

## History of Portsoy

### WORLD WAR II IN THE PORTSOY AREA.

*Researched by Findlay Pirie.*



Bomb damage in Hill Street, Portsoy, after a German air raid on 16th. July 1940.  
Occupant, Mrs. Wood, injured and removed to Chalmers Hospital, Banff.

## LOCAL INCIDENTS

### 1939.

**Sep 03** Great Britain declares war on Germany.

### 1940.

*From the Banffshire Journal Tuesday January 9<sup>th</sup> :-*

#### **RECRUITMENT OF SPECIAL CONSTABLES**

Chief Constable Strath has issued a completed list of the Special Constables attached to the **Banffshire Constabulary :-**

**PORTSOY** - Sergeant – George Mackie 26 the Square and six Constables – James D. Hendry : 25 Seafield Street : Alex. J.F. Burgess, 1 Seafield Terrace : George Anderson, 47 Schoolhendry Street : Robert J. Gray 29 Cullen Street : Alfred J. Smith 8 Seafield Street : Charles K. Petrie, 2 Chapel Street.

**Wed Feby 19<sup>th</sup>** Portknockie bombed, three people killed.

*Banffshire Journal, Tuesday February 25<sup>th</sup> 1941: -*

A lone raider on Wednesday morning (19<sup>th</sup> Feby) sweeping in from the sea dropped bombs on a town in the north east coast of Scotland. Three persons were killed and seven others were seriously injured. Those killed were Jas Mair, fisherman, home from patrol duty, his 16 year old daughter Margaret Ann Mair and a neighbour Mrs. Ann McKay, a fisherman's wife. Miss Mair was killed while peeling potatoes and Mrs. McKay met her death while returning to her house after hanging out clothes to dry. Many windows were broken with blast and in addition to those seriously injured, others were injured by splinters and debris.

The 'plane was flying low and machine-gunned a goods train and a bus. One of the bombs fell in a garden and altogether nine houses sustained damage. The school pupils, to the number of 300 were marshalled. Just then was heard the rattling of machine-guns and the playground was sprayed with bullets. After that the children marched in orderly fashion to the shelter and it was after that, that the raider returned and dropped his bombs. The bus passengers all escaped without injury.

**Apr 09** Germany invades Norway.

**May 10** Germany invades Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.

**May 14** Gt. Britain forms new defence force to be known as the "Local Defence Volunteers." (Name changed in July to the "Home Guard")

**Jun 04** Last of British Forces evacuated from Dunkirk.

**Jul 03** JU 88 of 8 Staffel, KG 30, Westerland (Denmark) shot down in sea by Spitfires of Green Section, 603 Sqn, up from Montrose. One crew member killed, the other rescued by HM Minesweeper OHM off Aberdeen.

**Sat Jul 13** Single aircraft, type unknown, dropped incendiary bombs during the early morning

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on open country at the following farms between Portsoy and Whitehills: - Cowhythe, Wester Whyntie and Thriepland..)

*Banffshire Journal, Tuesday, July 16, 1940 : -*

### **Banffshire at War. Incendiaries fall in Fields**

Although they had previously had air raid warnings and at least one night time visit of enemy aircraft overhead, two neighbouring North-East towns, a village nearby and the rural district behind the village had their first experience of actual aerial bombing after midnight on Saturday morning (13<sup>th</sup> July) when a raiding plane passed over the area and dropped a shower of incendiary bombs. They all fell on open country, and, happily caused not the slightest damage. No high explosive bombs were dropped in the district but about the same time the sounds of a few explosions were heard, apparently coming from a considerable distance in a north direction.

An isolated cottage occupied by a farm servant and his wife and child was the nearest "objective" to where the incendiary bombs were dropped, and although the missiles fell all round it and ringed it with fires, the house, miraculously enough, was untouched. The sole effect of the bombing in fact was to provide an unexampled pyrotechnic display, and if the two towns, village and district always escape as lightly at the hands of the enemy raiders they will assuredly not complain.

### **Passed Over Town**

Soon after the air raid warning was sounded a raiding plane was heard approaching from the east. It was a dark night for the time of year. The plane came over the outskirts of the East-most of the two towns then passed directly over the neighbouring town. It was a noisy machine and its droning engines were widely heard. It passed on due westwards, its line of flight taking it within half a mile south of the nearby village.

A minute or two later, air raid wardens and others whose duties took them out of doors in the two towns and village were startled by brilliant flashes of blue-green light, which intermittently lit up the streets and the whole district. No sounds accompanied the flashes – it was like lightning without thunder. It was speedily realised that incendiary bombs were being dropped, and that the two towns and village had fortunately just been missed.

The display of "fireworks" was seen with most effect in the village where people were amazed to witness a succession of blinding flares starting up from the ground in the open countryside nearby just as the plane was heard passing in that direction. The fires were not red flames, but blue and white glares which reflected in the sky and lit up the district in stabs of light with ghastly but thrilling effect. These were incendiaries which had ignited and were burning themselves out harmlessly in fields. Two air raid wardens were despatched by motor car from the village to investigate.

### **Lone Cottage Experience**

Meanwhile the focus point of the alarm and illuminations was the lone cottage occupied by Mr. James French, his wife and child of seven years. It is situated at the edge of a side road which leads to the parish church and school. As the crow flies it is three miles due west of the nearer of the two towns and about a mile south-west of the village.

"It was an experience we never expected and one we don't want again" Mr. French remarked to a Journal representative in relating the occurrence. Mr. French is an air raid warden of the district, and he has been warmly complimented on the prompt and plucky way in which he tackled and extinguished single-handed one of the incendiary bombs which fell and ignited close to his house. His coolness and presence of mind in a situation which came on him without warning probably saved some part of the house or its surroundings catching fire.

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The family were asleep, and had not heard the warning siren at the village, but Mrs. French was wakened by the sound of the aircraft approaching from the east. As the drone became louder Mr. French also wakened, and no sooner had he done so than vivid flashes lit the windows and heavy thuds were heard on the ground.

### **Bomb Extinguished**

"Mercy be here, they're dropping bombs on us" Mrs. French exclaimed as she rushed to clutch her child. The plane passed directly overhead, and in a few moments Mr. French was out of the house and saw a bomb starting to blaze close by. "From my training as a warden I knew what I should do and I lost no time in doing it," he said. The bomb was on a piece of rough grass, and getting hold of a spade, he dug up divots and threw them on the bomb, which was blazing and spurting to a height of about six feet with a blueish glare. In a few minutes, by vigorous digging, he had turf and earth heaped over it and it was quickly smothered out.

So intent was Mr. French on coping with this immediate danger that he had no time to look further afield, but once he had extinguished the bomb he saw there were several similar flares going on in the open fields around, some in a large field of barley to the east of the cottage and others in grass fields on slightly rising ground to the west. Most of these burned themselves out in a short time and others were put out by Mr. French in the same expeditious way he tackled the first one, with no injury to himself. In a short time the two wardens from the village arrived by car and assisted Mr. French. Soon all the bombs had burned out and left the countryside in darkness again. People from nearby farms arrived, and an A.R.P. squad was dispatched from the nearest town, but their services were not needed, as it was found that no damage of any kind had been done.

### **Animals Unscathed**

In two large grass fields to the west of the cottage, on which bombs fell, there were no fewer than about 500 sheep, cattle and pigs, and yet not one of them was injured. It seemed the animals had scattered from the path of the bombs as they fell, and kept well away while they burned. With daylight on Saturday morning fuller inspection confirmed that not the slightest damage had been done by any of the large number of bombs dropped. It was found that they had fallen over an area of about a mile in length from east to west and about a quarter of a mile in breadth, through three fields of growing barley and two fields of grass, practically all on one farm. The lone cottage is about the centre of that area. A large proportion of the bombs, although they are of quite light weight, went about two feet into the soft wet ground, and either failed to ignite or only partly ignited and quickly died out for want of air. Only comparatively few had buried themselves completely. At no point was the growing barley ignited or destroyed, and there are practically no marks or scars in any of the fields to indicate that anything unusual had occurred.

During Saturday many of the bombs, complete or partly burned, were found, and on Sunday a large squad of men, under the direction of the authorities, made a thorough search of the fields and recovered more. Altogether over three hundred bombs or remains of bombs have been found.

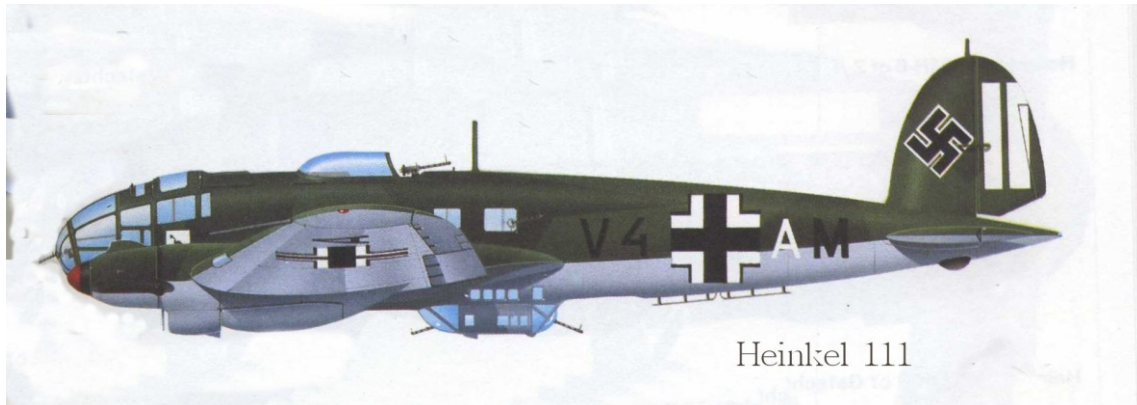
Notes :-

*The towns referred to are Macduff and Banff and the village is Whitehills. The incendiary bombs fell on the farms of Thriepland and Wester-Whyntie. At the time of the incident there was a considerable threat of German airborne forces being trained for an invasion of Gt. Britain. Miss Jean Harper, who lived alone at Auchmore Farm, Portsoy, became so alarmed at seeing the fires, that she ran to the Police Station at Portsoy in her night attire to inform the Police that the Germans were landing.*

**Tues Jul 16** Portsoy bombed by a Heinkel 111 at approx. 4.0 pm. Council house in Hill Street demolished. Occupant Mrs. Helen Wood injured and removed to Chalmers Hospital,

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Banff where she gave birth to a son on the 18<sup>th</sup>. July. Other bombs fell on the Public Park, Ritchies, Doonie and Lodging Brae. *(This raid was not reported in the press)*



**Mon Jul 22** Prisoner of War Camp at Duff House, Banff, bombed at approx. 8.30 am by single aircraft (type unknown). One British soldier and seven German P.O.W's died as a result of the raid.) and seventy-two were injured.

**Mon Sep 16** Heinkel 115 floatplane of 1 Staffel, KurstenfliegerGruppe 906, based at IJmuiden and Shellingwoude in Holland got lost in fog whilst on a minelaying operation and crashed in the Windyheads area between Pennan and New Pitsligo. The Pilot thought he was over the Tay estuary, and was probably to make a forced landing, out of fuel. The time of the crash was 2150 hours. The three crew were: - Lt-Zur-See Otto Aldus, Hptm Heinrich Kothe and Uffz Meissner.

**Mon Sep 30** Three spies, Wermer Walti, Karl Drucke and Vera Erikson, landed at Portgordon in a dinghy from a Heinkel 115 floatplane. Drucke and Erikson apprehended at Portgordon railway station and brought to Police HQ at Banff. Walti caught that same evening at Waverley Station, Edinburgh by Police Officer Merrilees (later Chief Constable). Walti and Drucke executed 6<sup>th</sup>. August 1941. Mystery surrounds the fate of Vera Erikson.

*From the book "The Man who was M" by Anthony Masters: -*

*"Another female agent of Maxwell Knight's was Vera de Cottani-Chalbur. Her background was Russian, and she had worked for him from 1937 until the outbreak of the war. Vera did not produce information of any great importance, but she was both intelligent and useful. Her value came to an end at the outbreak of hostilities and she disappeared.*

*Knight next heard of Vera when he was contacted on 30<sup>th</sup>. September 1940, by Peter Perfect, the Regional Liason Officer in Edinburgh. Perfect told Knight that two damp, suspicious characters, one male and one female had been detained in a small fishing community on the Moray Firth. They claimed their names were Francois de Deeker and Vera Erikson. Under questioning at Buckie however, Vera Erikson dramatically revealed that she was, in fact, Vera de Cottani-Chalbur and that 'Captain King' would vouch for her in London's War Office.*

*Nine months later Walti and Drucke were tried at the Old Bailey and sentenced to death. The press carried the story after the hanging but there was no mention of the part that Knight's double agent, Vera de Cottani-Chalbur had played."*



From an Unknown Newspaper dated 7th. August 1941

# Spies Who Landed on Coast

## *Executed This Morning*

**A**N official Home Office announcement to-day stated that two German Secret Service agents were executed at Wandsworth Prison this morning. They were:-

**Karl Theo Drueke**, a German national, born at Grebenstein, Hessen, on March 20, 1906; and **Werner Heinrich Waeltis**, a Swiss citizen, born at Zurich, Switzerland, on December 14, 1915.

### TREACHERY

**They were convicted under the Treachery Act, 1940, and their appeal against the sentence of death was dismissed.**

The detection and capture of the two men reflects great credit on the staff at a Banffshire railway station, the Banffshire County Constabulary and the Criminal Investigation Department of Edinburgh City Police.

The men entered Scotland during darkness, yet within a few hours of their arrival one was in the hands of the police, and a well organised and extensive search for a possible companion was in progress over a wide area.

The hunt was rewarded with success later the same day.

### Landed from Seaplane

The traitors were brought to this country by a German seaplane, the Banffshire coast being selected as the point of entry.

Some distance from the coast the men were transferred to a collapsible rubber boat of a type used by enemy pilots when baling out at sea, and they had to row some hours before they reached the shore. There they did their best to sink the boat, and in all probability thought they had succeeded in doing so.

### At Station

It was still dark when they came ashore. They had planned to separate. One turned west, the other east. Both carried suitcases, and they set out for railway stations, their ultimate destination being south.

A few hours later the man who had chosen the westward route was found studying a timetable in the early morning light at a railway station.

Certain circumstances roused the vigilance of the station staff.

### With Sausage

A policeman was quickly on the scene. The man was taken to the local police station where officers of the Banffshire County Constabulary acted with the greatest promptness and efficiency.

The suspect was found to be in possession of the complete outfit of a spy. He had a wireless receiving and transmitting set capable of sending messages to the Continent, a large sum of English money, a loaded automatic pistol and a supply of food which included a German sausage.

### Rubber Boat Found

Measures were at once taken to deal with the possibility of a missing companion. A rubber boat was sighted from the coast and recovered. Soon the authorities were satisfied that a companion spy was at large, but had succeeded in getting away from the district.

He was caught later the same day at Edinburgh, his arrest being due to the vigilance of two senior officers of the Edinburgh City C.I.D.

### Dived For Pistol

When the police seized him this man tried to get his hand into his pocket in which was found a loaded pistol.

This man, too, was fully equipped for espionage. Like the other man he had a wireless receiving and transmitting set, a large sum of British money and an emergency food ration which included German sausage. Both men carried foreign passports and both spoke English.

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**Oct 02** Heinkel 115 shot down by a Hurricane of 145 Sqn and crashed close to the shore 5 miles south of Kinnaird Head. It is not known if the three crew were posted missing or were taken prisoner.

**Oct 08** Dornier crashed in shallow water in St. Comb's Bay after engine failure at 1500 hours. Three crew taken prisoner and wrecked aircraft pulled out of sea.

**Oct 11** JU 88 was shot down somewhere in the Moray Firth by a 20 OTU Wellington. The JU 88 was on a collision course with two Wellingtons out on a training flight from Lossiemouth at 10 o'clock level from the leading Wellington. It was identified as a Blenheim, but when a burst of fire hit the leading Wellington's fuselage, just below the cockpit, it was realised that it was a JU88. As the JU 88 passed underneath the leading aircraft, the rear gunner, Sgt. Geoff Prior, let fly a few rounds, despite only two of his four Brownings being serviceable. He must have hit the pilot since the JU 88 dived into the sea, leaving only a circle of foam. Both Wellingtons circled the spot, but saw nothing, so returned to base to celebrate. The incident was reported in the Daily Express.

**Oct 12** Heinkel 11 shot down by Spitfires of 603 Sqn and crashed on the site of the ice rink near the Bridge-of-Dee, Aberdeen. All four crew members killed.

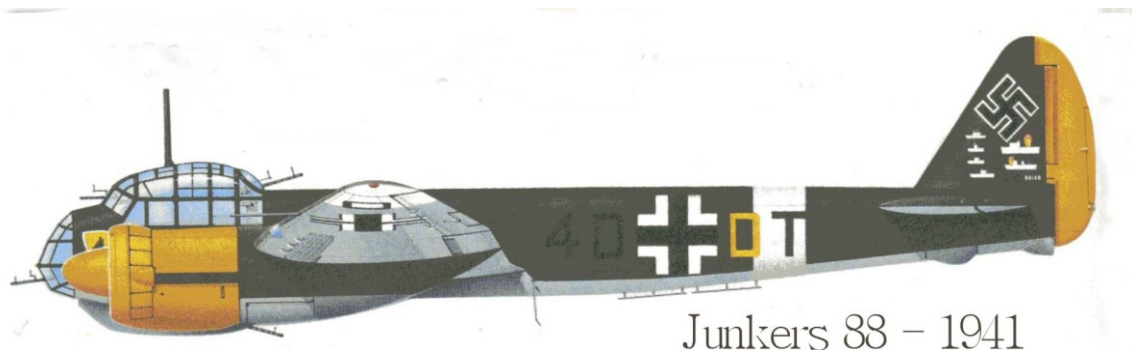
**Oct 16** Hurricane from 111 Sqn, Dyce, crashed on forced landing in field near Turriff at 1910 hours. Pilot injured.

**Oct. 19** Percival Gull crashed near Gartly. Pilot and passengers unhurt.

### 1941

**Feb 08** Two Hurricanes of "B" Flight, 232 Sqn, Elgin, collided during practice dog-fight near Buckie. One crashed on Blackhill near Goukstone Grange, and the other at Minduff, Drybridge, Buckie.

**Sat Feby 22** Portsoy Bombed and machine-gunned by a JU 88 at approx. 6.0 pm. Bomb exploded on grassy slope above caravan site close to Schoolhendry St. Village of Fordyce also machine-gunned. No casualties and little damage.



*The Press and Journal, Monday, February 24th. 1941: -*

**NORTH-EAST TOWN AND VILLAGE RAIDED.** Nazi airmen machine-gunned the streets of a coastal town and a neighbouring village in the north-east of Scotland on

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Saturday night. They also dropped bombs on the town. Damage was done to house property, but there were no casualties.

In one house, which had part of the roof torn off by blast, the family were mourning the death of a relative who died on Friday night, and whose body lay in a coffin in the house awaiting burial. (*The dead man was James Wood, Links Cottage.*) Other houses had windows broken by the explosions. The bombs fell on soft ground on the face of a steep incline.

The raider, identified as a Junkers, crossed the town with its machine-guns blazing. As it circled to make off over the sea again the raider also machine-gunned a nearby village.

Mrs. George Benzie stated in an interview: "I was in the street talking with a neighbour when we saw the Nazi bomber sweep in from over the sea. A young man near me shouted, 'It's a Jerry, run for it'. My five-year old son, Ivan, was on a seat nearby singing 'Roll out the barrel'. I cried to him to get into the house."

"As we ran towards the house the bombs fell, and everything seemed to go black for a time. Had I not shouted to Ivan to run for the house he might have been killed."

Mr. F. Masson, said bullets were flying everywhere. "I took shelter between two high walls. It was all over in a few seconds."

(*Note: - The town was Portsoy and the village was Fordyce. The bombs were dropped on the incline between Institute Street and the Caravan Site at Portsoy.*)

**Sat Mar 01** Heinkel 111 ditched in sea near Mains of Melrose, Macduff, at 8.0 pm, after attacking a convoy east of Troup Head. Crew of four paddled ashore in dinghy and taken prisoner by Chief Constable Strath. The aircraft marked 1H+BK was from No 3 Staffel, 1 Gruppe, KG26, based at Aalborg in Denmark. Crew: - Oblt Hatto Kuhn, Pilot: Ufzr Ferdinard Marnnling, Mechanic: Ufzr Grosshardt, Observer, Gftr Manfred Haehnel, Radio operator. Hatto Kuhn, the pilot, revisited the scene of his capture on 12th. August 1977.

**Mon Apl 07** Two German spies landed at Crovie at 4.0 am from an Arado seaplane and enquired directions from the occupant of No 27 (Mr. Frances Reid) on how to get out of the village. They were, in fact, two Norwegians, John Moe and Tor Glad and they were captured later in the morning by the Police at Silverhillocks near Macduff. Kept overnight in Banff Prison and taken next day under escort to London for questioning. Agreed to become double agents and work for the British. (*The Book "Double Agent" was written by Jan Moen, one of the spies*)

**Thur May 15** Avro Anson of 20 OUT, Lossiemouth, crashed at Lichnet Farm, Gardenstown, in the early afternoon during a heavy shower of snowflakes. All six crew members killed.

**Sat May 17** Wellington of 20 OTU, Lossiemouth, crashed in sea 2 miles NNE of Buckie on air to sea firing exercises. All six crew members killed.

**Fri Jun 06** HM Trawler "Forfeit" attacked by German aircraft (type unknown) east of Macduff. Badly damaged trawler brought into Macduff. Six of the crew of the trawler killed and buried at Newmacher. viz :- W.J. Mitchell 210952 : J. Perkin (28) 210989 : J. McDonnell (37) :210610 : J.W. Picknett (19) 251917 : A.C.H. Little 222655 : R.A. Burton (24) 210711 (*Note: - Before taking up Government service the vessel was named "Cornelius" and had then been skippered by a fisherman named Sandy Bruce, a relation of James Thomson the Assistant Harbourmaster at Macduff. It is reported on the internet that the "Cornelius" had at one time fired a couple of shots at a U-boat off the N.E. Scotland inflicting damage.*)



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**Jun 22** Germany invades Russia and move most of their bomber force from Denmark and Norway to the Russian front. Air Raids on the NE Scotland now less frequent.

**Jun 26** Miles Master crash-landed near Warylip Farm, Whitehills, during the forenoon. Crew uninjured. Plane dismantled and removed by road on the Sunday.

**Jul 30** Wellington of 20 OTU Lossiemouth, crashed in field near Tormore Farm, 1 mile NW of Keith. An Anson tried to land beside the crashed Wellington but it too crashed. All but one survived.

**Aug 06** Wellington of 20 OUT, Lossiemouth, crashed on forced landing near Greens of Blairrock, Deskford. Australian crew uninjured. Aircraft completely burnt out except for tail. Tail broke off on first impact but rear gunner escaped unhurt. Crew well on their way to nearest farm when they looked back and discovered their aircraft on fire.

**Sat Aug 16** A single German aircraft (type unknown) bombed Inverboyndie Distillery in the afternoon, setting fire to a warehouse containing barrels of whisky. Two fire brigades attended but they were unable to prevent the warehouse from being completely destroyed. It is said that the cows and ducks became inebriated when they drank the escaping whisky. Apparently the cows were so affected that they were unable to stand upright in order to get milked. There were no casualties amongst the civilians or soldiers that occupied neighbouring warehouses. The plane also machine-gunned nearby farms.

*Andy Findlay, then aged 15, and son of the cooper at the distillery, recalls the incident : -*

On Saturday 16th August 1941, Prince, the distillery cart-horse had a busy morning. Eight Butts, containing a total of over 800 gallons of whisky, and four Hogsheads, with an additional 200 gallons, evacuated from Edinburgh for safety had been transferred from the distillery railway sidings to No. 11 Bonded Warehouse. The workers had their daily drams and gone home. Most of the soldiers were attending a sports meeting in Banff.

The Junkers came in low. I heard nothing until it seemed to be coming through the roof. Then, an enormous explosion, the windows and door bounced and everything rattled. My father and I ran out. No. 11 Bonded Warehouse was on fire, with black smoke and flames shooting hundreds of feet in the air. Most of the block walls had blown out and large areas of roof had collapsed. As we approached, the noise of roaring flames, cracking staves and popping bungs absorbed our attention so we were unaware of the bomber approaching on a second run, till he was over us. We dived for cover by the boiler house. It was so low we could see the crew, and as it banked and lifted to clear the viaduct, the gunner sent a trail of tracers in our direction. Fortunately his elevation was not as good as his direction. The line of bullets rattled into the corrugated roof and down the wall finishing two feet above our heads. When our hearts settled to a regular beat again, we concluded that the raider had no more bombs or he would have used them on his second run, and that he would not be hanging around waiting for fighter planes to arrive.

The fires (two 100kg. bombs had been dropped) spread rapidly and a rivulet of burning whisky flowed through the fallen walls and into the stream. Being lighter than water, the flaming spirit spread across the width and was carried by the flow downstream. The burning river continued out of sight behind the peat store where a steeper gradient caused turbulence which extinguished the flames.

The manager and the exciseman, who had joint responsibility for the duty-free bonded spirit arrived with some workers to attempt a salvage operation. The fire-brigade followed and soon had water hosing on the flames trying to make breaks around the fires. The army joined

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in, with a controlling officer organising a platoon under an N.C.O. to aid the fire fighters. He would then have a second platoon ready to march smartly in an hour later as the first troops staggered out overcome by fumes. One private slouched out using his tin hat as a container; "Get your helmet on" roared the officer. He did, and as two bottles of whisky ran down his face and clothing someone remarked "Hope he doesn't light a fag". The firemen, hampered by the fallen roof, were fighting a losing battle against the volatile overproof whisky. One, imbibing a little to raise his spirits, succumbed to the heat, but was later fined for being drunk on duty. By midnight the fire was extinguished. My father who had spent all day at the bombsite and was not in least intoxicated said they had saved twelve barrels out of three hundred.

Next day the Regimental Sergeant Major, the scourge of the troops, supervised an equipment inspection including water bottles. This resulted in several non-commissioned officers being reduced to the ranks and many squaddies being confined to barracks for fourteen days.

Jock Crystal reported that his ducks were drunk, and that some of the Old Manse cows were legless.

**Sun Sep** A Hampden ran out of fuel on its way back from a mine-laying raid against the "Tirpitz" in Oslo Fjord on an early Sunday morning at about 0600 hours and crashed at Auchintoul Farm, Aberchirder. Three or four of the crew were unhurt, but the navigator, Hugh Sanderson, was injured. There was a feature on this in the Press and Journal of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> August 1974 when Hugh Sanderson came back from Australia to visit the site. The Hampden was thought to be from 44 or 50 Sqn operating temporarily from Lossiemouth.

## 1942

*Banffshire Journal, Tuesday, January 13th, 1942: -*

**AWARD OF B.E.M.** - The M.B.E. has been awarded to Capt. Owen Hughes Roberts, and the **B. E.M.** to **Douglas Harris, Mate, Portsoy**, and to Gunner, Henry Alfred Jones. When their ship was attacked by a German seaplane, the Master manned the Lewis-gun on the bridge, the Mate took the after Hodgkiss gun, and the gunner a second Hodgkiss gun. The Master ordered every one to hold his fire until the enemy was close. The German made two runs, both very low, and such a steady well directed stream of lead was fired into him that he was destroyed.

Mr. Harris, who belongs to Portsoy, is a grandson of the late Henry Harris and Mrs. Harris, and went to sea on herring fishing drifters until he was 18 years of age when he entered the Merchant Service. He has been with the same shipping company for six years, lately serving as Mate, a position that he reached at the age of 25. He was presented with an inscribed watch by his employers for his good work in bringing down the raider. The ship belonged to the Coal Coy. in Dublin.

**Apl 02** Wellington of D. Flight, 20 OTU, Lossiemouth, crashed in a turnip field on a hillside at Sinsharnie Farm near the main Huntly to Keith road. Crew of 6 killed.

**Jul 03** Whitley, 19 OTU, Kinloss, ditched four miles north of Portknockie at 1630 hours. Crew rescued safely from their dinghy.

**Sep 29** Wellington of D Flight, 20 OTU, Lossiemouth (based at satellite airfield at Elgin) crashed in thick fog and heavy rain at 0015 hours on a cliff edge at More Head, Gardenstown.

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Four crew killed. The aircraft was one of the bombers from Bomber Training Command which took part in one of the thousand raids over Germany in 1942. The particular raid in which N2758 took part was an attack on Bremen in 25.06.42 using Snaith in Yorkshire as a temporary base.

**Nov. 01** Wellington, B Flight, 20 OTU missing from training flight, crashed in Moray Firth. All five crew missing.

### 1943

**Jan 28** Wellington, B Flight 20 OTU, Lossiemouth, missing from cross-country flight, crashed in Moray Firth. All five crew missing.

**Apl 02** Whitley 19 OTU, Forres, belly landed 2 miles from Rosehearty.

**Apl 06** *Banffshire Journal, Tuesday, April 6th. 1943: -*

**AWARD FOR BRAVERY** - Portsoy is honoured by the recognition of bravery on Naval Service of **Mr. Alex. Smith**, Main Street, Portsoy, who has been decorated at Buckingham Palace by the King. Mr. Smith was Chief Engineer on a vessel, which was blown up by enemy action. The Skipper was seriously injured and Mr. Smith saw the dangerous position at once and carried his officer to safety at great risk to himself. Mr. Smith has been discharged owing to injury to his ears by the violent explosion, causing deafness, and is now engaged in the Merchant Service.

It may be recalled that a few years ago Mr. Smith was rescued from drowning at the mouth of the harbour during a heavy storm, by the late Geoffrey Kelman, a young lad who was publicly honoured for his gallant act.

**May 12** Wellington, B Flight, 20 OTU, Lossiemouth, crashed in sea eight miles off Portsoy. All five crew missing.

**Jun 14** Spitfire, 58 OTU, Balado Bridge, collided with starboard wing of Whitley, 19OUT, Kinloss, during practice fighter attacks over Spey Bay at 1722 hours. Spitfire crashed in sea near Banff killing pilot. Whitley landed safely at Kinloss with seven feet of starboard wing missing.

**Jul 18** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, Dallachy crashed near Milltown Airfield. Sgt Penfold killed.

**Aug 25** Two Oxfords of 14 (P) AFU, Banff, collided mid-air near Lochagan Farm Banff. Sgt. V.J. Surbey killed and buried in Banff Cemetery.

**Aug 26** Wellington, A Flight, 20 OTU, Lossiemouth, crashed and burned out in Clashindarroch Forest near Corrydown, Gartly, some 7 miles SW of Huntly.

**Aug 29** Oxford of 14(P) AFU Banff, crashed near Dyce. F/Sgt G. Braddock and Sgt A.F. Smith killed.

**Aug 30** Proctor, from Fleet Air Arm Base at Arbroath crashed at Pathside Farm just off the A96 three miles SW of Fochabers. All three occupants killed.

**.Sep 28** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, Fraserburgh, at 2200 hours, crashed ¼ mile from end of

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runway on take off. Sgt A.W. Hill injured and removed to R.N. Hospital, Kingseat.

**Oct 01** Spy lands by parachute near Fraserburgh : -

*The Aberdeen Press and Journal 5th September 2005 : -*

### **Herring Men Netted WWII German Spy.**

The two lorry drivers taking an overnight shipment of herring from Ullapool to Fraserburgh must have had the shock of their lives. Just after midnight on October 1, 1943, they were signalled to stop just outside Fraserburgh by someone who looked like a German parachutist.

Details of the case of reluctant secret agent Nicolay Hansen, 27, who was dropped into Scotland only to give himself up immediately, are contained in the latest release of Secret Service files -from the National Archive. The detailed dossier contains witness statements from the two drivers, 31 -year-old Ian Park, of 24 Castle Street, Fraserburgh, and 39-year-old Norman Cameron, of 95 Bon Accord Street, Aberdeen, who first saw Hansen's plane circling over woods in the area. Mr Park, who worked for William French and Sons, of Fraserburgh said that shortly afterwards "my attention was drawn to someone flashing a torch in a field at Tarmair, Smithy Croft."

In his own words: "I drew up my lorry on my proper side, stopped and got out of the cab. I went over the fence into a grass field at about 10 yards from the road. I came upon a German getting out of the harness of a parachute which was attached to him. He held a torch in his hand."

Mr Park said there was "a heap of stuff" on the ground beside the parachute and the man told him in broken English he had come from Stavanger in a Fokke Wulf plane and had been trying to get to an aerodrome.

He could not persuade the man he now believed to be a Norwegian escapee to get into his cab, so he stayed with him while Mr Cameron, who had driven a following lorry, went on to summon the police.

Mr Cameron met Inspector George Michie, who drove from Fraserburgh police station, and guided him to where the other driver and Hansen were waiting.

After taking the parachutist into custody, he discovered a bag containing a radio near the parachute and took the man back to Fraserburgh, where he was interviewed by a Colonel Perfect, a shadowy figure who seemed to have been in charge of security matters in Scotland. A subsequent search found a second radio that had been dropped by parachute nearby.

Hansen told his interrogators at Fraserburgh and later at top-secret Camp 020, somewhere in South London, that he had been instructed to surrender himself with one radio as evidence of his innocent intent. He was to hide the other for use later, when he hoped to be released and find work as a coal miner. Hansen was given the code name Heini.

What he did not reveal until much later was that he had secret-writing crystals concealed in a hollowed-out tooth and accommodation addresses in Goteburg in neutral Sweden, where he had intended to send his reports.

The Secret Service considered trying to use him as a double agent to plant false information on the Nazi Abwehr spy service but dropped the idea after concluding the Germans would expect them to do so, and that Hansen was not reliable enough.

The Germans received a report that Hansen had broken both legs on landing and had been captured. He was deported back to Norway after the war.

## World War II in the Portsoy Area

**Oct 12** Sunderland of 4 (C) OTU, Alness, crashed in sea 4 miles off Portsoy at 21 hours whilst on a training flight. All 15 crew missing or drowned.

**Oct 13.** A number of bodies from a crashed seaplane were taken ashore at Portsoy by Henry and Joel McDonald in their small fishing vessel "White Wings" and removed to the airfield at RAF Banff. The airmen were from a Sunderland seaplane of 4(C) OTU Alness, which crashed in the sea 4 miles off Portsoy at 2100 hours on October 12th. All 15 crew missing or drowned.

**Oct 15** Spitfire, 519 Sqn, Wick, caught fire and crashed in Moray Firth, 14 miles north or 18 miles north-east of Banff. Pilot missing.

**Oct 19** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, Dallachy crashed some 300 yards NW of Dallachy Airfield. Two crew, F/O J.H. Downs, Instructor and Sgt. M.D. Lumsden, killed.

**Nov 23** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, Fraserburgh crashed near St Combs. Sgt. W. Sykes killed.

**Nov 23** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU Fraserburgh crashed 2 miles from Airfield. Sgt. Lewis injured.

**Dec 14** Barracuda of 829 Sqn, Tain, crashed in sea north of Banff late evening. Crew missing.

**Dec 26** Spitfire from RAF Dyce crashed at Percyhorner 3 miles west of Fraserburgh. Pilot F/Sgt Edwards injured and removed to RN Hospital, Kingseat.

## 1944.

**Jan 17** Anson of 14 (P) AFU, crashed in field between Blairshinnoch level crossing and Ladysbridge Station whilst in the circuit to land at Banff Airfield. F/Lt O.J.C. Mason, F/O Pennington and P.O. Francis killed. Mason and Pennington buried at Banff Cemetery.

**Jan 18** Mosquito of 8 (C) OTU, Dyce crashed in sea off Pennan Head 5 miles west of Rosehearty. Wing came off in flight and came down on East Mains farm, Pennan.

**Feb 13** Spitfire from RAF Peterhead crashed on Mormond Hill at 1100 hours. Pilot killed.

**Feb 23** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, crashed on cliff face north of Banff Airfield at 0230 hours. Solo pilot, Sgt. A. Younger, killed.

**Mar 04** Wellington of D Flight, 20 OTU, Milltown, on bombing practice crashed into north side of Hill of Maud at Longfold 2 miles south of Findochty at 1215 hours. Four killed, two injured.

**Mar 19** Wellington of D Flight, 20 OTU, Milltown, landed at Banff Airfield to avoid a shower and became bogged down in soft ground. It was pulled out but crashed into field between Thriepland Farm and Wester Whyntie Farm when attempting to take off. All six crew members killed.

**Mar 23** Two Oxfords of 14(P) AFU Fraserburgh, collided in mid-air when landing at Fraserburgh Airfield. One aircraft landed safely with no injuries to the crew. All the crew of

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the other aircraft were killed viz.:- P/O Crouch (instructor), F/Sgt Munro and F/Sgt Ellis. Munro and Ellis, both Australians, were buried in Banff Cemetery.

**Mar 26** Spitfire of 4 FPP, ATA, on delivery flight crashed on forced landing in a field near Knock Hill, Grange. Pilot injured.

**Mar 30** Wellington of 20 OTU, based at Elgin, crashed into sea 6 miles west of the mouth of the Spey. Entire crew missing or drowned.

**May 10** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, Fraserburgh, crashed at 1100 hours killing the pilot F/Sgt. Hampton (Australia). F/Sgt Hampton was buried in Banff Cemetery

**Jul 10** Mosquito of 544 Sqn, Leuchars, crashed just outside Hillhead Wood, one and a half miles SW of Mulben at 2000 hours. Crew, F/O Simondson, (Pilot) (Australia) and F/O Reid (Nav) killed. Buried at Banff Cemetery.

**Jul 29** Oxford of 14 (P) AFU, Fraserburgh, crashed SW of Dyce Airfield, Sgt. Payne and P/O Sutherland killed.

**Aug 21** Two Oxfords of 14(P) AFU, Banff, collided in mid-air at Moss side of Grange, Banffshire. Both pilots, F/O Haynes and F/O James Law, killed. F/O Haynes buried in Banff Cemetery.

**Oct 02** Two Beaufighters of 404 Sqn, Banff, collided three and a half miles SW of Banff Airfield and both crashed near the farm of Wellheads, Tillynaught. All four crew members killed. F/O L. Robinson, F/O F.M. Stickel and F/O E.R. Davey buried in Banff Cemetery. The other crew member who died was F/O G.A. Lang (Pilot)

**Nov 18** A Liberator of 86 Sqn Tain, crashed in sea, five miles north of Whitehills, whilst on Leigh Light training. Entire crew of 10 missing or drowned.

## 1945

**Jan 09** Mosquito, 235 Sqn, Banff lost control while doing an air-test over Banff Airfield and crashed into the croft of Hopetown just outside the south perimeter. Croft set on fire, but occupants escaped injury. Two crew killed. F/Lt. Douglas (Pilot) buried in Banff Cemetery.

**Jan 25** Two Mosquitoes of 248 Sqn, Banff, collided in mid-air on return from operations. One crashed in Roughilly Wood, 2 miles SW of Airfield, killing the two crew. The other landed safely at base. F/Lt. Crimp, one of the dead, buried in Banff Cemetery.

**Feb 04** Mosquito of 248 Sqn, Banff, with port engine feathered, made forced landing at Cairnton Farm, near Fordyce. Hit invasion pole at Birkenbog Farm on the way down. Crew uninjured, and seen walking towards Fordyce.

**Feb 22** Mosquito of B Flight, 333 Sqn, Banff, on low level photographic run, hit masthead of fishing boat. Force landed in field on Hill of Maud, Buckie. Two crew injured.

**Feb 24** Mosquito of 248 Sqn, Banff, crashed into a bunker at Tarlair Golf Course around midday. Two crew killed. F/Lt Lewis Bacon, DFC, one of the dead, buried in Banff Cemetery.



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**Mar 22** Mosquito of B Flight, 333 Sqn, Banff, crashed on forced landing near Ordens farm Banff at 1638 hours. Two crew injured.

**Apr 22** Beaufighter of 144 Sqn, Dallachy, crashed shortly after take off with engine failure at 1755 hours. Ditched approx. 12 miles north of Portsoy. Two crew missing.

**May 08      War with Germany Ends.**

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*From an unknown newspaper:-*

## **German Prisoners Killed By Own Airmen**

There was free whisky for beast as well as man when a Banffshire distillery bond was hit and set on fire by a Nazi bomb. Cattle grazing on pasture soaked by whisky which flowed from the damaged bond fell under the influence of drink. The animals were seen "stytterin" in the field for days after. The incident occurred at Boyndie, early in the war.

It is recalled by Treasurer A.T. Morrison in his review as District Commissioner of air raids on the North-east-

From Banffshire, too, comes the story of the bombing on July 22, 1940, of Duff House, Banff,, then a prisoner of war camp. Seven were killed and seventy-two injured.

In another North-east air raid - that at Sullom Voe in Shetland where the Nazis made their first attack on land in Britain - the only casualty was a rabbit.

### **Table of Toll**

The table below gives, at glance the number of raids made on the North-east district and the casualties:—

	Raids	Killed	Injured
Aberdeenshire' Landward)	68	13	27
Peterhead .....	17	36	44
Fraserburgh. ....	19	49	249
Banffshire .....	9	10	90
Kincardine .....	16	—	—
Moray and Nairn .....	4	7	13
Orkney .....	16	2	11
Shetland .....	27	4	12

The main attacks on Aberdeenshire have fallen on Fraserburgh and Peterhead. In the nineteen raids on Fraserburgh, fifty-nine houses and twenty-four other buildings have been destroyed or rendered beyond repair, while 1296 have been damaged. The most serious Fraserburgh raid occurred on November 5, 1940, when the glare from a fire, started accidentally at Benzie and Miller's shop, attracted an enemy plane.

One of the bombs dropped hit a public house where a darts competition was in progress. The casualty list was heavy, thirty-one killed and seventeen injured.

Another serious attack on Fraserburgh was on April 5, 1941, when Messrs Maconochie's food factory got a direct hit, five persons being killed and 112 injured. Twelve days later a new housing scheme in Castle Street was hit the casualties being seven killed and twenty injured. An air raid shelter behind houses was slewed round eight feet off its base by blast.

In another raid on February 20, 1943 at the School Street housing scheme one person was killed and twenty-seven injured.

### **On First-Aid Post**

At Peterhead the Academy has been twice seriously damaged. Houses in Landale Road have been demolished.

One of Peterhead's most serious raids was on August 10, 1941, when a first-aid post got a direct hit. Five persons were killed and twenty injured.

## World War II in the Portsoy Area

On September 29, 1941, six bombs were dropped in the James Street area. Twenty-nine people were killed and five injured.

In Peterhead fifty-six houses have been demolished and 1138 damaged by Nazi bombs. In other parts of Aberdeenshire most of the bombs dropped have fallen on open, country, but on January 29, 1942, when Rosehearty was raided during a blizzard eleven people were killed and seven injured. Rescue parties from neighbouring districts were held up on snowbound roads.

Portsoy and Portknockie in Banffshire have also suffered considerable damage.

Lossiemouth has been the worst hit town in Moray and Nairn.

*(/Book 4/World War II)*

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