

TIMELINE OF KEY DATES WORLD WAR II

World War II started

1939 September 1

Bomber Command played a defensive role in the RAF

Battle of Britain

1940 10 July- 31 October

Bomber Command played an important role in the Battle of Britain by targeting German airbases, factories, transport networks and Berlin. They suffered more casualties than any other RAF command in that period with 718 airmen.

1942 16-17 August

The Peenemünde Raid

The code name for this operation was 'Hydra' Peenemünde was were the Nazi's were developing the V2 rockets. 280 aircrew were lost, Nazi rocket development was put back by an estimated 2 months.

Operation Heligoland

1939 December 18

A turning point for Bomber Command to change their tactics to predominately night-time operations after losing 57 airmen and 12 Wellington Bombers in a day-time op.

Raid on Cologne

1942 May 30/31

Night time raid on the city of Cologne involving 1,046 aircraft. 40,000 people were made homeless. This was the first of the 1,000 bomber raids.

Operation Gomorrah

1943 July 1943

Beginning of a campaign of air raids which lasted for 8 days and 7 nights. It was the heaviest assault in the history of aerial warfare.

Bomber Command was formed

1936

Raid on the Ruhr

1940 May 15/16

This was the first, of many, raids on the Ruhr valley by Bomber Command. It was also the first strategic attack from Bomber Command against Germany.

Air Chief Marshall Arthur 'Bomber' Harris became Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Bomber Command

1942 February 22

Operation Chastise, Dams Raid

1943 May 16/17

The famous 'Dambusters' raid used the Bouncing Bomb designed by Barnes Wallis.

Augsburg Raid

1942 April 17

Daylight raid on MAN factory in Germany this was where over half of the German U-boat engines were built. It was the Avro Lancaster's first major test.

1942 saw the introduction of new Radar systems such as Monica and HS2. This allowed for the creation of Path Finder Force, a special squadron that specialized in locating and marking targets increasing bombing accuracy

Sinking of the Tirpitz

1944 November 12

Many attempts had been made to sink this German warship since 1940, when it was being built. Finally, on a clear night in Tromso, Norway, Bomber Command sunk the ship.

Raid on Nuremberg

1944 March 30/31

Night raid on the city with 2,500 tonnes of bombs dropped. No serious damage caused. It was the heaviest defeat suffered by Bomber Command.

Operation Exodus

1945 April 3- May 31

The Lancaster was sent all over Europe to bring back POWs from collection points. Bomber Command flew over 3,500 sorties.

VE Day 1945 May 8

End of World War II

1945 September 2

Air Marshall Norman Bottomley became Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Bomber Command

1945 September 15

Bomber Command disbanded

1968

Bomber Command merged with Fighter command to become Strike Force

Operation Taxable

1944 June 5/6

Part of the air and sea support of D Day, specifically to persuade the Germans that an invasion of Pas de Calais or round Le Havre was imminent. The aim was to convince the Nazis small fleet of ship approaching France was a much bigger fleet invading by using 'Window'.

Operation Manna

1945 August 15

VJ Day

1945 April 29- May 8

Bomber Command dropped 6,685 tonnes of food on the fields of Holland. The Nazis had cut off their food supplies and they were dying of starvation. 20,000 people were saved. 33 squadrons were involved. 3,181 Lancaster sorties and 147 mosquito sorties.

Raid on Dresden

1945 February 13/14

Night area raid on city centre, 1,600 acres devastated. Incendiary bombs caused the worst fire storm of the War. This was the most destructive and controversial raid of the War.