

F/O William Forrester 430653 RAAF

William Forrester was a young Australian wireless operator who was killed along with the rest of his crew when their Lancaster crashed into a hill in Leicestershire a month before the war in Europe ended.

He was one of six Australians and one Englishman who died when Lancaster ND949 LE-Z (*pictured below*) hit a hill near the village of Foxton, near Market Harborough, at 0310 hours on 9 April 1945 as they returned from a bombing raid on a synthetic oil refinery near Leipzig. They had been diverted due to bad weather and it was later believed either a faulty or wrongly-adjusted altimeter led to the crash.

ND949 had taken off from East Kirkby at 1800 hours the previous night for the attack which destroyed the Molbis refinery at Lutzkendorf, one of the last supplying fuel supplies to German forces.



William and his crew were on their fourth operation with No. 630 Squadron after joining it in January. His home was in the Melbourne suburb of Chelsea and he was the 20-year-old son of Edgar and Ivy Forrester. He was later buried in Botley Cemetery in Oxford (Plot H/1. Grave 181).

The others who died were the pilot F/O Colin Richardson RAAF, flight engineer Sgt. Bernard Gibbons (who was also a qualified pilot), navigator Flt. Sgt. Herbert Burton RAAF, bomb-aimer F/O Robert Martin RAAF, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Anthony Bowman RAAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Frederick Howlett RAAF.

His name can be found on panel 036.

Sources: 630 Squadron/Australian Virtual War Memorial.



