

**A FINE SECOND WAR 578 SQUADRON 1944 D.F.M . GROUP TO A HALIFAX III AIRGUNNER OF WHO FLEW IN 38 OPERATIONAL SORTIES BETWEEN APRIL AND SEPTEMBER 1944, INCLUDING TARGETS IN NORMANDY JUST PRIOR AND AFTER D-DAY, AS WELL AS WELL KNOWN TARGETS IN GERMANY**



**DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL GVI '1825942 SGT. A PATON. R.A.F.', 1939-45 STAR, FRANCE AND GERMANY STAR, DEFENCE AND WAR MEDALS**

D.F.M. *London Gazette* 12 December 1944. The original recommendation on 16 September 1944 states:

*“Sergeant Paton has carried out 37 operations totalling 160.287 hours during which he has attacked many important targets which have included those situated in such well-known areas as Dusseldorf, Kiel, Russelsheim and Karlsruhe. Sergeant Paton has been exceptionally keen for operational flying. He possesses great energy which combined with a patient watchfulness which he has always maintained with consistent efficiency and ensured the success of the many operations he has carried out with his crew. His quiet Confident manner has always been of the utmost assistance to his Captain and it is recommended that he should be awarded the D.F.M. This Air Gunner has maintained a fine offensive spirit throughout his operational tour. His keenness for operations combined with his cool and calm manner has contributed to the successful tour of operations carried out by his crew.”*

Sergeant Alexander Paton, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve served as an Air Gunner with 578 Squadron, who operated with Halifax III's as part of No. 4 Group. He took part in 38 bombing raids between April and the time of his D.F.M. Recommendation in September 1944. Serving all of his OP's in a Halifax III, piloted by Sergeant, later Lieutenant M. Davis. On 14 October 1944, Paton was posted to 1652 C.U., the same day his pilot (Davis) was posted from the Squadron.



The Davis crew flew raids against a wide variety of targets including many targets around France and in particular Normandy just prior and after D-Day, as well as well known targets in Germany.



List of Paton's 38 Operational Sorties with 578 Squadron

- 20 April 1944 Ottignes
- 22 April Dusseldorf
- 24 April Karlshuhe
- 26 April Ville-Neuve St Georges
- 30 April Acheres
- 1 May Malines
- 8 May Berneval
- 31 May Trappes
- 4 June Boulogne
- 5 June Mont Fleury Battery
- 6 June Chateau Dun
- 8 June Alengon
- 12 June Amiens
- 14 June Douai
- 15 June Rennes
- 22 June Siracourt
- 27 June Marquise Mimoyecques
- 28 June Wizernes
- 30 June Viller Bocage
- 1 July Oisenmont/Neuville aus Bois
- 4 July St Martin L'Hortier
- 6 July Croixdeles

12 July Thirerny  
 29 July Foret De Nieppe  
 30 July Battle area 'G'  
 1 August Anderhelke  
 2 August Le Nieppe  
 3 August Foret De Nieppe  
 6 August Hazebrouck  
 9 August Foret De Mormal fuel dump  
 12 August Russelsheim  
 15 August Terlemont  
 16/17 August Kiel  
 9 September Le Havreio  
 11 September Gelsenkirch  
 15/16 September Kiel  
 24 September Calais  
 25 September Calais

With the research, are edited entries taken from 578 Squadron's Operational logs, April – October 1944. These detailing each of Paton's sorties, date, target, aircraft number, crew and flight report; an example:

22 June Siracourt:

IK.830	F/S Davis, L.	(P)	"	1345	1705	Special Equipment Monica 3 A.P.I. Bomb load 18 x 500 lb. C.P. Bombs were released on target at 1555 hours from 17,000 feet. This aircraft was hit by flak 5014N, 0218E making it necessary to feather inner port engine. The fuselage on starboard side was also damaged. Aircraft landed safely at Harrington.
IK. "H"	F/O Kemp, E.S.	(M)	"			
	F/O Terry, P.A.	(B)	"			
	Sgt. Green, E.J.	(W)	"			
	Sgt. Stevens, L.G.	(E)	"			
	Sgt. Paton, A.	(C)	"			
	Sgt. Jarris, E.	(G)	"			

A newspaper article on Scots airman being awarded gallantry awards, notes that Paton was from Oatlands in Glasgow. No further research has been undertaken on Paton.

In barely a year, 578 Bomber Squadron managed to earn 79 D.F.M.s, 144 D.F.C.s, 2 D.S.O.s and a Victoria Cross. Few Squadrons had gained so many honours in such a short period of time during the push into Germany. Details of the Squadrons operations can be found here:

<http://www.578squadron.org.uk/operations/>



Condition GVF. Sold with Air Gunners Wings and 578 Squadron Operational logs for March to October 1944 and above mentioned edited log, all on CD (or emailed). Ex Spink Numismatic Circular 1992