

F/O Robert Martin 424640 RAAF

Former soldier Robert Martin was an Australian bomb-aimer 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 below*) 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.



Robert and his crew were on their fourth operation with No. 630 Squadron after joining it in January. He had previously served with the 2/9 Field Regiment, in the Australian Army, and had fought during the siege of Tobruk in North Africa in 1941 before switching to the Royal Australian Air Force in

October 1942. He came from the Sydney suburb of Balmain and was the 23-year-old son of Robert and Catherine Martin. His family came originally from Sunderland and he was later buried in Southwick Cemetery in the city (Sec. 2. Grave 588).

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, wireless operator F/O William Forrester RAAF, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Anthony Bowman RAAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Frederick Howlett RAAF.

His name can be found on panel 068.

Sources: 630 Squadron/Australian Virtual War Memorial.



