

**Sergeant David William
Belsham 1387037
RAFVR**

David Belsham was a 19-year-old air gunner who died along with his crew when their Lancaster was shot down in a raid on a U-boat base in France.



He was part of the crew of No. 49 Squadron Lancaster III ED467 EA-E. It was one of five aircraft lost in a raid on St Nazaire by 437 bombers on the night of 28 February/1 March 1943. The attack followed a similar raid two weeks earlier on Lorient.

His aircraft was 'presumed lost in the target area'. They had taken off from RAF Fiskerton (near Lincoln) at 1825 hours, the ninth operation for the other members of the crew.

David had joined the crew as a last-minute replacement for their regular mid-upper gunner (who was killed flying with the squadron later in the year). He came from Pimlico in central London and was the 19-year-old son of Jesse and Alice Belsham.

The others who died were the pilot WO2 Frederick Duncan RCAF, flight engineer Sgt. Reginald Brookes, navigator F/O Ronald McCracken, bomb-aimer WO2 Alex Dickie RCAF, wireless operator Sgt. Herbert Kay and Irish rear gunner Sgt. James Kelly. All are buried in Escoublanc-le-Baule War Cemetery (joint grave 2. F. 16-17).

His name can be found on IBCC panel 008.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.