

Sgt. David Rowcliffe 1579317 RAFVR

David Rowcliffe was a young navigator who died after his first operation, the notorious Nuremburg raid on the night of 30/31 March 1944.

He and his crew took off from RAF Fiskerton at 2210 hours on board Lancaster JB314 EA-Q, part of a force of 795 Lancasters and Halifaxes heading for southern Germany. The expected cloud coverage did not materialise, with the bombers left in bright moonlight, and they were attacked almost constantly by night-fighters eventually losing 95 aircraft, the heaviest loss of the entire war.



David's aircraft was shot down on the outbound leg, crashing near the village of Quotshausen, west of Marburg. He was one of two members of the crew who survived but both suffered serious burns. They were taken to a local hospital where they were very well cared for, but David died the following day from his injuries. Their aircraft was the 36th of the 95 to be shot down during the raid.

David came from Wolverhampton and was the 21-year-old son of Gilbert and Edith Rowcliffe. The others who died were the pilot P/O Leslie Kellow, flight engineer Sgt. Sydney Silver, bomb-aimer Sgt. Terence Baker, wireless operator Sgt. Leonard Walford and rear gunner P/O Jim Latham RCAF. All are buried in Hanover War Cemetery. The survivor, mid-upper gunner Sgt. A J McAvoy, spent much of the rest of the war in hospital.

His name can be found on panel 092.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/The Nuremburg Raid by Martin Middlebrook.