

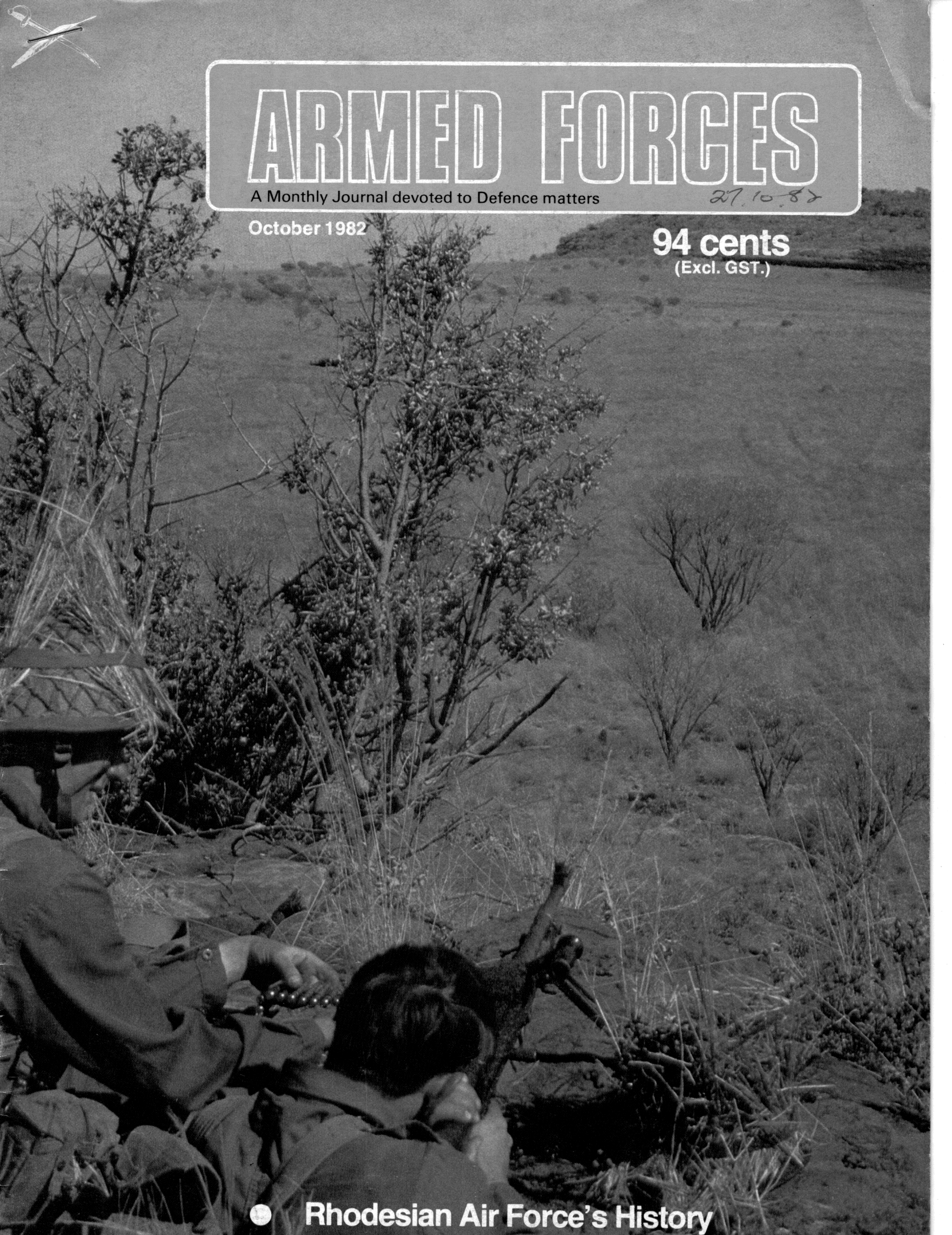
# ARMED FORCES

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● Rhodesian Air Force's History

# ARMED FORCES

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Cover Picture:  
*South African Infantrymen give fire support.*

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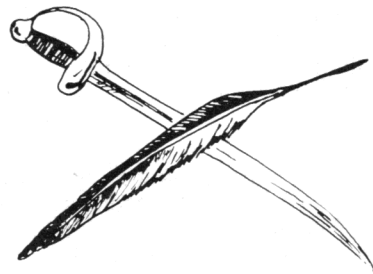
## EDITORIAL

In this issue we print a very comprehensive article on discipline that traces how it has worked since the establishment of regular armies, circa 500 B.C. And while the methods of application of discipline may have changed over the centuries there has never been any proof that it is a Code that is superfluous to military needs. In fact the contrary has been proved to be the case. Despite this there is an apparent continuous manoeuvre aimed at achieving a lowering of existing standards. While it can be accepted that elements favouring permissiveness are often in the forefront of the clamour that is raised to achieve the abolition of long established standards which in turn result only in a lowering of standards, it is surprising how many 'fellow travellers' they pick up along their path. These are often the righteous supporters of modern trends that in their opinion should be accepted by the armies, but strangely they can also incorporate supporters of facets of military tradition, (when it suits them) that they will fight to retain. Perhaps much of the success achieved in the lowering of standards is due to the persuasiveness of the promoters-on those who are unwilling to take a firm stand that they think may be unpopular with the masses. Often with hindsight this reveals a totally incorrect reading of the situation. A case in point was the decision by the United States Navy to accept as a replacement of the tradition sailors dress of bell-bottoms and jumper, an officers' style uniform. This decision was in keeping with the trendy thinking of the time. Now some years later, after a period of ill-discipline, poor recruiting and a general lowering of standards the old form of dress is back, the layabouts who joined the navy during the "with-it" period are mostly fired and the standards are coming back to what they were.

It is difficult to understand why and how this policy was accepted but there must have been many, many 'fellow travellers' who supported what was a permissive programme and nearly sunk their navy by doing so. Perhaps the lesson has now been well learned, that when you remove 2,500 years of experience, you do so at your peril.

South Africa's armament manufacturers will be encouraged by Armscor and its subsidiaries openly entering the international arms market, but to enter the trade of arms supplying is essentially a long term programme and a number of years will be needed before worthwhile financial benefits will occur to the Republic. Initially the Republic's main requirements will be to generate interest in our capability and to obtain orders that will assist in keeping our Armament Industry running, even if it means the heavy subsidising of export orders. The Defence plants must be kept working, for to allow a production line to close and then have to have it reopened is both expensive and time consuming.

THE EDITOR.



# The Rhodesian Air Force

## A History from inception to the Bush War

By  
S. Monick, OLJ., MA., PhD., ALA., FSA(Scot.),  
FRSA.

As has been stated in previous papers by the author published in this journal (1), very little detailed documentation concerning the course of the Rhodesian War can be obtained; in sharp contrast to the mass of political polemics that the COIN conflict has both generated and attracted. It is hoped that the following paper will help to rectify this situation with specific regard to the Rhodesian Air Force (RhAF). The RhAF is one of the numerous units which have received little or no concentrated study with reference to role in the defence of UDI Rhodesia; together with the Rhodesia Light Infantry (RLI), the Special Air Service (SAS), Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR), British South Africa Police (BSAP) and many other units, both military and para-military (examples of the latter being the Department of Internal Affairs - IntAF - and the Guard Force). The Selous Scouts is the only unit which defended UDI Rhodesia to which has been dedicated an authoritative history (2). The following paper is principally motivated by the fact that, in sharp contrast to many other campaigns, this dearth of information can only intensify. In other conflicts (the most obvious examples being the two World Wars), new information constantly emerged in the decades following the close of hostilities (considerably assisted by a veritable flood of reminiscences by former commanders); a process, indeed, which is still continuing. However, this situation cannot be said to apply to the Rhodesian War. The fact that the honours and awards associated with UDI Rhodesia have been superseded by a new series of Zimbabwe awards (3) is clearly symptomatic of the fact that the records associated with the War will be similarly 're-structured'. The destruction of the identify of many units which served in the conflict (e.g. the BSAP, Selous Scouts) is a powerful pointer to the same tendency.

(The writer was privately informed, within this context of the destruction of vital historical records, that the documentation relating to the history of the RhAF has been almost completely destroyed, especially with regard to the vital phase of its history concerned with the COIN war). Indeed, it is this central consideration which has suggested the title of the following paper, derived from the quotation, 'All these were honoured in their generation' (Ecclesiasticus Chapter 44 Verse 7). It will be noted that the emphasis is upon the past tense of 'honour'; suggestive of the process whereby those who served in the Rhodesian War are regarded with, at best, an equivocal attitude by the regime which eventually superseded that which they defended.

The scope of the following study of the RhAF is not confined to the role of the RhAF during the COIN war (1965-1980); although the emphasis is, naturally, placed upon this phase of its history; the history of the force, extending to its origins in 1934, is discussed. There is a specific reason for such an approach, directly related to the contribution made by the RhAF in the course of the COIN war. The flexibility and resourcefulness clearly displayed by the RhAF, in responding to the pressures generated by the COIN conflict after 1965 (and especially in the closing years of the War, when its role was very considerably extended in the cross border raids in which it participated) can only be viewed in clear perspective when compared to the greatly differing roles it performed in the decades prior to UDI.

Doctor Monick has in this work produced a very well researched history of the Rhodesian Air Force. Starting with its inception in 1953 until it ceased to exist as such and became the Air Force of Zimbabwe. In the instalment that will follow, Doctor Monick covers the RhAF operations undertaken during the years until 1980. This is the first authentic report on the RhAF to be published and we are sure that it will stimulate much comment.

### Pre-World War 11 period:

Rhodesia's Air Force existed as the 'result of a somewhat confused gestation and very uncertain birth' (4). Its official history commenced on 28 November 1947, the date of the RhAF's inauguration as a regular defence unit (cf. below). However, its origins extended back to the mid-1930s. On 23 April 1934, the Member of Parliament for Bulawayo North, Col Brady, introduced a motion that a contribution should be made by Southern Rhodesia (as it then was) to assist the Royal Navy in its defence of the Empire. The House approved the motion enthusiastically, and the sum of £10 000 was allocated to the cause.

However, the Imperial Defence Committee stated that a more practical use could be found for the money in the provision for an air training unit to be established in Southern Rhodesia. Accordingly, the De Havilland aircraft company was commissioned to supply aircraft and undertake the elementary training of pilots. The Air Unit was established on a Territorial Force basis as part of the Rhodesia Regiment, and the training of its members began in November 1935, at Belvedere Airport, Salisbury (as it then was). The first course consisted of six trainee pilots, who attended instructional periods at weekends and on Wednesday afternoons. Their aircraft were Tiger Moths (which at that time were considered to be so safe that they would crash only if deliberately flown at the ground). Two important steps were taken to ensure a secure future for the new air arm. First, in 1936 provision was made for airmen to join the Permanent Staff Corps of the Southern Rhodesian Defence Force as regulars. Second, the first course of apprentices was sent to Britain of technical training (as Halton). Maj Dirk Cloete, then Director of Civil Aviation, commanded the new unit as Staff Officer, Air Services, for the next two years (1936-1938). In 1937 six Hawker Hart bi-planes were purchased from the Royal Air Force and two experienced flying instructors were obtained from the same source on secondment. (The aircraft arrived from the Middle East in crates and were partly assembled at Salisbury police barracks. They were then towed by mule-teams to the new military airfield at Cranborne, where the assembly was completed; whilst the wooden crates were used to construct the first mess). On 13 May 1938 the first course of six Rhodesian pilots received their Wings. Later in the same year they were to prove their worth in flying the second batch of aircraft to Southern Rhodesia. (These consisted of six Hawker Audax bi-planes which were ferried to Salisbury from the RAF base at Heliopolis, Egypt, in September of 1938).

World War 11; 237, 266 and 44 Squadrons:

Maj Cloete retired and was succeeded in 1939 by Lt. Col C.W. Meredith as officer commanding Air Sections and Director of Civil Aviation in Rhodesia. Three Gloster Gladiators were acquired in April 1939 and more pilots were awarded their Wings. With the impending outbreak of war, the Territorial Force members of the unit were called up for full-time service (August 1939). Ten pilots (among whom was Lt E.W.S. Jacklin, later to become the first post-war Chief of Staff) and eight aircraft left Salisbury on 27 August to fly to Nairobi.



*One of the two caracels (Rooikat) that are Battalion mascots. This lady is in fine condition and is understood to also be in that condition that so many ladies so often find themselves.*



*A pair of those identifiers*

**The said it.**  
*"The food is as good as at home"  
What the mommy's will say now that their best efforts are equated with army cooking will probably be another story!*



This constituted the only aerial force available to the Imperial authorities in East Africa; clearly testifying to the fact that the decision to divert Rhodesia's contribution from naval to air power had been amply justified. Nairobi proved to be merely the staging post for the route north; for, within two to three days all the Rhodesian aircraft had been moved to the Northern Frontier District of the Abyssinian border. On 19 September 1939 the Air Unit became officially designated the Southern Rhodesian Air Force (SRAF), and the flights on service in Kenya were designated No 1 Squadron of that force.

---237 Squadron: However, the autonomous nature of the new force did not survive for very long in the manpower exigencies of the war; for, in April 1940, all SRAF personnel were absorbed into the RAF, and 1 Sqn was re-designated 237 (Rhodesia) Sqn. 237 was to prove the first of three Rhodesian squadrons serving with the RAF, all of which distinguished themselves in the course of World War II. As a tribute to its preparedness it was allowed to adopt the motto 'Primum Agmen in Caelo' — 'The First Force in the Sky'. (The former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Ian Smith, served in this Squadron). The Italians entered the war in June 1940 and fighting erupted along the Abyssinian border. 'A' Flight provided air cover during the battle around Moyale, while 'B' and 'C' flights patrolled the Somali border. In September 1940 the Squadron rejoined for a move to Khartoum, and two months later it received Westland Lysander aircraft to replace the Hardys with which it had been equipped. In March 1941 one flight was equipped with Gloster Gladiators and in April 1941, the Squadron occupied Asmara after the Italian surrender in Abyssinia. Further moves took it to Wadi Halfa in June and Kasfareet in August. At this point in time its energies were re-directed towards Libya and the Western Desert. By November 1941, 237 Squadron was equipped with Hawker Hurricanes and was embroiled in the fluctuating battles with the Afrika Corps and Luftwaffe. In February 1942 it was ordered back to Ismailia in the Canal Zone before travelling further east. The following year was spent covering the Iraq/Persia sector, with the Squadron operating from such bases as Mosul, Kermanshah and Kirkuk. In March 1943 it was returned to the Canal Zone, where its role changed from that of army co-operation to one of fighter reconnaissance. A long period of operations across North Africa followed, during which the Squadron moved progressively westwards.

In April 1944 237 Squadron was equipped with Spitfires and based initially at Serragia (Italy) and then at Kalvi (Corsica), whence it operated against the enemy in Northern Italy and Southern France. However, as the war drew to a close it became increasingly difficult to recruit personnel to replace those who had either completed their operational tour of duty or become casualties, and the Squadron was disbanded in 1945.

--- 266 Squadron: 266 Squadron was officially designated a 'Rhodesian' unit in August 1940, and it was, accordingly, decided that aircrew from Rhodesia, should be posted to it. The Squadron had, in some respects, a longer history than that of 237, having its origins in World War 1. It had been formed on the island of Lemnos during 1918 as a seaplane unit, and disbanded at the Black Sea port of Petrowsk in the following year. 266 Squadron was re-formed at Sutton Bridge, England, in 1939, before moving to Wittering. Equipped with Spitfires, it fought through the Battle of Britain, in the midst of which, as intimated above, it was designated as a Rhodesian Squadron. The unit adopted the motto 'Hlabezulu' — 'Stabber of the Skies'. Until 1942 the Squadron operated in a variety of roles, including that of interception over enemy occupied France. Re-equipped with Typhoons, it moved to Duxford and thence to Warmwell. By 1943 the Squadron had moved to Harrowbeer in South Devon, whence it continued fighter sweeps of the Channel and Northern France. As a component of 2 Tactical Air Force, the Squadron took part in the D-Day invasion and then was based in France. It continued to provide close support for the ground troops as the advance across Europe proceeded and the winter of 1944 found the Squadron at Antwerp. After the German surrender the unit returned to England for a short refresher course before returning to

resume duties with the British forces of occupation at Hildesheim, Germany. There it was disbanded in August 1945.

**44 Squadron:** 44 Squadron was the Rhodesian contingent within Bomber Command. A number of Rhodesian aircrew had joined Bomber Command since the early months of the War, and in 1941 it was decided to concentrate them as far as possible and to designate No 44 as a Rhodesian unit (11 September 1941). The Squadron had had a long history. It was formed in 1917 with Sopwith Camels, its principal role then being the defence of London against German air attacks. It was disbanded after World War 1 but re-formed in 1937.

**The Augsburg Raid:** The Augsburg raid merits some detailed attention in any history of the RhAF, as it was undoubtedly the most celebrated action undertaken by the Rhodesian squadrons. The Augsburg raid was motivated by the disastrous effect of German U-boat attacks upon Atlantic convoys travelling between the United States and Great Britain in the winter of 1941. One of the most productive factories for the manufacture of U-boat engines was the Messerschmitt Diesel Engine factory (MAN - Maschinefabrik Augsburg Nurnberg A.G.) located at Augsburg (48 km north west of Munich). It was the largest factory engaged in the manufacture of diesel engines in Germany at that time, and was estimated to supply half of Germany's U-boat requirements; in addition to engines for tanks, lorries and shipping. The flight approach to the factory represented incredible hazards for the attackers. The round trip consisted of the better part of 1 600 km over enemy territory, whilst the distances involved precluded the use of fighter escorts. Over such a daunting distance of heavily defended enemy territory, and carrying the maximum possible bomb load, the relatively new Lancasters appeared to be the most suitable aircraft. Two squadrons were allocated to this task; 44 and 97. It should be noted that Lancasters had never been previously used in low level formation attacks.

Low level practice flights commenced on 11 April 1942. In order to minimize the hazards attached to the flight path of the Lancasters, the following plan was adopted:- the French coast would be approached at zero feet in order to counteract the effects of German radar; a diversionary raid was also planned to precede the flight of the two squadrons en route to Augsburg - involving the use of 30 Boston bombers and 800 fighter aircraft, and scheduled to take place in the Pas de Calais and Cherbourg areas to draw off the Luftwaffe fighters. Each Lancaster was to be loaded with four 1 000lb bombs, all of which were fitted with an 11 second delay fuse. The route chosen led from Selsey Bill - Dives - Surmer - Sens - Ludwigshaven to the north end of Ammer See; thence a last moment turn to port to confuse the enemy, and lead straight to the true target. The raid was timed to allow the attacking Lancasters the last light of a fading day before striking. The raid completed, the aircraft could enjoy the cover of darkness in their long return flight; this cover was sorely needed, as all Germany would by then have been alerted to the bombers' presence.

On 14 April 44 Squadron carried out its last practice formation flight, at on 17 April, at 15h12 the Squadron took off. Of the seven Lancasters of 44 Squadron, six were detailed for the raid; the seventh being on stand-by. The pilots of the aircraft were as follows:-

**Lancaster**

R5508 'B' Sqn Ldr J.D. Nettleton  
R5510 'A' FO J. Garwell, DFC, DFM  
R5506 'P' Flt Lt R.R. Sandford, DFC  
L7536 'H' WO G.T. Rhodes  
L7548 'T' WO H.V. Crum  
L7565 'V' WO J.E. Beckett, DFM

(see fig (i) for flight plan)

97 Squadron's personnel and formation are not detailed in this paper, as they did not become involved in the ensuing actions which virtually annihilated 44 Squadron. In the event of the two squadrons becoming separated en route to Augsburg both had been ordered to proceed independently but to stay

together if possible to afford greater concentrated fire and protection in the event of attacks by the Luftwaffe. In the event, of squadrons rendezvoused on time at Selsey Bill, with Nettleton's squadron taking the lead for the Channel crossing. 44 Squadron drew ahead of 97 crossing the Channel, and Nettleton flew on a course slightly north of the planned route. The two squadrons became separated before reaching France, but both pressed on as planned.

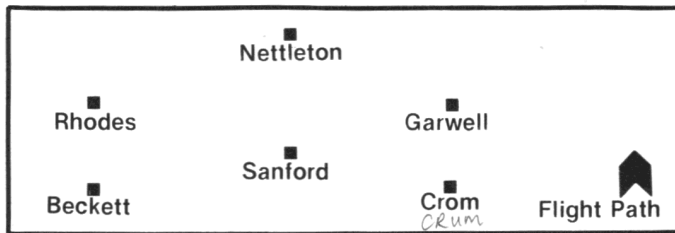


Fig. 1

Shortly after crossing the Channel, Nettleton's aircraft suffered the misfortune of passing the edge of Beaumont le Roger airfield at a time when the Messerschmitt Bf109s and Focke-Wulf Fw 190s of 11 Gruppe, Jagdgeschwader 2 ('Richthofen') were landing after a sortie in the Cherbourg zone. The aircraft had been scrambled to intercept the diversionary raid being carried out by the Bostons and fighters of the RAF. The German fighters were returning earlier than had been anticipated by the RAF. The Luftwaffe fighters appeared at their home airfield and were circling to land when the Lancasters of 44 Squadron swept past underneath. The German fighters were immediately alerted; undercarriages were raised, even on the approach to landing, and the fighters took off in pursuit of the Lancasters. Thirty German fighters covered on the six Lancasters, and Nettleton's squadron was attached from the rear. (of. fig i) The first casualty was the bomber piloted by WO J.E. Beckett DFM shot down by Gruppenkommander Hauptmann Heine Greisert. The second victim was Flt Lt R.R. Sandford's aircraft, which was attacked and shot down by Feldwebel Bossekert of 5 Staffel; the Lancaster plunged to the ground with all four engines aflame and exploded upon impact. The final victim of the second 'V' formation was WO H.V. Crum's bomber, shot down by Unteroffizier Pohl of 5 Staffel flying a Bf 109 'Black 7'.

His port wing a mass of flames, Crum jettisoned his bombs and landed his Lancaster straight ahead as per briefing instructions. Crum represented JG 2's claimed 1 000th victim. The Germans then attached the front 'V' of the Lancaster formation, and their first victim was WO G.T. Rhode's bomber. This was attacked by the Kommodore Major Oesau, a 100 victory 'ace'. He and his wing man, Ofw. Edelman 'closed to 10 metres' on Rhodes and shot both port engines into flames. With his port side aflame, Rhodes adhered to the formation gallantly. He shut off both port engines and closed in until he was wing tip to wing tip with Nettleton. Both starboard engines were under excessive pressure and Rhodes had the utmost difficulty in maintaining control; Rhodes nevertheless elected to remain with the formation. However, to cope with the demand upon both starboard engines, carrying a full load and trying to maintain the same pace as the other two Lancasters flown by Nettleton and Garwell, proved an impossible task. Suddenly both the starboard engines of Rhode's aircraft plunged into flames and the Lancaster reared 'as if in agony . . .', paused, stalled, and then plunged straight down between Nettleton and Garwell. The stricken aircraft — now a fireball — plunged to the ground and exploded. Oesau was flying a Bf 109F-4 and claimed the victim as a 'Liberator'. Edelman was hit by fire from the Lancaster gunners and slightly wounded, but landed safely. The two surviving Lancasters pressed on to their target, expecting further destruction. (Their orders had been that, if one aircraft of a section had been shot down early in the flight, the squadron was to return; in view of the importance of their target, however, the surviving bombers decided to disregard these orders). However, suddenly, and without warning, the German fighters abandoned the attack; having reached the limits of their fuel and ammunition, they broke off to return to base.

The two remaining Lancasters reached their target of Augsburg. On the approach they dropped from rooftop level to street level in line astern to fly beneath the German flak. Nettleton leading, both bombed on target and began pulling away. FO Garwell's aircraft was hit by ground flak as it sought to gain height after bombing and his aircraft was set on fire. Beyond Augsburg he crash landed. Nettleton, alone, began the long return flight. His aircraft was seriously damaged, whilst his navigator was seriously injured and unable to assist. At 005h00 Nettleton's aircraft landed at Squire's Gate, near Blackpool; the flight time was nine hours.

(97 Squadron had avoided interception in their flight across France, but had observed the explosions of 44 Squadron's casualties from a distance. 97 Squadron, led by Sqn Ldr J.S. Sherwood, DFC, reached their target without suffering any casualties and adopted the same tactics as 44 Squadron's surviving aircraft (i.e. rooftop level in line astern). Two aircraft were lost; that of Sherwood himself — he was the sole survivor of his crew — and WO Mycock, DFC; whilst a third — that of FO E.A. Deverill, DFC; was badly damaged but managed to pull away.

Of 44 Squadron, 35 aircrew had been lost, out of a total of 42. The casualties were as follows:-

**Lancaster L7565 'V'**

WO J.E. Beckett, DFM  
Sgt B.D. Moss (Rhodesian)  
Flt Sgt A.E. Moss  
Sgt B.D. Seagoe  
Sgt J.H. Hackett  
Sgt A.J. Harrison  
Sgt R. Trustram

**Lancaster R5506 'P'**

Flt Lt R.R. Sandford, DFC  
PO H.A.P. Peall (Rhodesian)  
FO A. Georie  
Sgt G.W.J. Hadgraft  
Sgt P.J. Venter  
Flt Sgt S.L. Law  
Sgt R. Wing

**Lancaster L7548 'T'**

WO H.V. Crum (taken prisoner)  
Sgt A.D.C. Dedman (Rhodesian)\*\*  
Sgt N.T. Birkett  
Flt Sgt J. Saunderson  
Sgt J. Miller  
Sgt B.A. Dowty  
Sgt A. Cobb

**Lancaster L7536 'H'**

Sgt G.T. Rhodes  
Sgt L.H. Baxter  
Sgt B. Daly  
Sgt C.L. Merricks  
Sgt J.A. Wynton  
Flt Sgt G. Edwards  
Flt Sgt H.V. Gill

**Lancaster R5510 'A'**

FO J. Garwell, DFC, DFM  
Sgt L.L. Dando  
Flt Sgt F.S. Kirke, DFM  
Flt Sgt R.J. Flux, DFM  
Sgt J. Watson  
Flt Sgt I. Edwards  
Flt Sgt D.H. McAlphine

The combined raids of 44 and 97 Squadrons resulted in 17 1000 lb bombs dropped on target, five of which failed to explode; the remaining 12 wrought havoc on two machine tool shops, the forging shop and main assembly shop.

\*\*  
*The War History of Southern Rhodesia 1939-1945 does not cite Dedman in its Roll of Honour (5) (The other names are excluded in any event, as they are not Rhodesian). It may, therefore, be reasonably assumed that the entire crew of Lancaster L7548 'T' were taken prisoner together with Crum.*

Nettleton was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on the raid (the first VC to be awarded to a South African in World War 2). Two Rhodesians, PO P.A. Dorehill and Sgt D.N. Huntly, were decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross and Distinguished Flying Medal respectively; whilst two South Africans, Flt C.S.C. McClure and Sgt C.S. Churchill, received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Distinguished Flying Medal respectively. (Sqn Ldr Nettleton was killed on active service on 13 July 1943).

**Attacks on the 'Tirpitz':** One week later the Squadron precision bombed the 'Tirpitz' at Trondhjem (Norway)

The Lancasters of 44 Squadron took off on this mission from Lossiemouth Airfield in the north-east of Scotland. On their return crews reported that the bombs had been accurately delivered. However, photographic reconnaissance revealed that the 'Tirpitz' had incurred little damage. Accordingly, it was necessary to repeat the attack on the night of 28 April 1942 by bright moonlight. Operations were more successful on this occasion, and the battleship was reported to have been hit by a 4 000lb bomb.

**Other operations:** On 30 May 1942 Lancasters of 44 Squadron participated in the first 1 000 bomber raid of the war, directed at Cologne. A third of the city, the capital of the Rhineland, was destroyed, and 250 factory buildings obliterated within 90 minutes. The cost in casualties, however, was heavy; 43 bombers failed to return. A further notable raid involved the attack on the Schneider works at Le Creusot (17 October 1942); nine bombers of 44 Squadron, in combination with bombers from other squadrons, took part in this attack.

In 1943 44 Squadron took part in bombing attacks on the cities of Northern Italy, and in the early months of 1943 a wide range of targets - Duisberg, Wilhelmshaven, Cologne, Berlin, Lorient, Essen, Hamburg - were attacked by 44 Squadron as part of the bomber offensive directed at the Ruhr. These at-

tacks were not executed without heavy cost. During the course of two months (January-February 1943) the Squadron lost eight Lancasters on operations. In January 1944, in which the Squadron shared in nine successful raids, five of the bombers were lost.

In February the Squadron participated in only five raids, losing two aircraft. When one considers that each bomber contained seven crew members, these losses of aircraft involved 49 casualties in two months. During the final two months of the war the Squadron attacked a wide variety of targets - Dresden, Emden, Karlsruhe, Pilsen, Leipzig and marshalling towns and yards in Eastern Germany. During this period, the unit lost eight aircraft (56 aircrew). The Squadron's last offensive operation was a raid on Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden on 25 April 1945. It was subsequently used to evacuate prisoners-of-war from Germany.

44 Squadron did not share the fate of the other two Rhodesian squadrons by being disbanded. Indeed, it operates to this day as a Bomber Squadron of the Royal Air Force's Strike Command, and still retains the original badge featuring the elephant. The word 'Rhodesia' was, however, removed from its title when Princess Marina presented the Standard to 44 Squadron in June 1967. (No Rhodesians had been invited, although the Chief of Staff and men of the RRAF sent a congratulatory telegram.

It should, of course, be borne in mind that the Rhodesian World War 2 was certainly not confined to the above three squadrons. During the course of the war the number of Rhodesians who served with the Royal Air Force numbered 977 officers and 1 432 other ranks. Of these 498 were killed, representing a proportion of one in every five serving Rhodesians.

Part Two in our next Issue

*This 18 Pounder Field Gun, was completely rebuilt in the Capetown workshops of Dorman Long Swan Hunter specially for the 125 anniversary of the Caoe Field Artillery. As can be seen from the photograph the Dorbyl Group subsidiary have done a magnificent job of work of restoration.*

