



Scampton, 27 May 1943. The crews were presented to the King and Queen in their bombing order, so David Shannon came immediately after David Maltby, whose pockets are bulging with a tobacco pouch and other smoking equipment. Vivian Nicholson can be seen over Shannon's shoulder.

PHOTOS: IWM CH9929/CH9953

Most of the shots show the King and Queen talking to the pilots. In the one of Shannon, Vivian Nicholson can be seen in the distance, eyes front, at attention behind David. In the shot of David himself, the King seems to be asking him a question, and David looks nervous as he gropes for an answer. Curiously, he is still only wearing a Flight Lieutenant's two rings on his sleeve. The inner half-ring indicating his promotion to Squadron Leader ten days previously has not yet been added.

The following day Ettrick wrote to Henry Kendall, the Warden (headmaster) of St Edward's School. He knew him well – as it was his own old school, boys from Hydney regularly went on to St Edward's. He first congratulated him on the fact that the raid had been led by a St Edward's old boy, ('Floreat St Edward's indeed!) then added: 'You will be doubly interested to know that my David was on the raid too and has been given the D.S.O.' After asking for the news to be passed on to a number of Hydney old boys at St Edward's he says: 'I certainly feel proud of him, but I think the word "thankful" should have most prominence.'

David's promotion to Squadron Leader and role as the Commander of A Flight meant a lot of bureaucratic work, such as planning schedules and countersigning logbooks. On 2 June he took over temporary command of the squadron while Gibson was on leave. The flight authorisation books show that intensive training was going on during this time. Flights averaging about two hours took place almost every day, to familiar training locations such as the lake at Uppingham or the bombing ranges at Wainfleet.

On one of these occasions David was able to show off to his old school friend Alan Pegler. David telephoned Alan on Saturday 29 May to tip him off that he would be flying over his family's house at Blyth in north Nottinghamshire. Alan was himself already a qualified pilot at the beginning of the war, and had joined the Fleet Air Arm. However, it was then discovered that he was medically unfit for combat duties, so he had moved into the Royal Observer Corps. It was quickly discovered that his railway enthusiast skills were readily translated into a natural talent for aircraft recognition, and he was soon heavily involved in training other observers.

So it was with great interest that Alan waited to see what would fly over his house that day, and he was rewarded by the sight of David and one of his colleagues (probably Bill Divall) flying very low over