

Sgt Leonard Easdon 2206647 RAFVR

Leonard, known as Len, was born on 3 March 1924 in Wigton, Cumberland, the son of Ralph Easdon and Elizabeth Easdon nee Irving. In 1942 he married Peggy Pearson in Wigton, Cumberland.

Before joining the RAF and training as an Air Gunner, Leonard was employed as a Cabinet Maker, and also volunteered with the ARP.

Completing his training at 1656 HCU where he crewed up, in July 1943 Leonard was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.

On the night of the 14 January 1944 498 aircraft, with twenty provided by 101 Sqn, were dispatched for the first major raid to Brunswick, Germany, of the war. Brunswick was a smaller than usual target for Bomber Command and the raid was not a success. The Luftwaffe tracked the force when it was still only 40 miles from the Lincolnshire coast and fell among the bomber stream with deadly effect downing 38 Lancasters, three of which were from 101 Sqn with the loss of 24 men.



Between 16:30 and 17:10 the 101 Sqn Lancasters departed RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire en-route to Brunswick. Leonard, operating as an Air Gunner, and the crew were flying Lancaster III DV287 (SR-N).

At 18:30, whilst outbound, Leonard's aircraft was intercepted at 19,500 ft by Oblt Martin Drewes of the 11./NJG 1 flying a Lichtenstein-equipped Bf 110 from Leeuwarden airfield. Using the deadly 20mm "Schrage Muzik" upward firing cannon to deadly effect, the Lancaster's port wing and fuselage was set alight. Leonard's aircraft was seen to descend and explode just above the ground near the Dutch border village of Klazienaveen, killing 8 of the 9 man crew. The navigator managed to bale out and evade capture with the assistance of the Dutch resistance.

Also Killed: PO Joseph Walter Slater (Pilot); PO Stanley Ernest Watchorn (AB); FS Maxwell Chambers Patterson (Pilot); FS John Francis Stafford (AG/SDO); Sgt George Thomas McLatchie (AG); Sgt Peter Mitchell (WOp); Sgt Arthur William Louis Schneider (FE)

Leonard is buried in Emmen (Nieuw Dordrecht) General Cemetery, Drenthe, Netherlands

Leonard is commemorated on Wall Panel 31

Photo Source: Findagrave