

F/O Herbert Harry Stephen Gwyer 163713 RAFVR

Flak and fighters over Europe were not the only dangers facing Bomber Command crews. Sometimes, even mundane training flights could end in disaster.



Bomb-aimer Herbert Gwyer and his crew had recently arrived at No. 49 Squadron at Fulbeck when they took off at 1955 hours on the night of 11 December 1944 for a cross country and high-level bombing exercise. They were one of two new crews taking part.

Their aircraft, Lancaster I PB799 EA-G, was to cross Nottinghamshire and on to a turning point at The Great Orme head near Llandudno, to Cirencester, then Norwich and back to base. Sadly nothing more was heard of the Lancaster or its seven-man crew. The pilot of the second Lancaster later reported that on approaching North Wales his crew faced a huge cumulonimbus cloud reaching at least 29,000 feet with the added threat of icing. It was believed that PB799 went into that cloud and later crashed in the Irish Sea.

Herbert lived in East Croydon, Surrey with his wife, Mary, and was the 23-year-old son of Herbert and May Gwyer. He and the rest of his crew were never found and are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

The others who were lost were the pilot F/L Jerry Green, flight engineer Sgt. Edward Charles, navigator Sgt. Arthur Blanchard, wireless operator Sgt. John Rudd, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Rex Henson and rear gunner Sgt. Hanley Stobart.

His name can be found on panel 043.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1944 by Bill Chorley.