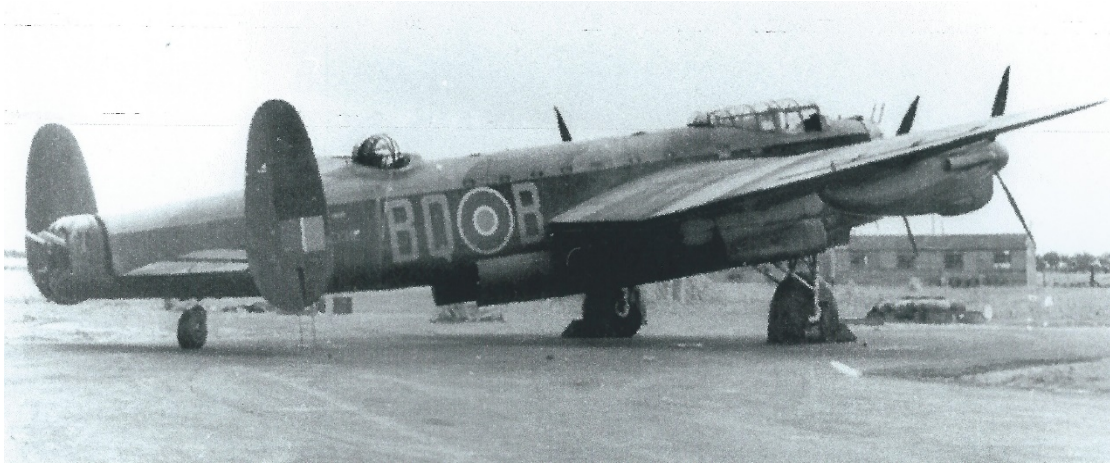


Sgt. Kenneth Raymond Ansell 572304 RAF



550's 'Phantom of the Ruhr' in which the crew flew 12 operations

Kenneth Ansell was an experienced Lancaster bomb-aimer who died along with his crew less than 24 hours after the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

His aircraft was lost in what turned out to be an abortive attack on a rail communication target at Acheres, north-east of Paris, in the early hours of 7 June 1944. The raid was part of a concerted assault on rail targets to disrupt reinforcements reaching Normandy but was halted by the Master Bomber at the last minute because of cloud cover.

Kenneth and his 550 Squadron crew had left North Killingholme shortly after midnight, on board Lancaster ME556 BQ-F, as part of a 1 Group force sent to Acheres. Their regular aircraft was the squadron's now-legendary BQ-B 'Phantom of the Ruhr', in which they had flown their previous 12 operations. However, on this night 'Phantom' was grounded for routine maintenance work and they flew in a replacement.

Their aircraft is reported to have crashed near the village of Eragny, close to their target, almost certainly a victim of anti-aircraft fire. There were no survivors and Kenneth and the five other crew members whose bodies were recovered now rest in Eragny Communal Cemetery.

He came from the Broadlands town of Thorpe, near Norwich and was the 22-year-old son of Robert and Grace Ansell.

The others who died were the pilot P/O Tyrrell Shervington, flight engineer Sgt. Albert Small, navigator P/O John Mawhinney RCAF, wireless operator Sgt. Ernest Hall, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Alan Griffiths and rear gunner Sgt. Ronald Dennett.

His name can be found on panel 003.

Sources: 550 Squadron Association/'Five-Fifty: The Story of a Wartime Lancaster Squadron' by Patrick Otter.