

## **Flt Lt Ernest Stead MiD RAFVR 124125**



Yorkshireman Ernest Stead was his squadron's gunnery leader when he died along with three of his crew when their bomber was shot down over Leipzig on 20th February 1944.

His aircraft, LD532 LE-N of 630 Squadron, was one of 833 bombers targeting aircraft factories in the eastern German city when his Lancaster was attacked by three single-engine fighters at between 04:16 and 04:20, after which the Lancaster crashed near the target. Three men bailed out, but Wilson Yates and three others died in the crash.

On their previous operation, a raid on Berlin a few days earlier, the crew had successfully beaten off a Ju88 fighter over the German capital.

LD532 had taken off from East Kirkby a few minutes after midnight and was one of seventy-eight Bomber Command which failed to return, including a second Lancaster from 630 Squadron.

Ernest lived in Leeds with his wife, Margaret, and was the thirty-year-old son of Arthur and Ellen Stead. He had come through the ranks as an air gunner and was on his second tour of operations when he was appointed gunnery leader at 630, having been awarded his Mentioned in Despatches on 1st January 1943.

The others who died were the pilot PO Wilson Yates DFC, navigator Sgt Alan Spence and rear gunner Flt Sgt Dennis Dawson. The survivors were the flight engineer Sgt William Isaacs, bomb-aimer Sgt Reginald Findlow RCAF and wireless operator Sgt Donald Scott. Those who died were buried locally and later reinterred in Berlin War Cemetery.

Ernest's name can be found on panel 101.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association.