

BANFF STRIKE WING AT WAR

A UNIQUE PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY

Les Taylor

The role of Banff Strike Wing can be summed up in a single word – steel. Without steel, no nation in the twentieth century could sustain a war for any period of time. Tanks, ships, submarines, aircraft engines – all the weapons and tools of modern war required steel in vast quantities. For Nazi Germany this meant transporting raw materials from Sweden to the blast furnaces and steel mills of the Ruhr in a fleet of merchant ships. They had to be stopped.

Two Coastal Command airfields were available in north-east Scotland – Banff and Dallachy – providing ideal bases for two new strike wings to operate from. During September and October 1944, the Beaufighters and Mosquitos began to take up residence at these bases. Four or five squadrons were based at Banff at any one time, with two or three at the smaller satellite of Dallachy, near Buckie. Their task was a simple one – sink the iron ore-carrying ships, and cut off the only remaining supply of this strategic raw material to Germany.

This book is a photographic history of RAF Banff Strike Wing, 1944–1945, comprising 175 photographs, together with rare documents and other artefacts, the vast majority of which have never previously been published. The collection itself is unique in that the photographs were all donated to the author by veterans of Banff Strike Wing during the time the author was secretary of the RAF Banff Strike Wing Memorial Trust from 1987–1992. The extensive correspondence with these veterans that this entailed has allowed the author to write the narrative from a unique and personal perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Les Taylor has been closely involved with the history of Banff Strike Wing for over 25 years.

He founded a project to build a granite memorial to the wing which was unveiled in 1990.

This helped him establish contacts with veterans around the world – and to be able to write *Banff Strike Wing at War* with the testimonies of those who were actually there.

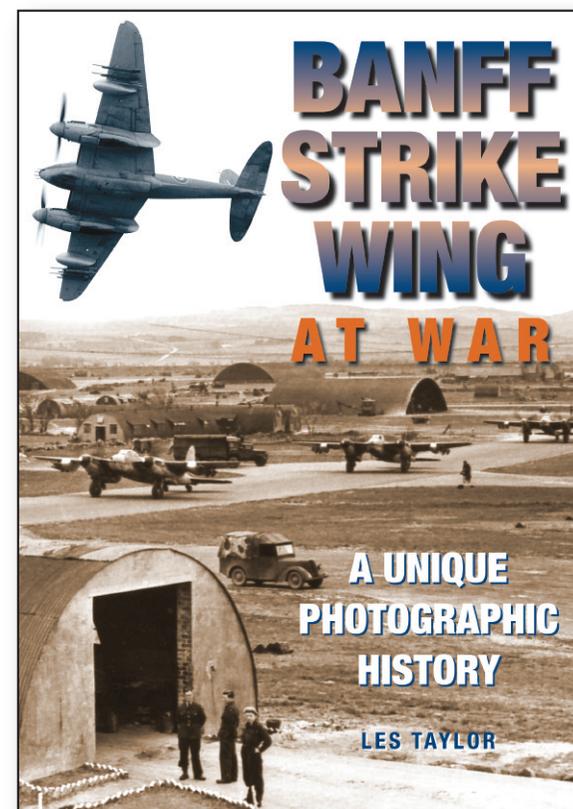
Les Taylor lives in northern Aberdeenshire with his wife and two children.

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