

**Flt. Sgt. Frederick
James Howlett
435918 RAAF**



Frederick Howlett was an Australian rear gunner who was killed along with the rest of his crew when their Lancaster crashed into a hill in Leicestershire a month before the war in Europe ended.

He was one of six Australians and one Englishman who died when Lancaster ND949 LE-Z (*pictured above*) hit a hill near the village of Foxton, near Market Harborough, at 0310 hours on 9 April 1945 as they returned from a bombing raid on a synthetic oil refinery near Leipzig. They had been diverted due to bad weather and it was later believed either a faulty or wrongly-adjusted altimeter led to the crash.

ND949 had taken off from East Kirkby at 1800 hours the previous night for the attack which destroyed the Molbis refinery at Lutzkendorf, one of the last supplying fuel supplies to German forces.

Frederick and his crew were on their fourth operation with No. 630 Squadron after joining it in January. His home was in the Queensland coastal city of Townsville and he was the 29-year-old son of James and Catherine Howlett. He was later buried in the military section at Cambridge City Cemetery (Grave 15570).

The others who died were the pilot F/O Colin Richardson RAAF, flight engineer Sgt. Bernard Gibbons (who was also a qualified pilot), navigator Flt. Sgt. Herbert Burton RAAF, bomb-aimer F/O Robert Martin RAAF, wireless operator F/O William Forrester RAAF and mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Anthony Bowman RAAF.

His name can be found on panel 052.

Sources: 630 Squadron/Australian Virtual War Memorial.