

Sergeant Arthur Blanchard 1685551 RAFVR

Flak and fighters were not the only dangers facing Bomber Command crews. Sometimes, even mundane training flights could end in disaster.

Navigator Arthur Blanchard and his crew had recently joined No. 49 Squadron at RAF Fulbeck when they took off at 1955 hours on the night of 11 December 1944 for a cross country and high-level bombing exercise. They were one of two new crews taking part.

Their aircraft, Lancaster PB799 EA-G, was to cross Nottinghamshire and on to a turning point at The Great Orme head near Llandudno, to Cirencester, then Norwich and back to base. Sadly nothing was heard of the Lancaster or its seven-man crew. The pilot of a second Lancaster later reported that on approaching North Wales, his crew faced a huge cumulonimbus cloud reaching to at least 29,000 feet with the added threat of icing. It was believed the PB799 went into that cloud and later crashed in the Irish Sea.



Arthur was the 21-year-old son of Arthur and Ellen Blanchard and came from Liverpool. He and the rest of his crew were never found and are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (Arthur on panel 225).

The others lost were pilot F/L Jerry Green, flight engineer Sgt. Edward Charles, bomb-aimer F/O Herbert Gwyer, wireless operator Sgt. John Rudd, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Rex Henson and rear gunner Sgt. Hanley Stobart.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 010.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1944 by Bill Chorley.