

Alan  
Morris



# First of the Many



The story of  
Independent  
Force, R.A.F.





ARROW BOOKS LTD  
178-202 Great Portland Street, London W1

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AN IMPRINT OF THE  HUTCHINSON GROUP

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London Melbourne Sydney  
Auckland Bombay Toronto  
Johannesburg New York

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First published by  
Jarrolds Publishers (London) Ltd 1968  
Arrow edition 1969

*This book is published at a net price and  
supplied subject to the Publishers Association  
Standard Condition of Sale registered under  
the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1956*

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*Made and printed in Great Britain  
by The Anchor Press Ltd.,  
Tiptree, Essex  
09 001820 6*

# Foreword

by

AIR MARSHAL SIR ROBERT SAUNDBY

KCB, KBE, MC, DFC, AFC, DL

*Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command 1943-5*

The first of the many were those very gallant pilots, observers and air gunners of the Independent Force, supported by their hard-working and long-suffering air mechanics, who during the last year of the First World War flew on strategic missions over Germany. With imperfect aircraft, unreliable engines, and primitive flying instruments, they flew by day and by night, often at considerable heights and in appalling weather. They had no closed cockpits, no effective heating, no self-sealing tanks, and no parachutes. Because they knew little or nothing of these things, they cheerfully carried on without them. Though their casualty rate was high, their worst trials were not the running fights against the enemy's air defences, but failing engines and cruel weather.

In the vivid and stimulating pages of this book can be seen all the problems, in embryo, which Bomber Command had to solve. Allowing for the difference in scale and technical development, there are many striking similarities between the story of the Independent Force and the story of Bomber Command.

Through a long year of frustration and high endeavour this small company of pioneers not only made history, but laid the foundations on which was built the great strategic bombing campaign of the Second World War. It is fitting that the saga of their deeds and sacrifices should be made known as widely as possible.

Above all, we can look back on the first of the many with admiration and pride for their valour and determination. Just as our fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain were inspired by the

exemplary courage and daring of the 'scout' pilots of the RFC, so our overstrained bomber crews of the Second World War were heartened and sustained by the splendid traditions of the Independent Force.

R. Saunders

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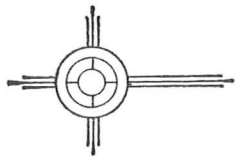


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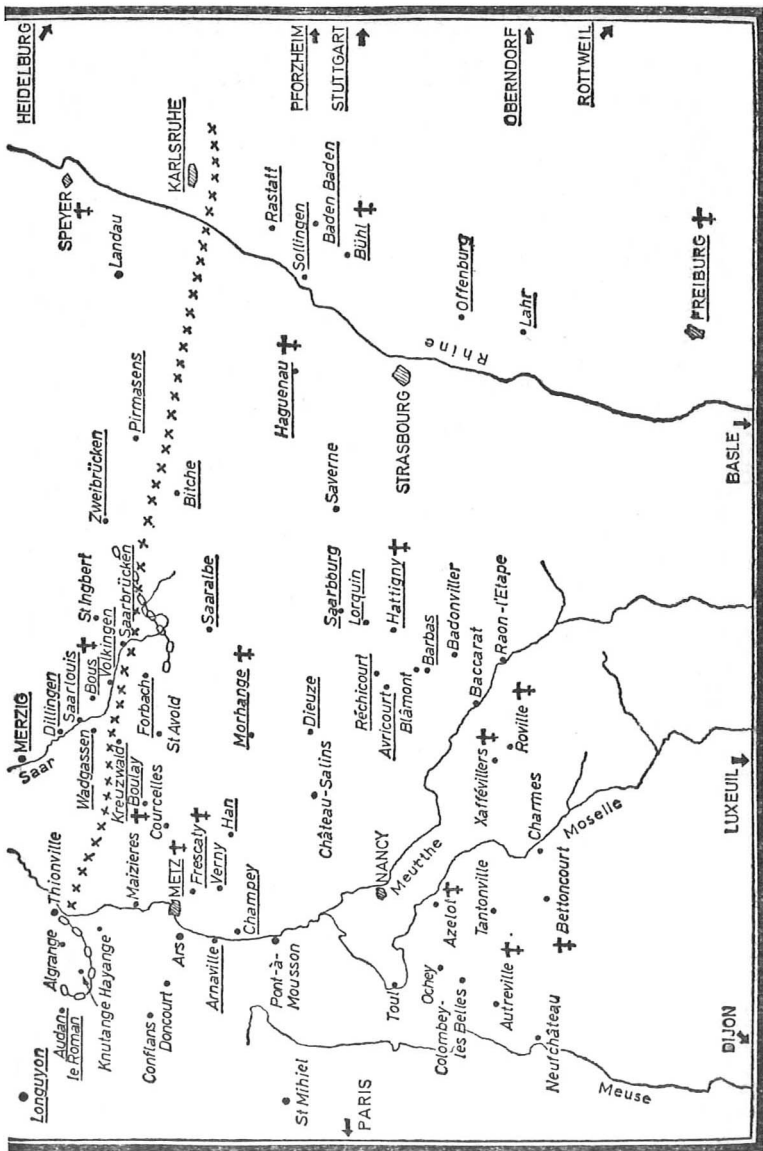
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MAINZ

Darmstadt

- Underlined = Chief Towns Bombed
- † = Main Aerodromes
- = Balloon Barrage
- xxxx = EA Standing Patrol





In 1918 a handful of young British aviators, flying unsafe machines round-the-clock and harried by Germany's home defences, originated long-range bombing, thus becoming the forerunners of R.A.F. Bomber Command, the U.S. Strategic Air Force, and N.A.T.O.'s H-bombers. Their losses rose to 75%; their survivors pioneered Britain's airmail services.

**First of the Many**, which has a Foreword by Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Saundby, KCB, KBE, MC, DFC, AFC, DL, tells for the first time the story of Independent Force, abounding in amazing incident and revealing squadron and Intelligence records which disclose how Germany's morale was cracked. Alan Morris, who is also the author of *Bloody April*, the heroic story of the fliers of the First World War, shows, too, that if the lesson of Independent Force operations had been properly learned in the 1930s, R.A.F. Bomber Command might well have crushed Nazi Germany in 1942.

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