

P/O John Keith Bennett 40664 RAF

John Bennett was a young Hampden second pilot who was killed when his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire and eventually crashed in the North Sea off the Belgian coast.

He was part of the crew of Hampden P1318, one of ten Hampdens of 49 Squadron involved in an attack on rail and communication links between Krefeld and Aachen during the German invasion of France in May 1940.

The Hampden took off from RAF Scampton at 2100 hours on the night of 25 May, one of 103 Bomber Command aircraft to attempt to try to hamper the ongoing battle in northern France. His aircraft is believed to have been hit by flak 'in the target area' and reported to have crashed in the sea.

He was the 20-year-old son of John and Beatrice Bennett and came from Loughborough. He was later buried in Adegem Canadian War Cemetery in Belgium and is now remembered on the Loughborough Carillion War Memorial Tower and at St Bartholomew's Church in Quorn.

The others who died were the pilot F/O Peter Butler, observer Sgt. John Harrison and wireless operator/air gunner LAC George Parsons.

His name can be found on panel 008.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook/Loughborough Roll of Honour.

