

Lancaster III, ND 820, F2-W of 635 Squadron

RAF Downham Market

Crashed at 11.20 hours 10th April 1944

At 10.58 hours Lancaster ND 820 took off from RAF Downham Market on a training flight, the date was 10th April 1944, during the flight it got into difficulties and caught fire whilst flying over, Swineshead, south Lincolnshire, eventually crashing into the ground at Bicker.

All of the crew perished, with only the body of F/O T F Wilson RCAF, being buried at Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery. The rest are still listed as missing and are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

The Crew:-

1388878 F/S Douglas James **FARRANT** (24) RAFVR >>>>>
Commemorated on Runnymede Memorial. Panel 217



1386763 Sgt Reuben Horace Frederick **MALTHOUSE** (23) RAFVR >>>>>
Son of Frederick Malthouse and Rose Malthouse. Husband to May Florence Malthouse of Walworth, London. Commemorated on Runnymede Memorial. Panel 234.



748357 W/O Roland Thornton **LORD** (25) RAFVR
Son of Harold Lord and Amy Lord of Oldham, Lancs. Commemorated on Runnymede Memorial. Panel 214.

J/12709 F/O Thomas Ferguson **WILSON** (26) RCAF >>>>>
Son of James Wilson and Euphemia Wilson. Husband to Laurine Wilson of Lucknow, Ontario, Canada. Buried at Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery.



1007262 F/S Joseph Bernard **BANNAN** (24) RAFVR >>>>>
Son of Bernard Bannan and Frances Bannan. Husband to Kathleen Bannan of Head's Nook, Cumberland. Commemorated on Runnymede Memorial. Panel 215.



1358626 F/S Anthony Ivor Gwynne **HUNTER** (28) RAFVR
Son of Philip Claudius Hunter and Agnes Hunter. Husband to Ann Hunter of Leeds, Yorkshire. Commemorated on Runnymede Memorial. Panel 219.



R/163358 Sgt John William **NIXON** (19) RCAF >>>>>
Son of Reginald T Nixon and Ethel Nixon of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Commemorated on Runnymede Memorial. Panel 256

On the 10th April 2004, 60 years to the day that the aircraft came down, a stone memorial plaque, inset into a brick cairn supporting a cross, was unveiled at 11.20am, the time of the crash, by Mr. Michael Patrick who witnessed the crash as a 7-year-old child. The memorial, built over the actual impact point, had been commissioned and built by the Lincolnshire Aircraft Recovery Group.

To give recognition to all those that lost their lives in the accident. The ceremony was officiated over by the Reverend (Squadron Leader) Nicholas Pnematicatos MA BA RAF, Station Chaplain RAF Coningsby, who finally consecrated the cairn. Also attending were members of the local RAFA and British Legion carrying their Standards.

Mr. Ian Blackamore of the LARG, along with Mr. Patrick, then laid a wreath at the foot of the cairn, in the presence of some 75 local people, many who remembered the plane crash.

In 2024 on the 13th April there was to be another service to commemorate the 80th Anniversary. This time the extended family of F/S JB Bannan will be attending including his daughter Mrs Jo Maddox as well as Laura McBride and Jennifer Peart, from Canada, grandnieces of F/O Tom Wilson, buried in Stonefall Cemetery, Harrogate. Also Lesley Holdridge – Neice of F/S Douglas Farrant, Pilot

Footnote:

From the crash record card it has been noted that ND 820 was on a bombing run and bombing practice exercise. At 8,000 ft it was seen to do a diving turn to port which increased in rate and then went into a vertical dive, the ailerons came adrift.

Previous reports had stated that there had been an Auto-pilot failure on previous flights – it was recovered between 3/4 thousand ft at 280 mph.

The Auto-pilot had been examined – a ‘relay piston’ was found to be sticking and was rectified!

The aircraft was 22 minutes into its flight.

The engines were Merlin 38’s, No. 251070, 246817, 246895, 250389.

Wartime crash map ref:- F7375. South of Swineshead.

Pilot, F/S Farrant had 254hrs flying time, 115hrs on type.

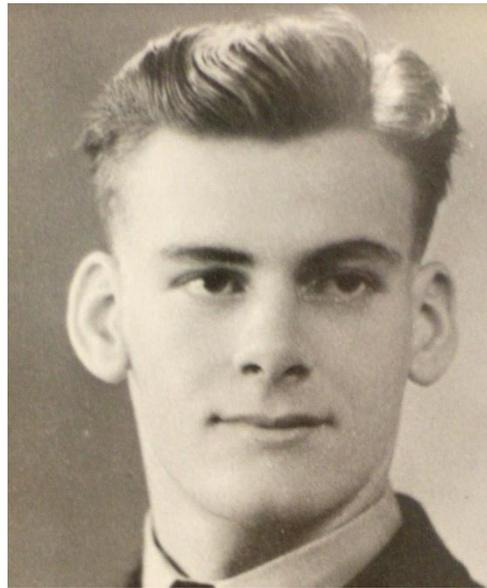


The Memorial on the crash site.

The Crash site showing tree ‘pushed over’ from the blast.



Nixon



Malthouse



Wilson



Bannan



Farrant



80th Service 13th April 2024

