

## **Flt. Sgt. Richard Walter Andrews 1853736 RAFVR**

Richard Andrews was a young mid-upper gunner from Gloucester who died when the Lancaster he was flying in was shot down in a disastrous Bomber Command raid staged to prepare the way for D-Day.

He was one of 19 aircrew from 625 Squadron at Kelstern to be killed during an attack on a German military site in France on the night of 3/4 May 1943. 625 lost three of the 42 Lancasters, 28 of them from 1 Group, that failed to return from the raid, which was blighted by communication problems leaving bombers circling what turned out to be a fighter beacon. Over 250 Bomber Command aircrew died in this raid.



The attack was on the Wehrmacht camp at Mailly-le-Camp and was staged as part of the preparations for D-Day, which was only a month away. The bombers' controller's information was drowned out by a wrong-tuned American forces broadcast so, in place of instructions wireless operators on the Lancasters could only hear 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' and other popular songs. The circling Lancasters were quickly found by night fighters and many were shot down close to the target. The bombing, however, was highly successful, destroying numerous tanks and vehicles, storage depots and support services for the German military.

Richard and his crew had taken off from RAF Kelstern in Lincolnshire at 2158 hours on board Lancaster III LM515 CF-W, one of 15 Lancasters from the squadron taking part in the raid.

His parents, Ernest and Annie Andrews, ran the Bell Inn in Barton Street in Gloucester. He was one of six children and lived in Gloucester. He was married in the city in 1943 to his wife Joan and their son, Tony, was born three months after Richard was killed.

The others who died were the pilot P/O Neil McGaw, flight engineer Sgt. Kenneth Garner, navigator Sgt. Frederick Clarke, bomb-aimer F/O Daniel Moriarty RCAF, wireless operator Sgt. Reginald Tailby and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Thomas White RAAF.

His name can be found on panel 002.

Sources: Aircrew Remembered/625 Squadron records.