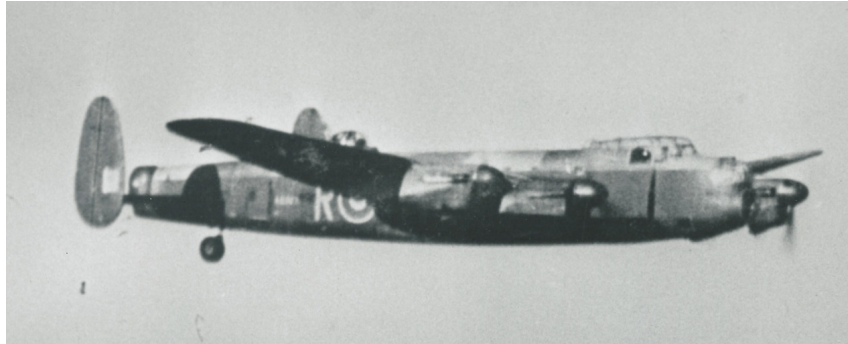


Pilot Officer James Nelson Brown 173626 RAFVR



A non-ABC 101 Squadron Lancaster pictured over France, 1944

On the night of 30 June/1 July 1944 No. 101 Squadron, based at RAF Ludford Magna, lost three of the 10 Lancasters it provided for a very accurate 1 Group attack on rail yards at Vierzon, near Orleans. Being shortly after D-Day, the raid helped hinder the Germans bringing reinforcements to the Normandy battlefields.

All three aircraft lost were on ABC duties, helping jam Luftwaffe night-fighter frequencies. As such each carried crews of eight men (Lancasters usually carried seven). Only one man was to survive from the three Lancasters.

John Brown was the 23-year-old pilot of one of those aircraft, DV301 SR-Y. It had completed its bomb run and just left the target area when it was caught by a night fighter at relatively low-level, crashing close to the small village of Langon, 20km north-east of Vierzon. The aircraft came down 500 metres from houses in the village, two of the crew attempting to bale out only for their parachutes to fail to deploy at low level.

John came from West Hartlepool, the son of James and Florance Brown and husband of Elsie Brown (née King). He is buried with other members of his crew in Langon Communal Cemetery in France (Plot 2 Coll. Grave).

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. John Offord, navigator P/O William Cuthbertson, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. John Pritchard RAAF, wireless operator Sgt. Thomas Lyth, special operator Flt. Sgt. Carl Krieg RAAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. David Urquhart RCAF and rear gunner Sgt. Albert Couch RCAF.



General view of the Langon Cemetery

John's name can be found on IBCC panel 014

Photographic sources: 101 Squadron archives; CWCG