

Sgt. Lawrence John Yeates 1057877
RAFVR

Lawrence Yeates was the wireless operator 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.

Lawrence'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.

He came from the village of Mellor in Cheshire, was the 26-year-old husband of Barbara and the son of John and Abigail Yeates.

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

His name can be found on panel 120.

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