

Flt Sgt James Louis Rossiter RAAF 410729

Jim Rossiter was a twenty-eight-year-old Australian rear gunner who was killed when his aircraft was raked by cannon fire during a raid on Berlin on the night of 2nd/3rd December 1943.

He was the crew of 630 Squadron Lancaster JB561 which was one of thirteen bombers from the squadron which had taken off from East Kirkby in Lincolnshire to take part in the continuing battle between Bomber Command and the German capital.



His was one of 458 aircraft taking part. Forty were lost but JB561 made it back badly damaged, landing at to land at the American base at Horsham St Faith in Norfolk.

JB561 was on its approach to Berlin between Leipzig and Brandenburg when the gunners spotted a Me210 night-fighter approaching. Both opened fire as the night-fighter attacked with both cannon and machine guns. The Lancaster was damaged, the starboard engine caught fire and had to be feathered and the intercom was wrecked along with parts of the hydraulics.

It was believed that return fire from Jim Rossiter's turret and from the upper turret in turn damaged the night-fighter and it broke off. In the meantime, JB561 had lost height but still managed to bomb from 15,000 feet before turning for home. With no working intercom, the flight engineer went back to check on the rear gunner and saw the turret slowly rotating and assumed he was alright. It was only when the Lancaster landed at Horsham St Faith on two punctured tyres it was discovered Jim Rossiter was dead with multiple cannon and machine gun wounds.

Jim was twenty-eight and was the son of the late Captain Sydney Rossiter and Caroline Rossiter. He came from the city of Murray Bridge in South Australia and had worked in the town of Wolseley before enlisting. He had sailed for England in 1943 and had trained at 14 OTU at Cottesmore and 1654 Heavy Conversion Unit at Wigsley, near Newark before he and his crew joined 630 Squadron at East Kirkby. He is now buried in Cambridge City Cemetery. His Scottish pilot, Flt Sgt Jim White, was awarded a Distinguished Flying Medal for his actions that night but was the be killed in another Berlin raid in March 1944 when the other members of his Lancaster survived.

Jim's name can be found on panel 092.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association.

