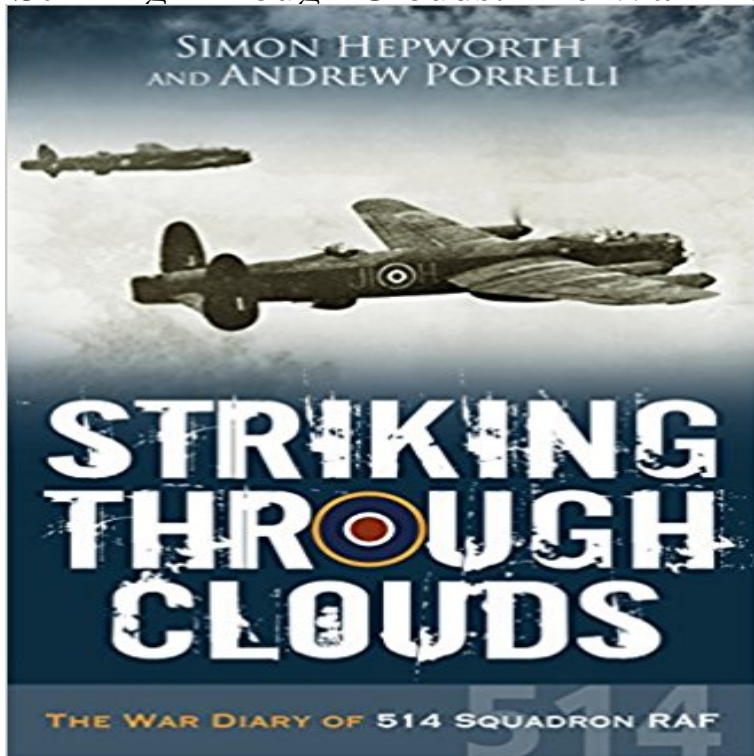


## Striking Through Clouds: The War Diary of No. 514 Squadron, RAF



Striking Through Clouds is the companion volume to *Nothing Can Stop Us*, published in May 2015 and available in Kindle and as a 400-page book. 514 Squadron specialised in blind bombing techniques in the drawn out and bloody campaign against Nazi Germany. 514 Squadron was stationed at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, operating Lancaster bombers. Aircrew members were drawn not just from Britain but also Canada, Australia and New Zealand amongst others. Over four hundred members of the squadron were to lose their lives in the two years of the squadrons existence, which saw the loss 88 aircraft, in action or accidents. Thrown into the Battle of Berlin in the winter of 1943/4, 514 Squadron also played a pivotal role in supporting the Allied bridgehead in Normandy after D-Day, before reverting to attacks on German infrastructure, including transport facilities and oil production plants. *Striking Through Clouds* is the day-by-day contemporaneous account of the operations of 514 Squadron. Recorded by squadron officers, this was a dispassionate but comprehensive account of the war effort of the squadron and its members. It serves as the official record of the squadrons day to day war. The account is taken directly from the Operational Record Book (ORB) of the squadron, now held in the National Archives. Until now this was retained in microfiche form, from which a print could be made. Every day, the compiling officer would record the weather conditions as these affected the squadrons ability to operate. Non-operational flying was then detailed, along with notable events on the ground, such as the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, awards ceremonies and other events. Operations were recorded in summary form, with individual pilots adding their own reports. The book also contains all available combat reports as well as additional

material, especially concerning what happened to the aircraft and crews that failed to return from ops. Photographs of aircraft and crews, most never before published, enhance this work. In the course of its two-year operational life, 514 Sqn flew 3675 sorties on 218 bombing raids, in the course of which it dropped 14,650 tons of bombs. A further four mining operations were also undertaken, with 70 sea mines being dropped. 426 aircrew and nine ground crew lost their lives whilst serving with the squadron. 66 Lancasters were lost on operations with a further fourteen crashing either on ops or local flying. Twelve were brought down by flak, 38 by night fighters (others are considered as most likely to have been shot down by night fighters), one collided with another aircraft, and at least three were brought down by bombs from higher-flying aircraft whilst six were lost without trace. Of these it is possible that two 514 Sqn aircraft collided over the North Sea whilst en route to or from Leipzig, and another aircraft possibly collided with another squadrons Lancaster which crashed near Caen. None of these aircraft ever having been found, it is impossible to know for certain. Today we are left, fortuitously, with a few resilient survivors, many more having, inevitably, passed away in the intervening decades. Some have left written records, others have passed on their recollections to their families. There is still interest, even three generations on. The book has been written to tell the full story of 514 Squadrons war. It is intended to inform and educate, to keep the memory alive of this particularly robust and heroic generation. Above all, it is a tribute to the squadrons members, so many of whom disappeared into the night. The book contains many photographs of the squadrons aircraft and crews, along with details of aircrew involved in every loss. It is the only comprehensive account of 514 Squadron at war. Please note that the format of this book might not suit all e-readers as it has been designed primarily for print.

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