

## **P/O William Storey Ashworth 156554 RAFVR**

Bill Ashworth was a Lancaster bomb-aimer who died along with his crew when they were shot down by a Luftwaffe night-fighter ace over Belgium.



His aircraft, Lancaster III ED663 of 49 Squadron, was homebound from a raid on Cologne on the night of 8/9 July 1943 when they were intercepted by a Me110 flown by Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer. The Lancaster crashed into the bank of the Albert Kanal, killing all seven men on board. It was Schnauffer's 20<sup>th</sup> victim and he went on to claim 121 aircraft before the end of the war.

Bill and his crew were on their fourth operation together. They had been one of 14 Lancasters which had taken off from RAF Fiskerton to join a force of 282 bombers which carried out a highly-successful raid on the Rhineland city.

He came from the village of Ben Rhydding, near Ilkley in Yorkshire and, at the age of 36, was among the oldest members of the aircrew with the squadron. He was the son of William and Florence Ashworth.

The others who died were the pilot P/O Stanley Eyles RAFVR, flight engineer Sgt. Dennis Neal RAFVR, navigator P/O Dennis Fullager RAFVR, wireless operator Sgt. Gordon Shepherd RAFVR, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Reginald Labrie RCAF and rear gunner Sgt. Martin Barrett RCAF.

His name can be found on panel 003.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.