

Flt. Sgt. Lloyd Douglas Bennett R/188356 RCAF

Lloyd Bennett was a bomb-aimer who died when his blazing bomber crashed between two neighbouring Lincolnshire villages in what local people believed was an act of great bravery.

He was part of the crew of Lancaster I LL956 CF-Q (call sign 'Queenie'), of No. 625 Squadron, which burst into flames as it took off at 0628 hours from RAF Kelstern on 14 October 1944 for a huge daylight attack on Duisburg. With the aircraft full of bombs and fuel, the pilot, F/O Lloyd Hannah RCAF, ordered the other seven men on board to bale out over the Lincolnshire Wolds. Six minutes after 'Queenie' had taken off it crashed and exploded in Bradley's Farm, midway between the villages of Fotherby and Little Grimsby, just off the A16 between Grimsby and Louth. Lloyd Bennett failed to escape in time and died along with his brave pilot. No civilians were lost although the explosion shattered the roofs of neighbouring farm buildings, smashed house windows and blew a huge crater which remains today, now a pond in a farmer's field.



Those living in both villages, which are less than a mile apart, were convinced those on board had remained at the controls of CF-Q to prevent the blazing Lancaster from crashing into either Fotherby or Little Grimsby. A plaque honouring the bravery of those who died now stands in St Edith's Church in Little Grimsby simply saying 'they gave their lives to save the villages'.

LL956 was one of 31 Lancasters from Kelstern that were to join a force of 1,013 RAF bombers attacking Duisburg in the first stage of 'Operation Hurricane'. This was followed by a raid by 749 USAAF bombers and a third attack by the RAF involving a further 1,005 aircraft, all

within 24 hours. 625 Squadron, which had just expanded to a third flight prior to helping the nucleus for the about-to-be formed 170 Squadron, provided 60 sorties with LL956 the only casualty.

Lloyd was a Graduate of Pharmacy at Toronto University and a practising pharmacologist before enlisting. He was the 26-year-old son of Frank and Sadie Bennett and came from the town of Aylmer, in southern Ontario. He and his pilot are buried in Stonefall Cemetery in Harrogate.

The survivors from LL956 were the second pilot Sgt. Darrel Paige RCAF, flight engineer Sgt. Robert Bennett, navigator Flt. Sgt. Roy Strachan RCAF, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. John Bilan RCAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Ken McCorie RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Jack Loughran RCAF.

Lloyd's name can be found on panel 008.

Sources: 625 Squadron records/Aircrew Remembered/Canadian veterans.