

Sgt. Erod Gordon Johnson 1036704 RAFVR

Erod was born on 1 October 1922 in Pontefract, Yorkshire, the son of George and Edith Johnson (née Wardman). Educated locally, prior to joining the RAF Erod was employed as an electrician.

Erod joined the RAF after war was declared and was trained as an Air Gunner. After completing his conversion training Erod was posted to 101 Squadron at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire, on 15 March 1944.

On the night of 30/31 March 1944, 795 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Nuremberg. This was the last act of Bomber Harris's "Battle of Berlin", an attempt to destroy German morale by battering its cities night after night before the bomber force turned its attentions to preparing the way for D-Day in June. A direct route, full moon and a new German weapon, the upward firing gun fitted to many fighters, would make this an incredibly challenging and dangerous mission. More than 200 night-fighters based around the Ruhr and the Rhine took to the skies that night. Twenty-six 101 Squadron Lancasters participated in the raid. This was Erod's 2nd op.

At 2150 hours on 30 March 1944 Erod, operating as an Air Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster III LM463 (SR-K2), tasked with ABC duties for the raid. At 0036 hours, whilst outbound, the aircraft was engaged East of Siegen at 18,000ft by a night fighter flown by Uffz. Bruno Rupp of 4./NJG3. The aircraft crashed near Dillenburg, Hessen, killing 6 of the 8 crew; the pilot (P/O Albert Lander RNZAF) and wireless operator (Sgt. W G Clapp) and were captured. Seven 101 Squadron aircraft were lost on this raid, with 47 men killed.



The raid was a major disaster for Bomber Command with the loss of 105 aircraft, Bomber Command's heaviest loss of the war. There were 721 casualties: 542 men died, 6 injured, 161 POWs, with just 12 airmen evading capture. The damage to Nuremberg itself was slight - 256 buildings destroyed and 75 enemy dead.

Also killed were the navigator F/O Mervyn Hutchinson RNZAF, air bomber F/Sgt. Raymond Cato RNZAF, air gunner F/Sgt. Cyril Parkinson RNZAF, special duties operator Sgt. Alfred Clayton and flight engineer Sgt. Alexander Johnston.

Originally buried in Dillenburg Cemetery, Hessen, Erod and the crew were moved to Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, in April 1947.

Erod is commemorated on Wall Panel 55.

Photo Source: twixtaireandcalder.org.uk