

# A brief history of the



**RAF**  
Royal **air force**



## Greatest raid: **The dam busters**

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### Vocabulary

**Countless**

**Bombing raids**

**In the annals of history**

**Daring**

**In the heart of Germany**

**Key part**

**Made a breakthrough**

**Perfected**

**Groundbreaking**

**Significant**

**Morale boost**

**Breathtaking**

**Captivated people**

**Immortalised**

### Meaning

This means 'many'. Too many to count.

Every time the bombers went to bomb Germany it was called a raid. So, a 'bombing raid' talks about when they went to bomb Germany.

If something is in the 'annals of history' it is recorded in history and will always be remembered.

If you do something 'daring', it is very brave and something that no one thought you could or would do.

In the centre of Germany.

A very important part.

If you make a 'breakthrough' you make an important discovery.

If you perfect something, make it perfect, it has been perfected.

This means something very creative / innovative has been done. No one has achieved it before.

Very important.

This means that people feel better than before. The raid made people feel proud and happy that the RAF could do something so ground-breaking. It gave them a morale boost.

Amazing.

If something 'captivates' you it interests you / amazes you and makes you want to know more.

If you 'immortalise' something, it has been written about, or has been represented in a painting, or a movie has been done about it etc. Something has been done so it will be remembered in history and never be forgotten. It has been made famous.



WW2 RAF British bomber



## Greatest raid: **The dambusters**

The RAF did **countless bombing raids** during World War two, but there is one that will be remembered in **the annals of history** – Operation 'Chastise', more commonly known as 'The dambusters.'

On the night of 16-17 May 1943, Guy Gibson led 617 Squadron of the Royal Air Force on a **daring bombing raid** to destroy three dams **in the heart of Germany** where most of their factories were placed.

The dams were protected from all sides which made it almost impossible to attack. However, the RAF had a secret weapon to surprise the Germans: the bouncing bomb.

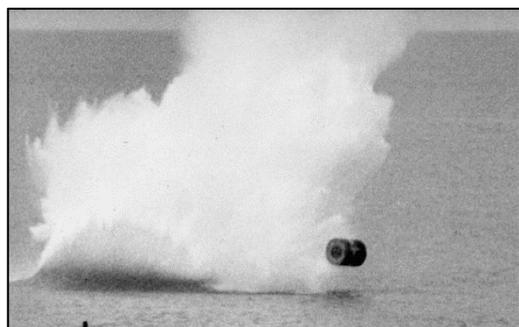
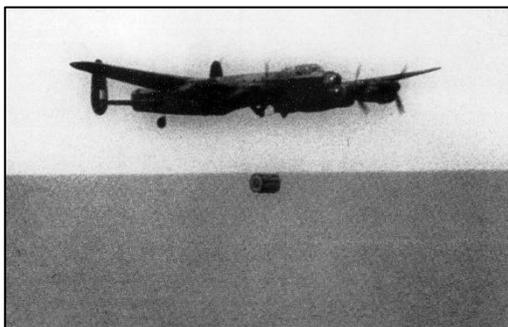
The RAF wanted to destroy the dams to affect Germany's war production as the Dams water supply was a **key part** to keeping the factories running. But due to the defence of the Dams, the RAF didn't have any effective weapon to destroy them. This was until British designer Barnes Wallis, **made a breakthrough** in his back garden.



### **The creator**

It was in 1942 that Barnes Wallis came up with the idea of the bouncing bomb by throwing marbles across a bathtub in his garden. The RAF loved the idea and carried out tests around the country. Many tests were carried out until finally the bouncing bomb was **perfected**. All that was left now was to find the pilots and the planes.

In late March 1943, a new squadron was formed to carry out the raid on the dams. It was made up of pilots from Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. After months of training they were finally ready to try out this **groundbreaking** bouncing bomb.

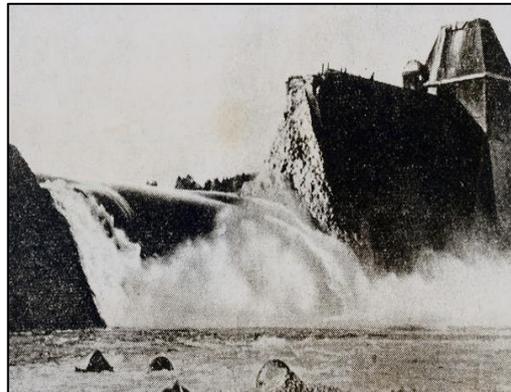
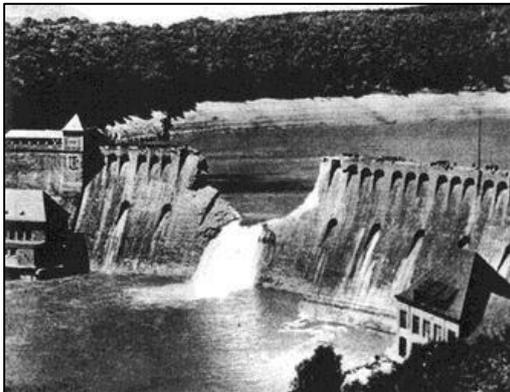


**The pilots went through many hours of hard training to use the bouncing bomb**



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The **Eder** and **Möhne** dams damaged by the Dam busters

### The raid

It was the night of 16-17 May 1943, and the three main targets were the Möhne, Eder and Sorpe dams. 133 aircrew in 19 Lancaster bombers took off to bomb the dams. It was a successful raid with both the Möhne and Eder Dams destroyed. However, the Sorpe Dam was only slightly damaged.

Although the effect on industrial production was limited, the raid surprised the world and gave a **significant morale boost** to the people of Britain.

The skill and bravery of the pilots who flew that night, at 30m or less from the ground over Germany is **breathtaking**. They flew so low that one hit the sea, while another was destroyed as it flew straight into electricity cables.

The **raid** has **captivated people** to this day due to the **groundbreaking** design of the bouncing bomb, and the bravery of the aircrews that went on the raid. It has been **immortalised** in the 1955 war movie 'The Dambusters'.



The brave pilots who captivated a nation and encouraged them to never give up