

“Lest we forget”

Today **73 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 **William Leonard John Clark, Alexander Jerry Salaba, Brian Sidney James West, Ronald Everest Watts, Leslie George Robert Miller, Ronald Zimmer** and **Thomas Henry Donnelly** did for our freedom.

The entire crew of **Lancaster JB280 LQ-K** is buried on the cemetery in **Schoonebeek** in the **Netherlands**.

Rest in Peace.