

Sgt. Kenneth Edward Byrne 798555 RAFVR

Newfoundlander Kenneth Byrne was a 27-year-old wireless operator/air gunner serving in the RAF who died along with the rest of his crew when their Wellington crashed into the sea after developing engine problems during a bombing raid on the night of 8/9 May 1942.

His aircraft, Wellington W5574 from No. 12 Squadron, had taken off from RAF Binbrook at 2214 hours as part of a force heading for the port and town of Warnemünde and the adjacent Heinkel factory on the Baltic coast near Rostock.

At 0116 hours a message was picked up from W5574 that it was suffering from serious engine problems and that the crew were planning to bale out once they reached land. Later, four bodies from the crew were washed up while two others were never found.



Kenneth came from St John's, Newfoundland and he was the son of Patrick and Mary Byrne. He had worked as a projectionist in the Star Movie Theatre in St John's before deciding to enlist in the RAF along with other Newfoundlanders. His uncle was killed while serving with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment on the Western Front in 1916.

Kenneth's body was found some time later on the Frisian island of Sylt where he was initially buried before being reinterred in Kiel War Cemetery after the war.

The others who died were the pilot Flt. Sgt. Frederick Roddy RCAF, second pilot Sgt. Alan Millar, observer Sgt. Allan Nicholson RAAF, wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. John Hobgen RAAF and rear gunner Sgt. John Etherington.

Kenneth's name can be found on panel 016.

Sources: Canadian veterans/Aviation Safety Network/Airwar over Denmark/Bomber Command Losses 1942 by Bill Chorley.