

P/O Stephan August Loftson J/90278
RCAF

Stephan Loftson was a young Canadian mid-upper gunner killed along with his crew on their first operation.

His aircraft was one of 33 Bomber Command aircraft lost in an attack on the southern German city of Schweinfurt on the night of 24/25 February 1944, part of the RAF/USAAF 'Big Week' assault on Nazi targets.

Stephan and his crew had only been with 9 Squadron at Bardney for a few days, after leaving No. 1654 Heavy Conversion Unit, before their name came on the Battle Order for the attack.



They were to be part of Bomber Command's first wave of attackers, the second wave to take off two hours later. It was the first wave that suffered the highest casualties and his aircraft, Lancaster LM433 WS-H, was believed to have been shot down by a Do217 night fighter, crashing in the small town of Tiefenbronn, a few miles south-east of Pforzheim. The wreckage landed close to houses and a number of people from the town, including a few children, were later believed to have been killed by delayed action bombs exploding.

Stephan came from an Icelandic émigré community that had settled in Lundar, in Manitoba, and was the 20-year-old son of Bjarni and Thora Loftson. Stephan had worked in the family farming business before enlisting in the RCAF in October 1942.

The crew were all initially buried in Tiefenbronn Churchyard and later reinterred in Durnbach War Cemetery. The others who died were the pilot P/O George Denson, flight engineer Sgt. Colin Todd, navigator Sgt. John Charlier, bomb-aimer Sgt. David Marshall, wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Herbert Masters and rear gunner Sgt. Leonard Parker.

Stephan's name can be found on panel 064.

Sources: Bombers First and Last by Gordon Thorburn/Canadian Veterans/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.