

Sgt. Ronald Bell
1021071 RAFVR



Ronald Bell was a Lancaster mid-upper gunner from Manchester who was killed along with the rest of his crew during what was a highly successful attack by Bomber Command on the industrial city of Duisburg.

He was part of the crew of Lancaster ED476 PH-N, of 12 Squadron, which crashed in the neighbouring Ruhr city of Dusseldorf after taking part in what was a devastating attack by 572 aircraft on Duisburg, one of the most successful raids in Bomber Command's ongoing Battle of the Ruhr.

Ronald and his crew were on their 11th operation with 12 Squadron when they took off from RAF Wickenby at 2340 hours on the night of 12 May 1943. It is believed ED476 was turning for home when it was attacked and crashed in Dusseldorf, a few miles south of Duisburg. All seven men on board were buried in the city, and his was one of just three recovered after the war. He is now buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.

He was the 32-year-old son of Joseph and Mary Bell and came from the Chorlton-cum-Hardy area of Manchester. Ronald and his crew had assembled at No. 30 Operational Training Unit at RAF Hixon and spent time at No. 1656 Conversion Unit at Lindholme before being posted to 12 Squadron early in March 1943.

The others who died with him were the pilot P/O Ian Alexander RNZAF, flight engineer Sgt. Edwin Rome, navigator Flt. Sgt. Richard Fraser RCAF, 19-year-old bomb-aimer Sgt. Edgar Harrison, wireless operator Sgt. John Stephens and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. David Williams.

Ronald's name can be found on IBCC panel 008.

Sources: Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.