

**PO William
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William Hewitt was a 20-year-old Australian rear gunner who was killed when his aircraft was shot down by a night fighter as his Lancaster was heading for Berlin.

He had joined the crew of Lancaster JB665 LE-B of 630 Squadron, whose aircraft was one of twenty bombers shot down as they approached the German capital, on the night of 15 February 1944. A further twenty-three Bomber Command aircraft were later lost from a force of 891 on what was a record-breaking night for the RAF as the Battle of Berlin had resumed after a two-week break.

JB665 had lifted off from East Kirkby at 17:16, the second to take from the twenty-one Lancasters, the biggest number yet for 630 Squadron since its formation in November. The outward route took the bomber stream across Denmark and the Baltic before going south-east for Berlin. It was in this stage JB665 was caught by Oblt Joseph Kraft's Bf110 and shot down in flames, crashing near Güstrow, south of Rostock. There were no survivors.

William came from the old gold rush town of Gulgong in New South Wales and was the son of William and Dorothea Hewitt. His body was never recovered, and he is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial. The other members of his crew were buried in the churchyard in Güstrow and later reinterred in Berlin War Cemetery.

The others who died were the pilot Flt Lt William English, second pilot PO John Richards, flight engineer Sgt Norman Mitchell, navigator FO John Evans, bomb-aimer PO Llewellyn Fussell, wireless operator Flt Sgt Leslie Lane and mid-upper gunner PO Derek Carlile.

William's name can be found on panel 048.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association/The Berlin Raids by Martin Middlebrook.