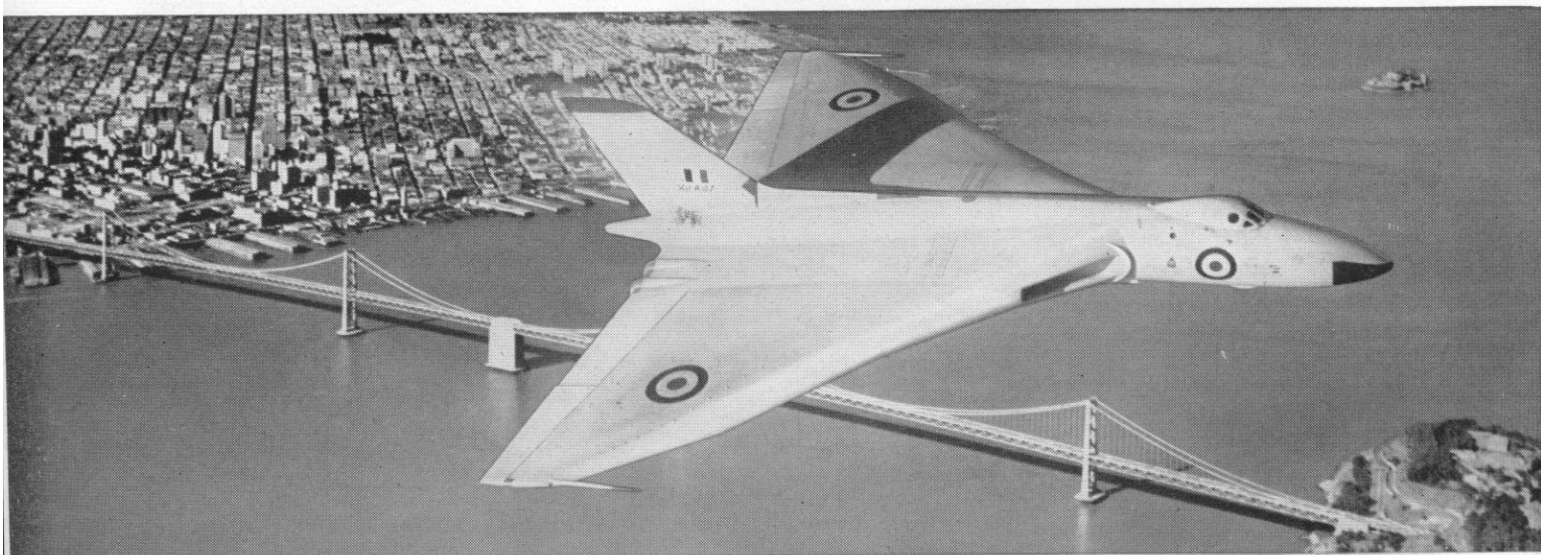


*Squadrons of today's Royal Air Force—No. 1 of a series*

# The Dam Busters 1960



*A Vulcan of 617 Squadron over San Francisco*



*Wing Commander  
Guy Gibson, V.C.*

Just before 1 a.m., May 17, 1943, Wing Commander Guy Gibson radioed back to his base the one word "Nigger". This was the name of his well-loved dog, killed only a few hours before by a car; it was also the code-word indicating that the Mohne dam had been breached. An hour later the code-word "Dinghy" told the same story about the Eder dam. These two hammer-blows at German industry marked the brilliant debut of 617 Squadron, formed from hand-picked crews only two months before specifically for this operation.

It was an audacious mission calling for delicate judgment and high courage, qualities which earned 617 a Squadron Standard of Battle Honours,—the youngest squadron ever to receive one.

Today's member of 617 Squadron flies in a bomber which has the striking power of the whole of last war's Bomber Command. He has all the skill and nicety of judgment of his predecessors but these are now applied to the split-second accuracy of modern flying instead of to the calculated risks of war. The appearance of the Squadron has changed as radically as its function. From Lancasters to Vulcans. From a vital part of a war machine to an integral part of a war deterrent. From bombing runs over Europe to flights quartering the globe. The one thing which has not changed—will never change—is the spirit of 617 Squadron.