

Sgt. James Hamilton Connel 1370941 RAFVR

James Connel was the Scottish wireless operator/air gunner 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.

His was one of three bodies never recovered and he is now remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

James 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. He was the 23-year-old son of John and Agnes Connel and came from the small market town of Dalmellington, in Ayrshire

The others who died were the pilot WO Royce Burton, navigator Sgt. Bertram Harris, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. David Carson and rear gunner Sgt. Alan Ord.

His name can be found on panel 022.

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