## Flying Officer Peter Anthony Charles Bell 129478 RAFVR

Peter Bell was a Lancaster bomb-aimer killed in the RAF's final large-scale raid on Berlin in March 1944.

He was part of the crew of Sqn. Ldr Ken Bickers DFC, a flight commander with No. 103 squadron at RAF Elsham Wolds.

They were on board Lancaster I ME665 PM-C which left Elsham at 1839 hours on the evening of 24 March 1944. It joined 810 other Bomber Command aircraft in what was the final attack of the Battle of Berlin and the last major raid by the RAF on the city.

The bombers ran into very strong winds over Germany, resulting in the bomber stream become scattered, which led in part to 72 four-engined bombers being lost, including PM-C.

*Ruhe in Frieden:* Rest in Peace

Exactly what happened to Peter's Lancaster is unclear but it crashed at Luckenwalde, some 30 kilometres from Berlin after completing its bomb run and exploded. Only three bodies were later found and the remainder of the crew, including Peter, are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 204).

Peter was 23 and came from Grantham in Lincolnshire. His family lived in North Parade in the town and his father, who was an engineer, had served as a major in the Royal Signals in the First World War. Peter had been educated at the King's School in Grantham and worked as a Post Office sorting clerk before joining the RAF.

Killed with him were the pilot, flight engineer Flt. Sgt. Joe Wadsworth, navigator F/O Cyril Plummer DFC, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Len Comer, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Dennis Cannon and rear gunner F/O Norman Tombs.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 008.

Photographic source: The Bickers family.