

## **Sgt. Derek Kilgour Ashton 1396278 RAFVR**

Derek Ashton was a Lancaster bomb-aimer killed along with the rest of his crew when their aircraft was shot down during an attack on Berlin in January 1944.



He was part of the crew of Lancaster W4996 AS-R of 166 Squadron – a relatively elderly aircraft which had first flown with 101 Squadron at the beginning of 1943 – which took off from Kirmington at 1755 hours on the evening of January 27. It was one of 515 Lancasters involved in the raid, 33 of which were lost. W4996 is believed to have been shot down in the Berlin area and all seven on board are now buried in Berlin War Cemetery.

Derek and his crew had arrived at Kirmington on 2 October 1943 and flew their first operation to Stuttgart five days later. They were lost on their 10<sup>th</sup> operation plus one which had to be aborted, and their sixth to Berlin.

Derek's parents, Reginald and Grace Ashton, lived in the Peruvian capital of Lima. His father was one of numerous British industrialists who settled in Peru between the wars and became of director of the National Society of Industries in Lima. Derek was 29 when he was killed.

The others who died were the pilot F/O Richard Hicks RAFVR, flight engineer Sgt. Joseph Swann RAFVR, navigator F/O Aubrey Cook RAFVR, wireless operator Sgt. James Ravenscroft RAFVR, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Anthony Holdom RAFVR and rear gunner Sgt. Harold Bell RAFVR.

His name can be found on panel 003.

Source: 166 Squadron Association.