**Flt Sgt NL Newel 428888 77 SQN RAF**

Operational Sortie to Berlin on 15/16th February 1944.

891 aircraft- the largest raid on Berlin and in fact the largest 'non-1000' raid of the war. The bomb tonnage dropped was also a record at 2642 tons. 43 aircraft losses (4.8%). The bomber stream was tracked by the German controllers as soon as it left the English coast but a swing to the north over Denmark for the approach was effective as it was out of the range of many fighters. The controller ordered that Berlin be kept free of fighters to allow the flak batteries the full range of altitudes but many ignored the order and attacked bombers over the target. Berlin was cloud covered but the bombing was reasonably concentrated, although some bombs fell on outlying towns and villages. Damage was extensive with over 1000 houses and 526 temporary accommodation barracks destroyed. Some of the most important war industries were hit and 320 people were killed. The relatively low death toll is a reflection of the fact that large-scale evacuations had taken place by now.