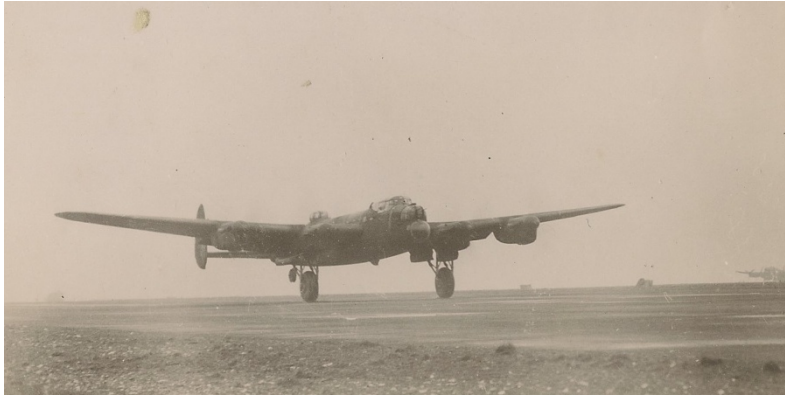


Sgt. John Henry Hawkins 1369127 RAFVR



A Lancaster of 625 Squadron pictured at RAF Kelstern

John Hawkins was the wireless operator of the first Lancaster to be lost by 625 Squadron. It was just six days after the squadron moved into its new airfield at RAF Kelstern, on top of the Lincolnshire Wolds. So new was 625 to the war that it appears no typewriters had been issued as the squadron's records are all hand-written until the beginning of November 1943.

He was 25 years old and was the son of William and Sarah Hawkins of Greenock, Renfrewshire. He was part of a young crew that left Kelstern at 1747 hours on the evening of 20 October 1943 heading for Leipzig, part of a force of 358 Lancasters. He and his crew were on board Lancaster III JA714 CF-R, which had previously served with 156 Squadron at Warboys.

Ninety minutes after leaving Kelstern they were shot down by night-fighter pilot Oberfeldwebel Karl-Heinz Scherfling of the 12./NJG 1, flying a Bf 110G from Leeuwarden airfield. JA714 crashed into the Waddenzee, the stretch of water separating the island from the mainland. There were no survivors and only one body was recovered.

Killed with him were the pilot F/O Bill Cameron RCAF, flight engineer Sgt. John Diggle, navigator Sgt. Len Wild, bomb-aimer F/O Albert Snook RCAF, mid-upper gunner P/O Clifford McFarlane RCAF and rear gunner Sgt. Frederick Porter. The bomb aimer is buried in Terschelling (West-Terschelling) General Cemetery while the others are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

John's name can be found on panel 047.

Photographic source: 625 Squadron Association