

Flying Officer Ronald George Buckland 171366 RAFVR

Ronald Buckland was the wireless operator of one of the three Lancasters lost by No. 166 Squadron during the attack on Nuremburg on the night of 16/17 March 1945.

The raid involved 278 Lancasters and eight Mosquitoes from 1 and 8 Groups, and resulted in the loss of 24 1 Group aircraft. Most fell to night fighters in scenes reminiscent of the infamous Nuremburg raid almost a year earlier.

Ronald was part of the crew of F/O Kevin Muncer DFC, and had left RAF Kirmington in north Lincolnshire at 1714 hours for what was their 23rd operation.



Their aircraft, Lancaster I PA234 AS-M, had reached the target area and the crew could see the first of the Pathfinder Force markers going down just as they were attacked by a night fighter.

The fighter, a Ju88 flown by Major Werner Hoffman, raked the Lancaster with cannon fire. The pilot was hit in the left arm by a cannon shell but managed to briefly keep control before the Lancaster turned over, throwing clear F/O Muncer and the navigator, P/O Bill Gerrard. On the ground Muncer realised his arm had been severed but his life was saved by the wife of a German farmer.

The other five members of the crew, including Ronald, perished when the Lancaster crashed at Grosshabersdorf, 15 miles from Nuremburg. Four were buried locally but were later reinterred in the Durnbach War Cemetery. Ronald's body, however, was never found and he is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (Panel 266). He was 32 and the son of George and Agnes Buckland.

The others who were killed with him were the flight engineer Sgt. Victor Jones, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Jim Paterson, mid-upper gunner F/O John Gardner and rear gunner Sgt. Bill Reynolds RCAF.

(In 1947 Kevin Muncer's watch was returned to him via the Red Cross, having been found still attached to his severed arm by a French PoW. Kevin repaid his debt to the farmer's wife by arranging for the early release of her son, a PoW in England, to help on the family farm).

Ronald's name can be found on IBCC panel 014.

Photographic source: 166 Squadron Association.