The Norwegian Campaign
HMS Glorious
May to June 1940
On the 9th of April 1940 German forces started the invasion of Norway. On the 1st of May the Germans had captured the southern part of Norway. Up north the situation was different. The Germans lost the battle of Narvik fighting against British, Polish, French and Norwegian Forces. There then followed one of the most notable periods of No 46 Squadron’s history.

Already in April, the Air Ministry in London ordered RAF to establish a force, "Force V, to give air-support to the Norwegian campaign. Squadron Leader Kenneth "Bing" Cross, commander of No.46 (Fighter) Squadron, was told that the Air Ministry intended to send his squadron of Hawker Hurricane Mk1 fighters to Andalsnes. However, with the Allied evacuation of central Norway, the plan was abandoned a few days later.

Then, on 9th May, orders were received to embark the Squadron in the carrier HMS Glorious. During the next two days their Hurricanes were hoisted aboard the carrier. On the 12th, Glorious sailed only to be recalled. No airfields in northern Norway were ready to receive the fighters yet. No 46 Squadron's ground crews and advance party embarked in the troop carrier Batory in Glasgow on 13th May, and on the following day Glorious sailed again. HMS Furious, carrying No 263 (F) Squadron and its Gloster Gladiators, also set course for Norway. On the 21st, the carriers entered their fly-off position outside Lofoten. Furious then flew off her Gladiators, which landed at Bardufoss. but Skånland was still not ready for the Hurricanes. The carriers withdrew from Norway, and Glorious arrived Scapa Flow on the 23rd, refueled on the 24th and sailed again the same afternoon. On the 26th, the landing strip at Skånland was finally reported ready.

At 0830 on 26th of May Squadron Leader Kenneth Cross took off from Glorious in his Hurricane P2632. This was the first Hurricane to take off from a carrier. Since Glorious did 30 knots the take off was not a problem for Cross nor the rest of the Squadron that all departed Glorious that evening.
In three formations they set course from Skånland west of Narvik. Each formation was lead by a navigating Swordfish. The runway at Skånland consisted of 700 metres of steel-meshed “sommerfelt” tracking laid on bare earth. Cross landed first. On the roll-out the wheels on his Hurricane started to sink into the too soft earth and the plane tipped over bending the propeller blades. There followed two successful landings, but then Flight Lieutenant Stewart tipped over and ended up inverted. Stewart was unhurt but his Hurricane was damaged beyond repair on site. After two more landings Cross ordered Flight Lieutenant P.G “Jamie” Jameson to continue with the remaining eight Hurricanes onwards to Bardufoss, which had solid earth runway. At Bardufoss all planes landed safely although one of them overshot the short runway and ran a few yards into the scrub.

Early next morning Cross led three Hurricanes off from Skånland in the Squadron’s first scramble. Actually only two got airborne. Pilot Officer Bunker tipped over on the take off due to the soft earth. The patrol did not make contact with German planes. Cross now decided to evacuate Skånland and after flying a patrol, all planes landed at Bardufoss. Cross flew his own Hurricane, having been able to straighten the bent propeller. In the evening, 46 Sqn. had 15 of its remaining 16 Hurricanes operational at Bardufoss. From 0730 and through the night 46 Sqn flew patrols over Narvik to give cover to an allied attack. They did not sight any German planes. At 00:41 in the morning they had to stop flying due to fog at Bardufoss. At that time Ju 88’s and He 111’s from Trondheim arrived in the Narvik area and had a lot of damage to Royal Navy ships.

Later in the morning the weather at Bardufoss improved and 46 Sqn flew 15 missions that day. Now they made contact with the enemy. Flying Officers Mike Mee and Jack Lydall attacked two Ju 88’s over the Ofotfjorden west of Narvik. Lydall was able to give cover to an allied attack. They did not sight any German planes. At 00:41 in the morning they had to stop flying due to fog at Bardufoss. At that time Ju 88’s and He 111’s from Trondheim arrived in the Narvik area and had a lot of damage to Royal Navy ships.

Nearby, and at about the same time, Pilot Officer Neville Banks also attacked the Heinkels. He probably managed to shoot one Heinkel down. However, his Hurricane was severely damaged by bullets from one or more Heinkels. He tried to make an emergency landing in a marsh a few miles north of Ledingen. Unfortunately, he landed short; in a small river, and the Hurricane hit large stones. The stop was abrupt and Banks was thrown out of the cockpit and hit a birch. He died instantly.

In the afternoon of 24th May, Pilot Officer Banks attacked and shot down a FW 200 Condor bombing Tromso. The stricken aircraft fell at Dyrøy. In the evening, Lydall was able to shoot down a He 111, it made an emergency landing at Andoya. Probably hit by return fire from the Heinkel, Lydall had to make an emergency landing. He crash-landed in a small marsh on the western slop of Tiefjord. The Hurricane turned over on its back and Lydall was not able to get out. A small fire started, and Lydall feared that he would be burnt to death. He managed to throw a few private letters some metres away onto the snow. The fire died out before it reached the cockpit. When people finally arrived at the scene of the crash, perhaps as much as one hour later, Lydall was dead from wounds and exposure.

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The same evening Flt Sgt Shackley shot down a Me 110, his camera gun filming continually as the German went down to crash. On the 30th, the weather was too bad for any flying. The next day weather improved and the Squadron flew several missions over Harstad, Skånland, Bardufoss and Narvik. Lefevre was my number two at this time and he joined me as I walked over to my aircraft. I told Pete what I knew and we got aboard and taxied down the runway for take-off. I was alarmed to see a formation of 4 He 111s in a shallow dive for the airfield and only a few miles away. Pete saw them at almost the same time and, slamming the hood shut; I opened up to full throttle and took off straight towards the approaching enemy aircraft. As we became airborne, the Heinkels turned away to the south and started to climb. I put the firing button on “Fire” switched on the reflector sight.

In his biography "Straight and Level" Cross describes that early morning:

"The 7th of June started early for me. I was asleep in my tent when I was awakened by the sound of a Hurricane section taking off. It was just 3 am and I thought this was rather early for the Germans. I wondered whether the enemy had at last got wind of the evacuation. I got up, put on my flying overalls over my pajamas and walked over to the Operations Tent. Mee was the Duty Operations Officer and I asked him what the flap was all about. "Enemy aircraft in the area" he said and the Readiness Section has gone to cover Harstad." “Right I’ll do the next Readiness. Call Peter Lefevre.”

- Lefevre was my number two at this time and he joined me as I walked over to my aircraft. I told Pete what I knew and we got aboard and taxied down the runway for take-off. I was alarmed to see a formation of 4 He 111s in a shallow dive for the airfield and only a few miles away. Pete saw them at almost the same time and, slamming the hood shut; I opened up to full throttle and took off straight towards the approaching enemy aircraft. As we became airborne, the Heinkels turned away to the south and started to climb. I put the firing button on “Fire” switched on the reflector sight.

The next few days 15,000 troops evacuated Narvik. No 46 and 263 Sqn flew 18 missions and made contact with the enemy. Plt Off Drummond and Sgt Taylor took off from Bardufoss at 12.30 and immediately attacked two Ju 87s. Taylor’s victim smashed onto rocky around, while the Stuka hit by Drummond crash-landed to the south-east of Narvik.

Pilot Officer Jack Frost in L 1815 and Sergeant Tyler in P2632 attacked a Junkers Ju 87. Frost received a bullet in his windscreen, which shattered, but stopped the bullet. The Ju 87 was lucky to escape among clouds. Pilot Officer Bunker and Sergeant Shackley engaged five BF 110s from Zerstorër Gruppe (Z.G.) 76. One of the Messerschmitts was damaged and force-landed to its return towards Trondheim.

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On the 6th, two Hurricanes escorted five of No 701 Squadron Walrus on a bombing sortie in the neighborhood of Sørfold.

The last day at Bardufoss, the 7th of June, was hectic. Fg Off Knight and Plt Off Drummond took off at 03.40 a.m. and shortly after engaged enemy bombers over Narvik, claiming one each. Sqn Ldr Cross and Plt Off Lefevre scrambled ten minutes later and reported attacking four more Heinkel 111’s over the airfield, claiming one shared between them. Return fire damaged Cross’ Hurricane and he had to land back at Bardufoss.

On 1st of June fog: prevented any flying. Late on the 2nd of June the weather improved and Luftwaffe bombed and destroyed most of Narvik town. 46 Sqn flew 17 missions without enemy contact. That day the Squadron was visited by Crown Prince Olav of Norway (later King Olav V, who presented the Squadron Standard in 1979) and Captain Ole Reistad, Acting CO of the Royal Norwegian Army Air Force.

Fg Off Mee with Flt Lt Jamie Jameson

On the 31st Glorious and HMS Ark Royal sailed from Scapa Flow to cover the evacuation planned for the 2nd of June. On that same date 46 Sqn flew 17 missions without enemy contact. That day the weather improved and Luftwaffe bombed and destroyed most of Narvik town. 46 Sqn. flew 18 missions and made contact with the enemy. Plt Off Drummond and Sgt Taylor took off from Bardufoss at 12.30 and immediately attacked two Ju 87s. Taylor’s victim smashed onto rocky around, while the Stuka hit by Drummond crash-landed to the south-east of Narvik.

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NARVIK NEW CEMETERY Norway

Narvik is a major port on the north west coast of Norway. Approaching from the south on the main E6 route follow this road through the town and over the railway bridge just past the tourist information centre on Rongensgate. The road bends sharply to the right then curves gently left. The cemetery is on the right side approximately 1 km past the bridge and the entrance is reached via a slip road off the main road rising to a parking area outside the gates. From the entrance to the cemetery follow the main path for 70 metres to the second intersection and turn right. The Second World War plot is 30 metres straight ahead.
and turned after them with Pete close behind me. We were about a thousand feet below and despite full throttle, it seemed an age before we reached their altitude.

The enemy had tightened his formation a bit and I selected the starboard aircraft. Pete was on my left in a good position to engage one of the others. As I got within range I fired and immediately my target’s undercarriage dropped down and his starboard engine started smoking. Almost simultaneously the Perspex on the port side of my windscreen disintegrated and smoke filled the cockpit. I turned away quickly cursing that I had been too deliberate in my attack and had been hit by the rear gunners of the Heinkels. I opened the hood and the smoke cleared a bit. A quick look round the cockpit showed me I had no oil pressure and already the coolant temperature gauge was going off the clock. There was nothing for it but to try to get back to the airfield. I was able from the height we had climbed, 4000 ft, to glide back and, thank goodness, the undercarriage came down when selected so I landed safely. I ran gently off the runway and cut the switches.

As I got out of the cockpit my ground crew came running up and we went around the Hurricane together. I had been hit in the port oil tank, which was blown to pieces, and also the radiator. The bullet that had hit the side of the Perspex of the windscreen had gone through the armour plate directly behind where my head would have been if I had strapped in. Luckily, because of the hurried take-off, I had been unable to do up the straps and had been crouching forward over the control column to steady myself. A narrow escape. Corporal Willers, one of the Armament NCOs and who is still alive today, found the strengthened core of this bullet and recorded the incident in a personal diary he was keeping."

A last patrol over Narvik gave results. Flying Officers Mee and Drummond attacked four He 111’s. One was shot down. Another made it home to Trondheim with 233 bullet holes, and a third flew into a storm and crashed at Grong on the way back!

In the early hours of 8th June it was time to fly the Hurricanes out to Glorious, “Jamie” Jameson describes the first Hurricane landings on an aircraft carrier:

"We agreed that I would lead the first section of three Hurricanes back to the carrier Somewhere - we had to get rid of the nose heaviness caused by the metal propeller so that we could slam on the brake."

I carried out some trials at Bardufoss and found that a fourteen pound sandbag strapped in the fuselage right down at the tail end allowed the use of full brake.

We took off in the twilight of the Arctic night and were navigated out to the carriers by a Swordfish from Glorious. They were about 150 miles out from the Norwegian coast and looked quite impressive with their four escorting destroyers fussing round them.

Despite the ships’ size their flight-decks looked pathetically small. Lilliputian was the description that sprang to mind. Glorious grey deck reminded me of the back of an elephant, particularly as the flight-deck had a round-down at the stern which was moving up and down like a cantering elephant’s backside! We had to touch down as near the top of the heaving rump as possible to minimize the chance of over-shooting and crashing on to the fo’castle (the flight deck did not go right up to the bow of the ship). There was quite a swell on and Glorious was at full tilt - about 30 knots - which meant that the landing spot was moving up and down at an alarming rate! Before taking-off from Bardufoss I had decided that the only way to find out if it was possible to land on Glorious was to commit myself to the landing. If I got three-quarters of the way along the deck and then realized that I was not going to stop in time, it would be too late to take off again anyway!

While I’ve been waiting for the signal to land Sergeant Taylor said his engine was running very rough and that he would have to land immediately. He made a perfect landing.

I came in on the approach at just above stalling speed, feeling my way because the sandbag away down in the tail was affecting the flying characteristics of the aeroplane. Suddenly, as I was getting near the touchdown point, the Hurricane dropped rapidly and it seemed she was turning to land on the quarterdeck below the flight-deck! I slammed on full throttle and that beautiful, lovely Rolls-Royce Merlin engine never faltered. It dragged us up on to the flight deck and the Hurricane and I stopped a quarter of the way along it. When the wind flowing along the deck gets to the run-down it follows the downturn of the deck and causes a terrific down-draught. If you get too low on the approach and are caught in it you are pushed down, and if have not got mighty engine power and quick reactions - that’s it.
Of course, the Fleet Air Arm pilots were trained to cope with this by doing a fairly steep approach, thereby keeping above the down-draught. Anyway all three of us managed to get down all right and no one used more than three-quarters of the deck. "...Shortly after, seven more Hurricanes landed together with ten Gladiators from 263 Sqn.

The Commander of Glorious was Captain Guy D'Olly-Hughes. He was in a hurry to get home to start making preparations for a court-martial against his Commander of Flying. He received permissions to part company from the rest of the naval force and proceed to Scapa Flow escorted by two destroyers, leaving Ark Royal and her screen of destroyers behind. For unknown reasons Glorious did not use its Swordfish planes to patrol ahead and on the flanks. Glorious was intercepted and sunk by the battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau 200 miles of the Norwegian coast just north of the Arctic Circle. The destroyers were also sunk. Out of a total of over 1500 men only 41 survived. Jameson and Cross survived three days on a float before being rescued by a Norwegian ship.

In their ten day Norwegian campaign 46 Sqn. flew 330 hours and 240 missions. They lost two of their 23 pilots in combat. Eight more pilots lost their lives in the Glorious tragedy. Three Hurricanes were shot down and three left behind at Bardufoss. The two damaged planes at Skånland were salvaged and brought home by ship.

Sources and Acknowledgements:

- RAF Operations Record Book, Forms 540 and 541 of No 46 Squadron.
- "FLYALARM" by Ulf Larsstwold, Bjorn Olsen, Bjorn Hafsten and Sten Stenersen.
- "Jamie" Jameson
- Interviews with locals in the Narvik area.
- "Fledgling Eagles " by Christopher Shores, with John Foreman, Christian-Jacques Earnhardt, Heinrich Weiss and Bjorn Olsen
- "Straight and Level " by ACM Sir Kenneth Cross with Professor Vincent Orange.
- "Carrier Glorious " by John Winton.

Life at Bardufoss

Pilots of 46 Sqn at Bardufoss, in front of aircraft shelter and two Hurricanes, from left to right: P/O J.F. Drummond, Sgt. R.V.H. Lonsdale, Sgt. B.L. Taylor and Sgt. S. Andrew.

46 Squadron personnel in front of Squadron Operations tent at Bardufoss, left to right: Sgt. Lonsdale, P/O Ambrose, F/O Knight (?) in duffel coat, and Sergeants Edworthy (?) and Earp with life vests on readiness. Probably taken after Edworthy and Earp landed from a patrol over Narvik at 1830 on Sunday 2 June 1940, when they remained on readiness. F/O H.H. "Bertie" Knight was the only pipe smoker among No. 46 (F) squadron pilots at Bardufoss on left is heap of empty 4 Imp. Gals. petrol tin cans. Possibly F/O H.H. Knight in duffel coat and using binoculars. Sitting behind on canvas bag is possibly Sgt. Lonsdale with parachute and possible flying suit on canvas bags in front. Standing seems to be Sgt. Earp zipping up his Irving sheepskin flight jacket and behind AM pump cart is Sergeant B.L. Taylor and Sergeant S. Andrew is easily identifiable from portrait printed on page 442 of "Battle of Britain Then and Now IV". In background a pilot with Mae West life preserver over flight jacket is walking towards left wingtip of Hurricane having its
HMS Glorious

The print depicts the moment as the first Hurricane of 46 squadron of the Royal Air Force, piloted by Sqn Ldr Kenneth Cross, without arrestor hooks or wires approaches the ill-fated carrier HMS Glorious, during the evacuation of Norway in June 1940. Bing later said We showed them they were wrong. The Fleet Air Arm pilots were delighted saying Marvellous bloody marvellous, now we will get them too. All had landed safely by 4.30am on June 8th.

Signed limited edition of 350 prints. Image size 23 inches x 15 inches (58cm x 38cm). Price £115.00
Signed by Sir Kenneth Cross KCB, CBE, DSO, DFC (deceased).

HMS Ardent and Acasta

In addition to the tragic loss of HMS Glorious, her two escorting destroyers, HMS Ardent and HMS Acasta were also sunk with tremendous loss of life. The HM Ships GLOURIOS,ARDENT & ACASTA Association (Glarac) was formed in 2002 to honour the memory of the ships’ companies and the RAF personnel attached to HMS Glorious. For more information on the Association, please go to their website at www.glaric.com.

The Loss of HMS Glorious
An Analysis of the Action
by Vernon W. Howland Captain, RCN (Ret’d.)
http://www.warship.org/no11994.htm

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Enemy Aircraft Shot Down by No 46 Sqn in Norway

BF 110

Ju 87D Stuka

Do 26 Flying Boat

Ju 88

He 111

From Hayling to the far north - a journey of remembrance

Norwegians pay tribute to wartime RAF heroes

THE HEROISM and horror of war were remembered in a poignant ceremony in the far north of Norway last month.

Hailing vessels at Ronneby, two squadrons were remembered at the ceremony. They included the No 46 Sqn Norwegian aircraft in Norway.

Although he is not in the best of health, he remains one of the most active members of the Norwegian community. Despite his age, he remains active in local affairs. He is also a board member of the Norwegian Association of Former RAF Officers.

The ceremony was a moving tribute to the sacrifices made by the RAF officers who served in Norway during World War II. It was attended by officials from the Norwegian government, the Royal Air Force, and other organizations.

The Norwegians who served in the RAF during World War II were remembered with a wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial in Harstad.

A large crowd turned out to pay their respects, and the atmosphere was somber yet respectful. The ceremony was a reminder of the bravery and sacrifice of those who served.

The memorial, located in central Harstad, is a tribute to the Norwegian pilots who fought in the North Atlantic during the war. It is a fitting reminder of the heroism and sacrifice of those who served in the RAF.

The ceremony concluded with a flypast of Norwegian military aircraft, including the Ju 88 and He 111. The planes flew low over the memorial, paying tribute to the brave men who served in the North Atlantic during World War II. The crowd watched in awe as the aircraft flew overhead, a moving tribute to the sacrifices made.

The ceremony was a powerful reminder of the history and heroism of the Norwegian pilots who fought in the North Atlantic during World War II. It was a fitting tribute to those who served and an opportunity to honor their sacrifices.
Letter Written to 46 Sqn Association Secretary by Sqn Ldr Cross from his hospital bed after being rescued

Glenegales Hospital
Auchterarder
Perthshire
26th June 1940

My Dear Marchant,

Many thanks for your letter, which has just reached me. As you see I’m hors de combat for the moment and Jameson is here with me, but I’ll start at the beginning and tell you the whole story since we left Digby on the 9th May.

At the beginning of May, I was sent for by the AM; and told that we should be going to Narvik as soon as an aerodrome could be prepared for us there. On the 9th May we got the signal and we left Digby as a formation of 18 Hurricanes (an impressive sight I was told) and landed at Abbotshinch near the Clyde.

Next day we taxied through fields to a wharf where the Hurricanes were hoisted aboard barges two at a time and taken down the Clyde to HMS Glorious where they were hoisted aboard. By the grace of luck and little apples, none were bent though only inches saved us on several occasions. After one false sailing we got away in company with the Furious on the 14th May and a strong escort of destroyers. The Furious carried a Gladiator Squadron. We arrived in our position to take off on the 21st but received a signal that the aerodrome wouldn’t be ready until 26th May so we returned to Leaps to refuel. We turned to a point 60 miles off the Norwegian coast on the 26th and on receiving the affirmative signal from the General ashore we prepared to take off.

This, of course, was the first time Hurricanes had ever taken off the deck of a carrier and though we were given figures by the AM, things were complicated by the Glorious having a ramp two thirds of the way along the deck on which there was a distant chance of our touching the props if we weren’t airborne by then. However, we worked it out that with a 30 knot wind over the deck we should just be airborne at the top of the ramp which meant getting up speed over the first part and then easing the stick back enough to give prop clearance without losing forward speed. The Navy were perfectly splendid all the way out, they couldn’t do enough and the night we were in Scapa they threw a full dress guest night for us of which the poor lad waded into a formation of five J088’s and was picked off from behind but not before he’d sent one down in flames himself. Banks was the other, and we never really found out how he went.

Then came the evacuation, which was a damn shame as we’d forced the Germans, right back to the Swedish border and were all set to move south. However, things at home made it necessary and of course the Navy were using an awful lot of ships up there. I was told at the start that we would have to be the last to leave or the embarking troops would be bombed to hell, that was O.K by us but I insisted that there should be some method of us leaving when it was all over but of course this was difficult as they wanted us to guard the ships well out to sea.

However, after a few wet suggestions like bailing out beside destroyers, etc, I heard that the Glorious was around and so asked if we might have a shot at flying on. I know the chaps on the Glorious would be full out and this was eventually arranged. Things were complicated by the Norwegian Army getting wing of things, and things weren’t at all comfortable as we were surrounded by five thousand of them at our aerodrome. However, we armed all the troops and by putting a bold face on things avoided that trouble. Well, we covered the evacuation for two days (there were 35,000 men) to be taken off, and on the third day (the last) Jerry really woke up to what was going on.

The day started at 3a.m. with a raid on our aerodrome, which we dealt with in undress, our standby section having been ordered off to Narvik a few minutes before. Of course, it never got dark up there and it was as light at midnight as it was at midday. It was a Hell of a day but we managed to keep them off Narvik while they took the troops off and no ships were bombed. We knocked down 4 confirmed that day and hit 3 or 4 more that we weren’t able to get information about.

At midnight, I called for volunteers for a shot at landing on the Glorious and of course the boys stepped forward to a man, so there was nothing for it but to pick the senior ten (we only had ten serviceable aircraft by this time, 4 having been lost by enemy action, only two pilots though, both the other two managing to get back, one by the use of his parachute, and the other four having been dismantled and shipped back (being unrepairable out there).

We left at 00.45 hours dead beat, but as we left we were pleased to see the Skuas of the Fleet Air Arm coming in to cover the embarkation of our troops who had a destroyer standing by for them at a little fishing village seventeen miles away. We were navigated by a Swordfish at 100 knots and the old Hurricanes had to do some fairly hearty zigzagging to keep behind. It wasn’t a nice feeling knowing that if we couldn’t get on the deck there was no way out, and remember we had gone to the trouble of hoisting them aboard in the first place as the Air Ministry having had trials, pronounced it as being impractical. However, we had taken the precaution of setting our brakes pretty coarsely without too much risk of going on our noses The Navy again were full out and as there was a fresh breeze blowing we had 35 knots over the deck and they all came on like birds. The last one landed at 0300 hrs just 24 hours after our first air raid the day before. Most of the boys were pretty tired, and after some very welcome eggs and bacon and cocoa we all tuned in.

However, we had our reward with x Bosch shot down and the capture of Narvik. The gratitude of the troops had to be seen to be believed for they. Poles, Norwegians, French and English, had been subjected to uninterrupted bombing for weeks past.

By this time, of course, the Germans realised we were there and in our normal patrols over the line and the port of embarkation we had some stirring battles and though out numbed sometimes by as many as four to one we always managed to prevent them getting into their target. We came to the conclusion that they weren’t keen on fighting even when they had superior numbers. Everything went well for a bit, we lost 2 couple of chaps, Jackie Lydall who was at the last dinner was one.

The poor lad waded into a formation of five J088’s and was picked off from behind but not before he’d sent one down in flames himself. Banks was the other, and we never really found out how he went.

Many thanks for your letter, which has just reached me. As you see I’m hors de combat for the moment and Jameson is here with me, but I’ll start at the beginning and tell you the whole story since we left Digby on the 9th May.
The next day most of the boys appeared about lunch, when we discovered we were on our way home at 18
knots. At teatime we were suddenly given "Action Stations" and by the time I’d got on deck, salvos were al-
ready falling around us. We’d been caught in fact by a couple of German cruisers. We had a couple of de-
stroyers, one of which was blown out of the water when she went to investigate in the first place, the second did
her best to lay a smoke screen, but as there was a cruiser on each quarter this wasn’t effective.

All the boys went to their abandoned ship stations and when the order came, we went over the side. The whole
thing was over in 45 minutes. I swam to a raft and a few minutes later young Jameson came swimming along.
Well, we eventually had, twenty-nine people aboard, but after 3 nights and, 2 days when we were picked up,
we had but seven left, of which two died later.

We spent three days on the Norwegian tramp that took us to the Faeroe Islands. We spent a couple of days in
hospital there, and were then transferred on stretchers to a couple of destroyers and brought to Rosyth. I
should have-said that the tramp picked up 39 people all told clinging to various rafts, and I think that that was
all that was saved out of 1,400.

The boats that got away were sunk by heavy seas, but in most cases they so badly holed by gunfire that they
all sank as they were launched. When we were in the raft the Germans came up, had a look and then went
straight away. I’ve a real hatred for Germans now.

Have been here for just over a week. Our feet are the trouble, being in the water all that time-they got a spe-
cies of frost bite and have been giving us terrific stick for now for some time, We’re assured, that this is nor-
mal, and that the pain will stop “in about a week.”

46 of course, has been reformed with a new C.O and two new Flight Commanders. I was heartbroken at first
but now I realise that I couldn’t go back having lost ten fellows, the finest on earth, who’d been through some
of the most difficult tasks ever asked of a fighter squadron and always with a smile and never a thought of
questioning an order. And they have all gone - what a shame.

Well this is a very long letter, and being written in bed my handwriting is now chronic. I’ve said a lot of things
I’d like you to keep to yourself, but I should let George Bulman know about the show as he’d be interested in
Well this is a very long letter, and being written in bed my handwriting is now chronic. I’ve said a lot of things
what a shame.

Thank you for your kind wishes and the Padres. Jameson sends his regards and so do I.

Yours sincerely,

[K.B.B. CROSS]

P.S. We got 19 Huns in all.

P.P.S. The new C.O. of 46 is S/L Maclachlan, a Canadian and a very good sort.