

**DAMBUSTERS 70: AFTER ME THE FLOOD**

**Conan Lawrence and Emma Rogers**

**Influenced by Max Arthur's *Dambusters*.**

ACT I SCENE 1

INTRODUCTION

A/V1: "FOR 133 MEN WHO FLEW FROM HERE SEVENTY YEARS AGO TONIGHT THROUGH ADVERSITY TO THE STARS."

A/V2: FADE OF SLIDE.

A/V2: "MOONLIGHT ON THE WATERFALL" PLAYS WHILE CAST ENTER AND MARCH TO THE PLAYING AREA.

"1943. BRITAIN HAS BEEN AT WAR WITH GERMANY FOR THREE AND A HALF YEARS. BOMBER COMMAND IS HER MAIN OFFENSIVE FORCE."

A/V2.1: FADE OF MOONLIGHT ON THE WATERFALL.

[CAST ENTER THROUGH RED DOOR AT SL END OF HANGAR 2 AND MARCH DOWN THE CENTRAL AISLE TO THE PLAYING AREA]

L/X1: MOVING LIGHTS COME UP TO FULL IN 3 SECONDS, O/W, POINTING DIRECTLY UPWARDS FOR 5 SECONDS. THEY PIVOT, TRACING CONCENTRIC CIRCLES, SLOWLY AT FIRST THEN FASTER, THEIR ANGLES GETTING WIDER UNTIL, SUDDENLY, THEY CONVERGE AT 45 DEGREES, PROJECTING ONTO THE CEILING, AS IF 'CONING' A LANCASTER. MOVING LIGHTS SWAY, KEEPING THE 'CONE' EXACT, BUT MOVING. MOVING LIGHTS CHANGE TO MIMIC THE D70 SEARCHLIGHT LOGO, ACROSS THE CEILING.

[WAAFS ENTER DS AND SPEAK ONCE THEY ARE FACING THE AUDIENCE]

On the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 1943, nineteen Lancaster Bombers of 617 Squadron took off from RAF Scampton in three waves to bomb the Mohne, Eder and Sorpe Dams.

This elite squadron, each of whose Bombers carried a crew of seven, were tasked with destroying three Dams, vital to German industrial war production in the Ruhr Valley, heart of the Nazi war machine.

Flying at one hundred feet above occupied Europe, the Lancasters carried Barnes Wallis's revolutionary *Upkeep*: a mine that bounced across the surface of each reservoir before sinking to a depth of thirty feet and exploding against their concrete walls.

One hundred and thirty-three aircrew flew on *Operation Chastise* seventy years ago.

The men behind me represent the raid's eighty survivors and fifty-three aircrew who were killed on the mission. Each of these seven men also stands for their collective positions in a Lancaster flight: Pilot, Navigator, Wireless Operator, Bomb Aimer, Front Gunner, Flight Engineer, and Rear Gunner. *This* is their story.

## ACT I SCENE 2

### SQUADRON FORMATION

A/V3: "SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND."

"15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH."

GIBSON: I'd been at Group Headquarters one or two days when the AOC sent for me. The new Air-Vice Marshal was the honourable Ralph Cochrane. In one breath he congratulated me on my bar to the DSO, the next he said

SUMPTER: "How would you like the idea of going on one more trip, Gibson?"

GIBSON: More flak, more fighters. What kind of trip sir?

SUMPTER: "A pretty important one, perhaps one of the most devastating of all time. I can't tell you any more now. Do you want to do it?"

GIBSON: I said I thought I did, trying to remember where I had left my flying kit.

GIBSON WALKS DOWN THE LINE OF CREW.

GIBSON: It took me an hour to choose my pilots. I picked them because they were the best available. I knew each one should be having a well earned rest. But I also knew there was nothing any of them would want more than to be in *this* squadron.

CHALMERS: I was stationed at Abingdon doing blind flying -flying approaches- and I got bored of this and my Squadron Leader got bored of me. Between us we agreed I'd go back on operations and I was requested to join Squadron X. When I arrived at Scampton the first thing I had to do was spend an hour and a half reading the security orders. Then I was told to report to the Squadron commander on the airfield. When I got there I saw the hangar, guarded at both ends.

HILL: There were a lot of officer aircrews in this Squadron -twenty crews had recently arrived, and many of these were highly decorated, which made us wonder what sort of op we were in for.

SUMPTER: I'd done my navigational training in Canada. Then I was assigned to 57 Squadron at Scampton. In the next two hangars a new Squadron was forming - nobody knew its number. Gibson picked his pilots and one or two brought their crews with them. For the rest it was just getting together and finding a pilot -or him finding you.

GIBSON: On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March I arrived in the Mess at Scampton. There was a babble of chatter and the hum of shop being happily exchanged. [CREW IN LIGHT CONVERSATION.] Old faces, old names; targets, bases, bombs. The conversation only *real* flyers can have. These were men who'd done their stuff -you could see it in their eyes. And they were ready for more. They were the aces of Bomber Command

and together they knew more about the art of bombing than any other Squadron in the world.

CHALMERS: It was a real Commonwealth of flyers -Canadians, Americans, New Zealanders and Australians. It was unlike *any* other Squadron I'd been in before.

EILEEN: Guy was a charming man, an absolute Gentleman. Some of the men thought he was too big for his boots. He wasn't like that to me -he was one of my greatest friends.

GIBSON: I called them together in the crew room. Most were twenty-three or younger, and nearly all of them veterans. I felt old among them. My speech was short. I said [TO AIRCREW] at ease. You're here to do a special job. You're here to carry out a raid on Germany which will have major results. Some say it might even cut short the duration of the war. What the target is I can't tell you, nor can I tell you where it is. What I can say is that you'll have to practice low flying, day and night, until you can do it with your eyes shut. If I tell you to fly to a tree in the middle of England you will bomb that tree. If I tell you to fly through a hangar then you'll go through that hangar, even if your wingtips hit the sides. Discipline is absolutely essential. Like all things in this game security is the greatest factor. I needn't tell you, gentlemen, we *are* going to be talked about.

MCDONALD: We had no idea *what* we were training for. Bomber Command had been attacking targets from higher and higher, stacking up at 20,000 feet. Suddenly here *we* were low level flying, which was alarming back in the rear turret, watching the ground go by so quickly. You'd hear about people flying *under* high tension wires -Lancs taking damage from hitting trees.

SUMPTER: On a typical training day the Navigation Officer announced cross-country flights which we each had to do. He'd say, "Number 3 today", or "Number 5". You had a set of maps for each flight and you'd wait until the Navigator had done his pre-flight planning, accounting for take off time, the wind and ground speeds. You'd take off on your own, no set time, and you'd go out and come back again. After that you'd talk about the flight, how the system could be improved. Then it was off to the Mess: Officers to theirs, and Sergeants to theirs.

#### AV5: NON-STOP FLIGHT

MORFYDD: The Sergeant's Mess doors would burst open and the aircrew would swarm in, shouting boisterously. We young WAAFs had to endure a barrage of good-humoured banter.

HILL: How's your sex life?

FENERON: I dreamed about you last night.

SUMPTER: *Please* serve us in the nude.

MORFYDD: Then someone would ask:

HILL: What's the collective noun for WAAFs?

MORFYDD: And a chorus would answer:

HILL, FENERON, SUMPTER, CHALMERS: A mattress.

MORFYDD: But we took it all in good part, because we knew the *great* strain they were under, and the dangers they faced.

*AV5.2: NON-STOP FLIGHT INCREASE IN VOLUME AND THEN FADEOUT.*

CHALMERS: When low level flying was new to us some held their breath from take-off to landing. We flew all over Lincolnshire, and right on one of our tracks was this haystack some Land Girls were building, and we'd zoom over them, waving. People were complaining to Scampton all the time. We trained everywhere, but mostly over canals and reservoirs, flying at a hundred feet. What was surprising was that we began to enjoy it.

SUMPTER: Then it got harder. Flying at night. So dark you couldn't even see the map. The main exercise in low level flying is to sharpen up your map reading. Up high Navigators can give an easy change of course -you see aiming points six miles before you get to them. But at *low* level, by the time the Navigator gives the pilot a correction you're ten miles past where you should be turning. *Now* it was up to the bomb aimer to keep the plane on course, which he did by telling the pilot, "five degrees port"

GIBSON: Five degrees port.

SUMPTER: Five degrees starboard

GIBSON: Five degrees starboard.

SUMPTER: Until you were back on track. Low level flying was mostly up to the bomb aimer and *his* map-reading.

HILL: We had no idea they were still working on the bomb. And very close to the operation we were suddenly told that it had to be dropped from sixty feet. Apparently that was the best height for the bomb to do its work. So we went and had a drink.

FENERON: *Sixty* feet!

SUMPTER: That man needs a pint. Because there was no bomb sight that could operate at the height we'd be flying at, we had to learn a new technique.

GIBSON: The solution was an old one, from the First World War. Spotlights were fixed on either wing of the aircraft pointing towards the water, where they would converge. When the spots merged into one the pilot knew they were at the exact height. Night after night, dawn after dawn, the boys flew round The Wash, nearby lakes, and over Scampton itself. Within a week they were so good they could fly within two feet of the necessary altitude. But I knew we were going to make it easy for the German gunners, flying with our lights on.

SUMPTER: We trained for six weeks, and we *were* tested. Flying at low level in a Lancaster with a bomb load is an ordeal. It requires very careful observation of the land below. And, because a lot of it was over reservoirs, rivers, canals, it got a lot more difficult at night. Night flying at low level over water in the Lancaster -well, if the water's smooth, you've got a job to see it in the dark, it's very easy to fly *into* it.

MORFYDD: Their operations were secret and we knew little of their activities or missions. But we used to wait at the end of the runway, counting them back, counting them back. They were our best friends.

CHALMERS: Security was very, very tight. We had people listening to us in pubs in Lincoln, anywhere we went.

GIBSON: One boy rang his girlfriend and told her he couldn't come out that night because of special training. Next day, in front of the whole Squadron, I told him another lapse would end in a court martial. There was no more loose talk.

A/V6: VIDEO OF SLOW MOTION LANCASTER OVERFLIGHT AT PETWOOD.

SUMPTER: The training helped us survive. Weeks of flying low, hugging the ground, sometimes coming back with leaves and branches snagged on the rear wheel. A couple of farmers were blown off their tractors, not from the draught, but *sheer* terror. Our main concern was high-tension cables -they were difficult to see, and we'd have our mikes on all the time, and you'd just say, "High-tension cable coming up".

GIBSON: Okay, I can see it.

SUMPTER: And we'd nip up, get over it and swoop down again.

GIBSON: By the end of the third week crews had done twenty cross-countries at night and could now find the 'tree' I'd asked them to. Their navigation was expert. We'd dropped one thousand, five hundred practice bombs, and average error was twenty-five yards. Then we planned our target route, so we could copy it, as much as possible, at home.

A/V7: VICKERS FOOTAGE OF LANCASTER WITH DUMMY MINE DROP AT RECVLVER.

FENERON: It wasn't until early May that we started getting modified Lancasters. Some got to drop a dummy in the sea off Reculver, near Margate, to feel how the Lanc would react when carrying its 9,000 pound revolving mine. When it was released the mine behaved like a flat stone, skimming across the water. It had to settle against the Dam wall, run down it, and be triggered by a fuse thirty feet beneath the surface. With the weight of the water behind it Barnes Wallis calculated that *one* of these things *could* shatter a Dam.

SUMPTER: We sighted on the church towers, as if they were the Dams' towers, and released it running into the beach.

[AIRCREW LINE UP IN TWO RANKS]

EILEEN: One day Guy said to me:

GIBSON: I want you to meet the people I fly with, Eileen, *my* squadron.

EILEEN: I told him I didn't want to know them. If a plane went down it was only a plane. But to *know* the men who flew them, that was too much to bear.

GIBSON: Six aircraft were seriously damaged by great columns of water sent up when their mines went in near Reculver. The Squadron was exhausted. [GIBSON WALKS DOWN THE LINE AND FINDS ONE OF THE AIRCREW SAGGING. HE PAUSES BRIEFLY AND LOOKS AT THE AIRCREW MEMBER, WHO IS LOOKING AT THE FLOOR. GIBSON NOTICES, LOOKS. AIRCREW MEMBER SNAPS TO ATTENTION.] They'd had nearly two months of continuous training, getting up at dawn and dusk so they could fly in conditions which were like moonlight. The strain was beginning to tell. *I* began to get ill too, irritable and bad-tempered. I went to the doctor. He was very kind, and said:

MCDONALD: You're overworked -take two weeks off.

[GIBSON SMILES WRILY]

GIBSON: The AOC came over on the 15<sup>th</sup> and told me that we would take off the next night.

A/V8: TANNOY VOICE: All crews of No. 617 Squadron report to the briefing room immediately.



## ACT I SCENE THREE

### THE BRIEFING

SUMPTER: It's *got* to be over water.

FENERON: Tirpitz?

MACDONALD: U-Boat pens.

HILL: I hate these exams.

NUGENT: He's coming.

GIBSON: Thank you, Gentlemen. At ease. This is Operation Chastise.

A/V9: OPERATION CHASTISE MAP.

Now, the Ruhr Valley relies on a series of Dams to supply power and water to the enemy's greatest concentration of industrial production. Tonight we will attack and destroy three of these Dams. In doing so we will bring about a serious shortage of water vital to the enemy's factories, as well as flooding and wrecking as many of them as possible.

Our Lancasters will carry the mines that arrived yesterday, and which some of you have already practised with. Mines will be dropped from a height of 60 feet, at a range of 400 yards, at an airspeed of 232 miles per hour. This is what we have trained for, and this is what we will do.

Wave 1 will consist of three sections, taking off at ten minute intervals, each consisting of three aircraft. They are to take the Southern route and attack Target X until clearly breached. When this has been achieved, Wave 1 will be diverted to Target Y. Should X *and* Y be breached, any remaining aircraft are to attack Target Z.

Wave 2 will consist of 5 aircraft and take the Northern route, crossing the enemy coast at the same time as the leading section of the 1<sup>st</sup> wave. This Wave will attack Target Z.

Wave 3 will consist of the remaining aircraft and will form an airborne reserve under Group H.Q. They will take the Southern route to the Target. This wave will be recalled *if* all Primary Targets have already been destroyed.

Crews will not exceed 1,500 feet over England, 100 feet over enemy territory, and will drop to 60ft in the approach to the Dams using the Spotlight Altimeters you've been training with.

GIBSON: Any questions Gentlemen? [A MURMUR RIPPLES THROUGH THE CREW]. Good. Dismissed

EILEEN: Sir, I'm sorry to tell you, your dog has been hit by a passing car. He is dead.

GIBSON: Thank you. Arrange to have him buried will you please. Tonight, while I am over the target.

HILL, SUMPTER, FENERON, CHALMERS, MACDONALD, NUGENT MURMUR,  
LEAN INTO EACH OTHER, WHISPERING.

BESSIE: On the night of May 16<sup>th</sup> the switchboard was swamped with calls. Very senior officers arrived. We knew then something significant was about to happen.

## ACT I SCENE FOUR

### THE RAID

RUTH: I cooked for the crews before they went, *and* when they came back -those that did.

FENERON: They always gave us a cracking meal before we left. It might be our last.

A/V10: *SILVER WINGS IN THE MOONLIGHT* (IN ON FIRST LINE OF SONG) AND VIDEO OF CREW WALKING TO LANCASTER, COVERING THE COSTUME CHANGE. FADED BY THE FIRST WORD OF THE NEXT LINE.

HILL: We gathered round the pilots, waiting to walk to the Lancs.

FENERON: Covers and control locks removed.

A/V11: LANCASTER STARTING UP.

GIBSON: Starboard inner start up: Contact 3.

MACDONALD: If you don't get back, can I have your egg tomorrow?

GIBSON: Contact 4.

CHALMERS: I went round the back of the hangar to smoke.

GIBSON: Contact 2.

NUGENT: This is a tough one. I don't think I'm going to make it.

GIBSON: Contact 1.

CHALMERS: Just like every mission.

GIBSON: Ground flight switch.

CHALMERS: Dew was forming on the grass.

FENERON: On flight.

CHALMERS: The tail gunner, who'd been unusually quiet, just stood there.

MACDONALD: You know that crew isn't coming back?

GIBSON: Altimeter?

FENERON: Set.

CHALMERS: I know. Come on.

GIBSON: Instruments vacuum?

FENERON: Check. Radiator shutters open.

GIBSON: Brake pressure?

FENERON: Three zero zero.

NUGENT: Let's face it, if you made *this* one, you were going to be very, very lucky.

GIBSON: Autopilot control out.

FENERON: One and two tanks selected and booster pumps on.

SUMPTER: There was only moonlight -

GIBSON: Flaps.

SUMPTER: But your eyes were used to the dark.

FENERON: Set for takeoff.

AV11.1: LANCASTER THROTTLE UP.

CHALMERS: The most dramatic part is when it's silent. Then they open up the throttle and your nerves *run* with petrol.

SUMPTER: I saw the shack on the runway's edge with the man in it. Waiting to signal green, waiting to set us off.

GIBSON: Releasing brakes.

HILL: I knew it was going to be something special.

GIBSON: Engine temperature check.

FENERON: All fine, Skip.

VIDEO OF WAAFS WATCHING LANCASTER TAKE OFF (SCAMPTON).

MACDONALD: We took off in formations of threes and stayed low at 300 feet.

LANCASTER FLY PAST (SOUND DIPS FOR LINE BELOW.)

BESSIE: [LINE BEGINS AFTER WAAF VIDEO FADES] We stood *silently* until the *final ripple of engines died away*, then drifted off to our duties. No-one slept that night. *Our* hearts and minds were in those Lancasters, too, between the men and their moonlight. We sat, waiting. We laid out places for the meal, ready for their return.

AV12: LANCASTER OPEN FLIGHT AUDIO LIGHTLY UNDER THE REST OF THE RAID SCENE.

CHALMERS: We'd been flying for an hour and ten minutes, each of us busy in his thoughts, with the waves a few feet below.

NUGENT: Five minutes to the Dutch Coast, skip.

A/V13 : AUDIO OF FLAK BURSTS.

SUMPTER: Flak!

NUGENT: A flak ship opened up. We must have been a sitting target for the gunners below.

SUMPTER: Lower, lower.

NUGENT: A target framed close against the sky.

A/V13.1: 3 SECOND FADE OF FLAK BURSTS.

RUTH: The night wore on. Twice we heard roaring engines and rushed to see whose they were. One was AJ-W, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Munro, whose Lancaster had been badly damaged by flak over the Dutch coast. The other was AJ-H, flown by Pilot Officer Rice, who'd hit the water over Holland, tearing the bomb from the aircraft. With incredible skill both pilots brought their crews safely back to Scampton. We settled back, once more, to wait.

MACDONALD: I saw someone to starboard skim the water and send up a plume of spray, it might have been Barlow or Byers.

A/V14: VIDEO: SURFACE WATER SEQUENCE 1.

AJ-K CREW DETAILS.

CHALMERS: (*Slightly shaken*) Could have happened to anybody -they must have been a mile or so off track and got the hammer.

MACDONALD: (*To self*) Looking back, I wonder how we shouldered it. But we *had* to get on.

HILL: Tension cables ahead.

GIBSON: Yes.

A/V14.5: AJ-K CREW DETAILS.

MACDONALD: One of ours strayed a little off course, right over one of their airfields.

GIBSON: He was blinded by their searchlights.

MACDONALD: Shot down straight away. I *knew* them.

AV15: AJ-B CREW DETAILS.

FENERON: Lower lower.

NUGENT: Round to port a bit this heading, Skipper.

GIBSON: OK.

HILL: They got Burpee somewhere between Hamm and the target.

CHALMERS: When they crashed the whole valley went red.

SUMPTER: Steady up a bit.

GIBSON: Heading?

SUMPTER: Seeing where Burpee was saved our skins. If we'd been over a bit further, we'd have been hit first.

A/V16: AJ-S CREW DETAILS.

NUGENT: One four six.

GIBSON: OK on one four six. Airspeed?

FENERON: Two four zero.

GIBSON: OK. Temperature check.

SUMPTER: We've given ourselves to the country, to each other -what more can we do?

CHALMERS: Every Lanc had to reply to a group message, transmitted every half hour by sending back their aircraft letter. After a while I realised certain letters had stopped appearing.

FENERON: Engines fine. Take her lower, skip.

GIBSON: OK.

HILL: There, there, off to starboard.

SUMPTER: No, that's not -

MACDONALD: Have we found it?

CHALMERS: No, it's - it's over there. Off port.

A/V17: GIBSON THROWS A SKIMMER. CUTS INTO MINE EXPLOSION.

GIBSON: There we are.

HILL: Ack ack on the Dam.

GIBSON: Yes.

SUMPTER: Gibson went in first and made a perfect run. A huge spurt of water went up hundreds of feet, but the wall was still there.

HILL: There weren't *many* guns but it was terrifying -your stomach turned over when you saw how close they were.

CHALMERS: Hopgood was up next.

MACDONALD: Now the Flak *knew* where the attack was coming from, and they let him have it.

GIBSON: An unlucky shot got one of his petrol tanks.

SUMPTER: His Bomb Aimer must have been hit because the mine dropped late.

CHALMERS: Ten minutes.

GIBSON: OK. Ready to spin.

FENERON: Start spinning.

HILL: Hoppy staggered on trying to gain height so his crew could bale out. But

AV18: AJ-M CREW DETAILS

CHALMERS: OK. Starting up.

MACDONALD: Can you chaps feel that?

NUGENT: At the next Dam Maudsley dropped his mine a fraction too late. It was the same as Hopgood: his bomb hit the wall, bounced over, and they were caught in its blast.

AJ-Z CREW DETAILS.

A/V18.1: FADE OF LANCASTER OPEN FLIGHT.

MORFYDD: (*Heartfelt, but not too slow*) *We* bear the sorrow. Of laughing and dancing with the boys one evening, then the next morning they're gone. We sit in the mess, looking at the faces of *such* young men, knowing they could *die* in the course of their next flight. *We* bear it with them. The work, the responsibility: understanding their *great* pain and skill. We are *their* tears.

A/V18.2: LANCASTER OPEN FLIGHT FADE-UP.

CHALMERS: OK, up to speed.

HILL: Up next was Squadron Leader 'Dinghy' Young who made a good hit.

FENERON: Is it turning?

CHALMERS: Can't you feel it?

GIBSON: *This* time a *colossal* wall of water swept right over the Dam and kept on going. But it didn't come down, not yet.

FENERON: Yes, but is it going fast enough?

NUGENT: Our turn.

GIBSON: OK chaps, lining up. Need those spotlights.

L/X 2: MOVING LIGHTS MEET ON HANGAR 2 CEILING AT 45 DEGREE ANGLE.

SUMPTER: We began diving down to the flat, ominous water.

HILL: Spotlights on Skip.

NUGENT: Lower lower.

FENERON: Speed is good.

GIBSON: Leave the throttles open. Pull me out of the seat if I'm hit.

NUGENT: Lower lower.

HILL: The German gunners could see us coming with our spotlights on from miles away.

SUMPTER: Left left.

NUGENT: Lower lower

SUMPTER: God, how *much* lower? OK, steady on angle.

NUGENT: Too far skip, up a bit.

FENERON: Hold that, speed's two three zero.

GIBSON: We were exactly sixty feet above the water. I thought to myself -

SUMPTER: Steady.

GIBSON: In another minute, we'll all be dead. I went on.

SUMPTER: Steady.

GIBSON: My Lanc was so small and the Dam so large and high.

SUMPTER: Steady.

FENERON: Right right. Hold!

HILL: The tracers flashing up couldn't possibly miss. Somehow

SUMPTER: Steady.

*Pause*

SUMPTER: Mine's gone.

A/V19: LANCASTER THROTTLE UP.

GIBSON: Our Load sent water and mud a thousand feet up. It rose with tremendous speed, then ever so gently fell back.

MACDONALD: She's gone! I think she's gone!

SUMPTER: I didn't see the dam burst, but it was obvious what had happened by the noise on the intercom.

CHALMERS: The centre just dropped out of the Dam and the water overtook this narrow river. One giant wave rubbing out the land.



BESSIE: It won't be long before our boys start to come back.

CHALMERS: We forgot about going home and tried to trace the water down the river to see what it would do.

GIBSON: New heading?

NUGENT: Zero eight four.

GIBSON: Zero eight four. Send codeword.

CHALMERS: Already done, skip.

GIBSON: Good.

NUGENT: We went back individually, *not* in formation.

MACDONALD: The defences were the same as they had been coming over, searchlights and flak. And *waiting* for us.

HILL: On the left someone flew over Hamm at five hundred feet. He got the chop.

SUMPTER: Ottley was on my starboard side and they hit him, he blew up. His tanks went first, then the bomb.

A/V20: AJ- C CREW DETAILS.

#### PHOTO DROP ON WATER.

MACDONALD: Dinghy Young went down. He'd just crossed the Coast when he was hit by flak and came down in the sea.

SUMPTER: So close to us, and home. So little time to see them.

#### AJ-A CREW DETAILS.

CHALMERS: We went across, and up the Zuider Zee. A searchlight caught us from starboard.

SUMPTER: Light flak straight ahead Skip.

GIBSON: I see it. Taking us lower.

NUGENT: Cannon shells ripping through the canopy.

FENERON: We were so low their guns on the sea wall were firing *down* at us.

HILL: North Sea ahead Boys!

SUMPTER: I got a glance, just for a moment, and I could see gunners either falling off because they'd been hit by us, or jumping before they were.

A/V21: FADE OUT OF LANCASTER OPEN FLIGHT.

SUMPTER: And then we were out of range, going back. So tired. And sick of water.

A/V21.1 LANCASTER LANDING (PLAYS UNDER THE FOLLOWING).

MORFYDD: We waited. Some time later we heard engines in the far distance. Again we ran to the landing strips. The first planes came in and taxied to a halt. Ordered back to the Mess to serve the first arrivals, we waited.

NUGENT: Then, after six hours, it was over. And as we landed there came over us all an immense feeling of relief, and pride. Each of us had a Dam of our own come down.

EILEEN: When Guy landed after the raid I drove him back from his Lancaster. It was marvellous to see him return. I even kissed him. [TO GIBSON] Did you do a good job, Sir?

GIBSON: I beg your pardon! We always do a good job. Where's the car?  
[ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

CHALMERS: I was first out of the Lanc, and was met by Air Chief Marshall Harris, Air Vice-Marshall Cochrane and Group Captain Whitworth. When they came and shook my hand I nearly fell over. [ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

HILL: We didn't notice until we got out that the ground crew were all crying. Half at the losses, and half with pride. [ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

MCDONALD: After debriefing I couldn't sleep. There was a good deal of boozing went on through the night. I haven't the faintest idea what time I went to bed.  
[ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

FENERON: When we landed I jumped out and kissed the ground, just like I did after any other op. [ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

NUGENT: I looked back down the runway where the Lancs had been swallowed by the night. Then I went inside. [ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

SUMPTER: I once said to the crew, "You'll never go down with me in the plane", and they laughed. We'll be alright. [ASSUMES BCM AT EASE POSITION]

MORFYDD: Looking round the Mess we burst into tears. The tables we'd laid out, hoping for the safe return of our friends, were empty. The Sergeant told us to go to our quarters to get a few hours sleep. Nightmares followed -we were shattered by the loss and we would never be the same again. But gradually we began to adjust back to Squadron routine, and tomorrow was always another working day.

PAUSE BEFORE NEXT CUE.

A/V22: AUDIO OF NEWSPAPER REPORT.

IMAGE: CLOSE-UP OF BREACHED DAM.

IMAGE: BREACHED DAM FROM A DISTANCE.

DURING THE FIRST LINE OF THE A/V AUDIO THE SEVEN AIRCREW SNAP TO THEIR EXACT INDIVIDUAL BCM FREEZE POSITIONS.

GIBSON PRODUCES THE NEWSPAPER FROM HIS POCKET. THE FREEZE IS BROKEN AS THE AIRCREW CROWD ROUND THE PAPER, EAGERLY READING IT.

SUMPTER: Come on, it's time for breakfast.

*AV23: TOMORROW'S A LOVELY DAY* (AL BOWLEY) (PLAY UNTIL END OF SONG).

IMAGE: 617 SQUADRON STRIDING OFF.

CURTAIN CALL.

THE AIRCREW FILE OFF AND, FOLLOWED BY THE WAAFS, MARCH DOWN THE LENGTH OF HANGAR 2, WHERE THEY EXIT.

END.