

**“Lest we forget”**



Today **74 years ago**, in the night of *1 January 1944* the first night of the New Year after two nights of rest another massive mission of the ongoing '**Battle of Berlin**'.....

The Lancaster **JB280 LQ-K** of the RCAF 405 squadron took part in the second group of *Pathfinders* in the massive raid of the “**The Battle of Berlin**” on **1–2 January 1944**. **Berlin** was the main target, and was attacked by 421 Lancasters. Many German fighters intercepted the Bomber force, 28 Lancasters were lost 168 crewmembers killed and 34 prisoners of war.

**Berlin** was almost completely cloud-covered, and the *Pathfinders* experienced much difficulty in marking the target properly both marking, and bombing were carried out almost blindly. Bomber Command could make no assessment of the results; bombing was scattered and relatively ineffective mostly in the southern districts of **Berlin**.

The Lancaster **JB280 LQ-K** took off after a long delay caused by bad weather on **2 January 1944** at *00.23 Hrs.* from Gransden Lodge, west of Cambridge **England**.

On its route to their target **Berlin** the Canadian pilot Flying Officer **Thomas Henry Donnelly** and his crew, flying the Lancaster **JB280 LQ-K** were attacked by the German night fighter pilot Leutnant **Friedrich Potthast** flying a Bf 110 of the IV./NJG1 while the Lancaster **JB280 LQ-K** was bombed up with one 4000 lb. HC Cookie and four 1000 lb. MC bombs and with high octane fuel on board left for seven hours of flying.

The Lancaster **JB280 LQ-K** and its crew crashed at *02.10 Hrs.* close to **Schoonebeek** in the Netherlands after a violent midair explosion caused by the attack of the German night fighter killing instantly the entire crew of seven and shredded the Lancaster.



T.H. Donnelly  
Pilot  
Canada  
KIA

L.G.R. Miller  
Flight Engineer  
England  
KIA

A.J. Salaba  
Navigator  
Canada  
KIA

B.S.J. West  
Wireless Operator  
England  
KIA

W.L.J. Clark  
Air Bomber  
Canada  
KIA

R.E. Watts  
Air Gunner  
England  
KIA

R. Zimmer  
Air Gunner  
Canada  
KIA

Let's keep the remembrance alive of what Flying Officer **Thomas Henry Donnelly**, Sergeant **Leslie George Robert Miller**, Flying Officer **Alexander Jerry Salaba**, Sergeant **Brian Sidney James West**, Flight Sergeant **William Leonard John Clark**, Sergeant **Ronald Everest Watts** and Sergeant **Ronald Zimmer** did for our freedom.

All the crew members of the Lancaster **JB280 LQ-K** are buried in the Commonwealth War Graves section of the Municipal Cemetery at **Schoonebeek** in the Netherlands.

**Rest in Peace.**