

Flt. Lt. Norman Henry Carfoot 64295 RAFVR

Norman Carfoot was an experienced Coastal Command pilot who volunteered to switch to Bomber Command to look for more excitement.

He was a very tall man who knew that his size made it almost impossible for him to use one of the escape hatches on the Lancasters he would fly, if he had to use one of the exit points in an emergency, but that did not deter him.

So when his 49 Squadron Lancaster was hit by flak and set on fire and then attacked by a Ju88 over Dusseldorf he knew there was no escape for him.

He and his crew had taken off from RAF Fiskerton, on what would be their second operation with the squadron, at 1701 hours on the evening of 3 November 1943 for the raid involving 589 heavy bombers.

His Lancaster, JB305 EA-E, was over the target when it was coned by searchlights and then hit by flak. With a wing on fire the Lancaster was quickly attacked by the Ju88 night-fighter, cannon fire killing the wireless operator and sealing the fate of the bomber.

Norman, who was only 21, calmly ordered the crew to bale out and then held the burning bomber as steady as possible as the flight engineer Sgt. John Mason, the navigator Sgt. Harold Church and the bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Stephen Putman RCAF all managed to clear the aircraft before it exploded and crashed in the target area, also killing the wireless operator and two gunners. All were buried locally and later reinterred in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.

Norman came from the village of Stapenhill, near Burton-on-Trent. He was a former pupil at Burton Grammar School, joining in 1931 and leaving in 1940 before he joined the RAF. After training as a pilot he went to Coastal Command and logged 2,000 flying hours before volunteering to switch to Bomber Command. He was the son of Bernard and Helena Carfoot and is pictured here in his parents' garden on the occasion of his 21st birthday.

The others who died with him were the wireless operator Sgt. Henry Wood, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Wilfred Marson and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Stephen List RAAF.

Norman's name can be found on panel 017.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1943 by Bill Chorley/Burton Grammar School.

