



Sgt. William Thomson 1111480 RAFVR

Bill Thomson was the flight engineer of a Lancaster flown by 9 Squadron commanding officer which crashed nearing the German city of Mainz in the early hours of 11 April 1943. It was the final bombing operation of the squadron at the pre-war RAF station at Waddington and the last of eight aircraft lost by the unit in a week.

The aircraft, ED501 WS-R (pictured above), was one of 502 bombers involved in the attack on Frankfurt that night, taking off shortly before midnight on 10 April. Most of the bombs missed the target and 21 Bomber Command aircraft failed to return. There were no survivors in his crew, most of whom were nearing the end of their operation.

Bill was 22 and lived in the Preston suburb of Deepdale with his wife, Grace, and young son, Robert. He was the son of Robert and Elizabeth Thomson of Preston and is buried in Rheinberg War Cemetery.

The others who died were W/C Ken Smith DSO, second pilot Sgt. Allan Gaskell, bomb-aimer F/O Arnold Turner, bomb-aimer F/O Bernard Smith, wireless operator Sgt. Gordon Taylor RNZAF, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Louis Fiddes and rear gunner P/O Roy Pleasance.

His name can be found on panel 107.

Sources: *Bombers First and Last* and *Luck of the Lancaster* by Gordon Thorburn.