

Sgt. Laurence Burnett 574662 RAF



Laurence Burnett was a 20-year-old flight engineer from South London who was killed along with the rest of his crew during a raid on Hamburg on the night of 3/4 March 1943.

His aircraft, Lancaster W4855 PH-D of No. 12 Squadron, was one of 10 bombers lost during the raid. A total of 417 Bomber Command aircraft took part, with much of the bombing falling on the neighbouring town and harbour of Wedel.

W4855 took off from RAF Wickenby at 1835 hours. It was later reported to have been intercepted while en route to the target by a Bf 110 night-fighter flown by Fw Wilhelm Kurreck before crashing near Rotenburg, east of Bremen, at 2129 hours. There were no survivors. All seven crew members were initially buried locally and were later reinterred, after the war, in Becklingen War Cemetery.

Laurence Burnett came from Upper Tooting and was the son of William and Lilian Burnett. He served in a crew that included four Australians. Most of the men had trained together at No. 27 Operational Training Unit at Litchfield before being posted to No. 12 Squadron.

The others who died with him were the pilot Sgt. Kenneth Simmonds, bomb Aimer Flt. Sgt. Ian Heatley RAAF, navigator Flt. Sgt. Donald Kerr RAAF, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Henry Brien RAAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Roy Davenport and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Archibald Marfell RAAF.

Laurence's name can be found on panel 015.

Sources: Aviation Safety Network/RAF Commands/Bomber Command Losses 1943 by Bill Chorley/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.