

**P/O Francis Frederick George Allan
J/19942 RCAF**

Few bomber crews could have had a more testing baptism of fire than that of Lancaster DV220 AS-J, of 166 Squadron.

The crew, headed by pilot Francis Allen, flew six of their first seven operations to Berlin in the winter of 1943, with the seventh being another long trip to Stettin.

Their eighth operation was another deep penetration raid into Germany, against Leipzig on the night of 19/20 February 1944, and this time their luck ran out. This raid saw the highest Bomber Command losses of the war so far – 70 out of an attacking force of 823 – with the majority falling victim to fighters. Four of those lost were from 166 Squadron.

It was a single-engined Fw190 that accounted for DV220. The aircraft was attacked and shot down, crashing close to a church at Krahne, near Brandenburg. Four of the crew managed to bale out successfully and became prisoners but three others, including Francis Allan, died in the crash.

He and his crew, which included three Canadians, had left RAF Kirmington at 2321 hours and it was some four hours later that they were intercepted, suggesting they were homebound at the time.

Francis came from Montreal and was one of two sons and three daughters of William and Jane Allen. He was educated at St Michael's School and later at a technical college before joining the Canadian Pacific Railways, where his father also worked. He was a keen sportsman and enjoyed skiing, swimming and playing tennis. Francis is now buried in Berlin War Cemetery.

Those killed with him were the navigator P/O Jim Yelland RCA and the wireless operator Sgt. Bill Dykes. The survivors were flight engineer Sgt. Tom Lee, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Frank Hughes RCAF and air gunners Flt. Sgt. Joe Manuel DFM and Sgt. Alan Rose.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 001.

Photographic source: 166 Squadron Association.

