

F/O Lloyd Albert Hannah J/87007 RCAF

Lloyd Hannah will always be remembered in one part of Lincolnshire as the Canadian pilot who saved the lives of many people in two neighbouring villages.

He was the pilot of Lancaster I LL956 CF-Q (call sign 'Queenie'), of No.625 Squadron, which burst into flames as it took off at 0628 hours from RAF Kelstern on 14 October 1944 for a huge daylight attack on Duisburg. With the aircraft full of bombs and fuel, he ordered the other seven men on board to bale out over the Lincolnshire Wolds. Six minutes after 'Queenie' had taken off it crashed and exploded in Bradley's Farm, midway the villages of Fotherby and Little Grimsby, just off the A16 between Grimsby and Louth. Lloyd Hannah was killed in the resulting explosion along with the bomb-aimer, Flt. Sgt. Lloyd Bennett RCAF, who hadn't managed to get out in time. No civilians were lost although the explosion shattered the roofs of neighbouring farm buildings, smashed house windows and blew a huge crater which remains today, now a pond in a farmer's field.



Those living in both villages, which are less than a mile apart, were convinced Lloyd Hannah had remained at the controls of CF-Q to prevent the blazing Lancaster from crashing into either Fotherby or Little Grimsby. A plaque honouring the bravery of those who died now stands in St Edith's Church in Little Grimsby simply saying 'they gave their lives to save the villages'.

LL956 was one of 31 Lancasters from Kelstern that were to join a force of 1,013 RAF bombers attacking Duisburg in the first stage of 'Operation Hurricane'. This was followed by a raid by 749 USAAF bombers and a third attack by the RAF involving a further 1,005 aircraft, all within 24 hours. 625 Squadron, which had just expanded to a third flight prior to helping the nucleus for the about-to-be formed 170 Squadron, provided 60 sorties with LL956 the only casualty.

Lloyd was the 26-year-old son of Allan and Mary Hannah of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and the husband of Margaret Hannah of Tuxford, Saskatchewan. He was buried in Stonefall Cemetery at Harrogate and among those there lies his brother, fellow Lancaster pilot F/O Harold Hannah, Croix de Guerre, of No. 405 Squadron. He was badly injured on the night of 3 November 1944 and died on 27 January 1945 from his injuries and is also buried in Stonefall Cemetery.

The survivors from LL956 were the second pilot Sgt. Darrel Paige RCAF, flight engineer Sgt. Robert Bennett, navigator Flt. Sgt. Roy Strachan RCAF, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. John Bilan RCAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Ken McCorie RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Jack Loughran RCAF.

Lloyd's name can be found on panel 045.

Sources: 625 Squadron records/Aircrew Remembered/Canadian veterans.