

## 64 Squadron

### Fighter Command records state at Fairlop

- (i) 8 August to 14 November 1942
- (ii) 2 January to 14 March 1943

### ORB's state

From Hornchurch, Essex

- (i) 1 to 22 February 1942 (\*)
- (ii) 8 August to 16 November 1942 (\*\*)
- (iii) 2 January to 15 March 1943

(\*) Hornchurch aerodrome waterlogged

(\*\*) Move back to Hornchurch delayed by mist.



### Aircraft

**Spitfire V** – (used by the new boys for circuits and bumps)  
EN132, EN152, EN522, EN525.

### Spitfire IX

BR140, BR141, BR142, BR240, BR260, BR278, BR370, BR506, BR539, BR592, BR594, BR596, BR600, BR601, BR602, BR603 (written off), BR624, BS105, BS126, BS140, BS227, BS262, BS276, BS278 (lost 26 January 1943), BS279, BS280, BS282, BS288, BS292, BS315, BS400, BS439, BS441, BS444, BS539, BS544, BS624.

### Pilots

Alexandre,	P/O	
Austeen, A	Lt	(Norway)
Bamberger,	F/O	
Batchelor, WJ	P/O	
Bern, W	Sgt	(New Zealand)
Bilsland, W	F/Sgt	
Burge, AW	Sgt	(New Zealand)
Burnard, FR	Sgt	(Bermuda)
Calder,	P/O	
Charles, EFJ	F/Lt	(supernumerary)
Collingnon	F/L	
Crawford-Compton, WV	S/L DFC	
Corkett, AH	S/Ldr	
Curd, J	F/O	
Dalziel, L	F/Sgt	
Doherty, J	P/O	
Donnet, MGL	F/L	DFC, C de G (Belgium)
Dowler, JC	P/O	
Draper, Raymund Sanders		F/O 107244 RAFVR (United States of America) died 24 March 1943 Hornchurch, Essex buried St Andrews, Hornchurch
Finney, C	F/Sgt	
Gaze	S/Ldr	
Gray	S/Ldr	
Gunn, AH	S/Ldr	(supernumerary)
Gun, J	Sgt	
Harder, JW	F/O	(United States of America) POW 24 July 1944 into Stalag Luft III
Harris, RFF	P/O	
Holmes,	P/O	
Holmes, HC	P/O	
Johnsen, T	2/Lt	(Norway)
Kain	S/Ldr	
Kelly, BC	P/O	
Kingaby, DE	F/L	DFC
Kirkman,	F/Sgt	(Australia)
Ledington, D	F/Sgt	RCAF (actually American)

Lindseth, E	2/Lt	(Norway)	
Loftus, FD	F/Sgt	(New Zealand)	
Marshall JW	F/Sgt		Believed killed November 1943 remembered at Runnymede Memorial
Mason, GA	F/Sgt		
McKoy, Godfrey Alan			F/Sgt 414651 - To Fairlop from 52 OTU New Zealand Died 26 January 1943 age 22 Buried Longuenesse (St. Omer) Souvenir Cemetery
Petterson, EHM	P/O		
Poulton, HRG	P/O		
Rice, CA	F/Sgt	(Australian)	
Roberts, JA	F/Sgt		
Schuren RC	P/O	(Netherlands)	
Stevenson, Peter Charles Fasken			DFC F/Lt 33521 RAF Died 13 February 1943 into sea off Boulogne. Attacked by FW190 Remembered at Runnymede Memorial
Stromme, Eiliv Schjederup	Lt	(Norway)	Died 11 October 1942 Buried Longuenesse (St. Omer) Souvenir Cemetery
Walker, FR	F/Sgt		
Wise, RA	F/S		
Withy, HF	P/O		
Worrall, V	F/Sgt		

## Notes

### First posting 1942.

**1 February 1942.** Hornchurch inch of snow. All personnel on snow clearing.

**2 February.** Hornchurch declared U/S.

**5 February.** 12 Aircraft have got to go to Fairlop with 12 from 411. Fairlop runways are snow covered so unlikely we will go today.

**6 February.** Fairlop temporarily U/S until runways sanded. The Squadron eventually took off at 1430 hours and flew in pairs to Fairlop. After a somewhat rowdy telly in which everything in sight was eaten, and a terrific snowball fight ensued and the Squadron returned to Hornchurch by transport.

**10 February.** One section remained at Fairlop on Aerodrome defence.

**12 February.** About 1100 hours word came through that a big German convoy including three big ships (subsequently proving to be the Gneisau, Scharnhorst and Prince Eugen) was coming up the channel. This information was accidentally discovered by Group Capt Beamish who happened to be flying up the channel in the morning.

At 1205 hours the squadron together with 411 Squadron was ordered to rendezvous with bombers at Manston at 1230 hours, but owing to lack of time we couldn't get there until 1245 hours, only to find the bombers had already gone. The wing was vectored back to a point 8 miles north of Calais, but after stoozing (sic) up and down being fired at by a flak ship, they came back to Fairlop, after meeting the Wing Commander and climbing 7,000 feet to reconnoitre. The Squadron (10 aircraft only) hardly had time to refuel and no lunch before they were off again at 1505 hours with 411 Squadron to rendezvous with 313 Squadron at Southend at 1630 hours. They were then given a vector of 080° for 30 minutes, but after seeing nothing but a number of our own aircraft returning from the direction of France the wing landed again at 1625 hours. Later in the evening it was reported that we shot down 18 huns for the loss of 42 of ours and the ships got through.

**PRANG.** Sgt Dobson-Smyth taxied into the wing of P/O Mitchell's aircraft. Result - two aircraft Cat. A for new spinner and new wing.

**13 February.** Lovely fine morning. The Squadron, still operating from Fairlop, carried out camera gun exercises at 30,000 feet in the morning. Three aircraft were detailed to carry out a beat up of a detachment of Scots Guards just behind 64 dispersal - some spectacular dive attacks resulted. Unfortunately P/O Jack Slade landed a little close to F/Lt Prevot and in trying to avoid him going off the runway and turned it into onto his nose in the soft ground. At 1100 the Squadron were called into readiness as the Hun had three wings over the Channel in different places but not the east. Sgt Helen caused quite a lot of excitement by getting lost but after turning up over Brentwood, Biggin Hill and Sevenoaks he eventually landed at Fairlop and someone was sent to collect the aircraft and bring it up to Fairlop. At 1240 hours eight aircraft which was all the squadron could muster led by the Wing Commander took off with 411 Squadron. Roadsted (sic) operation against three or four 2,000 ton ships off the French coast between Martinique and Calais. They had to escort six Hurricane bombers each 607 and 32 Squadrons who were going to bomb the ships while we beat up flak ships

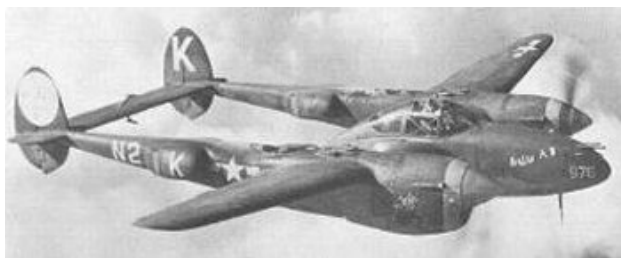
(if any). Actually the ships were never seen so after flying along the French coast Calais to Ostend the squadron returned to Manston with 411.

**22 February.** Squadron returned to Fairlop.

### Second posting

**12 September 1942.** Practice show with Fortresses (Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress), was cancelled. (10/10 cloud).

**13 September.** Low cloud. Practice flying interspersed with bouts of pontoon. (card game).



**P38 Lightning in flight**  
(Aircraft Aces)

**16 September.** Operation Rodeo. Escort to Lightning's, rendezvous at Beachy Head at 24,000 feet, Le Touquet 30,000 ft then right turn via Aix Le Chateau (Auxi-le-Château), Abbeville and Disemont (Dixmuides) – out at Dieppe. No E/A or shipping seen.

**19 September.** Patrol Whitstable area.

**26 September.** To Harrowbeer.

(RAF Harrowbeer is situated next to Yelverton, Devon). A/B at 1600 escort to Fortresses – target was Brest. Squadron airborne 2 hrs 20 mins – many aircraft short on fuel. P/O Calder forced landing at Wembury (south coast of Devon, close to Plymouth Sound) – into hospital at RN Hospital Plymouth with abdominal injuries. BR603 written off.

**8 October.** Sgts McKoy, Bern and Burge (all NZ) posted from 52 OTU. 2/Lt E Lindseth (Norwegian) posted from 332 Squadron

**9 October.** 0852 Squadron airborne to lead a wing of Spitfires as target support to 108 Fortresses and Liberators to Lille. Squadron missed Lille went to Manberge, saw 2 Squadrons of Lightning's rapidly vanishing in the direction of Paris. Several chaps short of juice. Kingaby, Donnet, Austeen and Stromme, land at Manston – all down by 1050 hours.

In the afternoon new boys in Spit V's circuits and bumps.

Johnsen and Schuren scrambled. On landing Schuren had no brakes, overshot and piled up 'WK' on its nose by railway embankment. This is his second prang of the day.

In morning, whilst taxiing, ran off runway, sank in, trying to get – went up on his nose. P/O Schuren prangs 'H' and 'K'.

**11 October.** Lovely fine day. At 1340 the Squadron took off on a rodeo. Rendezvous at Felixstowe at 1,500 feet with five other Squadrons and French coast crossed east of Dunkirk (Dunkerque) at 27,000 feet. By then six of the ten aircraft which set off had returned with jettison tank trouble but the remaining four met 4 FW 190's about 10 miles inland and as a result of the set to S/Ldr Gaze got an FW190 damaged and P/O Stromme and P/O Dowler are missing.

Johnson was testing 'A' when the jettison tank fell off and he landed smack in the middle of the road about 300 yards past the railway.

**16 October.** 0645 Squadron taxiing to take off to Bolthead, show cancelled. (Bolt Head airfield on the southern tip of Devon, near Salcombe) The spectacle of our worthy Belgian Flight Commander sprinting like a streak of lightning from dispersal to the runway to stop the C.O. was a sight to behold. Grand news.



S/Ldr Leon Prevot (our one time Flight Commander) and CO of 122 Squadron who went missing on 30 July 1942 is back again and coming to see us tomorrow.

ORB states Leon Prevot - months leave with his people in Belgium.

**Leon Prevot**  
(André Bar Collection)



**A Spitfire Mk IX of 64 Squadron undergoing an engine overhaul outside a Blister Hangar on the north side of Fairlop.**

(Imperial War Museum TR 513)

**21 October.** Gorgeous morning. Squadron took off at 0715 for Bolt Head and at 1215 went over to Lannion as fighter cover to 92 Fortresses. (Lannion, a Luftwaffe base in Brittany) Soon after leaving our coast they ran into 10/10th cloud through which they climbed for 21 minutes to 18,000ft, which took them to Lannion. (If they had flown for 31 minutes which was the course given them they would have once again been somewhere near Portugal). They then patrolled north Lannion for 10 minutes, seeing nothing returned. Squadron returned to Fairlop at 1730 just as it began to rain.

**22 October.** New boys did circuits and bumps.

**25 October.** 'B' flight on dawn readiness and did 2 patrols to South Forelands before breakfast. Clay shooting was much enjoyed by 'A' flight at 1000 hours. At 1415 Squadron took off on Rodeo 102, a big affair with 6 wings going in at Dunkirk to St Omer after rendezvous at Southend, while as a diversion a circus went to Le Havre. All went according to plan up to crossing the French coast when 10/10 cloud at 20/30,000 feet and severe icing conditions, forced everyone to return without seeing anything. Walker and Johnsen returned early with oiled up windscreens, with Mason and Schuren with jettison tank trouble.

**26 October.** Raining like stink when we woke up. We had several air raids and heard one E/A once quite close in cloud.

A keen type in a gun post at Southend killed the pilot of a Dornier 217 causing it to land halfway across the aerodrome and charged straight across 350's (\*) dispersal hut. 3 of the Huns were killed and the fourth seriously injured. W/O Engineer (\*\*) in the hut was also killed.



above: **Dornier 217** (Mackenzie Gregory)

left: **Grave of Theodulle Dyon** (War Graves Photo Project)

(\*) The person killed was Warrant Officer Adjt Theodulle Elsi Nicolas Dyon, 1458451 RAFVR of 350 (Belgian) Squadron– not stationed at Fairlop until March 1943. He is buried at Brussels Town Cemetery, Belgian Airmen's Field of Honour.

(\*\*) The summary of 350 Squadron events held at National Archives AIR 27/1745/22 suggests the Squadron were stationed at Southend on 26 October 1942. Although, is not mentioned directly by name, they were definitely not stationed at Fairlop.

**27 October.** Continuous patrols over Ashford.

In the evening a party of us went up to G.C. Broadhursts farewell party at Shepherds.

Sgt Rice had a lucky escape when he touched down just off the aerodrome on a newly sown field, crashed through a post and wire fence without touching his prop but slightly damaged the air cooler and then finished up normally on the runway – his windscreen was covered with oil.

**29 October.** Squadron to Hornchurch to parade in 0945 to receive two new spits IX's from the Brazilian Ambassador.

**31 October.** 'A' flight came into Readiness at 1300 hours and took off at 1535 with orders to patrol inland of Dungeness below the cloud. Actually they patrolled off Dungeness and until they saw a Walrus coming back with escort and then returned to base. At 1700 hours the Squadron was called to Readiness as 200 Huns came over and blitzed Folkestone. Austeen and Pat (*Patterson*) were already up off Dungeness and given a number of vectors without being told what area was being attacked. They came across 2 FW 190's who jumped them from a cloud. Austeen saw Pat vanishing into cloud surrounded by a shower of tracer and came to the conclusion that he had 'had it' but he wasn't touched and both spent the night at Manston.

**1 November.** Dull day with low clouds, rain settling in at lunchtime.  
The Squadron was ordered in rapid succession to:

- a) see films at Hornchurch
- b) take off at 1300 to do Readiness at Manston
- c) take off at 1330 for a circus to St Omer
- d) inflate immediately on take off at Fairlop
- e) fly to Manston and do Readiness there and it finally did rear support off Calais to a ramrod to St Omer, which saw nothing not even the target. The Squadron spent the night at Manston..



**A Spitfire Mk IX of 64 Squadron taxiing before take off at Fairlop.**  
(Imperial War Museum CH 7730)



**5 November.** It rained all day. Squadron went to church at 1400 for P.T. and the new pilots attended a lecture on escaping

**6 November.** Brighter weather and 'B' flight did formation in the morning whilst 'A' flight did a timed flight individually to a given point 25 miles away with fixed boost and revs, the time being taken from the moment of leaving dispersal to the time when they flew over dispersal on return journey.

1345 Squadron took off on Ramrod 22.

Everything went according to plan, but no one saw anything, not even France, as it was 10/10 cloud from mid-channel the whole way over France.

**8 November.** Weather fine but much ground mist.

One section of 'A' flight was at Readiness for aerodrome defence 0830 to 1300 hours.

At 1121 hours 10 aircraft were airborne as unit of Circus 234. Rendezvous was made with Fortresses 5 miles east of Dunkirk and the formation proceeded to Lille at 25,000 feet, turning right after bombing and coming out at Gravelines.

FW's were seen, but Squadron remained with the bombers.

**9 November.** Thick fog visibility 5 to 10 yards. Proceeded to Hornchurch where a lecture was given on the subject of prisoner of war interrogation. This proved so interesting that lecturer was kept busy for 2 hours.

**10 November.** Patrols over Dungeness, Canterbury and Ashford. 2/Lt Lindseth on first operational flight.

**11 November.** Thick fog on aerodrome, so in the afternoon all pilots went to bathe in Dagenham baths.

**12 November.** Again very foggy. In the afternoon pilots did daily inspections of the aircraft with the ground crews.

**13 November.** News received that P/O Dowler is safe and a prisoner of war.

**14 November.** Thick mist all day. Squadron to move to Hornchurch. Pilots move to Hornchurch by road.

**16 November.** Pilots to Fairlop by road and flew to Hornchurch by 1030.



**A few words from a fellow pilot before engine start Spitfire Mk IX BR600 of 64 Squadron at Fairlop.**  
(Imperial War Museum TR 517)

### **Third posting 1943.**

**2 January 1943.** At Predannack, Cornwall. 1030 hours 13 aircraft took off for Fairlop landing at 1150.

**4 January.** Fine and frosty with ground haze. At 1430 hrs 4 aircraft took off on patrol with two minesweepers 12-15 miles off Deal (heading north) at 800 ft. Sgt Burge on first operational flight. Nothing was seen and aircraft returned to base.

**5 January.** Dull morning inclined to snow and warmer. 1½ hours spent on aircraft recognition.

**6 January.** In the evening we were delighted to welcome P/O Ken Calder just out of hospital after his crash on 26 September 1942.

**8 January.** At 1430 hrs the Squadron took off on a practice wing formation round London and the imposing spectacle of 48 Spits line astern each 800 yards apart was to be seen.

**9 January.** 13 aircraft practice flying, then at 1245 hours took off on Rodeo to St Omer. 350 and 453 Squadrons were below with 122 and 64 Squadrons above. Rendezvous made at Hornchurch, out at Manson, then climbing until the French coast was crossed. West of Mardyck at 18,000 feet turned right then through Audruicq and out at Sangatte. Huns were reported behind so the Squadron returned to deal with them. Charlie section and Patterson and Mason were engaged with six FW 190 at 20,000 feet. Flying leader Donnet, Marshall, Johnsen and Patterson all had good squirts. Sgt Bern on first operational flight.

**10 January.** Filthy day with thick fog. In the morning did Hunt Range and link trainer.

**13 January.** At 1150 hours Squadron took off as rear support to circus 249. We were top Squadron going in at Mardyke (Mardyck) at 25,000 feet and patrolling inside France between Audruicq and Bourbourg Ville out east of Calais nothing seen it all ended by 1320 hours.

At 1345 hours they all took off again as top Squadron in rear support flight to Ypres, whilst Fortresses went to Lille. They went in at 25,000 feet down to Ypres then out toward Dunkirk. There they shot up to 33,000 feet to try and have a crack at 8 FW 190's in smoke but they beetled off into France and that was that.



**B17 in flight**  
(David Martin)

**16 January.** 4 aircraft on M.T.B. patrol off Dover, nothing seen.

**18 January.** After a somewhat disturbed night owing to very heavy ack ack. Jerry bombers came over twice, we found the aerodrome covered with RAF Regiment looking for unexploded shells, one of which had caused aircraft 'W' to resemble a colander (cat 'B').

**20 January.** Foggy morning. Squadron brought smartly to readiness at 1230 hours in the middle of lunch and a variety of interesting explosions were heard all around the countryside. At 1405 hours 10 aircraft went on an uneventful patrol of Dungeness. Sgt McKoy on first operational flight.

At 1555 hours course was set for Manston at 0 feet, out to Gris Nez, patrol was started at 13,000 feet between there and Dunkirk. They were about to dive on an 'R' boat about 4 miles east of Calais when 7 FW190 is was spotted coming from Gris-Nez at 7,000 feet without seeing us. The C.O. lead the Squadron adown to attack and as a result of the ensuing dogfight Squadron Leader Compton got a destroyed and F/L Poulton and 2/Lt Lindseth each a good damaged – Mason and Bilsland also has squirts without being able to see results. Squadron were all down by 1725 hours after some sticky landings in very bad visibility.

**21 January.** Fine and misty morning. At 1245 hours the Squadron–12 aircraft, took off on circus 252. Rendezvous at Hornchurch at 1,000 feet, out at Beachy Head at 16,000 feet and in at St Valery at 18,000 feet down to Le Havre at 23,000 feet and then back to Le Touquet at 33,000 feet where 22 FW 190 were seen below at 25,000 feet. Landed at 1425 hours.

After a very hurried lunch at dispersal we were off again (10 aircraft only) at 1505 hours on Rodeo 156, going out at Dungeness and climbing up to 13,000 feet through 10/10 clouds to just inside Gris-Nez where we patrolled for 10 to 15 minutes. 4 FW 190 was seen below climbing up but these were engaged by 122 Squadron below. Squadron Leader Kingaby getting one destroyed and one

probable and Squadron Leader Kain getting one destroyed. We were out again and eight aircraft landed here and two at Hornchurch by 1625 hours.

**22 January.** Squadron take off at 1430 hours and 10 aircraft on Circus 253. Out at Eastchurch at 5,000 feet and climbed to Mardyke going in at 25,000 feet down to Audruik at 31,000 feet back to down the coast to Dunkirk then home via Dover. Sgt Ledington had a narrow squeak as his engine burned out on the starboard side whilst over France and it came back on six cylinders. At 1720 hours 'B' flight were scrambled (six aircraft) to patrol Barrow Deep but they only saw two Whirlwinds—one landed here one at Southend.

**23 January.** Dull morning Practice flying, the Hun having jammed the R.D.F. (radio direction finder).

**25 January.** 12 aircraft of a Rodeo between 1115 and 1235 hours. In at Nieuport and out at Dunkirk.

**26 January.** Lovely fine early morning. At 1150 hours Squadron of 12 aircraft took off on Circus 256 making rendezvous with 122 Squadron over North Foreland at 5,000 feet climbing to cross the French coast 10 miles east of Dunkirk at 19,000 feet flying down to Dixmude and thence to St Omer at 23,000 feet and 3 enemy aircraft was seen behind at same height and 12 e/a at 13,000 feet. The CO led Red and Charlie sections into the 3 e/a whilst George Mason bounced the 12 good and proper. The three Huns eluded us, but we took the 12 by surprise and George Mason destroyed one, Sgt Burnard damaged another while S/Ldr Corkett and F/L Charles and 2/Lt Lindseth say all had good squirts. Sadly no one seems to have seen anything of Sgt Mckoy who did not return. The Squadron landed at Manston had a quick lunch and 10 aircraft took off again at 1550 hours to do a quick sweep with 122 Squadron. Nothing was seen and all back at Fairlop by 1700 hours.

**27 to 30 January.** Weather cloudy then high winds.

**31 January.** Gales and pouring rain, which developed into a hurricane during the day and night with gusts up to 90 mph.

**1 February.** Wind still strong with gusts up to 40 mph, but rain stopped.

**GONG.** F/L Michael Donnett is awarded the DFC. The award is immensely popular and most richly deserved.

**2 February.** Fair but stormy. 0930 were rushed off at short notice on Circus 257 (11 aircraft taking part) we were not able to make the rendezvous at Bradwell Bay, but picked up the Beehive at North Foreland, but when 5 miles off Mardyke the 12 Venturas (\*\*\*) turned back and we accompanied them. The Squadron was then called into Readiness as Hornchurch was still U/S.

(\*\*\*) The Lockheed Ventura was a bomber and patrol aircraft, used by United States and British Commonwealth forces in several guises.

**3 February.** At 0925 hrs, 10 aircraft took off on Circus 258, making rendezvous with Hornchurch wing at Bradwell Bay together with 12 Venturas going in at Furnes at 16,000 feet flying down to Courtrai where they were supposed to bomb the aerodromes but as there was 10/10 cloud below, the bombers overshot by about 3 minutes and the wing leader had to stop them and bring them back. For some unknown reason after starting to return on the correct course they shot off in a southerly directions and we returned to base.

At 1505 hours 12 aircraft took off on circus 259 taking 12 Venturas to Abbeville Marshalling Yards. Rendezvous at 0 feet at Beachy Head, in at mouth of the Somme, bombed from 10,000 feet, (we being at 13,000 feet) to Cayeux, after which the Squadron (7 aircraft, as four had returned early, including the CO as tanks would not come off) did a little pansy (sic) formation flying and landed at 1705 hours.

**4 February.** The Provost of Leicester gave a talk to the entire Squadron, followed by pay parade, while all pilots (and the Intelligence Officer) ran and walked round the perimeter track doing it in 30 minutes exactly.

**7 February.** Air to sea firing test. P/O Patterson had a narrow squeak flying a Spitfire Mk V as the flight had just reached land after 40 minutes over the sea, when his engine cut out at 200 feet and he belly landed about 10 miles from Burnham on Crouch. Unhurt but aircraft Cat 'B'.

**10 February.** 1050 hours 11 aircraft of Rodeo 166. In 5 miles west of Dunkirk at 24,000 feet and out at Le Touquet. A few Huns were seen in the Boulogne area away up in smoke but they beetled off.

**11 February.** Whole Squadron turned out on to practice rearming, an early lunch then Operation 'Kingo' was carried out. This consisted of 15 pilots including the C.O. being taken out into the country by Pilots Transport and dropped in pairs in different places about five miles from the Officers Mess with instructions to return within 3 ½ hours. The opposing forces were 1 Squadron of RAF Regiment and about 40 civilian police including at least 4 patrol cars. Pilots were only given sixpence and a pocket compass while the use of English, hitchhiking, 1250's were barred. (1250's believed to refer to an Ordnance Survey map at scale 1:1250). F/L Boulton, F/O Harris and Sgt Marshall were the only ones to get through, though five others got to within 500 yards of the mess before being pinched. Many and varied worthy adventures of them all and the adjutant and intelligent officer were kept busy the whole afternoon answering phone calls from police stations and army barracks reporting the capture of "suspicious and disreputable looking characters claiming to be members of 64 Squadron".

**12 February.** The Squadron rather stiff after its exertions of yesterday.

**13 February.** Fine and clear. At 0905 hours 11 aircraft took off on Circus 262. In 5 miles east of Calais at 16,000 feet, right Montreuil, after Boulogne south again to Le Touquet and out at Boulogne at 22,000 feet. The first time they made Boulogne, F/Lt. Stephenson's engine cut out and he eventually



went into the drink about 3 miles off Boulogne. Escorted until practically the last moment by Sgt Bilsland who damaged one of five FW 190's which attacked them. An international broadcast was sent out and acknowledged by the Hun at 1040 hours. Squadron landed base at 1035 hours.

**15 February.** Fine with strong wind and 2/10 cloud. At 1205 hours nine aircraft took off on Circus 265, taking 12 Boston's to bomb a ship in Dunkirk Harbour. F/O Harris reported engine trouble and the Squadron escorted him back to Manson. Seven aircraft took off on Circus 267 at 1500 hours, 18 Liberators being escorted to bomb the same ship at Dunkirk from 20,000 feet. We looked after the rear portion of gaggle and 122 Squadron the front. One Liberator was hit by flak over the target and went into miles out to sea, two of the crew blanking out, the bombing was excellent. On the way back about half way across the Channel 7 FW190's attack the bombers from below and shot one into the sea and damaged another so that it crash landed at Pedwell Bay and skidded onto the beach. The CO and Draper both had short squirts, the CO hitting his with machine gun only but not enough to claim. Michael Donnet got onto a striker who tried to escape by doing upward barrel rolls but Michael caught him when he was about to stall at the end of his second roll and he went straight into the sea about 10 miles off Dunkirk. Fighter Command score was 10 destroyed for 0 lost, the Norwegians at North Weald getting seven. All the Squadron landed by 1630 hours.

**16 February.** Another fine day with strong north west wind and very cold. Circus 269 being 12 Venturas to bomb the same ship in Dunkirk harbour, was brought on at 0930, postponed to 1030 hours and then postponed indefinitely. At 1215 hours Rodeo 169 was put on consisting of all four Squadrons of the whole Hornchurch Wing (10 aircraft of 64 Squadron took off). Going in at Dunkirk turning right to Guines having climbed to 27,000 feet then south to Montreuil, Le Touquet, Boulogne, back to Guines out at Gris Nez, two quick orbits in the Channel as Huns were reported behind, but nothing was seen.

In the afternoon Wing Commander Smith gave us a display in our new 'M' while the C.O. and Michael Donnet went up in Smithy's Vega Gull.

(The Percival Vega Gull was a 1930s British, four-seater touring aircraft built by Percival Aircraft Limited. It was a single-engine, low-wing (Folding), wood-and-fabric monoplane with a fixed tailwheel undercarriage).

**17 February.** Fine with about 6/10 cloud at 5,000 feet. At 0940 hours 9 aircraft took off to escort 12 Venturas to bomb the same ship at Dunkirk on Circus 269. Once again no bombing was possible nor was anything seen, owing to 10/10 cloud over northern France.

**18 February.** Misty and very low cloud.

**19 February.** Thick fog with visibility about 3 yards. It cleared up about 1500 hours. The new pilots and 2 or 3 older ones did some practice flying until 1730 hours.

**20 February.** 10/10 clouds. Interesting discussion with C/Cpt Scroggs from M.A.P. as to what height the second blower should come into play.

**21 February.** Still the same mist and low cloud – no possible flying.

**24 February.** Lovely morning with early ground mist, which persisted all day and stopped flying. An A.M. photographer came down and took a large number of photos of the Squadron, flights and individuals.

**26 February.** Beautiful cloudless morning. At 0940 hours 12 aircraft took off on Circus 274 with 12 Ventura's bombing Dunkirk for the first time in a month and we were able to put 12 aircraft in the air. We went in at Nieuport at 19,000 feet, Ypres, Cassel and out at Gravelines. At 1350 hours 13 aircraft took off on a repetition of this morning's Circus. Another 12 Venturas were taken in, but they could not say whether they bombed or not. At 1625 hours 12 aircraft on the same show with 12 Boston's. This time they could see bombs bursting in the harbour, but whether they actually hit the target it was impossible to say.

**27 February.** A flight was called readiness at 1400 hours and the whole Squadron scrambled at 1455 hours as about 35 enemy aircraft were following Kenley (Kenley Wing) back to the English coast but nothing came of it and they landed 15 minutes later.

**28 February.** Squadron Leader MacGillicuddy from A.S.R. gave us a lecture on use of the dinghy with new telescopic mast and sail.

**1 March.** Air to air firing at Southend.

**3 March** At 1200 hours Lt Lutz of USAAC came in with a Thunderbolt, the first we've seen and spent the afternoon with us. At about 2030 the Hun came to visit us with an attack on London but he only put over a few aircraft and the barrage was terrific causing him to take very violent evasion action as one could hear from the scream of his engines were every now and again. He came in again at 0430 hours and was greeted with an even bigger barrage.

**4 March.** Only one aircraft had a small piece of shrapnel in it from the night's barrage, but the troops picked up a rare lot from the aerodrome and runways.

**7 March.** At 1735 we took off to escort 6 Typhoons to beat up E boats off Le Touquet. Out at Dungeness at 0 feet thence to mouth of the Somme Estuary. When off Boulogne the shore batteries opened up and the C.O. saw shells ricocheting off the water just under his nose, so the whole formation went up to 2,000 feet and came back.

**8 March.** The 250 lb bomb by the Officers Mess was lifted without misadventure. After an early lunch the Squadron took off at 1305 hours to rendezvous with Liberators at Beachy Head at 23,000 ft and escort them to bomb Rouen. Soon after crossing east St Valery en Caux the bombers were attacked by 10 FW 190's from head on, but thought the C.O. destroyed one. It was impossible to stop such a determined attack and one Liberator was shot down. Shortly after a further 9 FW 190's attacked also from head on – from this lot the C.O. got another destroyed while F/Lt Charles and Sgt Marshall also had good squirts. The bombers turned back before reaching the target which was clearly in view and from there to crossing over Dieppe the boys were kept busy frantically beating off repeated attacks by small numbers of FW 190 and Me109F - Johnsen, Mason and Ledington all had good squirts without being able to observe results.

**9 March.** The C.O. attended an Investiture to receive his bar to DFC. At 1510 hours the Squadron took off on Rodeo 177 to practice the new Wolf Pack formation. Out at North Foreland 25,000 feet, Mardyck 28,000 feet, St Omer, Le Touquet, Gris Nez, Hythe and all back by 1625.

**10 March.** Air firing from Southend and the new boys did practice flying. At 1535 hours Rodeo 181 at 36,000 feet as enemy aircraft seen from St Omer. They saw a single FW 190 trying to formate on the Squadron, but lost him in his turn to starboard as he iced up. All back by 1635.

**11 March.** Dull but hardly any mist. At 0825 the Squadron took off to escort six Whirlibombers (The Westland Whirlwind was a British twin-engined heavy fighter) to Dunkirk against shipping. Nothing was seen. In the afternoon there were two Squadron scrambles – nothing seen on the first, but seven 190's were chased back over Gris Nez on the second but we couldn't catch them – on the way back five Spitfires were well and truly jumped off Dungeness.



**Westland Whirlwind (Whirlibomber)**

(Imperial War Museum IWM CH 4998)

**12 March.** Lovely fine morning and we start off with a warning at 0745, and a minute later we saw in the distance about 11 FW190's speeding over Romford at roof top height – bombs were dropped and they machine gunned the streets, but North Weald on the point of taking off for Tangmere got five destroyed, one probable and four damaged.

Telephone system U/S between us and Hornchurch, all rushed over to there to operate from there. At 1108 hours the Squadron took off on Ramrod 42 – a diversion to 76 Fortresses going to bomb Rouen. Nothing seen all back by 1225 hours. At 1605 hours eight aircraft took off on Rodeo 183 going in at Hadelot at 28,000 feet. They saw and bounced about seventeen FW 190's about 35,000 feet. F/L Charles and F/O Draper both got a damaged. The Squadron reformed, flew down to Gris Nez, did two orbits, but seeing nothing saved Biggin and Kenley wings above and returned to Fairlop at 1715 hours, now on the phone.

**GONG.** F/L Donnet gets a third Palm to his Croix-de-Guerre.

**14 March.** Perfect sunny day with haze in the morning. At 1310 hours the Squadron took off on Rodeo 185 with 122 Squadron to Birat, St Omer and out at Calais, all at 25 - 28,000 feet, all back at 1420 hours. At 1640 hours we took off again on Ramrod 44 escorting Whirlibombers to Abbeville.

P/O Batchelor had a tricky time as immediately after take off, his port aileron jammed and he had to make a very tricky landing at Hornchurch, which he did very well, with Marshall escorting him. F/L Poulton also came back early with tank trouble. The rest of the Squadron went in at the Somme Estuary at 18,000 feet, saw nothing and came back to base at 1810 hours.

**15 March.** The Squadron once more returned to Hornchurch.

### **Sergeant 414651 Godfrey Alan McKoy**



**Godfrey Alan McKoy**

Photo :David Martin

Died Tuesday 26 January 1943 age 22. Allan, son of Charles Lawrence Herbert McKoy and Ethel May McKoy (nee Allan) of Auckland City, New Zealand, is buried at Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.

Godfrey was born on 1st September 1920 in New Plymouth, New Zealand and educated at Mount Albert Grammar School, where he played hockey, cricket and swimming.

He was a signaller in the New Zealand Cadet School and could send morse at 25 wpm. In August 1940 he applied to become a Wireless Operator in the Royal New Zealand Air Force, then a month later applied for aircrew selection. In his application he is shown as being 5 Feet 7½ inches tall, and declared that he was British, of pure European descent.

He did basic training at the training school at Levin, 60 miles north of Wellington, then onto flying School at Dunville, Ontario, Canada, where he trained as a pilot under the Empire Training Scheme. He obtained his wings on 27 March 1942 and promoted to Sergeant.

He completed his training in England at Advanced Flying Unit at Watton Norfolk. After he completed his Spitfire training was posted to 64 Squadron, stationed at Fairlop from 8 October 1942. The squadron was equipped with Spitfire Mk IX's, but the three new boys, two New Zealanders and a Norwegian were confined to flying circuits and bumps in older Mk V's.

His first operational took place on 20 January 1943, an uneventful patrol off Dungeness.

Between 20 and 26 January, he took part in six circus operations, flying each occasion in BS 278, On 26 January 1943, at 1150 hours the Squadron

took off on Circus 256, Godfrey flying as Charlie 4, in Spitfire Mk IX (BS 278).

They went into France east of Dunkirk at 19,000 feet and on to St Omer at 23,000 feet. 12 enemy aircraft were seen at 13,000 feet and were attacked. The enemy were taken by surprise and a fight ensued. Sergeant McKoy did not return.

No other pilot of the squadron was able to give any information on the incident. Godfrey was posted missing. Later the Red Cross confirmed that he was buried in The Military Cemetery at Bruyeres, renamed by the CWGC as Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery.



**His grave**

Photo :David Martin

In 2007, the author and his wife Barbara visited Auckland, and were met at the Domain War Memorial by the Deputy Head Boy and girl Hamish Macintosh and Kirsty Strachan, together with Brian Murphy the Schools Archivist, where we laid a wreath.



Photo : Brian Murphy

We were shown around Mount Albert Grammar School and told that the school lost 198 former pupils during the war.

On Anzac day, a photograph of each former pupil goes on display in the main hall.

