

Sgt. Arthur Armstrong 1591807
RAFVR

Arthur Armstrong was a 20-year-old rear gunner who was killed along with his 49 Squadron crew when his aircraft was shot down into the North Sea off the Dutch coast.



He was taking part in a raid on a synthetic oil plant at Wesseling, between Cologne and Bonn, on the night of 21/22 June 1944, a disastrous night for 5 Group squadrons, 49 Squadron being one of four units losing six Lancasters among the 37 lost. The squadron lost 37 aircrew plus a BBC reporter flying in one of the Lancasters.

Arthur's aircraft, ND683 EA-K, a former 617 Squadron Lancaster, had taken off from Fiskerton at 2311 hours as part of a force of 133 Lancasters to attack the Rhineland plant. It is believed ND683 was among those attacked by fighters before crashing in the sea. His was one of three bodies never recovered and he is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

In March that year he and his crew had survived after being attacked by night-fighters over Essen, leaving their damaged aircraft to limp back to England before crash-landing, an operation which led to his pilot being awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross. Arthur was the son of Arthur and Margaret Armstrong and came from Houghton-le-Spring in County Durham.

Arthur and his crew were on their 10th operation together. The others who died were the pilot P/O Albert Shinn DFC, flight engineer Sgt. Norman Pettit, navigator F/O John Stanley, bomb-aimer P/O Victor Cully RCAF, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Stanley Hawes and mid-upper gunner Sgt. Albert Dicken.

His name can be found on panel 003.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1944 by Bill Chorley.