

Sergeant John Burnside 1148682 RAFVR

John Burnside was a young second pilot who was killed when his No. 49 Squadron Lancaster was shot down during an attack on Cologne in the summer of 1943.

His aircraft, Lancaster ED785 EA-A, had taken off from RAF Fiskerton in Lincolnshire on 16 June at 2211 hours. It was intercepted by a Bf110 night-fighter flown by Unteroffizier Rudolf Frank, and shot down into the Scheldt estuary near Flushing. Only one of the eight men on board, the wireless operator, survived. Six of those killed, including John, are now buried in Flushing Northern Cemetery (Row E. Grave 21).



His was one of nine Lancasters from 49 Squadron to take part in the raid, which involved 202 Lancasters and Halifaxes. Fourteen aircraft were lost including two from 49 Squadron.

John was flying on the operation to gain experience before taking his own crew out on their first operation. He came from the small village of Fencehouses, near Sunderland, and was the 23-year-old son of John and Elizabeth Burnside.

The others who died were the pilot Sqn. Ldr. George Storey, flight engineer Sgt. George Underlin, navigator F/O Ronald Blythe, bomb-aimer Sgt. William Waring, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Myrl Bunn RCAF and rear gunner Sgt. Harold Buttery. The surviving wireless operator was Sgt. Maurice Webb RCAF, who was rescued by a German patrol vessel and taken as a PoW.

John's name can be found on IBCC panel 015.

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