

1) 2/3rd May 1941: GARDENING - Nectarine area. Take off 21:00h Return 02:35h The weather was good with 9/10th cloud over the target area. Light and heavy flak in barrage form was observed. Vegetable successfully planted. Much flak was seen over Va??roog Island but no bursts experienced near aircraft.

2) 5/6th May 1941: AD908 GARDENING Crew: Broderick **Howett** Harrison **Bloomfield** Take off 22:10 Return 04:00 Detailed to plant vegetable in the Nectarine area. There was 9/10 cloud. The vegetable was laid whilst flying parallel to the island. No opposition encountered.

3) 8/9th May 1941: AD908 HAMBURG shipbuilding yards Crew: Broderick Tayler Grose **Bloomfield** Take off 22:15h Return 03:30h The aircraft unable to climb above 15,500ft At this height it vibrated violently and the tail was seen to shake from side to side. The intercom broke down and was only repaired when nearly to base.

4) 26/27th May 1941: Hampden AD908 GARDENING Crew: Broderick, **Howett**, Harrison, **Bloomfield** Take off 22:20h Return 05:50h This aircraft detailed to plant vegetable in the Jellyfish area. Owing to the bad weather in the form of low and medium cloud and almost continuous drizzle throughout the flight, the target was not located. Although over an hour was spent in the search. Landed Upper Heyford without planting vegetable.

5) 14/15 June 1941: Hampden AD891 COLOGNE Crew: Broderick **Howett** Harrison **Bloomfield**. Take off 23:30h Return 05:45h Identification of the target area impossible, due to low cloud and haze. The bombs were released from 14,000ft in two attacks over the concentration of flak and searchlights. No opposition was encountered.

6) 16/17th June 1941: Hampden AD902 COLOGNE Same crew. Take off 23:30h Return 06:15h. At Cologne a large dummy fire was due west of the town. Half of bomb load was dropped from 16000ft on a group of fires in the east end of the town. The remainder released from 10,000ft and a few small fires were seen as a result of the incendiaries. Shortly afterwards caught in a fierce barrage of accurate, heavy flak and searchlight. Though no damage was sustained, the noise of the exploding shells was heard and felt for some time. On the return we were held for 5 mins in a cluster of searchlights. Daylight was breaking as the enemy coast was crossed. Landed at Waddington.

7) 21/22nd June 1941: Hampden AD908 DUSSELDORF Same crew. Take off 23:00h Return 03:25h Soon after setting course the automatic? became useless. There was also excessive? of gyroscope. Owing to excessive flames from the starboard exhaust as the Dutch coast was being crossed, the wing bombs were released from 12,000ft on a concentration of searchlights at Schouwen Island. Remaining bomb load brought back to base.



L to R: Fewkes, Boreham, Howett, Bloomfield - Pamela Howett family

24/25th June Howett flew on a bombing mission to KIEL

8) 2/3rd July 1941: Hampden AE157 Target Marshalling Yards DUISBURG Crew: P/O **Smith**, Howett, Bloomfield, **Parker**. Take off 23:10h Return 04:55h About 20 miles from the Dutch coast at a height of 13,000ft, which could not be exceeded, the aircraft started to vibrate badly, and the oil temperature was unduly high. The flare path at Wien??rmeer aerodrome was bombed from 12,000ft. The return to base was without further incident.

9) 4/5th July 1941: Hampden AD836 Target LORIENT Take Off 22:40h Return 04:40h This aircraft was detailed to bomb the submarines at Lorient. It climbed up to 14,000ft. Before bombing from that height, it flew over the target area. The visibility was perfect. Many fires were seen burning.

Weather ideal, cloudless and perfect visibility with an almost full moon in the SW. The target was easily located, and Lorient could be seen a long way off, through the whole coast of Brittany being clearly defined in the moonlight. The brightness of the night made the few searchlights ineffective. There was a large amount of heavy flak and tracer that went to 18,000ft. The rest of the route was trouble free.

10) 6/7th July 1941: Hampden AD908 Target BREST battleships Crew: P/O Owens **Howett** **Bloomfield** Sgt Kilduff. Take off 22:35h Return 04/30h. On arrival at the target an aircraft was seen shot down to the west of the town. The first run was, made at 14,000ft and a second at 11,00ft. A smokescreen hid the battleships otherwise visibility was perfect.

13 aircraft took off to bomb the battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. It was a cloudless night with perfect visibility, the moon being almost full. The first arrivals reported a smoke screen which hid the battleships though points could be made out as the docks, with the result that bombing was carried out on the estimates made. The majority of the bomb bursts were not observed, but some were seen to fall along the dock. The defences were very intense. Flak and tracer together with searchlights being used. Except for two or three aircraft which had to take violent, evasive action, the others appeared to pass through without too much trouble, no doubt due to glide approaches. One aircraft was seen to be hit and burst into flames as it met the ground. Balloons were seen flying up to 10,000ft A large fire was seen on the dock side. One aircraft decided to machine gun the flare

path at Morlaix but this was extinguished on arrival. A dummy flare path about a mile away was lit for a minute.

11) 8/9th July 1941: Hampden AD897 Target HAMM. Crew: Sgt Broderick **Howett Bloomfield** Sgt Welford. Take off 22:50h Return 05:00h. This aircraft was detailed to bomb the marshalling yards at Hamm. Until the Ruhr was approached little in the way of defences was encountered. After spending a considerable time in a search, it eventually bombed the secondary target from a height of 10,000ft. Here it encountered an accurate barrage of flak.

The flak was accurate. Several aircraft dropped their bombs on a searchlight concentration. On the return midway across the North Sea one aircraft AD839 reported seeing an aircraft burst into flames and explode as it hit the water.

12/13th July 1941 Howett took part in a bombing mission to BREMEN

12) 20/21st July 1941: Target COLOGNE. Crew: Broderick Campbell **Bloomfield** Kilduff. Take off Swindery 23:10h Return 04:44h. Bombing was carried out from 15,000ft and one huge flash observed from bombs dropped on estimated position of town. Several other fires seen when leaving the target area. 8/10th cloud over target area. The aircraft made the return without incident.

In spite of the unfortunate weather conditions 9/10 cloud and haze, all aircraft succeeded in reaching the target. High level attacks were carried out and although detailed results could not be observed, many bursts were seen and several fires, one of which could be seen for 20 miles.

13) 22/23rd July 1941: Target FRANKFURT. Crew: Broderick P/O Grieve **Bloomfield** Kilduff. Take off 22:36h Return 05:06h. On arrival over target, bombs were dropped from 14,000ft on calculated position of target, with glimpse of River due south of target, obtained through gap in cloud, and incendiaries seen burning, but no further result noticed. The Razzle dropped between position 10 miles South of Aachen and Frankfurt. A camera was carried but photo flashes failed to leave aircraft. Fire seen burning in target area on approach.

4 aircraft detailed to attack Frankfurt. Only 3 attacked the target, one forced to return due to severe icing. The three did not definitely locate the target due to 9/10 cloud, so load was dropped on the calculated target.



Seated L to R: Fewkes, Boreham, Howett, Bloomfield - Pamela Howett family

14) 25/26th July 1941: Hampden AD908 HANOVER Crew: Broderick Campbell **Bloomfield** Smith. Take off 22:00h Return 06:35h There was no cloud, but much industrial haze was encountered over the target. The bombs were seen to burst in the vicinity of the aiming point. No further results were observed owing to the haze. On the return journey the aircraft climbed to 19,000ft in an endeavour to avoid a front, but lack of oxygen and fuel forced the pilot to come down. The port engine failed due to lack of fuel and a successful landing was made at Driffield.

One aircraft crashed immediately after take-off and all the crew were killed. They encountered considerable searchlight activity and inaccurate heavy flak over the target.

15) 28/29th July 1941: Hampden AD908 GARDENING Crew: Same as above. Take off 22:10h Return 05:50h Aircraft detailed to plant vegetable Quince area. Due to extensive cloud no pinpoint was made on the enemy coast, consequently the vegetable was brought back. A great deal of static was also encountered.

Weather was poor on return to base and many had difficulty in navigating a return course.

2nd August 1941: Sgt HOWETT returned from 25 OTU

16) 11/12th August 1941: Swinderby -Target ROTTERDAM Take off 01:15h Return 05:10h . 10/10 cloud cover prevented the identification of any target and the bombs were brought back to base.

17) 17/18th August 1941: Hampden AD908 Target BREMEN Crew: Hewitt, Campbell, Bloomfield, **Smith** Take off 22:25h Return 05:25h Dark night prevented the primary from being identified. The bombs were dropped on the town from 15,000ft but no bursts or results were observed. Considerable concentration of flak and searchlights were encountered over the target.

18) 29/30th August 1941: Hampden AD908 Target Docks at FRANKFURT Crew: Howett, Campbell, Bloomfield, Fewkes. Take off 21:45h Return 05:35h 10/10 cloud prevented identification of the docks. The bombs were dropped in the glare of searchlights and flak concentrations which were believed to be Frankfurt town. No opposition was encountered until the target area was reached.

19) 2/3rd September 1941: AD908 Crew: Howett **Campbell**, Bloomfield, Fewkes. Target FRANKFURT. Take off 20:10h Return 04:08h Medium and very accurate flak encountered over Brussels, but Frankfurt could not be identified owing to ground mist. The Rhine was followed to Mannheim which was bombed.

20) 6/7th September 1941: AD908 GARDENING Onion area - Oslo. Take off 22:00h Return 05:15h Brilliant moon and excellent weather conditions enabled the gardening area to be found easily. The vegetable was dropped in the correct position. The wing bombs were dropped on the edge of one of the runways at LISTE aerodrome. A few searchlights and considerable tracer were encountered from Oslo. These aircraft took off from Lossiemouth on this mission to mine Oslo Fjord.

21) 12/13th September 1941: AD908 Target FRANKFURT Take off 23:40h Return 07:00h Cloud 10/10 prevented the primary target being identified in spite of a long search and running into some heavy flak and searchlights; a town in the Southern Ruhr was seen and attacked from 11,500ft. Bursts were observed but no further results seen. Shortly after the bombs were dropped the intercom failed.

22) 20/21st September 1941: AE231 Target BERLIN Take off 20:10h Return 02:50h An hour into sortie a message was received to jettison the bombs - this was done near Heligoland. The aircraft was diverted to? away from Waddington. The aerodrome was found by dipping searchlights. A safe landing was made. Presumably the cause was thick fog. The aircraft were able to return to base later on the 21st.

23) 23/24th October 1941: Swinderby AE380 Target KIEL. Take off 00:41h Return 08:10h The waters of Kiel were seen clearly and parts of the town. Using the reflection of searchlights in the clouds the target was identified beneath the nose of the aircraft and was bombed from 9,500ft. Four explosions on the target were seen by the rear gunner.

One aircraft failed to return. The operation was very successful, 13 aircraft being able to locate and bomb the target. Of the 2 unsuccessful, one was forced to return as it crossed the English coast due to engine trouble, the other because of delayed take off. A fair amount of cloud was encountered, but visibility was good through gaps found. Some aircraft encountered considerable flak over the target, while others reported very little. Much searchlight and heavy AA were met at Eckernforde.

24) 26/27th October 1941: AE380 GARDENING Forget-Me-Not area Take off 18:10h Return 02:18h The operation was successful, there was no cloud and the visibility was 10-15 miles. Flak from a ship at Eckernforde shot away the hydraulics and the wing bombs could not be dropped.

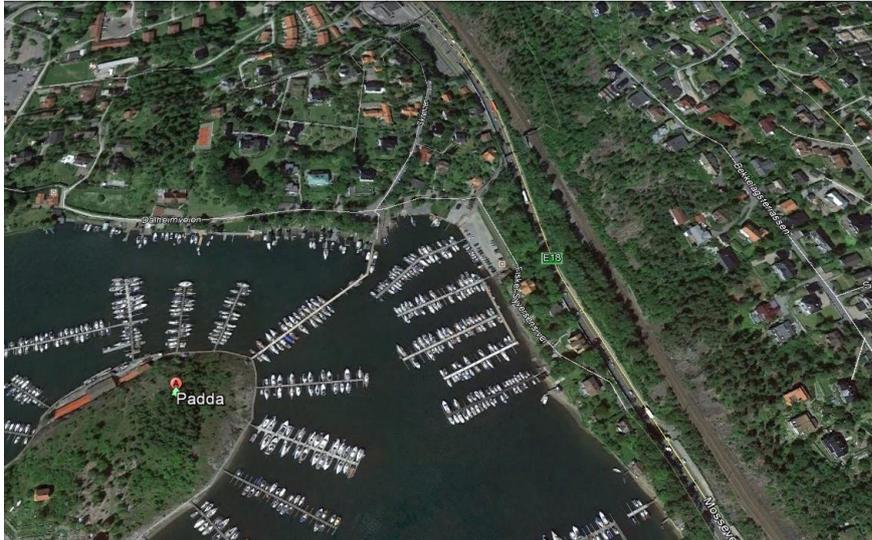
25) 29/30th October 1941: AE380 Target SCHIPOL AERODROME Take off 21:48h Return 01:??h. This aircraft was forced to return owing to the failure of the intercom when addressing the crew.

26) 3/4th November 1941: Swinderby AE427 GARDENING Crew: Howett, Morgan, Bloomfield, Fewkes. Take off 23:06h Return 07:22h This aircraft was detailed to plant vegetables in the Daffodil area. The operation was successful being aided by good visibility. The vegetable was dropped in the allotted position. The wing bombs were brought back as no shipping could be found.

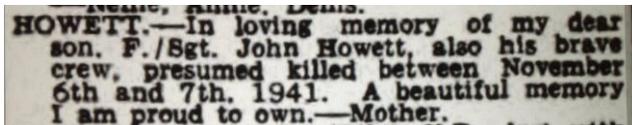
10 aircraft were detailed for this night's operation. Most of the aircraft reported good conditions with good visibility, although some icing was encountered on the way out. Some opposition was met with one aircraft being fired upon by a ship off Esjberg. One aircraft could not identify the area on

account of bad weather conditions and jettisoned the vegetable safely. The other brought the vegetable back owing to continued ice secretion.

27) 6/7th November 1941: Hampden AE427 VN-D GARDENING This aircraft was detailed to drop a vegetable in the Onions area Oslo-Stavanger area. After due course nothing was heard from this aircraft. The aircraft was later found to have been hit by flak and had crashed into Oslo Fjord killing all the crew.



The crash site was thought to be close to shore and a main railway line, where the water is shallow. The likely spot was between the Island of Padda and the main E18 road. (Source Roger J. Basford)



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15 aircraft were detailed to plant vegetables in the Onion area from the squadron. Severe weather conditions in the Norwegian area. One aircraft had to abandon the trip once it reached Norway as the rear gunner was suffering severe effects from the cold.



Rear to Front: Boreham, Howett, Fewkes, Bloomfield - Pamela Howett family

Researched by Dorothy Ramser