

P/O John Fallis J/16905 RCAF

John Fallis was a Canadian wireless operator who was among 21 aircrew from 12 Squadron killed during a raid on Berlin in January 1943.

Ten Lancasters had taken off from the squadron's base at RAF Wickenby in Lincolnshire in the late afternoon of 17 January and only six of them returned. Twenty-one aircrew from three Lancasters were killed while the seven on board the fourth bomber shot down all survived. Most of the crews involved had flown in another long-distance raid on the German capital the night before.



John was a member of the crew of Lancaster ED388 PH-Y, which had taken off from Wickenby at 1649 hours as part of a force of 170 Lancasters and 17 Halifaxes heading for Berlin for the second time in less than 24 hours.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened to ED388. One suggests that the aircraft was later shot down, crashing near the small village of Klein Kummerfeld, near Neumunster in northern Germany. However, in 12 Squadron's records the Lancaster is recorded as having been shot down into the sea off the German island of Sylt, with only two bodies later recovered and now buried in Kiel War Cemetery.

John was the 26-year-old son of Herbert and Mary Fallis. He was born in Lachine, Montreal, and was educated at the city's Catholic High School. He had been employed at the Siscoe gold mines before enlisting in July 1941 soon after marrying his wife, Dorothy, who came from St Lambert, Quebec. John was posted to England in January 1943 and had completed his training along with his pilot and navigator with No. 26 Operational Training Unit at RAF Wing in Buckinghamshire. He was later posted to No. 12 Squadron, in August 1942, to begin flying in Wellingtons.

The others who died with him were the pilot P/O Harry Fansher RCAF, flight engineer Sgt. Roy Poole, navigator P/O Kenneth Butler, bomb-aimer Sgt. Edward Cadden, mid-upper gunner Sgt. William Smith and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Frederick Marsh. John's body was one of those not recovered and he is now remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

John's name can be found on IBCC panel 034.

Sources: Wickenby Museum/Canadian veterans/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.