

AN EMOTIVE GROUP OF MEDALS, LOGBOOK AND LETTERS RELATING TO THE DEATH IN ACTION OF A FLIGHT ENGINEER OF 100 SQUADRON ROYAL AIR FORCE WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION DURING A SORTIE TO NURNBERG ON THE NIGHT OF 1 JANUARY 1945 WHEN HIS LANCASTER WAS SHOT DOWN BY A GERMAN NIGHT FIGHTER PILOT



An emotive group of medals, logbook and letters relating to the death in action of 546494 Flight Sergeant Douglas Joseph James Timms, a Flight Engineer of 100 Squadron Royal Air Force, who was killed in action during a sortie to Nurnberg on the night of 1 January 1945.

It is not clear when Douglas Timms joined the Royal Air Force but according to his logbook, he passed his Flight Engineers course at No 4 S, of T.T. at RAF St Athan on 16 August 1944. Initially flying in Halifax's at No 1662 Conversipon Unit, he crewed up with Flying Officer P. M. Bunn on 26 September 1944. Converting to Lancaster's on 1 November 1944, Timms and the Bunn crew joined 100 Squadron based at Waltham, Grimsby, on 13 November 1944.

Taking part on their first operational sortie on 26 November, an attack on Freiburg, Timms would take part in the following Sorties during November and December 1944:

29 November 1944 – Dortmund – aircraft slightly damaged by flak

4 December 1944 – Karlsruhe

6 December 1944 – Mersburg

12 December 1944 – Essen

17 December 1944 – Ulm

28 December 1944 – Munchen Gladbach

29 December 1944 – Gelsenkirchen

2 January 1945 – Nurnburg – Missing in action

Timms was killed in action on the night of 2 January during a raid on Nuremberg, when his Lancaster III, PB518 HW-P, was shot down Hptm Kurt-Heinz Weigel, crashing at Schlierbach.

The Crew consisted of: F/O P. M. Bunn POW, Sgt. D. J. J. Timms KIA, F/O L. J. Holford POW, F/O R. E. Marsh POW, Sgt. J. E. Benton KIA, Sgt. W. C. Muir KIA, Sgt. R. Poulson KIA



Details of exactly happened to Timm's and his aircraft were revealed in a poignant two page letter written by Paul Bunn, who was the pilot of his Lancaster bomber, to Mrs Timms on 16 June 1945:

'Dear Mrs Timms, I was very pleased to receive your letter. Frankly I cannot understand why the Air Ministry haven't communicated with you. I would have written to you earlier only I felt that perhaps it would only be rubbing salt into an open wound. Well now on the night of Jan 2nd we were caught by fighters and were hit in the petrol tanks which immediately caught fire. Within a few seconds the

aircraft just blew up in mid-air and myself, navigator, bomb aimer were blown clean out of the airplane. Now at the time your son was sitting next to me and when he got the burst from the fighter he collapsed and slid into the nose of the A/C and that was the last I saw of him. I did my best to find out from the Germans exactly what happened to them and they told me definitely that four of the boys were killed. Well now again they said that the boys would be given a decent funeral like their own people. There is another consolation and that is none of the boys could possibly have suffered in any way and were killed outright. We were shot down near a small town called Goppingen about 20 miles S.E. of Stuttgart. In closing please accept my sincerest sympathy and in future if I can possibly help you please don't hesitate in writing as I would only be too glad to do anything for you.'

3, Baldock Road,
Detchworth
Herts
14/6/45

Dear Mrs Timms,

I was very pleased to receive your letter. Frankly I cannot understand why the Air Ministry haven't communicated with you. I would have written to you earlier only I felt that perhaps it would only be rubbing salt into an open wound. Well now on the night of Jan 2nd we were caught by fighters and were hit in the petrol tanks which immediately caught fire. Within a few seconds the aircraft just blew up in mid-air and myself, navigator & bomb aimer were blown clean out of the airplane. Now at the time your son was sitting next to me and when we got the burst from the fighter he collapsed and slid into the nose of the A/C. and that was the last I saw of him. I did my best to find out from the Germans exactly what happened to them and they told me definitely that four of the boys were killed. Well now again they said that the boys would be given a decent funeral like their own people. There is another consolation and that is none of the boys could possibly have suffered in any way and were killed outright. We were shot down near a small town called Goppingen about 20 miles S.E. of Stuttgart.

In closing please accept my sincerest sympathy and in future if I can possibly help you please don't hesitate in writing as I would be only too glad to do anything for you

Yours faithfully
John H. Timms

Telephone No. : GERRARD 9234
Trunk Calls and } "AIR MINISTRY," LONDON
Telegraphic Address : }

AIR MINISTRY,
(Casualty Branch).
73-77 OXFORD STREET,
LONDON, W.1.

P.427122/2/F.A.A.2.

19 March, 1945.

Madam,

I am commanded by the Air Council to inform you that they have with great regret to confirm the telegram in which you were notified that, in view of information now received from the International Red Cross Committee, your son, Sergeant Douglas James Joseph Timms, Royal Air Force, is believed to have lost his life as the result of the air operations on 2nd January, 1945.

The Committee's telegram, quoting official German information, states that three of the occupants of the aircraft in which your son was flying on that night were captured on 2nd January, and that your son and the three other occupants were dead. It contains no information regarding the place of their burial.

Mrs. H. Timms,
82, Mayrick Road,
Battersea,
S.W.11.

/Although

Although there is unhappily little reason to doubt the accuracy of this report, the casualty will be recorded as "missing believed killed" until confirmed by further evidence, or until, in the absence of such evidence, it becomes necessary, owing to lapse of time, to presume for official purposes that death has occurred. In the absence of confirmatory evidence death would not be presumed until at least six months from the date when your son was reported missing.

The Air Council desire me to express their deep sympathy with you in your grave anxiety.

I am, Madam,
Your obedient Servant,
Charles Evans

FORM 1767
(REVISED OCT. 1943)

ROYAL AIR FORCE

FLYING LOG BOOK
FOR
NAVIGATORS
AIR BOMBERS
AIR GUNNERS
FLIGHT ENGINEERS

Name TIMMS

196 Reddings Lane,
Hall Green,
Birmingham, 11.

January 18th 1945.

Dear Mrs. Timms,

I do hope you will not mind me writing to you, but my son Jack was the Wireless operator in the same plane as your son, which has been missing since January 2nd. May I, as another father, offer you my sincere sympathies in your anxiety.

I am writing to ask if you should receive any news whether you would be kind enough to wire or write to me immediately, and I will do the same for you. I understand that sometimes they are able to get news through and I am quite sure that our boys will if it is at all possible.

There is no need to say to you that the suspense of waiting for news is heart-breaking, but I am praying that they are all safe somewhere and that we shall have good news of them soon.

You may rest assured that should I receive any news I will notify you immediately if you will write and let me have your address, I only know your name as for security reasons the R.A.F. will not give addresses.

Sincerely yours,
(90) *H. Benton*

Telephone No.: GERRARD 9234
Trunk Calls and } "AIR MINISTRY," LONDON
Telegraphic Address }
P.427122/2/E.A.A.2.

AIR MINISTRY,
(Casualty Branch),
73-77 OXFORD STREET,
LONDON, W.1.

10 January, 1945.

Madam,

I am commanded by the Air Council to express to you their great regret on learning that your son, Sergeant Douglas James Joseph Timms, Royal Air Force, is missing as the result of air operations on the night of 2nd January, 1945, when a Lancaster aircraft in which he was flying as flight engineer set out to bomb Ruresberg and was not heard from again.

This does not necessarily mean that he is killed or wounded, and if he is a prisoner of war he should be able to communicate with you in due course. Meanwhile enquiries are being made through the International Red Cross Committee, and as soon as any definite news is received you will be at once informed.

If any information regarding your son is received by you from any source you are requested to be kind enough to communicate it immediately to the Air Ministry.

Mrs. H. Timms,
82, Heyrick Road,
Battersea,
S. W. 11.

/The

The Air Council desire me to convey to you their sympathy in your present anxiety.

I am, Madam,
Your obedient Servant,
Charles Evans

WAR ORGANISATION
OF THE
BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY and ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

President: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
Grand Priest: H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, K.G.

WOUNDED, MISSING AND RELATIVES DEPARTMENT
Chairman: THE DOWAGER LADY AMPTHILL, C.I., G.B.E.

Telephone No. SLOANE 959
In replying please quote reference: S/LR. 7 BELGRAVE SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1
RAF/C.16703

18th March 1945.

Dear Mrs. Timms,

We deeply regret that you will by now have heard from the Air Ministry that your son Sergeant D.J.J. Timms, No. 546492 has been posted 'Missing, believed Killed in Action' and we should like to offer you the deep sympathy of all in this Department.

The report that your son, Sergeant J.B. Benton, Sergeant R. Paulsen and Sergeant W. O'Leary lost their lives on January 2nd 1945 was sent to the International Red Cross Committee at Geneva in an official German statement. The information was also included that the remaining three members of the crew were captured.

Further enquiries are being made about Sergeant Timms' death and place of burial, and you will be notified without delay when any information reaches the Air Ministry or ourselves. We shall also endeavour to get into touch with the airmen taken prisoner, and should we succeed in obtaining any helpful additional news from this source we shall, of course, communicate with you again.

Many answers are being received to enquiries of this kind, but we are afraid that they often take several months to come through.

With again our deepest sympathy,

Mrs. Timms,
82 Heyrick Road,
S.W.11.

Yours sincerely,
Margaret Paulsen
Chairwoman

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.

We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation.

George R.I

Mrs. H. Timms.

Instructions.

1. This log book is an official document and the property of H.M. Government.
2. This log book is to be maintained by all members of air crew other than pilot. An accurate record of all flights undertaken on service aircraft is to be inserted.
3. Results of ab initio courses will be recorded on either pages 2, 3, 4 or 5, for which purpose a rubber stamp is available.
4. Proficiency assessments will be recorded on the appropriate page at the back of the book on posting or on attachment to another unit for flying duties.
5. Bombing and Air Gunnery records will be entered in detail in the appropriate pages at the end of the book immediately after each practice.

Certificates of Qualification.

(to be filled in as appropriate)

1. This is to certify that 546494 Sgt. TIMMS has qualified as _____ with effect from _____ Sgd. _____ Date _____ Unit _____
2. This is to certify that _____ has qualified as _____ with effect from _____ Sgd. _____ Date _____ Unit _____
3. This is to certify that _____ has qualified as _____ with effect from _____ Sgd. _____ Date _____ Unit _____
4. This is to certify that _____

DEATH PRESUMED



100 SQUADRON. WALTHAM

NR GRIMSBEY.

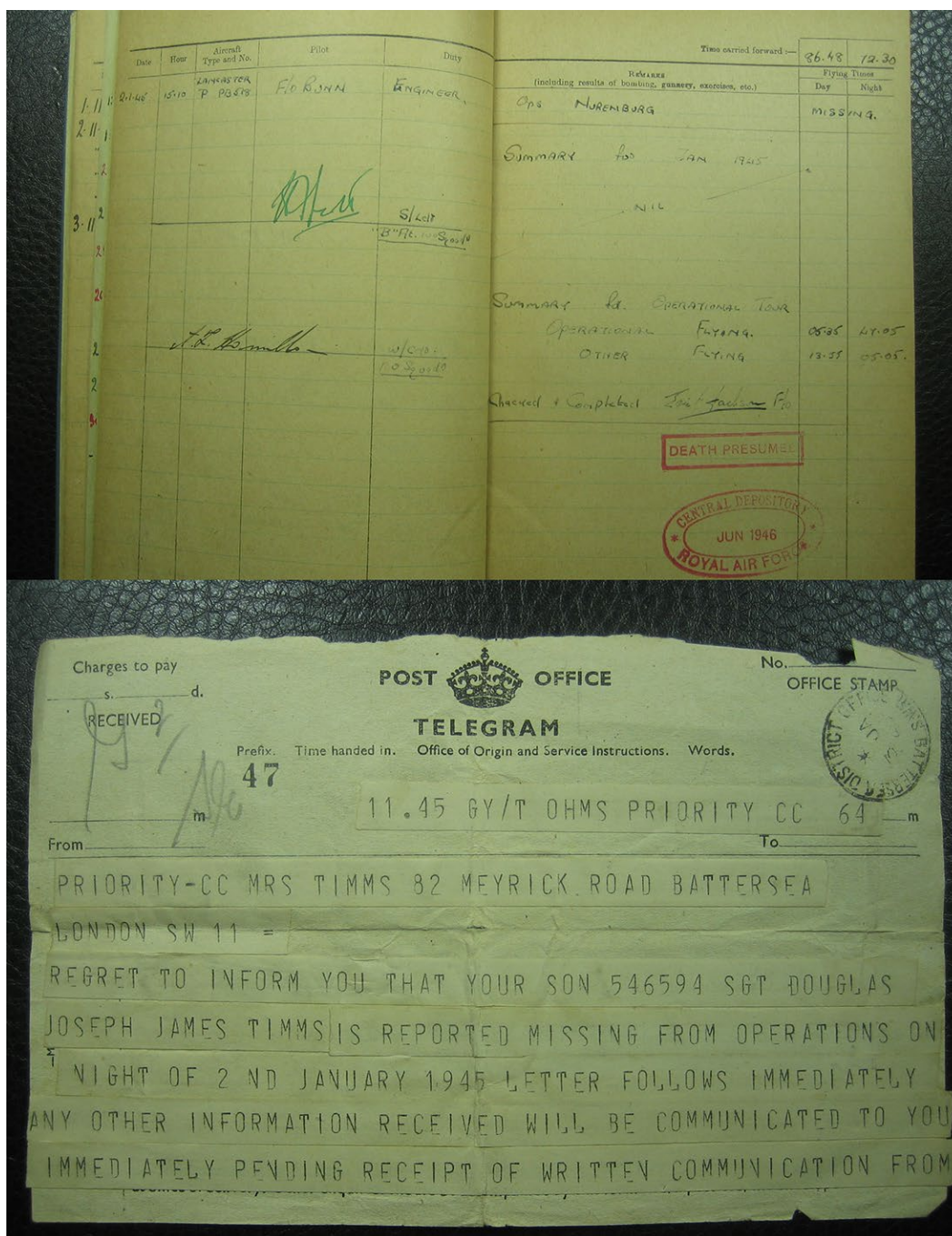
Time carried forward: 6.53 20.20

Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty
1.11.44	13.11.44	LANCASTER ND 644	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
2.11.44	15.11.44	LANCASTER ND 644	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
3.11.44	23.11.44	LANCASTER PB 572	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
4.11.44	25.11.44	LANCASTER LL 952	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
5.11.44	25.11.44	LANCASTER LL 952	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
6.11.44	26.11.44	LANCASTER ND 639	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
7.11.44	28.11.44	LANCASTER LM 623	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
8.11.44	29.11.44	LANCASTER ND 639	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
9.11.44	30.11.44	LANCASTER PB 172	F/O BUNN.	ENGINEER.
MONTH OF NOVEMBER 1944				

REMARKS (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times
Day	Night
X COUNTRY.	3.30
Y X COUNTRY - L. WOODBRIDGE.	2.50
PRACTICE BOMBING.	2.20
RATTLEDON RETURN.	1.00
PRACTICE BOMBING.	1.20
FREIBURG. 4000lb + incendiaries.	7.00
Y X COUNTRY.	3.55
DORTMUND. 4000 + incendiaries.	5.35
PRACTICE BOMBING.	1.25
TOTAL DAY OPERATIONS.	5.35
TOTAL DAY TRAINING.	11.15
TOTAL NIGHT OPERATIONS.	7.00
TOTAL NIGHT TRAINING.	5.05
TOTAL FLYING 100 SQDN.	16.50 12.05
SIGNED <u>W. H. O'NEILL</u>	
TOTAL TIME	78.43 32.25

Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty
1.12.44	1.12.44	LANCASTER ND 458	F/O SEAFORTH	INSTRUCTOR.
2.12.44	4.12.44	LANCASTER PB 518	F/O BUNN	Engineer
3.12.44	6.12.44	LANCASTER N4 292	F/O BUNN	Engineer
4.12.44	12.12.44	LANCASTER LM 672	F/O BUNN	Engineer
5.12.44	17.12.44	LANCASTER LM 672	F/O BUNN	ENGINEER
6.12.44	18.12.44	LANCASTER PB 569	F/O BUNN	ENGINEER
7.12.44	22.12.44	LANCASTER PA 117	F/O BUNN	ENGINEER
8.12.44	29.12.44	LANCASTER ND 644	F/O BUNN	ENGINEER

REMARKS (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Times
Day	Night
X COUNTRY	5.25
KARLSRUHE. 4000 + incendiaries.	6.30
MERSBURG. 4000 + H.E.	8.25
ESSEN. 4000 + H.E. DELAY.	5.40
ULM. 4000 + incendiaries.	7.35
F/A. AIR/SEA. BOMBING.	2.40
MÜNCHEN GLADBACH. H.E.	5.30
GEISENKIRCHEN. 4000 + H.E.	6.25
TOTAL DAY OPS.	NU



GROUP CONSIST OF:

- 1) 1939-45 Star, France and German Star, Defence and War Medals 1939-45, mounted as worn.
- 2) Timms flying Log Book, detailing his flights from passing as a Flight Engineer to his last on 2 January 1945; the latter filled in by his Squadron Leader.
- 3) Telegram advising his mother he has been reported missing
- 4) a letter from a fellow crewman's mother, asking if he has any information on their son's loss
- 5) Three letters from the Air Ministry, the first, dated 10 January 1945, advising Mrs Timms that here son was missing, a second dated 21 June 1947, asking her to identify a silk scarf, another, dated 19 March 1945 notifying here he was believed killed in action.

6) British Red Cross Society letter, dated 17 March 1945, advising Mrs Timms of his loss

7) A Buckingham Palace note of condolence

8) A poignant two page letter from Paul Bunn, who was the pilot of his Lancaster bomber and was taken prisoner, writing to Mrs Timms on 16 June 1945, advising her of the last time he saw Douglas Timms (as transcribed above)

9) Two photographs of crewmembers of Lancaster PB518; Air Gunner Willie Muir, who as killed and Navigator Ronald Holford, who survived and was captured. A third photograph of Timms grave

Details of Lancaster PB518's last flight, list of crew and fate of each and details of the German pilot; Hptm Kurt-Heinz Weigel, who shot Timms Lancaster down, can be viewed here:

<https://aircrewremembered.com/bunn-pm.html>

<http://www.rafcommands.com/database/wardead/details.php?qnum=45512>

Condition, generally excellent. Sold with copy 100 Squadron Operational Logs November 1944-January 1945 (digital). An extremely fine and emotive group. Provenance: Descent through the family to auction and directly to Jager Medals.