

WO Royce Reginald Burton 1331548
RAFVR

Royce Burton was the pilot of a Wellington lost after it is believed to have suffered engine problems while on a mining operation off the mouth of the River Elbe.

His Wellington, HE578 AS-G, was one of three aircraft from 166 Squadron at Kirmington tasked with mining the estuary during a heavy bombing raid on nearby Hamburg. The Wellington had left Kirmington shortly after midnight on 3 August 1943 and two hours later a distress message was picked up by the Danish coastguards indicating the aircraft was suffering from engine problems and asking for assistance. Nothing more was heard from AS-G.

Several weeks later Royce's body was washed up on a Danish North Sea beach and he is now buried in Lemvig Cemetery (Grave 716). His was one of only two bodies found with the other crew members remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

He and his crew had been with 166 Squadron since the beginning of May and this was their 15th operation, all but one of them flown in AS-G, and their second mining trip.

The others who died were the navigator Sgt. Bertram Harris, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. David Carson, wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. James Connel and rear gunner Sgt. Alan Ord.

His name can be found on panel 016.

Sources: 166 Squadron Association/On Wings of War by Jim Wright/Airwar over Denmark.

