

PO Cassian Henry Waight 172841 RAFVR

Cassian was born on 30 April 1911 in Belize, British Honduras, the son of John Woods Waight and Lottie Evelyn Gladys Waight nee Usher. Cassian was married to Cynthia (nee Sainsbury) and they had four children.

Cassian volunteered for aircrew service with the RAF in September 1941 and trained as a WOp/AG. Completing his advanced training at 1656 HCU, RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, in October 1943 Cassian was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire. Cassian was granted a commission in February 1944

On the night of 19/20 February 1944, a major offensive to Leipzig was planned by Bomber Command with 823 aircraft allocated to the op. Twenty-one 101 Sqn Lancasters participated in the raid. Leipzig, the 5th biggest German City with 12 aircraft factories, 8 machine and weapons factories and other war-related industries, including the production of textiles and synthetic oil. Leipzig was also one of the most important railway hubs of Central Germany. The raid proved to be the heaviest loss from Bomber Command with 78 aircraft failing to return.



At 23:38 Cassian, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster III DV267 (SR-K), tasked with ABC duties.

Whilst outbound, near Oldenburg, Cassian's aircraft was intercepted from beneath by Ofw Rudolf Frank of the 3./NJG 3 from Vechta airfield, Germany, flying a Bf 110 fitted with upward firing guns. With the fuel tank in the port wing on fire, the fire extinguishers were used and the propeller was stopped and 'feathered'. The crew jettisoned their bombs and headed home. Although the port wing engine had stopped burning, the fire had taken hold in the wing tanks between the port side engines. When the aircraft began to disintegrate, at 04:43 the captain ordered the crew to bale out.

Wearing a parachute impeded Cassian's work, so he did not normally wear it. One of the survivors reported that just before he left the aircraft he saw Cassian still without his parachute. Cassian was found in a meadow near Noordwijk, some 100km SW of the aircraft crash site, something that has never been explained.

Also Killed: PO John Jack Laurens DFM (Pilot) Sgt William Frederick Donald Bolt (AG)

Cassian is buried in the Marum (Noordwijk) Protestant Churchyard, Groningen, Netherlands

Cassian is commemorated on Wall Panel 110

Photo Source: IBCC