

Sgt. Maurice Samuel Ash 534824 RAFVR



Maurice Ash was an air gunner of a 49 Squadron Manchester lost on Bomber Command's first 'Thousand' raid on Cologne in 1942.

His aircraft, Manchester I L7429, was one of two lost from the squadron on the night of 30/31 May 1942 when Bomber Command sent more than 1,000 aircraft over the Rhineland city. They were the first losses of Manchesters for 49 Squadron following its switch from Hampdens. The squadron was planned to move onto Lancasters but used the twin-engined Manchesters for a few months until sufficient Lancasters were available.

49 Squadron sent 12 Manchesters to Cologne that night in addition to loaning three from the Manchester Conversion Flight to neighbours at Scampton, 83 Squadron, which was already flying with Lancasters.

Maurice's aircraft took off at 2250 and was among the 1,047 bombers sent on the raid. It was on the return flight that his Manchester was attacked by night-fighter ace Oblt Heinrich Prinz Zu Sagn-Wittgenstein, in his Ju88, and was shot down in the North Sea. There were no survivors from the seven-man crew and all are now remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

The others who died were the pilot P/O John Carter, second pilot Flt. Sgt. David Block, navigator Sgt. George Haynes, wireless operator Sgt. Lawrence Yeates and air gunners Sgt. Arnold Welch RAAF and Sgt. John Ramsey.

Maurice can be found on Panel 3.

Photo and biography courtesy of the 49 Squadron Association,