

**Sgt. Francis James Graham 1585636  
RAFVR**

Mid-upper gunner Francis Graham died after his Lancaster was hit by a 'friendly' bomb during a daylight operation.

He was part of a 166 Squadron crew which had arrived at Kirmington early in June 1944 and was heavily engaged in that summer's hectic bombing operations.

On 3 August 1944 they were tasked with taking part in an attack on a V1 storage site at Trossy St Maximin, north of Paris. It was their 20<sup>th</sup> operation.

Their aircraft, Lancaster ME839 AS-N, had left Kirmington at 1130 hours and was approaching the target when the flight engineer, Sgt Sydney Witham, spotted another Lancaster directly above them. As he shouted a warning a bomb hit AS-N, breaking off most of one wing. The pilot, F/O Hurbert Wagner, and Sgt. Witham managed to bale out but the other five members of the crew died when the Lancaster crashed. Sgt. Witham managed to evade capture but the pilot spent the rest of the war as a PoW.

Francis is buried with three other crew members in Creil Communal Cemetery. The others who died were the navigator F/O William Richards RCAF, bomb-aimer Sgt. John Davies, wireless operator Sgt. Henry Buckler and rear gunner Sgt. Lewis Arthur.

His name can be found on panel 041.

Sources: 166 Squadron Association/On Wings of War by Jim Wright/Pierre Vandervelden.

