

**Sqdn Ldr Kenneth Frederick Vare AFC RAF
40273**

Kenneth Vare was a New Zealander who had served in the RAF before the war who was killed during a raid on Berlin early in 1944.

He was the second pilot of Lancaster JB532 LE-X of 630 Squadron who was among eight men killed when his aircraft was shot down by flak during the raid on the night of 1st/2nd January 1944.

JB532 was part of a force of 471 bombers attacking the German capital as part of the ongoing Battle of Berlin being staged by Bomber Command. His was one of fifteen Lancasters from 630 Squadron which took off shortly before midnight from East Kirkby and was reported to have been hit by flak before crashing at Grossbeuthen, near Trebbin (south-east of Berlin). An engine was torn from one of the Lancaster's wings before the aircraft plunged into the ground.

Kenneth was the thirty-year-old son of Frederick and Amelia Vare, who lived in the Wellington suburb of Island Bay. He had joined the RAF in the 1930's and flew Fairey Battles and, in 1941, was posted to 108 Squadron flying Wellingtons in Egypt. He completed at least twenty-six operations before returning to England where he was eventually posted to 630 Squadron. His Air Force Cross was awarded posthumously and was announced in June 1944.

The others who died were the pilot Flt Lt Douglas Macdonald DFC RCAF, flight engineer Sgt Robert Smale MiD, navigator FO Niels Westergaard DFC, bomb-aimer Flt Sgt John Turnbull, wireless operator Sgt William Tyrie DFM, mid-upper gunner Flt Sgt William Jenkins and rear gunner Flt Sgt William Roche RAAF. All were initially buried in Grossbeuthen cemetery before being reinterred in Berlin War Cemetery.

Kenneth's name can be found on panel 065.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association/Aircrew Reunited.

