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THE LAST LANCASTER.

At the Coastal Command base at St. Newgan, Cornwall the R.A.F. says goodbye to an old friend which has done gallant service for 15 years - the backbone of our wartime bomber force - The Avro Lancaster. "D-Delta" the last of the operational Lancasters, is leaving for the breaker's yard. Air Chief Marshal Sir Walter Dawson shakes hands with the crew.

Skipper of "D-Delta" on this, her last flight of all, is Wing-Commander Edward Brooks, D.F.C. Wing-Commander Brooks was the first pilot to sink a U-Boat in World War Two.

Checks away - and the great four-engined bomber is ready to leave. If metal and fabric could hold memories, "D-Delta" would have much to tell; her task is done, her day is over; but her achievements will not be forgotten.

During the war, seven thousand three hundred and sixty-six Lancasters were built for operational service, and they flew 156,000 sorties, dropping nearly three-quarters of a million tons of bombs; two out of every three bombs which fell on Hitler's Fortress of Europe were delivered by Lancasters. Special missions included the Dem Busters' raid, the sinking of the Tirpitz, the smashing of the U-Boat pens, and most of the saturation raids which helped to end the Nazis' dream of world domination.

Only the Lancaster could carry "Grand Slam" - the deadly ten-ton bomb which could penetrate the deepest German Fortifications. Air Marshal "Bomber" Harris said of the Lancaster: "It's efficiency was almost incredible, both in performance and in the way in which it could be saddled with ever-increasing loads without breaking the camel's back".

Nothing could break the Lancaster's back; but it did as much as any single weapon to break the back of the enemy.

The last of a great line, heads for her final landing. Goodbye, Lancaster; you have served us well.