

Flight Sergeant Eric Alan Bock 423214 RAAF

Navigator Eric Bock was one of four Australians and three Englishmen who were killed when their bomber was shot down over Germany in August 1944.

His No. 625 Squadron Lancaster I (ME733 CF-Z) was part of a force of 375 aircraft taking part in an experimental raid by Bomber Command on the city of Brunswick on the night of 12/13 August. The attack, staged without Pathfinder participation and no sky marking, turned out to be a failure as bombing was widely scattered; 17 Lancasters and 10 Halifaxes were lost.

625 Squadron provided 15 Lancasters, and ME733 lifted off from RAF Kelstern at 2125 hours. It is believed the Lancaster was brought down by a Bf110 night-fighter flown by Lt Werner Barthel, crashing near Hollenstein in Westphalia. There were no survivors.

Eric was the 21-year-old son of Henry and Noreen Bock and came from the Newcastle suburb of Merewether in New South Wales. He was born in the Cook's Hill area of the city and enlisted in November 1941. Eric is remembered on the Newcastle War Memorial and is one of five members of the crew buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery (Coll. grave 26. C. 6-9).

The others who died were the pilot WO Francis Percy, flight engineer Sgt. Samuel Spooner, bomb-aimer Sgt. William Lynch, wireless operator Sgt. Frederick Howard, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Noel Gadsden RAAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Malcolm Moffatt RAAF.

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

Sources: Australian War Memorial/625 Squadron records/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.

