

F/O Edward Percival Smith 428798 RNZAF

New Zealander Edward Smith was a Lancaster pilot who was killed on his fourth operation, shot down during Bomber Command's final attack to halt traffic on the Mittelland canal in northern Germany.

His 49 Squadron Lancaster, NG327 EA-K, was attacked by a Ju88 fighter during the raid on the night of 21 February 1945. The wireless operator and mid-upper gunner were both killed instantaneously while the flight engineer and bomb-aimer both managed to successfully bale out. However, the latter was killed in a 'friendly fire' incident involving RAF aircraft days before the war ended.



Edward and his crew had taken off from Fulbeck at 1717 hours, part of a relatively small 5 Group force of 165 Lancasters and nine Mosquitoes. Nine Lancasters were lost, including two from 49.

He came from Pareora East in the Canterbury region of New Zealand, and was the 27-year-old son of George and Clara Smith. He is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.

The others who died were the navigator Flt. Sgt. Joe Newby, bomb-aimer F/O Edwin Hook (killed 4 April), wireless operator P/O Eric McCarthy, 19-year-old mid-upper gunner Sgt. Colin Burridge and rear gunner P/O Robert Simpson RCAF.

His name can be found on panel 098.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.