

A FINE WW2 '1944' D.F.C., LOGBOOK, PHOTO ALBUM AND DOCUMENT GROUP TO A NAVIGATOR, ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE, WHO FLEW 31 OPERATIONAL SORTIES WITH 51 SQUADRON, R.A.F., 1943-44, INCLUDING 'OPERATION HYDRA', THE FIRST RAID ON THE ROCKET RESEARCH FACILITY AT PEENEMÜNDE AND TO MANY OF THE MOST HEAVILY DEFENDED TARGETS IN GERMANY



DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS, G.V.I.R., REVERSE OFFICIALLY DATED '1944', IN ROYAL MINT CASE OF ISSUE, 1939-1945 STAR, AIR CREW EUROPE STAR, DEFENCE AND WAR MEDALS, NEW ZEALAND WAR SERVICE MEDAL, ALL CONTEMPORARILY ENGRAVED 'FG. OFF. G.B. PAGE. D.F.C. 417289 R.N.Z.A.F.' BAR THE AIR CREW EUROPE STAR

D.F.C. London Gazette 27 June 1944. The Recommendation states:

"This Officer has completed numerous operations against the enemy, in the course of which he has invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage and devotion to duty."

417289 Flying Officer Gordon Ballinghall Page was born at Riccarton, Christchurch, New Zealand, on 29 February 1908. A dairy and stud cattle breeder by trade, he served in the 1st Battalion Canterbury Regiment (Territorial Service), as Corporal, 1927-39. He attested at Levin, New Zealand for Service with the Royal New Zealand Air Force on 28 December 1941 and with the rank of Aircraftman 2nd Class, embarked for Canada to complete further training, 2 February 1942. Promoted Sergeant Air Navigator on 14 August 1942 and Flight Sergeant on 15 May 1943, he was posted to 51 Squadron at Snaithness, Scotland on 8 July 1943, flying on Halifax's.

Taking part in his first operational sorting on 27 July, a 'Firestorm' raid on Hamburg, two days later, he again took part in a sortie to Hamburg, with his final sortie of July was aborted. On 2 August, yet again, he took part in a sortie to Hamburg and on 17 August, 'Operation Hydra', the first major raid on the rocket research facility at Peenemünde: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Hydra_\(1943\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Hydra_(1943))



02.201						Time carried forward—	17h. 25	106.35
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Day	Flying Time	Night
Aug 2nd	21.8	Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Operations HAMBURG			
Aug. 16		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Operations HAMBURG			
Aug. 16		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Bombing practice. Duty not carried out owing to low cloud and bad visib.		55	
Aug. 17		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Operations - PEENEMÜNDE Radio location centre			7.05
Aug. 18		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	DOWNHAM MARKET to Base		55	
Aug. 22		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Air test		2.5	
Aug. 23		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Operations BERLIN. Returned early. Overload pump not connected			3.35
Aug. 27		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Air test		1.00	
Aug 29		Haltfax M.H.D.	F/Sgt Foster	Navigator	Operations - NUREMBERG			7.40
						TOTAL TIME...	174.35	129.50

03.201						Time carried forward—	174.35	129.50
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Day	Flying Time	Night
1944 Jan. 13th		M.H.E. Haltfax	P/O Caygill	Navigator	Fam on type		00.55	
13th		M.H.E. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	X-Country			4.45
14th		M.H.E. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	Air to Sea Flying		1.05	
15th		M.H.D. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	Operations BERLIN			4.15
16th		M.H.D. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	Operations/MAGDEBURG			4.00
17th		M.H.D. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	HUTTON CRANSWICK			
18th		M.H.D. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	HUTTON CRANSWICK to Base		00.15	
19th		M.H.D. Haltfax	P/O Foster	Navigator	Operations BERLIN			6.45
						Summary for JANUARY 1944	2.15	2.45
						Summary for Squadron	38.55	136.25

J. B. Foster
for O.C. A. F. C.

Commissioned Pilot Officer, Royal New Zealand Air Force, 21 August 1943, between then and April 1944, he took part in sorties to the following:

Berlin, Nuremberg, Rheydt, Berlin, Mannheim, Hanover, Mannheim, Hanover, Kassel, Dusseldorf, Cannes, Leverkusen, Frankfurt, Frankfurt, X Country, Berlin, Magdeburg, Berlin, Berlin, Leipzig, Stuttgart, Trappes, Le Mans, Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Lille, Tergnier, with his final operational sortie on 18 April 1944, to Tergnier again

A copied excerpt from the recipient's diary, dated 5 September 1943 gives detail on one Sortie *'We are on ops tonight, usual tearing round getting read. Target is Mannheim. We took off early and got to the target, about half past eleven and dropped our bombs. From then on we ran into trouble. We got hit by flak, and then pranged by a fighter who set our starboard wing on fire. It burned for an hour and a half, and then the petrol tank blew up, and the explosion put the fire out'*

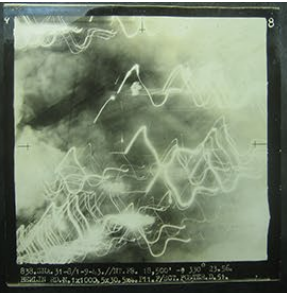
Another excerpt, this dated 19 November 1943 gives description of further enemy action *'Ops. again to-night. Target was Leverkusen. Things turned out rather badly. We were bang on track at the Dutch coast, but the wind changed and we wandered over Essen. We got badly caught by flak, and we had one engine hacked out and had to jettison to get clear. We stopped a lot of pieces, and had a very bad time. All of us were pretty badly shaken.'*

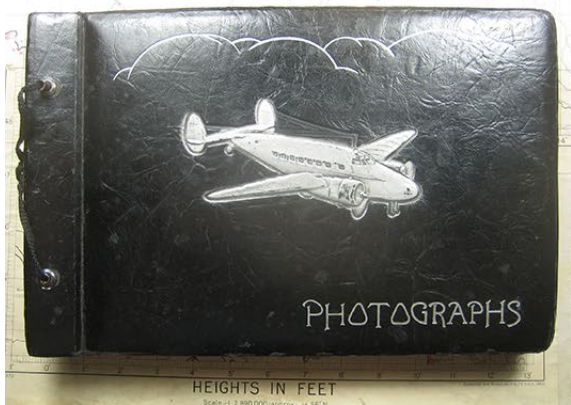
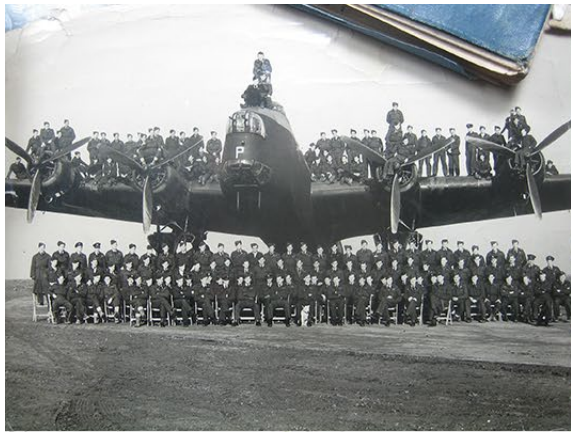
Having been promoted Flying Officer on 21 February 1944, by June 1944 he was flying from 11 O.T.U. and was discharged 12.11.1945. During the Second War Flying Officer Page took part in 31 Operational sorties with 51 Squadron, 28 July 1943 to 18 April 1944.

Sold with the following related contemporary documentation:

- 1) The recipient's Observer's and Air Gunner's Flying Log Book detailing flights on Observers April 1942, through to posting to 51 Squadron in early July 1943, all Operation sorties from then until his last on 18 April 1944 and flying at 11 OUT until June 17 1945. Logbook has suffered water damage, all entries legible but board inner covers loose and need glued back in place.
 - 2) A leather bound photograph album compiled by the recipient, containing 238 images, these including portrait and group photographs, photographs of training, country scenes and live bombing photographs, a fine and well compiled archive
 - 3) Buckingham Palace investiture ticket (for DFC award)
 - 4) Large original paper RAF operations map of Northern Europe, inscribed in ink 'N.Z. 417289 P/O G.B. Page. R.N.Z.A.F. 51. Squadron R.A.F.', this marked and dating many of the locations of operational Sorties in which the recipient participated
 - 5) A signed menu from an 'A' Flight 51 Squadron Dinner
 - 6) A group photographs of the recipient and crew and round a Halifax
 - 7) A wartime Air Ministry publication on Coastal Command
- Copy research includes:
- 8) List of operational sorties; 27 July 1943- 18 April 1944
 - 9) Copied page extracts from the recipient's diary recording
 - 10) Records of the recipients service, issued to his brother, August 1985, this detailing his full service in brief, medal entitlement etc.
 - 11) Full RNZAF service papers

Medals Militaria Jager & Militaria Jager & Militaria Jager & Militaria Jager & Militaria





When originally consigned to auction by the family in 2019, the Family confirmed the loss of the Air Crew Europe Star. An original unnamed example has subsequently been added to the group.

A fine and most complete D.F.C. group to a New Zealander