

P/O John Russell Dickinson RAFVR 170191

Twenty-one-year-old Lancaster pilot John Dickinson headed what was known as 49 Squadron's 'Bad Penny' crew.

They survived numerous narrow scrapes during the winter and spring of 1943/44 but finally the luck that had followed them ran out on the night of 26/27 April, after they had taken off from RAF Fiskerton on their 25th operation.

The target was the city of Schweinfurt and 49 Squadron provided 15 of the 215 Lancasters taking part. The raid was a failure and cost 1 and 5 Groups a total of 21 aircraft lost, including three from 49 Squadron.



John's aircraft was shot down over eastern France, crashing close to the village of Ugné-sur-Meuse, west of Nancy, and was one of three shot down in just 11 minutes by Luftwaffe ace Hpt. Helmut Bergmann, each time using his night-fighter's upward-firing guns. Two of his victims were from Fiskerton and one from the nearby airfield at Metherringham.

John and his crew had taken off from Fiskerton at 2139 hours. They were a popular crew with the squadron and are remembered for their enjoyment of flying their Lancaster at low level as often as possible during training flights.

There were no survivors and all seven men are now buried in Ugné-sur-Meuse churchyard. John came from Oswestry in Shropshire and was the son of John and Vera Dickinson.

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. Richard Hainsworth, navigator Flt. Sgt. Frederick Wale, bomb-aimer WO2 Norman Mackenzie RCAF, wireless operator Sgt. Claude Sizer, mid-upper gunner Sgt. John Ellenor and rear gunner Sgt. Robert Hudson DFM.

John's name can be found on IBCC Panel 029.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.