

Sgt William George Yorke RAFVR 1802298

William Yorke was a Lancaster flight engineer who was killed along with five of his crew when his aircraft was shot down near Berlin on what was a diversionary raid.

His was one of twenty-two Lancasters sent to Berlin as a diversionary tactic while 648 bombers were sent to Magdeburg. William's aircraft, JB294 LE-R, was one of two from 630 Squadron involved in the Berlin feint and was the only one lost. The Magdeburg raid itself cost Bomber Command fifty-seven aircraft, most falling to fighters.



JB294 had taken off from East Kirkby at 20:21 on 21st January 1944 and was reported to have crashed at Wiesenhausen, south of Berlin. The only survivor was the bomb-aimer, twenty-one-year-old Sgt Peter Walker, who successfully bailed out after the Lancaster exploded.

At the age of thirty-three, William was considerably older than most of the crew, five of whom were below the age of twenty-two.

The others who died were the pilot Flt Sgt John Homewood, navigator Flt Sgt Alexander Reedman, wireless operator Sgt Alexander Stopp, mid-upper gunner Sgt John Morris and rear gunner Flt Sgt Morris Marks RCAF. All are buried in Berlin War Cemetery.

William's name can be found on panel 120.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association/Find-a-Grave.