

F/Sgt. John Bede Newman 426999 RAAF

John, known as Jack, was born on 10 September 1923 in Grenfell, New South Wales, Australia, the youngest son of Walter Joseph Newman and Sarah Newman (nee McNamara).

John enlisted in the RAAF in September 1942 and trained as an Air Gunner. After advanced training, in January 1944 John was posted to 101 Squadron at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.

On the night of 30 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 this night. Twenty-six 101 Squadron Lancasters participated in the raid.



At 2150 hours on 30 March 1944 John, operating as the mid-upper gunner, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna, in Lancaster I LL861 (SR), tasked with ABC duties for the raid.

Strong winds had blown John's aircraft well off course when, at 0045 hours whilst outbound, the Lancaster was intercepted by Hptm Gustav Tham flying a Me110 of IV./NJG5 from Nord-Erfurt Airfield. Fully laden, the Lancaster exploded with great force scattering debris over a large area near the German town of Lauterbach, about 40km NE of Frankfurt and about 200 km short of Nuremberg. All eight crew were killed, although only John and one other could be identified. This was John's 9th op.

Seven 101 Squadron aircraft were lost on the raid with 47 men killed.

Also Killed: F/O Ralph Frank Litchfield RCAF (AB/SDO); P/O Donald James Irving RAAF (Pilot); WO Stanley George Richard King RAAF (Nav); F/Sgt. Norman Grenfell Huggett RAAF (WOp/AG); F/Sgt. Walter Joseph Adam RAAF (AG); F/Sgt. John Alfred Noske RAAF (AB); Sgt. Frank Phillips (FE).

Originally buried close to the crash site, in 1950 John was moved to the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery, Germany.

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 78.

Photo Source: FamilySearch