

Ft. Sgt. David Block
903489 RAFVR

David Block was a 30-year-old second pilot of a 49 Squadron Manchester lost on Bomber Command's first 'Thousand' raid on Cologne in 1942.

His aircraft, Manchester I L7429, was one of two lost from the squadron on the night of 30/31 May 1942 when Bomber Command sent more than 1,000 aircraft over the Rhineland city. They were the first losses of Manchesters for 49 Squadron following its switch from Hampdens. The squadron was planned to move onto Lancasters but used the twin-engined Manchesters for a few months until sufficient Lancasters were available.



49 Squadron sent 12 Manchesters to Cologne that night in addition to loaning three from the Manchester Conversion Flight to neighbours at Scampton, 83 Squadron, which was already flying with Lancasters.

David's aircraft took off at 2250 hours and was among the 1,047 bombers sent on the raid. It was on the return flight that his Manchester was attacked by night-fighter ace Oblt Heinrich Prinz Zu Sagn-Wittgenstein, in his Ju88, and was shot down in the North Sea. There were no survivors from the seven-man crew and all are now remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

David is pictured with his Hampden crew earlier in the year and is believed to be either on the left or second right in this photograph. He came from Salford in Manchester and was the son of Joseph and Hettie Block and lived in the city with his wife, Phyllis.

The others who died were the pilot P/O John Carter, navigator Sgt. George Haynes, wireless operator Sgt. Lawrence Yeates and air gunners Sgt. Maurice Ash, Sgt. Arnold Welch RAAF and Sgt. John Ramsey.

His name can be found on panel O10.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/The Thousand Plan by Ralph Barker.