

Sgt. Harry James Bailey 1601442 RAFVR



Pictured at North Killingholme on 8 November 1944 are (from the left) Ft. Lt. Morris, F/O Leonard, Sgt. Bailey, Sgt. Furber, Sgt. Byrne (who missed the fatal operation) Sgt. Dennis and Sgt. Hooper. Below, the crew pictured with Ft. Lt. Shaw, ground crew and veteran 'Press on Regardless' before their first operation.

Harry Bailey was a 20-year-old bomb-aimer killed within six weeks of joining 550 Squadron at RAF North Killingholme.

He and his crew had arrived at the 1 Group airfield on 20 October 1944 after completing a course at 1 Lancaster Finishing School at Hemswell. They were to fly their first operation under the guidance of the experienced Ft. Lt. 'Jock' Shaw on what was the 100th operation of 550's centenarian Lancaster, 'Press on Regardless', on 2 November. Six of them were to be killed, along with a replacement wireless operator, on 6 December when their aircraft failed to return from an attack on the Leuna oil refinery, near Leipzig.

On that raid they were flying Lancaster NG251 BQ-J, which left North Killingholme at 1634 hours. Over the target area their aircraft was badly damaged by flak and crashed at Dolzig, not far from Leipzig. There were no survivors. It is believed they were buried locally before their bodies were recovered by an American graves registration unit and reburied in cemeteries in Germany and Holland.

Harry was the son of Walter and Hilda Bailey and came from Kenton in Middlesex. He is buried in Venray War Cemetery in Holland.

Killed with him were the pilot Ft. Lt. Joe Morris, flight engineer Sgt. Alan Furber, navigator F/O Arthur Leonard, wireless operator Sgt. William Roberts and gunners Sgt. George Dennis and Sgt. Tom Hooper.

His name can be found on panel 004.

Photographic source: 550 Squadron Association.

