

Sgt. Frank Phillips 1581809 RAFVR

Frank was born on 13 June 1923 in Birmingham, Warwickshire, the son of Frank Phillips and Mary Ann Selina Phillips (nee Cook).

Frank was employed as an assistant buyer when he volunteered for aircrew duties with the RAF. Trained as a Flight Engineer, in January 1944, after advanced training, he 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 Frank, operating as the Flight Engineer, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna, in Lancaster I LL861 (SR), tasked with ABC duties for the raid.

Strong winds had blown Frank'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 two crew members could be identified. This was Frank'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 Bede Newman RAAF (AG); F/Sgt. John Alfred Noske RAAF (AB).

Frank has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey.

Frank is commemorated on Wall Panel 84.

Photo Source: AWM

