

Flt. Sgt. Max Harvey Foster 410649 RAAF



Max Foster (second left) with five of his crew at Kirmington

On the night of 19/20 February 1944, 166 Squadron at Kirmington provided 19 of the 823 heavy bombers sent to attack the eastern German city of Leipzig. Only 15 of them made it back – three were shot down and a fourth badly damaged as it made an emergency landing at RAF Manston. 166's losses were amongst 78 Lancasters and Halifaxes lost by Bomber Command on this ill-fated raid.

The navigator of one of the 166 Squadron victims, Lancaster I ME627 AS-Z, was Australian Max Foster. He was 20 and came from Hawthorn in Victoria and was the son of Edgar and Rita Foster.

His aircraft is believed to have been one of those shot down by night fighters and he is buried with the rest of his crew in Berlin War Cemetery.

Those who died with him were the pilot Flt. Sgt. Roy Kingston RAAF, flight engineer Sgt. Roy Mercer, bomb-aimer Sgt. George Campbell, wireless operators Sgt. Stanley Gardiner, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Albert Bailey and rear gunner Sgt. Desmond Dennehy.

They had been together at 166 Squadron since 14 January and in those few weeks had completed four major operations, three of them to Berlin and a fourth of Magdeburg.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 036.

Photographic source: 166 Squadron Association.