

**Sgt. John Ackroyd
Stephens 1179576
RAFVR**



John Stephens was a Lancaster wireless operator who was killed along with the rest of his crew during what was a highly successful attack by Bomber Command on the industrial city of Duisburg.

He was part of the crew of Lancaster ED476 PH-N, of 12 Squadron, which crashed in the neighbouring Ruhr city of Dusseldorf after taking part in what was a devastating attack by 572 aircraft on Duisburg, one of the most successful raids in Bomber Command's ongoing Battle of the Ruhr.

John and his crew were on their 11th operation with 12 Squadron when they took off from RAF Wickenby at 2340 hours on the night of 12 May 1943. It is believed ED476 was turning for home when it was attacked and crashed in Dusseldorf, a few miles south of Duisburg. All seven men on board were buried in the city but only three bodies were found after the war and John's was not among those. He is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 165).

He was the 20-year-old son of Raymond and Gladys Stephens of Tamworth. He and his crew had assembled at No. 30 Operational Training Unit at RAF Hixon and spent time at No. 1656 Conversion Unit at Lindholme before being posted to 12 Squadron early in March 1943.

The others who died with him were the pilot P/O Ian Alexander RNZAF, flight engineer Sgt. Edwin Rome, navigator Flt. Sgt. Richard Fraser RCAF, 19-year-old bomb-aimer Sgt. Edgar Harrison, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Ronald Bell and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. David Williams.

John's name can be found on IBCC panel 101.

Sources: Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.