

**P/O John Morrison DFC
159666 RAFVR**



It was a cruel fate which befell a Halifax of 427 (Lion) RCAF Squadron from Leeming and a Lancaster from 622 Squadron at Mildenhall as they both returned from Bomber Command's worst raid of the war.

Both were heading back to England from the mauling the bombers had taken during the raid on Nuremburg on the night of 30/31 March, 1944 when they collided, crashing close to the border of Luxemburg and Belgium. Only one of the 15 men on board survived as they became the 89th and 90th Bomber Command losses on the night.

Flight engineer on board 427 Halifax III LV932 ZL-W was John Morrison, a young decorated Scotsman from one of the furthestmost parts of the British Isles. His aircraft crashed at Rachecourt on the Luxemburg border, close to the attractive Belgian Ardennes town of Arlon. Only the rear gunner survived and evaded capture. John had baled out but was found critically injured and was to spend 20 days in hospital before dying in Arlon, where he is now buried.

He was the 22-year-old son of Angus and Annie Morrison and came from the Isle of Lewis and was awarded his Distinguished Flying Cross in December 1943. He is remembered in Stornoway on Lewis.

They had taken off from Leeming at 2200 hours one of 795 bombers heading to the southern Germany city. Ninety-five were lost, including three from 427 Squadron.

The others who died were the pilot S/L George 'Turkey' Laird DFC RCAF, second pilot Flt. Sgt. Arthur Stainton RCAF, navigator F/O William Soeder RCAF, bomb-aimer P/O Joseph Corbally RCAF, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Bill Clapham and mid-upper gunner P/O Lloyd Smith RCAF. The surviving rear gunner was P/O Jim Moffat RCAF. Six of those are buried in Hotton War Cemetery.

His name can be found on panel 215.

Sources: 427 Squadron Association/Yorkshire Aircraft/Bomber Command Losses 1944 by Bill Chorley/The Nuremburg Raid by Martin Middlebrook/Nuremburg: The Blackest Night in RAF History by Martin Bowman.

