

Flying Officer Eric Bourton 153873 RAFVR



Eric Bourton is pictured on the third from the right of this photograph of his crew

Eric Bourton was a young Lancaster navigator killed on his first operation.

His aircraft, PB429 EA-S, was one of two No. 49 Squadron Lancasters lost during a raid on Bremen on the night of 6 October 1944. There were the first losses for over two months from the squadron after a torrid summer.

The raid itself was the last major attack of the war on the heavily-bombed German city, 246 Lancasters devastated what was left of the northern port at a cost of five aircraft.

PB429 had taken off from RAF Fiskerton at 1717 hours; Eric's crew was one of five flying operationally for the first time. His Lancaster was reported to have crashed at Leuchtenburg, near Bremen and there were no survivors.

He was the 21-year-old son of John and Lilian Harrison and came from the city of Oxford.

The others who died were pilot F/O Cyril Beatson, flight engineer Sgt. Denis Harrison, bomb-aimer F/O James King, wireless operator F/O Lance McMonagle RAAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Andrew Stephen and rear gunner F/O John Murray RAAF. All are buried in Becklingen War Cemetery (grave ref. 12. C. 9).

Eric's name can be found on IBCC panel 011.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.