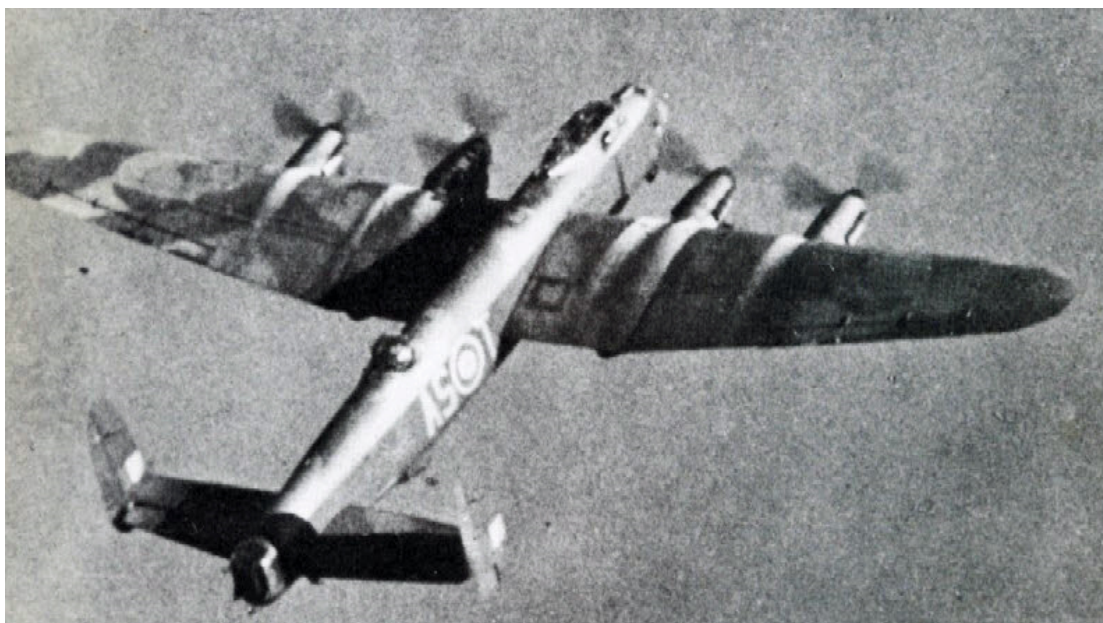


Sqn. Ldr. Ronald Bows 40363 RAF



A 166 Squadron Lancaster

The night of 19/20 February 1944 was one of the blackest nights yet suffered by Bomber Command when it lost 78 aircraft during a raid on the eastern German city of Leipzig. 166 Squadron at Kirmington was particularly badly affected, losing three of the 19 aircraft it sent plus a fourth wrecked on landing with severe battle damage.

One of those lost was Lancaster I ME637 AS-F, which is recorded as being 'lost without trace'. The aircraft was shot down by a Bf 110 night-fighter flown by Ofw. Heinz Vinke of 11./NJG 1, based at Leeuwarden and Bergen airfields. No trace of it or its seven-man crew was ever found.

The pilot was experienced pre-war regular Sqn. Ldr. Ron Bows. He was a 31-year-old Lincolnshire man who joined the squadron with his crew a month before the Leipzig raid. He was 31 and is remembered on the war memorial in the village of Nettleham, near Lincoln. He was the son of George and Annie Bows and was married, his wife Thelma living in Middlesbrough.

Those who died with him were the Rhodesian flight engineer Sgt. Francis Brooks, navigator F/O Wyvern Hughes RNZAF, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Henry Gregg, wireless operator Sgt. Albert Barlow, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Ernest Morton and rear gunner Sgt. David Asquith. They are all remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 011.

Photographic source: D Shaw