

Flt. Sgt. Maurice Emile Combres R/147647
RCAF

Maurice Combres was a 22-year-old Canadian rear gunner who was killed when his bomber was shot down by a night-fighter during the early hours of 4 July 1943.

He was part of the crew of ED820 PH-A, one of two Lancasters from No. 12 Squadron lost during the attack on Cologne. ED820 was one of 630 bombers involved in the raid on the much-bombed Rhineland city, 30 of which were lost, many of them over the target area.



Maurice's aircraft had taken off from RAF Wickenby at 2337 hours on the night of 3 July and had taken part in what was a successful heavy attack on the industrial area of Cologne. ED820 was heading home when it was attacked by a fighter flown by Hpt. Wilhelm Telge and shot down in central Belgium. The aircraft crashed at 0305 hours between the villages of Walhain and Ernage with only the bomb-aimer, Sgt. H Williams, surviving.

Maurice came from the village of Richard, in Saskatchewan, and was one of eight children of Mr Ernest-Pierre-Jean and Mrs Emilie Combres. He was educated in the village school and worked with his father on the family farm before enlisting in January 1943.

The others who died with him were the pilot F/O Arnold Herron RCAF, flight engineer Sgt. Malcolm Green, navigator Sgt. Donald Baird, wireless operator Sgt. Thomas Edmondson and mid-upper gunner Sgt. Arthur Baseley. All were initially buried at the Le Culot military airfield in Belgium before being reinterred after the war in the Heverlee War Cemetery (grave 2. F. 9).

Maurice's name can be found on IBCC panel 022.

Sources: Aircrew Remembered/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.