

Sergeant Jack Rowland Wales, Squadron 100



A story with many gaps



Figure 1: Sergeant Jack Rowland Wales..Photo courtesy of Steve Smith.

Smith, S. 2022. SERGEANT 1496737 JACK ROWLAND WALES 100 SQUADRON ROYAL AIR FORCE. [Online]. [17 June 2023]. Available from: [Sergeant 1496737 Jack Rowland Wales 100 Squadron Royal Air Force | stevesmith1944 \(wordpress.com\)](#)

RAF Squadron 100 consisted of seven men: Pilot Flying Officer William Austin Gardiner, Flight Engineer Sergeant Joseph Richard Dunn, Navigator Sergeant Oliver Henry Thomas Innocent, Mid Upper Gunner Sergeant Jack Rowland Wales, Wireless Operator Sergeant John King, Bomb Aimer Pilot Officer Edward Charles Harrill and Warrant Officer Fred Hugh Davis.

The squadron's final raid took place on 31st August. Wales' crew were flying the aircraft Lancaster Mk III, JA930, and the target was Berlin. Squadron 100 was one of two aircraft of the 100 Squadron Lancasters to be lost in the course of the night. The official report for the Lancaster aircraft suggested that the aircraft departed at 19:49 hours on 3rd September 1943 from Grimsby and later exploded over Berlin. The whole crew were later declared to be 'lost without a trace'. The average age of the crew was only 21 years.

Although Pilot Officer Harrill's body was initially buried in Heerstraße Cemetery, later to be moved to the Berlin 1939-1945 Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery, Wales and his other five remaining crewmembers were never found. They are therefore commemorated only in name at the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey, Panel 168 (Smith, 2022).

Filling in the gaps

Sergeant Jack Rowland Wales' story is particularly interesting, as his family were related a lot of false information concerning his death.

Researcher Steve Smith, who writes of Sergeant Jack Rowland Wales in his book *Great War Britain Norfolk Remembering 1914-1918* (Smith, 2014), discusses meeting Wales' sisters, who described the nature of the misinformation that they were relayed concerning their brother's fate.

The sisters were told that Wales' crew were very inexperienced and the aircraft was lost over the English Channel. From official military records, it is clear that Wales' crew were in fact several operations into their career and not inexperienced (Smith, 2022).



Figure 2: Sergeant Jack Rowland Wales pictured second to right. Photo courtesy of Steve Smith. Smith, S. 2022. SERGEANT 1496737 JACK ROWLAND WALES 100 SQUADRON ROYAL AIR FORCE. [Online]. [17 June 2023]. Available from: [Sergeant 1496737 Jack Rowland Wales 100 Squadron Royal Air Force | stevesmith1944](#)

A letter supplied to Smith by a relative of Pilot Officer Edward Harrill believed to have been written by the Air Historical Branch on 20th December 1999 describes the fate of the 100 Squadron: "...captured German records stated that the aircraft was shot down at 00.50 hrs on 4/9/43 northeast of Wilkendorf, twenty-two miles north east of Berlin. After the cessation of hostilities, investigations carried out by the RAF Missing Research and Enquiry Service were made at the village of Wilkendorf, located in the Russian zone of occupation. The Burgermeister of Wilkendorf state that more than one aircraft crashed in the vicinity during the war and that all the dead had been taken to Berlin for burial. The cemetery used for Allied casualties was the District Army Cemetery Doeberitz, near Berlin and P/O Harrill's grave was located there."