

Flt. Lt. Donovan John Bacon DFC 132592
RAFVR

Donovan 'Don' Bacon was a highly-experienced bomber pilot and an acting flight commander when he and his crew were shot down by one of the Luftwaffe's top-scoring night fighter aces.

He was nearing the end of his operational tour with 49 Squadron when he and his crew took off from Fiskerton at 2031 hours on the night of 11 April 1944 to take part in what proved to be a highly-accurate attack by 341 Lancasters on the German city of Aachen.



His aircraft, Lancaster LL899 EA-P, was intercepted over western Belgium by Oblt Heinz-Wolfgang Schnaufer's Me110 and shot down in flames close to the hamlet of Henxbroek, 25 miles from Antwerp. Only the navigator managed to escape by parachute but he was killed while landing.

Don Bacon was 29 and came from Beeston, Nottingham where he lived with his wife, Annie, the couple marrying in 1939. He was the son of John and Ethel Bacon, his father having served as president of the South Nottinghamshire Liberal Association. He was educated at Huntingdon Central School and High Pavement Secondary School where he was captain of the cricket team. He went on to study at Nottingham University and in 1935 was awarded a BA by London University. He also represented the university at both cricket and rugby, became the leading batsman at Ellerslie Cricket Club and played for Notts Casuals FC. Don later joined the Army before transferring to the RAF in 1941 and training as a pilot. A week after his death, Don Bacon was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. John Hennessey, navigator P/O Clifford Coward, bomb-aimer F/O Nicholas Melnick RCAF, wireless operator Sgt. Peter Monck, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Stanley Weedon and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Clarence Richard RCAF. All seven are buried in Schoonselhof Cemetery in Antwerp and a tablet remembering the crew can be found St Leonard's Church in Brecht.

His name can be found on panel 004.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Nottingham University/Belgians Remember Them.