

F/O Jack Pierce Hutchinson DFC 416501 RAAF



F/O Hutchinson and crew pictured at Wickenby. They are (back row, l-r) Sgt. Edgeworth, WO2 Binder, F/O Young, Flt. Sgt. Macey; (front) F/O Hutchinson, P/O Goodkey and Sgt. Hodgson. They are pictured in front of ex-12 Squadron Lancaster DV177 UM-K2 which was shot down by an intruder over Essex in April 1944

Australian pilot Jack Hutchinson was on the final operation of a tour that had begun at Wickenby with No. 12 Squadron when he was killed as his 626 Squadron Lancaster crashed during a raid on Schweinfurt on the night of 24/25 February 1944.

He had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross just 10 days before his death and had been with 626 with his crew since the squadron was formed at Wickenby in the autumn of 1943. Before that he had survived a ditching in the North Sea when his Lancaster developed engine trouble outbound for Munich on 6 September 1943, spending 18 hours in a dinghy with four other survivors from his crew. His DFC citation also included reference to his 'superb airmanship' in nursing a damaged Lancaster back to Wickenby during a raid on Frankfurt.

On the Schweinfurt raid he was piloting LL797 UM-B2 with his regular crew plus a second pilot, Sgt. Bryan Bowditch, who was there to gain experience. 626 was in the first wave of the attack but his aircraft was attacked by a night fighter and exploded in mid-air, the wreckage coming down near the village of Marsal in the Moselle region of France. All eight crew members are buried in the local churchyard.

The other members of the crew were the flight engineer Sgt. Arthur Hodgson, navigator P/O Leonard Goodkey RCAF, bomb-aimer F/O Peter Young, wireless operator Sgt. Robert Edgeworth (at 18 one of the youngest men to be lost on Bomber Command operations), mid-upper gunner WO2 Hector Binder RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Kenneth Macey.

Jack Hutchinson was 23 years old and the son of George and Ruby Hutchinson of Glenelg, South Australia.

Jack's name can be found on IBCC panel 053.

Photographic source: Wickenby Archive