

Flt. Lt. Donald Thomas Tonkinson 51064 RAF

Donald Tonkinson was a regular Royal Air Force officer killed when the Wellington he was flying was shot down by a night fighter over Holland.

He died along with all his crew in the early hours of 28 May 1943 when his 166 Squadron Wellington was homebound from a raid on Essen.

His aircraft, Wellington HE752 AS-W, was intercepted over Holland by a fighter flown by Oblt. Hans-Heinz Augenstein. It crashed close to the hamlet of Oele on the outskirts of the city of Hengelo, a few miles from the German border.

Donald and his crew were flying in one of six No. 166 Squadron Wellingtons that took part in the attack by 518 Bomber Command aircraft, in which considerable damage was done to the Krupps factories in this much-bombed city. On the same night, other 166 Squadron Wellingtons were engaged in mining operations. They had left Kirmington at 2302 hours on 27 May and their aircraft was the only one not to return.

Donald was the 21-year-old son of Mr and Mrs T A Tonkinson and had been promoted twice before he and his crew joined 166 Squadron at Kirmington on 4 May.

The others who died were the navigator Sgt. Percy Guest, bomb-aimer F/O Thomas Brown, wireless operator/air gunner P/O Arthur Johnson and rear gunner Sgt. Norman Rayner.

Donald is buried in the Hengelo (Overijssel) General Cemetery in the Netherlands, Plot D Row 1 Joint Grave 65.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 107.

Sources: 166 Squadron Association/On Wings of War by Jim Wright/Air Battle of the Ruhr by Alan Cooper.

