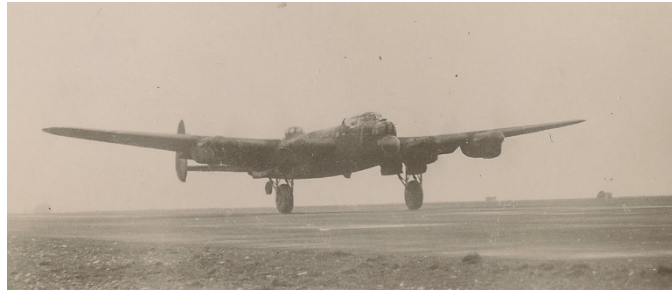


P/O Donald Baker
169107 RAFVR

Donald Baker was a 20-year-old Lancaster pilot who died along with five of his crew when their aircraft was shot down by a night-fighter on the approach to Berlin.



His aircraft, Lancaster III LM424 CF-B of 625 Squadron, had taken off from RAF Kelstern at 1621 hours on the afternoon of 16 December 1943 as part of an all-Lancaster force of 483 bombers, heading for the German capital. 625 contributed 17 aircraft, the highest for the squadron since it came into operation in October.

At 1907 hours LM424 was intercepted outbound by a Bf night-fighter flown by Luftwaffe ace Major Helmut Lent and shot down in flames, crashing on farm buildings in the German village of Wetschen. Six of the crew died along with two people on the ground. The only survivor of the crew was the bomb-aimer, Sgt William Pallett, who parachuted to safety and became a prisoner.

Donald's aircraft was one of 25 lost during the raid while a further 32, including one from 625 Squadron, crashed on their return when fog and mist shrouded many airfields in eastern England.

Donald and most of the crew had originally served with 100 Squadron before transferring to 625, when it was formed, and they were on their fourth operation with their new squadron. He came from Bletchley – now part of Milton Keynes – in Buckinghamshire and was the son of Frank and Laura Baker.

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. Clifford Robinson, navigator P/O George Batchelor, wireless operator P/O Gilbert Adams DFC, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Kenneth Watmough and rear gunner (and 625 Squadron's gunnery leader) Flt. Lt. William Crimmins DFC RCAF.

His name can be found on panel 005.

Sources: 625 Squadron records/625 Squadron Association/Aircrew Remembered.