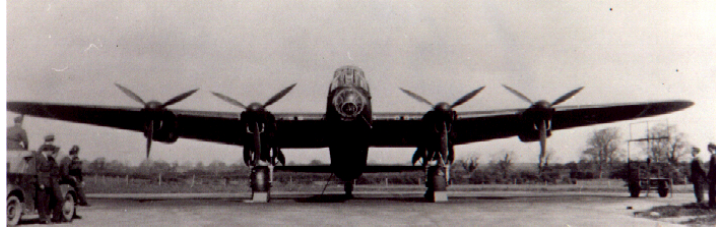


**Sgt. George Denby
Hester 1231807
RAFVR**



George Hester was a 20-year-old flight engineer whose Lancaster was the first to be lost by No. 12 Squadron. He was part of an experienced crew that was lost on a mining operation off the Danish coast on the night of 8/9 January 1943.

They had taken off from RAF Wickenby at 1857 hours, the squadron having recently become operational on their new Lancasters. His aircraft, W4371 PH-C, was one of the Lancasters delivered to the squadron in November 1942 as it converted from Wellingtons. *(One of these first Lancasters is pictured above at RAF Wickenby)*. W4371 was one of 73 aircraft sent out on mining operations off Denmark and France that night; it was one of two not to return. It is believed it had been shot down over the North Sea with no wreckage or bodies ever recovered.

George was part of a crew that included three Canadians, an Australian, two Englishmen and a South African serving in the RAF. He was among the first of the new flight engineers in 12 Squadron and joined a mostly experienced crew who had previously flown on Wellingtons.

He came from the village of Ilkeithshall St Margaret, near Bungay in Suffolk, and was the son of Charles and Mary Hester.

The others lost with him were the pilot WO2 Donald Marshall RCAF, navigator WO2 John Buick RCAF, bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Raymond Cripps RAAF, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Sydney Ramsay, mid-upper gunner Sgt. William Dorey and rear gunner WO2 John Bradley RCAF. All are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 153).

George's name can be found on IBCC panel 048.

Sources: Wickenby museum/Bomber Command Losses 1943 by Bill Chorley.