

## P/O Leonard Earl Goodkey J/19575 RCAF



F/O Hutchinson and crew pictured at Wickenby. They are (back row, l-r) Sgt. Edgeworth, WO2 Binder, F/O Young, Flt. Sgt. Macey; (front) F/O Hutchinson, P/O Goodkey and Sgt. Hodgson. They are pictured in front of ex-12 Squadron Lancaster DV177 UM-K2 which was shot down by an intruder over Essex in April 1944

Len Goodkey was a Canadian navigator who had previously flown with 12 Squadron at RAF Wickenby before joining his skipper, F/O Jack Hutchinson DFC RAAF, when 626 Squadron was formed at the airfield in the autumn of 1943. Both had survived a ditching in the North Sea a month earlier when their Lancaster ran out of fuel after a 10-hour trip to Stettin.

On the night of 24/25 February 1944 he and five other members of the crew were on their 30<sup>th</sup> and final operation of their tour when they left Wickenby on board Lancaster LL797 UM-B2 bound for Schweinfurt in southern Germany. 626 was to be in the first wave of the attack on ball-bearing production in the city but they were intercepted over eastern France by a German night fighter, their Lancaster exploding in mid-air and crashing near Marsal in the Moselle region. There were no survivors.

The aircraft was carrying a crew of eight with a second pilot, a newcomer to the squadron, who had gone along for experience. They are all buried in Marsal churchyard.

The others who died were the pilot F/O Jack Hutchinson DFC RAAF, second pilot Sgt. Bryan Bowditch, flight engineer Sgt. Arthur Hodgson, bomb-aimer F/O Peter Young, wireless operator Sgt. Robert Edgeworth (at 18 one of the youngest men to be lost on Bomber Command operations), mid-upper gunner WO2 Hector Binder RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Ken Macey.

Len was the 23-year-old son of Charles and Elsie Goodkey of Bancroft, Ontario. A lake in Parry Sound, Ontario, was later named in his memory.

Len's name can be found on IBCC panel 041.

Photographic source: Wickenby Archive.