

**Sgt. Dennis Francis
Gibbs 1293272 RAFVR**



Eighteen-year-old Dennis Gibbs was a mid-upper gunner from Kent who was killed when his Lancaster crashed in Lincolnshire as it returned from a bombing raid on the night of 13 February 1943.

He was part of the crew of Lancaster W4836 PH-P, of No. 12 Squadron, which had taken part in what was the biggest raid of the war on the French port of Lorient. Bomber Command sent 466 aircraft to Lorient and its extensive U-boat facilities, and just seven were lost.

W4836 had taken off from RAF Wickenby at 1741 hours and had almost made it back home. The bomber was in the airfield's circuit when it crashed at Newhall Farm, less than three miles from the runway, killing all of the young crew members.

Dennis was among 12 Squadron's youngest casualties. He came from the Denton area of Gravesend and was the son of Arthur and Lena Gibbs. He was later buried in St Mary's Churchyard in Binbrook in north Lincolnshire.

The others who died with him were the pilot P/O James Martin, flight engineer Sgt. Leonard Jones, navigator Sgt. John Reay, bomb-aimer Sgt. Robert Coombs, wireless operator Sgt. James Callanan and rear gunner Sgt. Edward Hemmings.

Dennis' name can be found on IBCC panel 039.

Sources: IBCC/Bomber Command Losses 1943 by Bill Chorley/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.