

DISPERSALS

2TAF MEDIUM BOMBERS ASSOCIATION NEWSMAGAZINE

Sep 2021



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2nd TACTICAL AIR FORCE MEDIUM BOMBERS ASSOCIATION

Incorporating
88, 98, 107, 180, 226, 305, 320, & 342 Squadrons
137 & 139 Wings, 2 Group RAF

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DISPERSALS is published three times per year.

On our cover: A crop from my favorite B-25 photo: 'Panchito' owned by Rag Wings & Radials; taken by aviation photographer Eric Dumigan (©Airic). Eric died suddenly in September; I'm proud to have known him. Dave.



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES • Issue 131

September 2021

CORRECTION

In our November 2020 Dispersals issue, we carried a story 'COLLISION OVER HORSHAM' by John Reijnders that recounted experiences of John's Great Uncle Rinus T.M. van der Hayden who served as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner (WAG) with 320 (Dutch) Squadron.

Two crews were lost in a collision over Horsham on return from an attack on a railway installation in France. One other crew was shot down by flak over the target and we reported that all crew members of FR179 'NO-T' were lost and have no known graves:

Lt. H.L. Hamilton • S/Lt W. Badings • Cpl L. Posthumus • Sgt F. Kuypers

In my Facebook announcement that the November issue was available on the Brussels Air Museum Fund website, Yann Perrotte commented that two of the crew, Badings and Posthumus, were known to be buried in the Dutch Military Cemetery at Orry-la-Ville in Northern France. Yann provided a link to francecrashes39-45.net that carries photos (by R. Biaux) of their headstones.



The graves of H.L. Hamilton and F. Kuypers, are still unknown.

Thank you Yann, for advising us so we can correct our records and properly direct our respect.

DAVE

LAST POST

F/O J.H.M. 'Max' Henning • Pilot – 226 Squadron



James Herbert Maxwell 'Max' Henning went to his last post 3 June 2021 at the age of 97 in Grande Prairie, Alberta where he spent most of his life.

Max was born in Lorie, Saskatchewan and at the age of four accompanied his family on a six-day road trip in their Model T Ford, piled high with belongings, to their new home in Grande Prairie.

He tried to enlist in the RCAF at age 17 but was refused because he had not yet completed high school. Later the same year, while on a sleigh ride down the Wapiti River, he learned of the attack on Pearl Harbour; that encouraged him to work hard and a year later he was in Air Force

blue and part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP).

Max was crewed up, at No. 34 Operational Training Unit Pennfield Ridge, New Brunswick with Dave Peterkin (Observer), Jack Matthews (Wireless Op/Air Gunner) and Moe Swartz (Air Gunner). Together they completed their training and crossed the Atlantic to England. On 20 Jul 44 they were posted to 226 Squadron RAF at Hartford Bridge Aerodrome; their first operational flight was four days later, in Mitchell FW152 'EV-V' as part of an attack by 60 Mitchells from 4 Squadrons against a heavily defended enemy troop and gun concentration in France. Their second flight was an Air/Sea Rescue search the next day for a Mitchell crew that ditched in the Channel the previous night; of the crew of 5, there was just a single survivor; he was picked up by an ASR launch.

226 Squadron was relocated to France 17 Oct 44, taking up 'residence' at RAF Aerodrome B.50 Vitry-en-Artois when that 'drome was captured from the Luftwaffe. Max and crew would fly 8 more ops, the last being a 26 Nov 44 raid on the railway bridge at Deventer, Holland; Max's aircraft was Mitchell HD304 'EV-C'. Another Mitchell, FW230 'EV-B' was hit by flak over the target and broke in two; there were no parachutes.

In a 2013 interview with the Grande Prairie Herald-Tribune, reporter Christopher Mills quoted Max saying, of his service "I was scared all the time, but as soon as I got in the air, you seemed to level out and do your job. You knew you were in danger, but you didn't shake or worry about it,



F/O Max Henning RCAF, with 226 Sqn RAF. Brenda Henning photo

you just kept going, because everyone else did. I had three or four guys that relied on me to get them back if I could and I relied on them to keep the buggers away from me.”

Their tour complete, Max (20 years), Dave (21), Jack (19) and Moe (18) were transported to England on 24 Dec 44 to begin the journey home.

Max married Marie McFetridge in 1948; in addition to raising 3 children, they would also raise Arabian horses. Max was very active in the community; playing, coaching and managing hockey teams, was a volunteer fire fighter, Cub master, Kinsmen Club President and City alderman; he was also part of a group that in 1979 started a new radio station (CJXX), the towers for which were on Max and Marie’s property.



*Max and Marie at 2TAF MBA 1998 reunion in Regina
Brenda Henning photo*

The website www.gphockeylegends.com states, in honour of Max, “Old time Grande Prairie hockey fans will remember defenseman Henning’s patented end-to-end rushes that resulted in a goal or at least a successful "shoot in." The maneuver was based on Max's ability to pass the puck to himself using the boards as he rushed headlong, head down from end to end. It was a tactic he perfected on the natural ice in the old Wapiti Arena where he was a rink rat at age 12.”

Marie predeceased Max in 2005 after 57 years of marriage. Max eventually moved into Wild Rose Manor care home; when he was offered room 226, he took it immediately (his RAF Squadron number).

Max is survived by son Cam (Diana), daughters Donna (Blaine) Thomson and Brenda Henning; 6 grandchildren, 8 great grandchildren, 3 great-great grandchildren and sisters Jean Jones and Alice Band.

We Will Remember Them



Terry Batchelor • Curator • Reg Day Museum

Terry Batchelor, curator of the Reg Day Museum on Dunsfold Aerodrome, passed away Jan 2, 2021 due to bronchopneumonia; as reported by Terry's wife, Eileen Batchelor.



*l-r: Owen Warren, John Reijnders (Netherlands B-25 'Sarinah' crewman), **Terry Batchelor**. Taken at the Veterans tent, 2017 Wheels & Wings, Dunsfold John Reijnders photo*

Terry worked for years with Reg Day and fellow volunteer Owen Warren curating the Museum, collecting artifacts, photos and stories of 139 Wing to keep alive the memories of those who served in the Second Tactical Air Force. Terry took over after Reg passed away in March of 2019.

Information from Dunsfold Aerodrome Historical Society indicated that The Museum was permanently closed and its contents in storage. Paul McCue advised further that Dunsfold Park principals at the aerodrome have everything under lock and key 'in situ' as Reg, and then Terry, left it.

Paul is involved in discussions on the future of the collection and there is interest in another established museum setting up at the Dunsfold Village end of the airfield.

Adam Tudor-Lane, who recently researched a 180 Squadron crash that claimed the life of his uncle (see Aug 2020 Dispersals), worked closely with Terry and is also in contact with Dunsfold Park personnel re Museum the museum's future.

Paul McCue and Adam are known to each other; we can be assured we will soon know where the Reg Day Museum collection will continue.

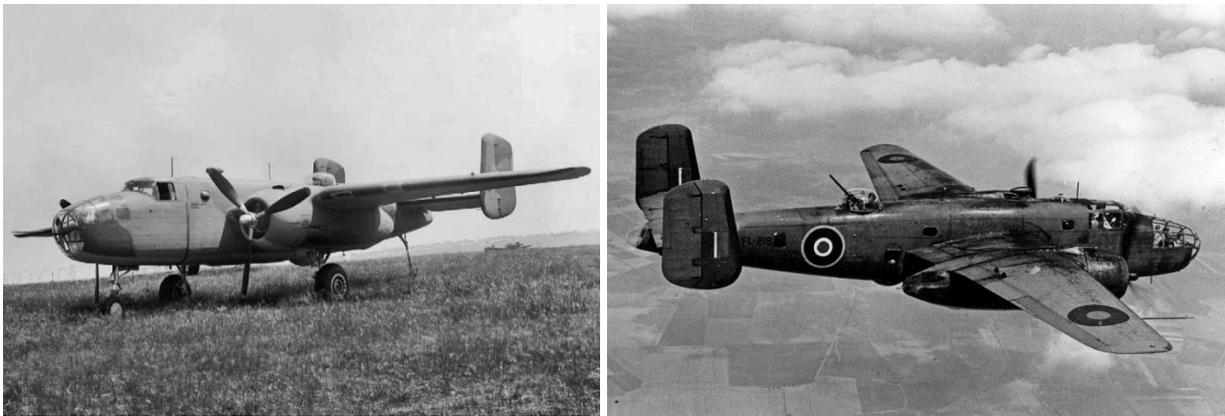
I know that all of us who have visited or followed Dunsfold Aerodrome will breathe a bit easier hearing that the work of Reg, Owen and Terry will be preserved.

In Search of **MITCHELL II series ii**

David Poissant

North American Aviation (NAA) built 9,889 B-25 Mitchells between 1941 and 1945. Production of the eight various models were: B-25: 24 built; B-25A: 40; B-25B: 120; B-25C: 1,625; B-25D: 2,290; B-25G: 400; B-25H: 1,000; B-25J: 4,390.

The Royal Air Force received 23 B-25Bs, known in the RAF as Mitchell I, in August of '41; 3 went to the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) at Boscombe Down and the rest were assigned to No. 111 Operational Training Unit at Nassau, Bahamas; one of which crashed before delivery by the USAAC.



Left: Royal Air Force's first Mitchell, FK161 (USAAF B-25B serial 40-2341) at A&AEE Boscombe Down, where she remained until Struck off Charge (SOC) 12 May 43. IWM photo **Right:** RAF Mitchell II FL218 (B-25C 41-12806) with 180 Squadron was hit by flak over Zudauques, France 25 Jun 44, crashed near Hawkinge, Kent; Pilot W/O W.D. Rogers was KIA, minor injuries to rest of crew. Air Ministry photo.

B-25Cs & Ds (both known in the RAF as Mitchell II) were identical except for location of manufacture; Cs were built in Inglewood, California; Ds in the new plant in Kansas City (KC), Kansas. 'G' models, produced in Inglewood, grew from the 'C' design with a solid, shortened nose to house a 75 mm cannon and 2 fixed .50 caliber machine guns; midway through production, the ventral (belly) turret was deleted and waist and tail guns were added. The RAF received 2 early 'G' models, also known as Mitchell IIs (FR208 & FR209); they were not used operationally.

'H' models, also Inglewood built, were based on the cannon-equipped 'G' with 2 additional .50 cal nose machine guns (4 total) and a deepened rear fuselage for waist and tail gunners; and the upper turret was moved to the forward fuselage. That modified rear fuselage, the roof raised by 7", and its more effective gun positions, would be incorporated into the following B-25J model design, as would the revised upper turret position. The final differentiation for the 'H' was the addition of 2 packaged .50 cal machine guns on each side of the forward fuselage. There were no 'H' models in RAF inventory.

Letters missing from the B-25 production series are: 'E', a single modified B-25C experiment (USAAF serial 43-32281) using engine heat for deicing; it proved very effective, but much more costly than inflatable boots; and 'F', the photo reconnaissance modified Ds (45 built, included with B-25D total). As in most alpha series, the letter 'I' was not used, due to possible confusion with the numeral 1.

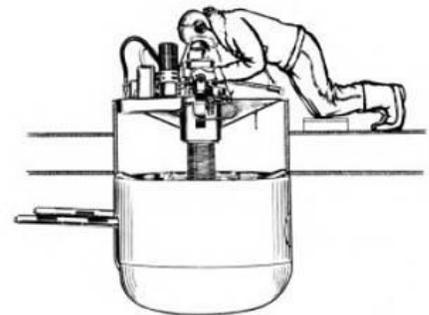


RAF FR209 (B-25G 42-64823) and close-up of her nose with 75mm cannon at A&AEE. She was converted to glass nose in early 1944; was last noted at RAF Dyce (Aberdeen) 15 Sep 51 where she was converted to an instructional airframe for Air Training Command. No final disposition noted; likely scrapped. Laura Postaltrip Cidoncha photos.

With a total production of 4,390 the B-25J (RAF Mitchell III) was the highest-produced model and, because it was also the final version, makes up most of the B-25 population we now see in museums, air shows and magazines. It was the most heavily-armed version, with as many as 8 @ .50 caliber machine guns in the nose ('strafer' option used in Pacific Theatres), 4 more in forward fuselage blister packs (removed in RAF service) and 2 more in each of the top (dorsal) turret, 2 fuselage waist windows and the tail cupola.

The B-25J design was the culmination of innovation gathered by NAA factory field managers and consultants closely supporting deployed Army Air Force units to 'up-gun' early Mitchells for more effective ground forces support, much-improved fighter defense and aggressive attack missions against naval vessels and installations in the South Pacific and China/Burma/India theatres.

NAA Field managers found the consensus of B-25 combat users was that the ventral (belly) turret was difficult to use; it jammed when lowered too quickly and its periscopic sighting system induced vertigo to the point of nausea. Removing it eliminated



*B-25 ventral turret operation
Illustration from lonessentry.com*

600 pounds of weight, allowing the addition of more effective machine gun positions and additional armour.

John Leland 'Lee' Atwood, NAA 1st VP during WWII, in his forward to Norman Avery's authoritative book 'The Magnificent Medium', noted "The B-25 was used primarily in the Pacific...and the concept that the medium bomber was just a small B-17 underwent major modifications. Their targets were more tactical...so some very creative people [including] 'Pappy' Gunn...took the lead in changing the mission into an attack mode...which made the plane very effective for attack purposes. Those modifications and changes were shortly incorporated at the factory..."

Those factory modifications and changes (elimination of ventral turret, added waist guns, deepened rear fuselage, tail guns with canopy, packaged side guns, additional armour plating and an 8-gun strafing nose option) were built into the B-25J design. When UAAF officials saw the new design, they wanted its production moved up quickly. NAA showed that it was not possible and offered to modify the then remaining scheduled production of B-25Ds at Kansas City to include many of the B-25J improvements.

In a June 11, 1943 letterⁱⁱ to the Commanding General, AAF Material Command, Lee Atwood wrote, in part "...in order to expedite delivery of current, modified Model B-25D airplanes from [NAA's] Modification Center at Kansas City with additional armament, the following proposal is submitted and could be put into effect within 30 days...provided such structural modifications be applicable to all subsequent Model B-25D airplanes."

He went on to describe the modifications and additions and where in the factory process they would be accomplished. They included:

- Structural rear fuselage modifications for .50 caliber waist guns and windows
- Elimination of lower turret



B-25J 'Panchito' with standard glass nose and side blister pack machine guns; above her is B-25J 'Betty's Dream' with an 8-gun strafing nose. Next is standard B-25J 'God & Country', and B-25H 'Barbie III'. Scott Slocum photo.

The above modifications would be performed in a rework line after the fuselage assemblies were received from Fisher Body Division and before entering the production line. This also applied to similar items manufactured by NAA Kansas.

- Modification and installation provisions for tail gun cupola would be incorporated in the regular production line.
- Fabrication of gun mounts, ammunition boxes and supports, including actual installation of waist guns, forward fuselage package guns and tail guns were to be done at the Modification Center as at present.

...and if accepted at once, would expedite the modifications of approximately the last 700 to 800 Model B-25Ds.

North American Aviation's contract was with the USAAF who in turn supplied aircraft to other countries; therefore the proposed modifications would also be intrinsic to the B-25Ds directed to those other air forces.

In the RAF parlance, these modified B-25Ds were known as '**Mitchell II series ii**'.



Mitchell II series ii (Late model B-25D) of 98 Squadron RAF the evening of 10 Jun 44; one of 72 Mitchells from 137 & 139 Wings to attack Panzer Group West HQ near Caen in 'The Dinner Raid'. Note the waist gun window and tail gun cupola. Individual aircraft ID is not visible but this is one of twelve 98 Squadron Mitchell II series ii a/c in that raid. Photo by British Newspaper Pool 11 Jun 44 via Laura Postaltrip Cidoncha.

We have not yet uncovered confirming documentation, but Atwood's statement of the "last 700 to 800 Model B-25Ds" indicates a start point to be about the beginning of the B-25D-30/35 model blocks, of which 750 were built.

There's no doubt that the USAAF quickly approved NAA's proposal; and modifications at the Kansas City plant likely started very shortly afterward. In trying to establish the actual start point, we've searched out photos of modified late 'D' model Mitchells (upper turret on rear fuselage; waist windows & guns; tail canopy with single gun; no ventral turret). NAA must have modified a number while working out the details well before Atwood's 11 Jun 43 letter; the earliest example we've uncovered is 41-30416, a model B-25D-15-NC that served with the Royal Australian Air Force as 'KO-R'; her USAAF acceptance was April 6, 1943; two months prior to that proposal.

We found identifiable photos of 65 modified B-25Ds in wartime service with USAAF & USN, Russian Air Force, RAAF, RAF, RCAF and NEIAF (Netherlands East Indies Air Force; their acceptance dates are from 6 Apr 43 through 6 Mar 44. We charted the modifications of each and found there were a number of 'hiccups' along the way; not every airframe received every mod.

100% of our census had the ventral turret removed, 94% sported waist guns and windows and 82% had the tail cupola with single .50 caliber gun. There must have been intermittent problems with tail cupola manufacturing, as we see occasional breaks where aircraft were turned out without them. Problems with supply were worked out by the end of December '43; after that point all B-25Ds left KC with all modifications complete. The last B-25D, serial 43-3869, was accepted March 9, 1944; she was delivered to NEIAF in Australia and transferred to the RAAF.

The search was not without surprise. An RAF photo of Mitchell II series ii FW172 (B-25D-30-NC-A serial 43-3280) appeared to show her with a partially deployed ventral turret. How, given that the ventral turret structure was removed before entering the KC production line, did she make it out of the plant with an intact turret? About the same time, Simon Glancey, a UK researcher told me of an online forum asking why some RAF Mitchells had their Bendix ventral turrets replaced with non-retractable Frazer Nash FN64 turrets.



180 Squadron FW172 taking off from Dunsfold Aerodrome in July '44. Note the Frazer Nash 'under turret' and lack of waist and tail guns.

National Archives Canada photo

Eureka! The Bendix turrets were not *replaced*; they were never there; the FNs were *added*. When the RAF received some of their Mitchell II series iis (late B-25Ds) without waist and tail gun mods and with the ventral turret position faired over they recognized a vulnerability. Some enterprising

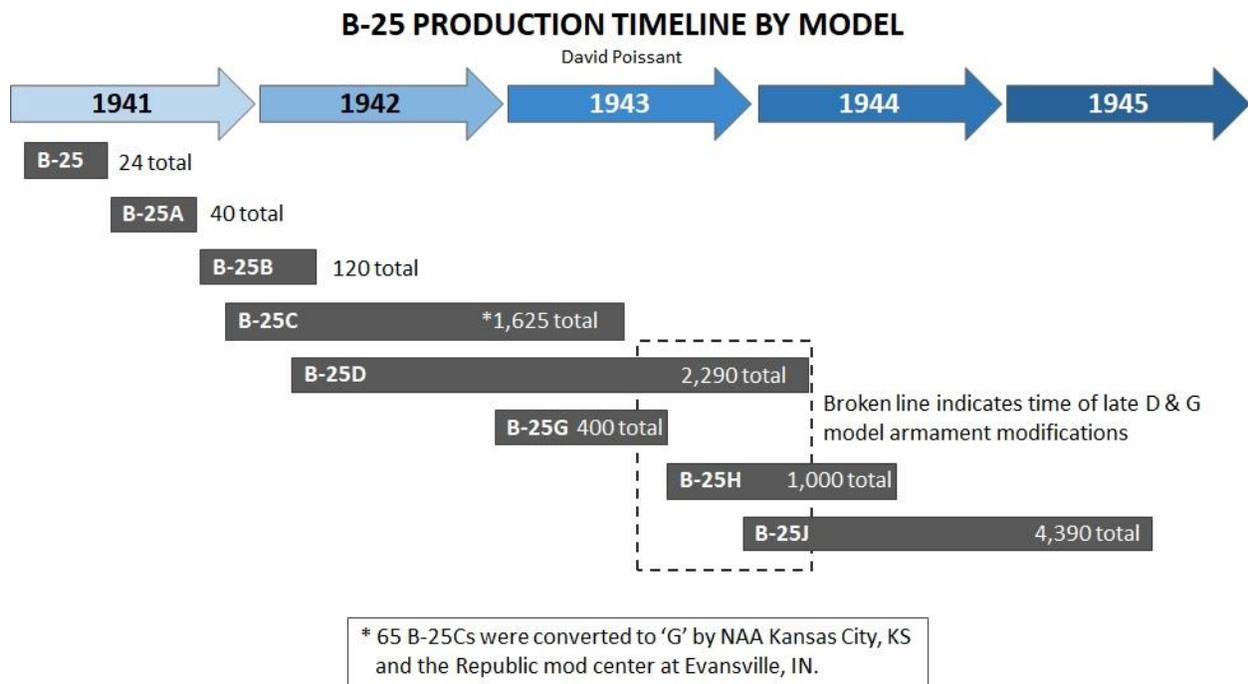
individual thought to remove the belly fairing and install left-over Frazer Nash 'under gun turrets' (used in early Lancasters and Stirlings) in the blank space.

Many USAAF field units receiving similarly lacking B-25Ds chose to modify the tail cones with vision panels on the sides and top; and installed a single .50 caliber machine gun. The tail gunner operated in a prone position. Historical correspondence of the US Army Air Forces Service Command (MTO) ⁱⁱⁱ describe the modification line in Aug 1943 at Sidi Ahmed Air Base in Bizerte, Tunisia for 300 existing B-25C/Ds: "lower turret removal and installation of two (2) ea. waist guns and one (1) 'stinger' gun in the tail position."



Wim Nienhuis photo

The first B-25J (43-3870) rolled out of the KC plant December 23, 1943; so there was a period of 11 weeks of overlapping production of D and J models.



We continue to search for NAA documents to establish the actual starting point of the late model B-25D modification program and its 'growing pains'.



This remarkable photo of Mitchell II series ii aircraft of 98 Squadron RAF in July '44 (invasion stripes are eliminated from upper surfaces) illustrates the interim problems of supply experienced by the North American Aviation plant at Kansas City, Kansas.

In this 6-plane box formation, the trailing 3 planes all have waist guns and windows and tail cupolas with single .50 caliber guns. The ventral (lower) turrets are eliminated, typical of *all* Mitchell II series ii; also typical of all was inclusion of the dorsal (upper) turret.

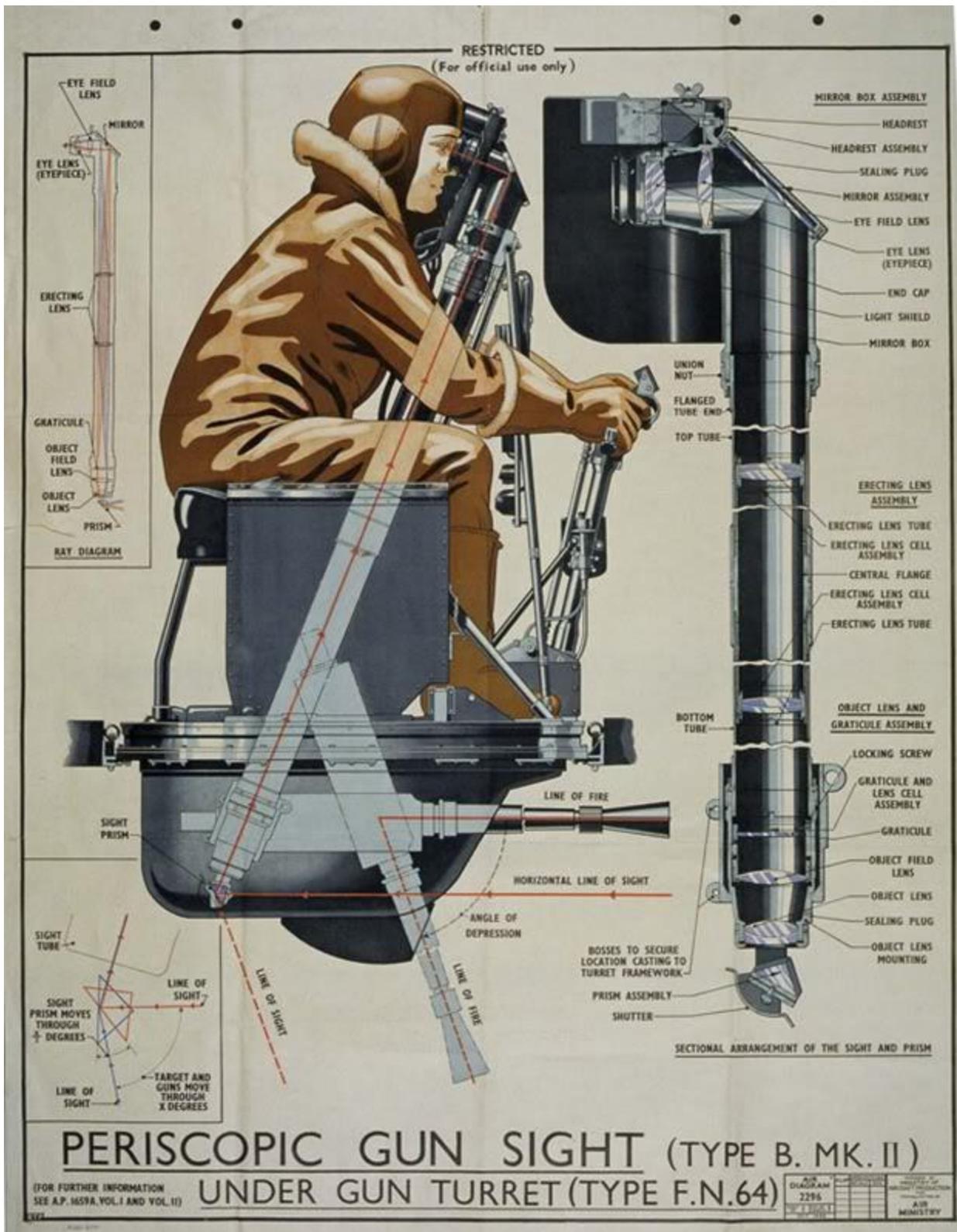
The next 2 Mitchells have the waist guns and windows, but are lacking the tail cupola and gun.

The lead aircraft lacks *all* of those modifications and, because it had no protection against attack from below, has had a Frazer Nash FN.64 'under turret' installed after being received by the RAF.

ⁱ 'B-25 Mitchell – The Magnificent Medium' (Norman Avery) page 195, Appendix Q

ⁱⁱ NAA correspondence #43C26792. Subject: Contract W535 ac-19941 – B-25D Airplanes.

ⁱⁱⁱ 11 Oct 1944 Informal Routing Slip, Army Air Force Service Command Mediterranean Theater of Operations – Subject: Material for AAFSCMTO History.



Frazer Nash 'Under Gun Turret' model F.N.64 used by RAF in some Mitchell II series ii aircraft received without waist and tail gun installations. D. Poissant collection

BLEEDING US DRY

Stephen J. Thorne/*Legion Magazine*

Reprinted courtesy of *Legion Magazine*

Osama bin Laden had more in mind than inflicting incidental death and mayhem when he dispatched 19 al-Qaida terrorists to strike at the heart of American economic and military might two decades ago.

With hatred rooted in real and perceived abuse and exploitation, he aimed to lure the West, specifically the United States, into a protracted and costly war of attrition on home soil, where devout jihadists would be motivated and readily available.

By doing so, the son of a Saudi construction magnate believed he could engineer the moral and economic collapse of his enemies by bleeding them dry, both in human lives and treasure. The strategy is detailed in al-Qaida manuals and a 2004 al Jazeera broadcast in which bin Laden spoke of “bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy.”

Now a report by the Costs of War Project, released as U.S. involvement in Afghanistan drew to a close, tallies those costs, and the ledger bears some earth-shaking numbers.

While no country has declared bankruptcy as a result of the wars on terror, the economic costs as tallied by the Brown University endeavour are staggering: successive administrations in Washington alone have spent about US\$6.4 trillion on overseas wars since three airliners hit the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

While nearly 3,000 people died in those attacks and a thwarted fourth attack that ended in a farmer’s field in Pennsylvania, at least 801,000 have been killed in related overseas wars, said the report assembled by

Brown’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs in Providence, R.I.



Reconnaissance troops from the 3PPCLI Battle Group after Canada’s first combat offensive since the Korean War, on March 17, 2002. Stephen J. Thorne/CP



A mounted militia fighter stops to check out a 3RCR patrol south of Kabul on Nov. 3, 2003. Stephen J. Thorne

“Many times more have died indirectly in these wars, due to ripple effects like malnutrition, damaged infrastructure, and environmental degradation,” said the report, a summary of investigations by a project team of 35 scholars, legal experts, human-rights advocates and physicians who began their work in 2011.

The tally of the dead includes 892 aid workers in a half-dozen countries, along with 680 journalists and other media workers.

9/11 was not an outlier; al-Qaida’s reach was long and game-changing. Its attacks dotted the globe.

As a result, some 37 million people have been displaced by subsequent wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya, the Philippines and Somalia, said the project.

The U.S. government is conducting counterterror activities in 85 countries, vastly expanding the war across continents, it said. Its estimates do not include borrowing costs or veterans’ care, the latter to total \$2.2 trillion over 30 years.



Children play on the remains of a Soviet MiG fighter jet in Kabul in October 2003. Stephen J Thorne

Bin Laden believed that all citizens of democracies like Canada and the U.S. bear responsibility for their government’s actions and are therefore fair game, whether military, political or otherwise.

Officially, 2,977 people were killed and more than 6,000 injured on 9/11. They came from more than 90 countries, including Canada (24 killed).

Attention immediately turned to Afghanistan, where the perpetrators of history’s worst terrorist attack had been trained. It was the first time the NATO credo of collective defence—an attack on one being an attack on all—was instituted, and Canada didn’t hesitate.

Joint Task Force 2 commandos were operating in-country by early December 2001 and, over the course of the next 12-plus years, some 40,000 Canadian troops served in Afghanistan. At least 158 were killed; thousands more were wounded.

In 2011, after Canadians stopped fighting and turned to training Afghan defence forces, the Rideau Institute reported that Ottawa had devoted C\$92 billion to national security spending, over and above what it would have spent had budgets remained consistent with pre-9/11 levels—more than doubling its anticipated expenditure.

Various sources estimate Canada spent \$18 billion fighting in Afghanistan and trying to reconstruct the country.



Left: Capt. Amerigo Rodrigues, a doctor with 3R22 Battle Group, conducts a clinic in the mountains northeast of Kabul, May 20 2004. Right: Canadian trainer instructs Afghan National Army recruits in Kabul, Aug 12, 2004.

Stephen J. Thorne/CP

The events affected Canada and others in ways that many in the West could not have imagined in 2001.

Canadian exports to the States declined, largely due to heightened border security. The ripple effects on the Canadian and American economies included shutdowns, job losses and interest rate increases.

“Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation shows the volume of passenger vehicles crossing into the U.S. never returned to its pre-2001 peak—it was still 27 per cent lower [in 2019] than in 2000,” Alexander Panetta wrote for the CBC.

And that was before the coronavirus pandemic shut down the border.

Travel would never be the same as security measures multiplied, lineups became the airport norm, and airline cost-cutting further dampened enthusiasm. Surveillance and intelligence-gathering have grown exponentially.

Canada instituted a raft of legislation, including the *Anti-terrorism Act*, the *Public Safety Act*, the *Combating Terrorism Act* and more.

Democracy suffered as the shifting emphasis on security eroded civil liberties and human rights in North America and abroad, said the *Costs of War*. The measures have increased and intensified divides at home.

Right-wing extremism has grown in North America and Europe, where an influx of refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and elsewhere has fueled xenophobia. Hate crimes against Muslims increased

around the world. Canada alone experienced a 16-fold rise in anti-Muslim attacks in the year following 9/11.

“America’s involvement in the War on Terror...resulted in a dramatic change in our nation’s attitudes and concerns about safety, vigilance and privacy,” journalist Matthew Green wrote in September 2020 for San Francisco public radio.

“It ushered in a new generation of policies like the USA Patriot Act, prioritizing national security and defense, often at the expense of civil liberties.

“These changes continue to have ripple effects across the globe, particularly in the Middle East, where American-led military operations helped foment rebellions and ongoing warfare throughout the region.”

On the 15th anniversary of 9/11, journalist Terry Davidson wrote in the Toronto Sun that the attacks “changed everything.”

“From that point on,” wrote Davidson, “the everyday lives and daily comings and goings of Canadians, Americans, and people around the globe were forever altered by what one scholar calls a historical ‘game changer’ akin to that of the attack on Pearl Harbor.”

That scholar, the late author and York University politics professor James Laxer, said 9/11 accomplished bin Laden’s key goal: to goad the enemy into war.

The expanding conflicts have given rise to discontent and new threats like those posed by the Islamic State, an avowed enemy of the Taliban which launched a deadly attack on the Kabul airport Aug. 26.

The West’s war in Afghanistan is over—for now, at least—but the war on terror, and its costs, continue to exact a toll.



A member of 3R22R Battle Group on patrol in Kabul, May 30, 2004. Stepehn J. Thorne.



Afghan children chase an Iltis jeep loaded with Canadian paratroopers down a hillside outside of Kabul, Oct 1, 2003 Stephen J. Thorne

INVASION STRIPES

David Poissant



98 Squadron RAF Mitchell II series ii 'VO-V' serial FW224 (B-25D-30 USAAF serial 43-3544) photographed in October 1944 or later, evidenced by the full invasion stripes on the fuselage and absence of wing stripes.

Documentation of the origin of 'Invasion' or 'D-Day' stripes has yet to be discovered, but it's likely they were based on the aircraft identification developed for 'Operation Starkey' (09 Sep 43), a deception raid often referred to as 'The raid that never was'.

Invasion markings were defined in an April '44 SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) memorandum and were to be applied to aircraft taking part in D-Day operations as shortly as possible before the assault. Stripes were applied beginning 03 Jun 44 using distemper (a form of whitewash used for temporary projects) in the shades of 'white' and 'night'. The speed and manner of application (brushes) led to some very scruffy stripes. Neater examples were done, particularly on more senior officers' aircraft.

Although invasion stripes were primarily for protection against Allied fire, they were not universally appreciated. Reconnaissance (Mustang) and observation (Auster) aircraft units objected to the compromise of their extremely important camouflage. On 06 Jul 44 an order was signed allowing removal of stripes from upper wing surfaces and fuselage stripes down to the national insignia.

On 19 Aug 44, SHAEF ordered all wing stripes removed between 25 Aug and 10 Sep 44. 2nd Tactical Air Force twin-engined aircraft (Mitchells, Boston and Mosquitos) were increasingly attacked, especially at night, by Allied fighters; the twin-finned Mitchells were particularly prone to mis-identification (Me110 & Do17). No official instruction was given, but by mid October 1944, full fuselage (only) stripes had been reapplied to 2nd TAF's medium bombers.