

Sgt. Stanley Bland
1024020 RAFVR

Stanley Bland was a rear gunner who died when his Wellington crashed in the North Sea in a raid on Bremen in September 1942.



He was part of the crew of Wellington Z8595, of No. 12 Squadron, which had taken off from RAF Binbrook in Lincolnshire at 0025 hours on 5 September 1942. They were part of a 251-aircraft force heading for the port of Bremen.

As Z8595 approached the Dutch coast it developed serious engine problems and the crew decided to turn back, dumping their bombs in the sea. The aircraft still struggled to maintain height and, finally, at 0230 hours the Wellington crashed about 20 miles off Cromer.

Only the pilot, Sgt. Tom Smith, managed to get clear and despite being injured climbed into the bomber's dinghy. He was found three hours later by the Harwich-based destroyer *HMS Hambledon* and later taken to hospital in Felixstowe.

The others who died with Stanley were the observer P/O Arthur 'Sandy' Needham, bomb-aimer Sgt. Frank Smith and wireless operator/air gunner Flt. Sgt. Russel Mills RCAF. Their bodies were never recovered and all are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (Panel 78).

Stanley's name can be found on IBCC panel 010.

Sources: Aviation Safety Network/Bomber Command Losses 1942 by Bill Chorley.