

# Lancasters at the Ready

by

**Philip E. West**

All the prints in this edition are signed and numbered in pencil by the artist.

***The Primary Edition prints are also signed by: Sqn. Ldr. Lawrence “Benny” Goodman (617 Sqn)*** volunteered for aircrew at 18 years of age and was called up in 1940. After basic training he went to RAF Abingdon – a Whitley O.T.U – for what he was told would be ‘straight through’ training. This did not materialise and he found himself in the role of a Ground Gunner. In 1941, a posting eventually came through to the Initial Training Wing followed by Elementary Flying School at Peterborough and an instructor’s course at Woodley, Reading; then to Clyffe Pyparde, a holding unit. A sea journey to Canada followed and Service Flying Training School on Ansons. On completion he was posted to Kingston, Ontario, to instruct Acting Leading Naval Airmen on the Royal Navy tactics of the time. e.g. jinking after take off, dive bombing etc. *“However, I had to learn everything first, so I was just about one step ahead of the students!”* said Benny.

Eventually returning to the UK and O.T.U. on Wellingtons at Silverstone and Heavy Conversion Bomber Unit at Swinderby on Stirlings. Then a short course at the Lancaster Conversion Unit. After an interview Benny and his crew were surprised and delighted to find they had been selected for 617 Squadron – this was in 1944 and they stayed together as a crew on 617 Squadron until the war in Europe ended.

He completed 30 missions – all with William “Jock” Burnett as his flight engineer. Notable raids Benny took part in were on the Tirpitz (29/10/44), dropping the Grand Slam 22,000 bomb on the Arnsberg Viaduct (19/03/45) and the attack on Berchtesgarten ‘Eagles nest’ (25/05/45).

***The Artist Special Reserve and Remarque editions are also signed by:***

**Flt. Lt. Joe Petrie-Andrews DFC DFM** joined the RAF at “about 14 or 15 years of age.” Rejecting the opportunity to become a bomb-aimer, Joe was determined to pester the RAF until they would accept him on a pilot’s training course. Flying mainly Lancaster and Halifax aircraft, Joe joined 158 and 35 Squadron’s, and later became part of the Pathfinder Force.

During an operation to bomb Cannes in southern France on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1943, Joe’s (aged only 19) Halifax was badly shot up, forcing him to ditch the aircraft in the Mediterranean, where he and the crew spent three days in a dingy before being rescued; for this operation Joe was awarded an ‘immediate’ DFC. He completed 68 operations, 60 before his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday on 11/7/1944.

**Flt Lt Phil Ainley DFC** was accepted for aircrew training in February 1942 at the age of 17½ years. He was selected for pilot training and was sent to the United States Naval Aviation base in Pensacola. After gaining his United States Navy wings on completion of his Catalina flying boat course, he was commissioned and returned to the UK. Following retraining on land planes, he eventually joined No. 57 Lancaster squadron in May 1944.

The squadron was heavily engaged in attacking both French flying bomb sites, the build up to D. Day and German industrial targets. One sortie to Königsberg necessitated flying for 11 hours 10 minutes, whilst another was to drop mines in the Stettin canal from 250 feet. For this last sortie Flt Lt Ainley was awarded an immediate DFC. He completed his operational tour of 33 sorties in October 1944, having flown all this time with the same crew with the exception of a replacement flight engineer. On completing a course at the Bomber Command Instructors School, he became a flying instructor in Bomber Command.

**Ronald Clark DFC (Pilot)** volunteered for flying duties in 1941 and after interviews completed initial training in Paignton. A flying grading course followed at Kingstown near Carlisle surprisingly near my family, before being sent as “Ambassadors” for Britain across the Atlantic to be trained by the USAAF. After more initial training to learn the American way, not a bad way, we embarked on the flying training and after receiving the silver wings, the next port of call was Bournemouth in a hotel which shortly afterwards was demolished by the Luftwaffe.

Several courses preceded our arrival at Lindholme heavy conversion unit before joining the “Battle of the Ruhr” with No 100 Squadron based at Waltham near Grimsby. My crew and I were assigned a brand new Lancaster III EE139 which we almost did for on our twenty-fourth trip with her to Mannheim, but she went on to complete 120 operations before being unceremoniously scrapped. Little did we think that over 60 years later she would be “recalled to life” by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

After a period of instructing I was then posted to No 7 Sqn for deployment to the Far East, which was stymied by the dropping of the atomic bomb, I did a lot more instructing before applying for a secondment to BOAC. (Publishers note: A very modest potted biography by Ron! I highly recommend a visit to this web site where you will find a lot more information about Ron’s flying career.

<http://www.bbmf.co.uk/bomber.html>

**Flt Lt Russell (Rusty) Waughman DFC, AFC, (Pilot)** volunteered for the RAF in 1941. After training in Canada, he qualified as a heavy bomber pilot. In November 1943 he was posted to No 101(Special Duties) Squadron at Ludford Magna. He completed a tour of operations, which began during the ‘Battle of Berlin’, where they did several operations. Surviving a mid-air collision, only to write the aircraft off on landing, ‘Rusty’ and his crew on a subsequent flight had a miraculous escape when their aircraft was blown upside down, over the target, at Mailly-le-Camp; they also survived the Nuremberg raid on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1944, when 97 aircraft were lost – including about one quarter of 101 sqn strength that night.

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