

F/O Edwin Frank Hook 154910

RAFVR

Edwin Hook was a 24-year-old Lancaster bomb-aimer who survived when his bomber was shot down only to be killed by RAF fighter-bombers days before the war ended.



He was one of two members of a 49 Squadron Lancaster who survived when their aircraft was shot down in late February 1945. He was held briefly in a PoW camp before being forced to join a march westwards as Russian forces advanced, and on 4 April he was part of a long column of PoWs marching near Feucht in Germany. The column was spotted by RAF aircraft, which attacked believing they were retreating German forces and sixty men were killed, including Edwin Hook, with another 30 badly wounded. Edwin is now buried in Durnbach War Cemetery.

He and his crew were on their fourth operation when they were shot down during Bomber Command's final attack to halt traffic on the Mittelland canal in northern Germany.

His No. 49 Squadron Lancaster, NG327 EA-K, was attacked by a Ju88 fighter during the raid on the night of 21 February 1945. The wireless operator and rear gunner were both killed instantaneously while the flight engineer baled out and became a PoW.

Edwin and his crew had taken off from Fulbeck at 1717 hours, part of a relatively small 5 Group force of 165 Lancasters and nine Mosquitoes. Nine Lancasters were lost, including two from 49. He lived in Cliftonville, near Margate, with his wife Doreen and was the son of Ernest and Agnes Hook.

The others who died were the pilot F/O Edward Smith RNZAF, navigator Flt. Sgt. Joe Newby, wireless operator P/O Eric McCarthy, 19-year-old mid-upper gunner Sgt. Colin Burrige and rear gunner P/O Robert Simpson RCAF.

His name can be found on panel 051.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.