

P/O Derrick John Gigger 173328 RAFVR

Derrick Gigger was a young bomber pilot who died along with his crew when their Lancaster is believed to have crashed into the sea returning from their fifth operation.

He was the pilot of veteran Lancaster I W4833 CF-J, of 625 Squadron, which was one of three aircraft dispatched by the squadron for a raid on Stuttgart that failed to return at a loss of 21 lives.

It is believed Derrick's Lancaster, which had seen service with 100, 101 and 625 Squadrons after being built in the autumn of 1942, crashed in the sea off the French coast. His body and that of the flight engineer were later recovered from the sea while the remaining members of the crew were never found. He is buried in Dannes Communal Cemetery on the French coast, near Le Touquet.

Derrick came from the attractive Kent village of Eynsford, near Swanley, and he was the 21-year-old son of John and Elsie Gigger. His crew was drawn partly from a crew from No. 1662 Heavy Conversion Unit (HCU) at Blyton and another from No. 1667 HCU at Faldingworth when they arrived at Kelstern at the beginning of February 1944.

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. Robert McNeill, navigator Flt. Sgt. George Stewart, bomb-aimer Sgt. Sydney Wasson, wireless operator Sgt. Richard Clegg, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Raymond Eddison and rear gunner Sgt. Peter Gallacher.

Derrick's name can be found on IBCC panel 039.

Sources: Aircrew Remembered/625 Squadron records.

