

# Cranwellians Remember 'Hoppy' (617 Sqn) 77 Years On

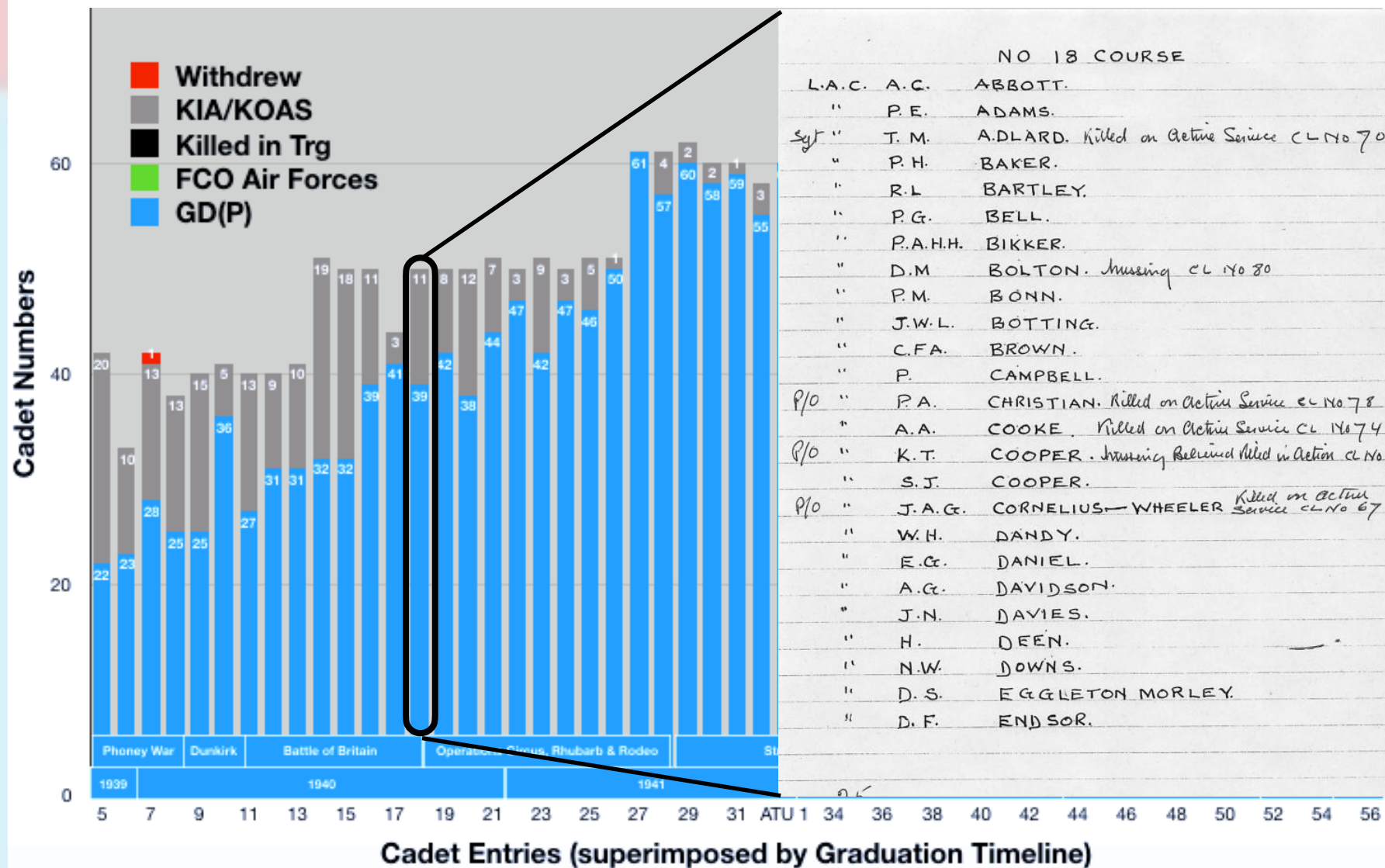


Having joined the Volunteer Reserve in 1940, John Vere Hopgood undertook flying training on No 18 Course, SFTS Cranwell in 1941 and was commissioned in 1942. As a Flight Lieutenant, 'Hoppy' was awarded a DFC in October 1942 after completing 47 missions; he was awarded a bar to the DFC in 1943. He served on 50 Sqn, 106 Sqn and the immortalised 617 (Dambusters) Sqn. Then the newly appointed OC 106 Sqn in 1942, Wg Cdr Guy Gibson recorded his first impressions:

*He was a fair-haired chap about medium height, rather good looking, except for one prominent tooth. .... He was a serious fellow at heart..... As soon as I saw him I thought, "What an ideal squadron type. I like that chap"*

Unsurprisingly, Gibson was to select Hoppy as his Deputy on the Mohne Dam attack. Outbound to the Mohne, his aircraft AJ-M (M for Mother) was hit by flak, injuring Hoppy, his gunners Burcher and Gregory (possibly fatally). The damaged aircraft reached the dam where they attacked at 00:32, ten minutes after Gibson. However, they were struck again by anti-aircraft fire and their bomb was released too late. It bounced over the dam and exploded on a power station on the other side. The aircraft was fatally damaged at this point and Hopgood remained at the controls, gaining height to allow his crew to bail out. AJ-M crashed in a field near Ostönnen, 6 kilometres (3.72 miles) from the dam. Hopgood's body rests in the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at Rheinberg War Cemetery (Coll. grave 17. E. 2-6).

SFTS Trainees 1939 - 1945



NO 18 COURSE		
L.A.C.	A.C.	ABBOTT.
"	P.E.	ADAMS.
Sgt "	T.M.	ADLARD. Killed on Active Service CL No 70
"	P.H.	BAKER.
"	R.L.	BARTLEY.
"	P.G.	BELL.
"	P.A.H.H.	BIKKER.
"	D.M.	BOLTON. Missing CL No 80
"	P.M.	BONN.
"	J.W.L.	BOTTING.
"	C.F.A.	BROWN.
"	P.	CAMPBELL.
P/O "	P.A.	CHRISTIAN. Killed on Active Service CL No 78
"	A.A.	COOKE. Killed on Active Service CL No 74
P/O "	K.T.	COOPER. Missing Returned Killed in Action CL No 96
"	S.J.	COOPER.
P/O "	J.A.G.	CORNELIUS-WHEELER Killed on Active Service CL No 67
"	W.H.	DANDY.
"	E.G.	DANIEL.
"	A.G.	DAVIDSON.
"	J.N.	DAVIES.
"	H.	DEEN.
"	N.W.	DOWNS.
"	D.S.	EGGLETON MORLEY.
"	D.F.	ENDSOR.

NO 18 COURSE		
L.A.C.	R.	GEE.
"	G.G.	GOODALE.
"	W.S.P.	GRIFFITHS. Missing CL No 90
Sgt "	S.F.	HODSMAN.
L.A.C.	J.C.I.	HOOPER.
"	J.V.	HOPGOOD.
"	M.J.	HORSEY.
"	T.R.	JENKINS.
"	G.	KERR.
"	D.T.	LEE.
"	I.F.	LIVINGSTONE.
"	D.H.S.	LONSDALE.
"	T.A.	LAMB.
"	F.W.R.	NEWCOMB.
"	P.R.	OWEN. Killed on Active Service CL No 89
"	T.	PRESCOTT-DECIE.
"	R.W.	READ.
"	J.L.	ROWE.
"	G.E.C.	SEALE. Killed on Active Service CL No 159
"	R.M.	SPENCER. Killed on Active Service 4/12/40 CL No
"	R.N.	TAIT. Killed on Active Service 23/12/40 CL No
"	C.F.	UPTON.
"	R.F.	WARTON.
"	F.H.	WILKINSON.
"	S.	WILKINSON.

'Hoppy' Hopgood; 617 Sqn; Dambusters 1st wave; killed NW Mohnesee