GR4 D.C.O.	3.00	
27/10/44	13.45	Anson 401	F/O REYNOLDS	Staff WOp – W4 D.C.O.	2.45	
29/10/44	10.10	Anson 111	W/C BAIN	Squires Gate to Turnhouse	1.20	
29/10/44	16.00	Anson 111	W/C BAIN	Turnhouse to Squires Gate	1.15	
30/11/44	14.00	Anson 412	F/O HUGHES	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.	3.00	
TOTAL –						
Non-Operational Hours					20.20	
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					246.00	329.20

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

November 1944

01/11/44	13.15	Anson 403	W/C BAIN	Squires Gate - Turnhouse	1.20	
02/11/44	16.00	Anson 403	W/C BAIN	Turnhouse – Squires Gate	1.15	
03/11/44	20.10	Anson 410	P/O CLARKE	Staff WOp – GR10 D.C.O.		2.30
05/11/44	14.10	Anson 415	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – GR1 D.C.O.	3.20	
06/11/44	13.50	Anson 416	S/L DOWNER	Staff WOp – GR7 D.C.O.	3.00	
07/11/44	20.00	Anson 415	F/O GREENWOOD	Staff WOp – GR D.C.O.		2.35
14/11/44	14.00	Anson 403	F/O OIE	Staff WOp – W5 D.C.O.	2.20	
15/11/44	09.00	Anson 412	F/O BEAUMONT	Staff WOp – GR6 D.C.O.	3.10	
15/11/44	20.00	Anson 412	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – GR8 D.C.O.		3.00
16/11/44	08.50	Anson 403	W/O LEACH	Staff WOp – W5 D.C.O.	3.00	
21/11/44	09.00	Anson 401	F/O OIE	Staff WOp – W4 D.C.O.	3.05	
21/11/44	14.00	Anson 412	F/O MERRILEES	Staff WOp – GR5 D.C.O.	3.05	
22/11/44	13.55	Anson 414	S/L DOWNER	Staff WOp – W5 D.C.O.	3.00	
23/11/44	14.00	Anson 410	F/O BOWMAN	Staff WOp – GR7 D.C.O.	2.40	
25/11/44	19.45	Anson 401	F/O HUGHES	Staff WOp – GR5 D.C.O.		2.30
28/11/44	14.00	Anson 406	P/O CLARKE	Staff WOp – W4 D.C.O.	3.05	
28/11/44	19.30	Anson 401	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – GR10 D.C.O.		2.35
29/11/44	13.50	Anson 415	W/O BARRINGTON	Staff WOp – GR2 D.C.O.	3.00	
30/11/44	08.50	Anson 407	W/O BARRINGTON	Staff WOp – W4 D.C.O.	2.50	
30/11/44	13.50	Anson 404	F/O MERRILEES	Staff WOp – GR4 D.C.O.	2.40	
TOTAL –						
	Operational Hours					
	Non-Operational Hours				40.50	13.10
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					286.50	342.30

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

December 1944

04/12/44	08.55	Anson AG	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.	3.00	
05/12/44	13.55	Anson DF	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – GR3 W/T Failure D.N.C.O.	2.00	
05/12/44	19.50	Anson DR	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – GR10 D.C.O.		2.40
06/12/44	09.07	Anson DF	P/O WALSH	Staff WOp – W1 D.C.O.	2.50	
06/12/44	15.55	Anson DK	F/O OIE	Staff WOp – N.F.T.	0.25	
07/12/44	09.30	Anson DB	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – W1 & Q.G.H. D.C.O.	2.30	
08/12/44	11.15	Anson DS	F/O CHURCHILL	Staff WOp – N.F.T.	0.30	
11/12/44	08.55	Anson DA	W/O BARRINGTON	Staff WOp – GR5	3.00	
12/12/44	15.00	Anson DF	W/O SMITH	Staff WOp – QGH & W1 D.C.O.	2.20	
18/12/44	08.55	Anson BP	F/O WESTOBY	Staff WOp – W6 Recalled weather	1.30	
18/12/44	15.00	Anson DP	F/O OIE	Staff WOp – W4 & QGH D.C.O.	2.45	
TOTAL –		Operational Hours				
		Non-Operational Hours			20.50	2.40
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					307.40	345.10

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

January 1945

08/01/45	14.00	Anson DA	F/L GRANT	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.	3.15	
09/01/45	09.00	Anson DS	W/O HOWITT	Staff WOp – GR7 D.C.O.	3.20	
09/01/45	19.40	Anson DP	F/L GRANT	Staff WOp – GR11 D.C.O.		2.40
10/01/45	14.00	Anson DL	F/O HUGHES	Staff WOp – GR2 D.C.O.	2.55	
11/01/45	09.15	Anson DA	F/L JARRETT	Staff WOp – W4 D.C.O.	2.15	
14/01/45	09.26	Anson DC	F/O CHURCHILL	Staff WOp – W2 D.C.O.	2.35	
15/01/45	13.50	Anson DL	F/O OIE	Staff WOp – GR 4 D.C.O.	3.05	
16/01/45	13.50	Anson DR	F/L SINCLAIR	Staff WOp – GR4 D.C.O.	3.00	
17/01/45	08.55	Anson DO	W/O POND	Staff WOp – W2 D.C.O.	2.35	
18/01/45	15.00	Anson DC	F/L JARRETT	Staff WOp – N.F.T.	0.30	
23/01/45	14.00	Anson DP	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.	2.55	
28/01/45	13.55	Anson DO	F/O MATTHEWS	Staff WOp – GR1 D.C.O.	2.45	
28/01/45	20.15	Anson DP	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR10 D.C.O.		1.45
TOTAL –		Operational Hours				
		Non-Operational Hours			29.10	4.25
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					336.50	349.35

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

February 1945

01/02/45	15.00	Anson DA	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – Air Test	0.30	
02/02/45	20.15	Anson DM	P/O WALSH	Staff WOp GR2 D.C.O.		2.30
03/02/45	09.00	Anson DO	W/O HOWITT	Staff WOp – GR3 D.C.O.	3.45	
04/02/45	09.05	Anson DP	W/O POND	Staff WOp – GR2 D.C.O.	2.55	
05/02/45	09.00	Anson DP	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR3 D.C.O.	2.55	
05/02/45	20.15	Anson DP	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR8 D.C.O.		2.35
07/02/45	08.50	Anson DS	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR4 D.C.O.	3.20	
09/02/45	08.55	Anson DO	F/O KNIGHT	Staff WOp – GR5 D.C.O.	2.55	
10/02/45	13.40	Anson DA	W/O HOPKINSON	Staff WOp – GR1 D.C.O.	3.15	
11/02/45	10.20	Anson DN	F/L JARRETT	Staff WOp – N.F.T.	0.30	
13/02/45	09.00	Anson DL	F/L MATTHEW	A.S.R. – Negative	1.30	
13/02/45	20.00	Anson DR	F/L JARRETT	Staff WOp – W9 D.C.O.		2.35
TOTAL –		Operational Hours			1.30	
		Non-Operational Hours			20.10	7.40
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					358.30	357.15

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

March 1945

05/03/45	14.00	Anson DM	F/O KNIGHT	Staff WOp – GR4 D.N.	2.50	
07/03/45	09.15	Anson DF	W/O HOPKINSON	Staff WOp – GR2 D.C.O.	2.30	
07/03/45	14.00	Anson DJ	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – W3 D.C.O.	2.45	
08/03/45	13.55	Anson AS	F/O PAULSON	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.	2.50	
10/03/45	10.55	Anson DP	F/L DEE	Air Test	0.30	
13/03/45	15.00	Anson DA	W/O BARRINGTON	STA Air Test	0.30	
14/03/45	11.00	Anson DN	F/L PAUS	N.F.T.	0.20	
16/03/45	10.00	Anson CP	F/O WALSH	Compass Check	0.35	
16/03/45	11.00	Anson DB	F/O WALSH	Air Test	0.45	
16/03/45	21.00	Anson DF	F/O CRICK	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.		2.35
17/03/45	20.30	Anson DF	W/O BARRINGTON	Staff WOp – GR D.C.O.		2.20
20/03/45	08.50	Anson DM	W/O BARRINGTON	Staff WOp – GR6 D.C.O.	3.15	
20/03/45	14.35	Anson DP	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR2 D.C.O.	3.10	
21/03/45	08.50	Anson DT	W/O PIANEZEK	Staff WOp – GR3 D.C.O.	2.45	
26/03/45	14.35	Anson DT	Lt. Van ROSSUM	Staff WOp – GR7 D.C.O.	2.40	
31/03/45	08.55	Anson DM	F/O WALSH	Staff WOp – GR6 D.C.O.	2.50	
TOTAL –		Operational Hours				
		Non-Operational Hours			28.15	4.55
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					386.45	362.10

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

April 1945

03/04/45	08.50	Anson CH	F/O WALSH	Staff WOp – W4 D.C.O.	2.50	
03/04/45	21.00	Anson DJ	F/O PAULSON	Staff WOp – W2 D.C.O.		2.40
04/04/45	09.00	Anson AF	W/O BARRINGTON	Staff WOp – W1 D.C.O.	2.50	
04/04/45	14.00	Anson DJ	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR4 D.C.O.	2.50	
05/04/45	13.55	Anson DB	F/O MATTHEW	Staff WOp – GR5 D.C.O.	2.55	
09/04/45	13.50	Anson DC	F/L PEER	Staff WOp – W2 D.C.O.	2.50	
10/04/45	14.45	Anson DF	F/O CRICK	Staff WOp – GR2 D.C.O.	3.10	
13/04/45	10.30	Anson DJ	F/O CRICK	Compass Check	0.50	
13/04/45	15.00	Anson DC	W/O CHURCH	Staff WOp – N.F.T.	0.20	
18/04/45	10.00	Anson DR	F/O PEEL	Air Test	0.50	
18/04/45	14.00	Anson DP	F/O CRICK	W2 D.C.O.	3.20	
18/04/45	22.45	Anson DF	F/O CRICK	Staff WOp – GR8 D.C.O.		3.00
19/04/45	17.55	Anson DH	F/O COONEY	Staff WOp – GR3 D.C.O.	2.40	
20/04/45	17.50	Anson DN	W/O PIENOZEK	Staff WOp – W2 D.C.O.	2.45	
23/04/45	14.45	Anson DG	F/O WALSH	Staff WOp – W7 D.C.O.	3.10	
24/04/45	14.30	Anson DP	F/L PAUS	Staff WOp – GR3 D.C.O.	3.25	
24/04/45	22.00	Anson DB	F/O HOLLAND	Staff WOp – GR8 D.C.O.		2.10
25/04/45	14.30	Anson DR	F/O LORD	Staff WOp – GR3 D.C.O.	3.10	
26/04/45	15.30	Anson DJ	F/O WALSH	N.F.T.	0.30	
26/04/45	22.00	Anson DJ	F/O WALSH	Staff WOp – GR9 D.C.O.		2.30
30/04/45	10.00	Anson DJ	F/O LORD	Staff WOp –W1 QGH D.C.O.	2.15	
TOTAL –		Operational Hours				
		Non-Operational Hours			40.40	10.20
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					427.25	372.30

No. 3 School of General Reconnaissance – R.A.F. Squires Gate

May 1945

02/05/45	22.30	Anson DJ	F/O LORD	GR2 D.C.O.		2.35
03/05/45	15.15	Anson DC	W/O POND	N.F.T.	0.15	
10/05/45	09.00	Anson DJ	W/O PIENAZEK	GR3 D.C.O.	2.30	
11/05/45	09.00	Anson DO	W/O POND	W1 D.C.O.	2.50	
11/05/45	15.15	Anson DJ	F/L RUGG	W4 D.C.O.	2.25	
12/05/45	09.00	Anson DJ	F/O CRICK	GR2 D.N.C.O. WLU	1.40	
TOTAL –		Operational Hours				
		Non-Operational Hours			9.40	2.35
CUMULATIVE TOTAL					437.05	315.15

Last Flying Activity recorded. On 14 May 1945, posted to No. 132 Operational Training Unit at R.A.F. East Fortune.

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