

Sgt. John Henry Ace
2203439 RAFVR



John Ace was a young Lancaster flight engineer who was one of 16 men from 97 Squadron who were killed on a night training exercise over France in November 1944.

They were in two Lancasters which had been among six sent out on training sorties from Coningsby on the night of 11 November 1944. Their task was to use the new American-designed LORAN (long range reconnaissance) radar on board their Pathfinder Lancasters. John's aircraft, PB200 OF-G, dived into marshy ground at Cernay-en-Dormois, between Reims and Verdun at 2225 hours while the second Lancaster and its crew vanished.

Each crew was carrying an additional radar operator and both were described by the squadron records as 'very capable'.

John came from Salford in Manchester and was the 20-year-old son of Sydney and Annie Ace. He and his crew had already completed three operations with 9 Squadron.

The others who died in his crew were the pilot F/O Cyril Peters, navigator Sgt. George Saunders, additional radar operator P/O Fraser Farish, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Len Welham, wireless operator Sgt. Patrick Piper, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Len Worley and rear gunner F/O John Negus. All are buried in Clichy New Communal Cemetery.

His name can be found on panel 001.

Sources: Bomber Command Losses 1944 by Bill Chorley/97 Squadron ORBs.