

**Sgt. John Archer Akers**  
**1397504 RAFVR**



John Akers was a navigator in one of 15 Lancasters lost during one of Bomber Command's most successful long-range bombing operations.

He died along with the rest of his crew when his Lancaster, ND982 LE-Y of 630 Squadron, was understood to have been shot down 18 miles from the Baltic port and city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad in Russia), a 2,000-mile round trip from his home airfield in Lincolnshire.

The attack by 189 Lancasters, of 5 Group, on the night of 29/30 August 1944 was the second in a few days in a bid to prevent the port being used to supply weapons to Germany's Eastern Front. It turned out to be Bomber Command's most successful extreme range attack of the war, devastating much of the city and port area, despite the minimal bomb loads carried by the Lancasters.

John and his crew were on their third operation with 630, including their second on Königsberg, since joining the squadron at East Kirkby a few weeks earlier. They had taken off at 2014 hours and their aircraft crashed at 0128 hours close to the small village of Gross Waldeck (now Osokino in Russia), killing all on board. The bodies were later buried nearby but when the British Graves Burial Unit attempted to locate the graves after the war they were refused permission by the Russians so John and all his crew are now remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

The others who died were the pilot F/O Douglas Twidle RNZAF, flight engineer Sgt. Charles Garner, bomb-aimer Sgt. Samuel Stanton, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Leonard Prior, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Edward Walton and rear gunner Sgt. Harold Wickenden.

His name can be found on panel 001.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association.