Sgt. Frederick William Thornton 1181849 RAFVR

Frederick Thornton was the son of Mr and Mrs W J Hartwell of Byfield, Warwickshire. He was 20 years old when he was killed in action on 30 May 1942.

Frederick joined 22 OTU on 13 January 1942 as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner. Here he crewed up with P/O Melvin Johnson (Pilot), P/O Walter Ewart Gregory (Observer/Bomb Aimer), Flt. Lt. Peter Thorne Candler (1st Wireless Operator /Air Gunner) and Sgt. K Kellar (Air Gunner).

The crew was posted to 142 Squadron on 13 May 1942, however, they didn't fly an operational sortie together as a crew. P/O Johnson and Sgt. Kellar were replaced by Sgt. Noel Lowden and Sgt. Lawrence Mallon respectively for their fateful mission to Cologne.

On 30 May 1942 at 2306 hours the crew took off on their mission, Codenamed 'Operation Millennium', to Cologne. They flew Wellington Z1208 QT-S that night on the first ever 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne. Z1208 was one of two aircraft from 142 Squadron that did not return. Nearly 4% of all aircraft were lost on that night. The exact fate of Z1208 is unclear. All 5 members of the crew are buried at Rheinberg War Cemetery, Germany.

Frederick is commemorated on Panel 107.

Sources

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www.ancestry.co.uk
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