



TALES FROM THE ARCHIVE

RAF PATHFINDERS ARCHIVE – New & Historical Items, No.1 – 30 November 2017

IN THIS ISSUE ...

Edmondson, Norman
Thomson, RCAF – Lindley
crew

Importance of Bombing
Campaign/Communist
leaflet

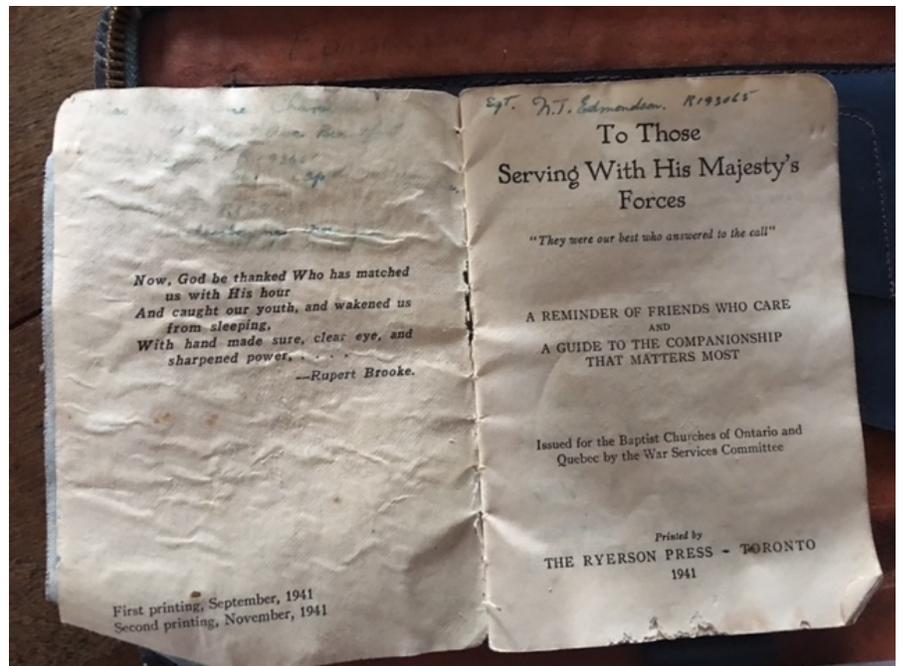
Nuremburg Raid, 30/31
March 1944

Pathfinder Badge awarded
to Squadrons with 5 Group

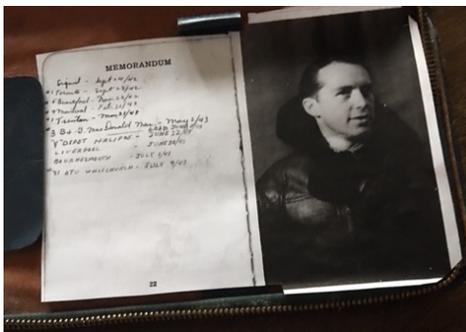
RAF Volunteer Reserve
Candidates

NEW: NORMAN EDMONDSON, RCAF, 156 SQD

Edmondson's crew was lost on 30/31 March 1944 on the night of the infamous Nuremburg raid. Their Lancaster was one of four 156 Squadron aircraft, flying from Upwood, which were shot down that night. The aircraft was brought down by a night fighter and crashed at Oberirsen, in Western Germany, east of Bonn. By some miracle, the pilot Lindley survived to become a prisoner of war. The rest of the crew, including Edmondson, who was only 20, were killed.



Amongst other items, Gordon Edmondson recently sent photographs of a small pocket book which his uncle used to carry, which has its own little leather case stamped with an Air Force crest. Inside there are a number of contact details for what appear to be young women. The Air Force boys were very attractive and Edmondson, it seems, was no exception.



NEW: TWO INTERESTING ODDITIES

Two interesting oddities turned up this month, the first being a leaflet for **RAFVR (VOLUNTEER RESERVE) CANDIDATES** which exhorts them to brush up on various parts of so-called Elementary Mathematics before they are called up. There is no date on the leaflet, which is addressed to prospective pilots, navigators and wireless operators.

The second oddity is a communist party leaflet calling on British people to march in solidarity with the Soviet Union and to demand that Hitler be attacked in the West to take the pressure off Moscow. The mention of Moscow dates the leaflet to between October 1941 and January 1942 when the German threat to Moscow was at its worst. It is an oblique reminder of

why the bomber offensive was so important, because until a second front could be opened in mainland Europe (which did not happen until the invasion of Italy in September 1943) **BOMBER COMMAND** was the only means of attacking the Germans and reassuring the Soviet Union that something was being done to reduce the dire pressure on them.



HISTORICAL: PATHFINDER BADGE AWARDED TO SQUADRONS FLYING WITH 5 GROUP

97, 83, and 627 Squadrons of the Path Finder Force - 8 Group - were 'loaned' to 5 Group in April 1944 against the strong opposition of the Pathfinders' commander, Donald Bennett. The squadrons remained Pathfinders, carrying out pathfinder duties, and as such were still eligible for the full award of the Pathfinder badge, as can be seen, for example, in 97 Squadron's ORB for September 1944

The following officers were permanently awarded the PFF Badge on the dates shown:-

149331	A/F/L P.J.Drane	GD	1.9.44	161609	A/F/L R.L.Lasham	GD	1.9.44
134687	A/F/L D.Bowes	GDN	1.9.44	149529	A/F/L C.S.Chatten DSO DFC	GD	1.9.44
151017	A/F/L K.H.H.Cook	GDB	1.9.44	173966	P/O T.W.L.Leak	GDB	1.9.44
178826	P/O C.D.Hooton	GDE	2.9.44	172347	P/O K.Swale	GDN	2.9.44
170882	P/O J.A.Pearson	GDE	2.9.44	173966	P/O A.J.Tindall	GDS	2.9.44
Aus401950	A/S/L H.B.Locke DFC	GD	1.9.44	Aus413349	A/F/L J.V.Comans	GD	1.9.44
Aus415500	P/O A.Boulbee	GDG	2.9.44	Aus420904	P/O J.W.Nedwich	GDB	2.9.44
Aus421736	P/O C.W.Lacy	GDG	2.9.44	132535	A/F/L R.D.Parker	GDN	19.9.44



There are a number of notable names on the above list, such as Pete Drane, Clifford Chatten, and Bob Lasham, of whom more in **TALES** to come. We will be continuing the story of 97 Squadron at 5 Group next month. Stationed at Coningsby, the squadron was closely allied to 54 Base, and the cream of the crews (if they wished to continue operational flying after their PFF tour was completed) went on to become master bombers and controllers there. The most famous of the pilots at 54 Base was Guy Gibson, see our page: <https://raf-pathfinders.com/simpson-master-bomber/>

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