# Sgt. Arnold Gregory Welch 400763 RAAF



Arnold Welch was an Australian wireless operator/air gunner in a 49 Squadron Manchester lost on Bomber Command's first 'Thousand' raid on Cologne in 1942.

His aircraft, Manchester I L7429, was one of two lost from the squadron on the night of 30/31 May 1942 when Bomber Command sent more than 1,000 aircraft over the Rhineland city. They were the first losses of Manchesters for 49 Squadron following its switch from Hampdens. The squadron was planned to move onto Lancasters but used the twin-engined Manchesters for a few months until sufficient Lancasters were available.

49 Squadron sent 12 Manchesters to Cologne that night in addition to loaning three from the Manchester Conversion Flight to neighbours at Scampton, 83 Squadron, which was already flying with Lancasters.

Arnold's aircraft took off at 2250 hours and was among the 1,047 bombers sent on the raid. It was on the return flight that his Manchester was attacked by night-fighter ace Oblt Heinrich Prinz Zu Sagn-Wittgenstein, in his Ju88, and was shot down in the North Sea. There were no survivors from the seven-man crew and all are now remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

His home was in the small town of Bright, in north-eastern Victoria, and he had worked as a barber in the state Electricity Commission and Forest Commission before volunteering in February 1940. He later trained in Australia and Canada before being posted to England and joined 14 Operational Training Unit at Cottesmore. He was eventually posted to 49 Squadron at Scampton in March 1942. He was the 27-year-old son of Charles and Mary Welch.

The others who died were the pilot P/O John Carter, second pilot Flt. Sgt. David Block, navigator Sgt. George Haynes, wireless operator Sgt. Lawrence Yeates and air gunners Sgt. Maurice Ash and Sgt. John Ramsey.

His name can be found on panel 113.

Sources: 49 Squadron Association/The Thousand Plan by Ralph Barker.