

F//O Edward Thomas Coles J/35865 RCAF



Edward Coles (back row, left) with his Canadian colleagues at Kirmington

Ted Coles was the pilot of a No. 166 Squadron Lancaster lost in a daylight raid aimed at helping the advance of American ground forces in November 1944.

His Lancaster III, PB648 AS-B, was one of 25 provided by 166 for the attack on Düren during the afternoon of 16 November involving 485 aircraft from Nos. 1 and 5 Group. The raid utterly destroyed the town, which lay in the path of the US advance towards the Rhine. Only three aircraft were lost, all to flak, and Ted's was one of them, crashing close to the American lines in Belgium. There were no survivors.

Ted and his crew, which was made up of six Canadians and a Welsh flight engineer, had left RAF Kirmington at 1235 hours on what would have been their seventh operation since joining the squadron on 16 October 1944. He is buried along with five of his fellow crew members in Rheinberg War Cemetery.

Ted was the 21-year-old son of Thomas and Margaret Coles of Toronto. He was born in the city and had attended the Runnymede and Annette public schools before later graduating in aircraft engineering from Humberside Central Technical School in Toronto.

Those killed with Ted were the flight engineer Sgt. David Orme, navigator F/O Ken Farrow RCAF, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Ralph Carroll RCAF, wireless operator Sgt. Ralph Schnauffer RCAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Neil Smith RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Joe Leaman RCAF.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 021.

Photographic source: 166 Squadron Association.