

## “Lest we forget”

Today **74 years** ago, in the night of *23rd-24th of May 1943* in the middle of the 5-month long *Bomber Command* campaign the “**Battle of the Ruhr**”, the campaign of strategic bombing against the **Ruhr** area.

The 460 RAAF Squadron Lancaster **W4984 AR-J** took off from **Binbrook** airfield, for their fatal mission. After a 9-day break in major operations, *Bomber Command* dispatched 826 aircraft to **Dortmund**, a record number of aircraft in a 'non-1,000' raid so far in the war and the largest raid of the “**Battle of the Ruhr**”.

The force comprised: 343 Lancasters, 199 Halifax's, 151 Wellingtons, 120 Stirlings and 13 Mosquitos. Despite the loss of 38 aircraft it was a very successful raid. Many industrial premises were hit, particularly the large *Hoesch steelworks*, which ceased production.

The **W4984 AR-J** was one of Lancaster's who were dispatched for the attack on **Dortmund**. On its route to their target **Dortmund** the Australian pilot **Flight Sergeant Beresford Milton Troy Davis** and his crew, flying the Lancaster **W4984 AR-J** were attacked by the German night fighter pilot Oberleutnant August Geiger flying a Bf 110 night fighter of the 7./NJG 1 from **Twenthe** airbase. The Lancaster **W4984 AR-J** was bombed up with one 4000 *lb.* HC Cookie, 48x30 *lb.* and 540 x4 *lb.* incendiaries and with high octane fuel on board left for several hours of flying.

The Lancaster **W4984 AR-J** and its crew crashed at *02.07 Hrs.* close to **Schoonebeek** in **the Netherlands** after a violent fire on board of the Lancaster caused by the attack of the German night fighter killing seven of the eight crewmembers, **Sergeant Clarence Goldthorpe** could bail out in time and was taken Prisoner of War (POW) by the German army soon after landing close to the **Dutch-German** border.



B.M.T. Davis  
Pilot  
Australia  
KIA

E. Rowlands  
Flight Engineer  
England  
KIA

K.D. Dyce  
Navigator  
Australia  
KIA

J.S. Biffen  
Wireless Operator  
Australia  
KIA

C. Goldthorpe  
Air Bomber  
Australia  
POW

F.W. Ralph  
Air Gunner  
United States  
KIA

C.S. Wright  
Air Gunner  
Australia  
KIA

Let's keep the remembrance alive of what **Beresford Milton Troy Davis, Eric Rowlands, Kenneth Douglas Dyce, Jack Stanley Biffen, Charles Sinclair Wright, Frederick Wilson Ralph** and **Clarence Goldthorpe** did for our freedom.

The entire crew of the **Lancaster W4984 AR-J** except **Sergeant Clarence Goldthorpe** are buried on the cemetery in **Schoonebeek** in the **Netherlands**.

**Rest in Peace.**