

Sgt. Herbert Bottomley 1360092 RAFVR



Yorkshireman Herbert Bottomley was a wireless operator/air gunner whose Wellington was one of four aircraft lost by No. 12 Squadron on Bomber Command's first 'thousand' raid on the city of Cologne on the night of 30/31 May 1942.

Some 1,047 bombers took part in the raid, many from training units, in what was seen as a display of strength by Bomber Command and a morale-boosting attack for the British after more than two and a half years of war.

Based at Binbrook, No. 12 Squadron provided an astonishing 28 Wellingtons, the most from any of the units taking part, although six of these aircraft were forced to return to Binbrook after suffering mechanical problems. No. 12 Squadron's losses were also the highest.

Herbert was part of the crew of Wellington Z8376 which took off from Binbrook at 2340 hours. The aircraft was reported to have crashed in the city of Dusseldorf, one source suggesting that it fell to a night-fighter, another to a flak battery. There were no survivors in the five-man crew.

Herbert came from the village of Tyersal, near Bradford, and was the 30-year-old son of Mr and Mrs T J Bottomley.

The others who died with him were pilot F/O Alan Waddell RAAF, second pilot Flt. Sgt. Robert Holden RAAF, observer Flt. Sgt. Arnold Seifert RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Edward Masson. All were buried locally but reinterred after the war in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.

Herbert's name can be found on panel 011.

Sources: The Thousand Raid by Ralph Barker/Aircrew Remembered/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.