

SERGEANT

## GORDON STANLEY BOWLES

Service Number: 1219595  
Regiment & Unit/Ship Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve  
102 Sqdn.  
Date of Death Died 05 May 1943  
Buried/commemorated RHEINBERG WAR CEMETERY  
2. F. 10.  
Germany  
Country of Service United Kingdom

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Baptised 02-Jul-1922 at St John The Baptist, Halling. Parents Thomas and Agnes.

The following information is from the Richard Allenby Website – Yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk]  
<https://www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk/aircraft/yorkshire/york43/jb869.html>

Halifax JB869 at Pocklington airfield.

On the evening of 30th April 1943 the crew of this 102 Squadron aircraft were about to take off for an operational flight to bomb Essen when this aircraft taxied into an unlit vehicle on the airfield. The aircraft cannot have been seriously damaged as it was soon repaired and lost on Ops less than a week later with most of those list below involved in both incidents.

Pilot - Sgt William Bernard Johnson Happold	RAFVR (1092623).
Navigator - F/O John Dartry Erzinger	RCAF (J/7023).
Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt John Brownlie	RAFVR (1070175).
Air Gunner - Sgt T H Jones.	
Air Gunner - Sgt Duncan Roy McGregor	RAFVR (1602585).
Flight Engineer - Sgt Gordon Stanley Bowles	RAFVR (1219595).
Bomb Aimer - F/O John Baxter	RAFVR (127296).

On the night of 4th / 5th May 1943 all of the above, apart from F/O Erzinger, were flying in Halifax JB869 again on Ops to Dortmund when the aircraft crashed in the Monchengladbach area. Happold (21), Bowles, Baxter (27) and McGregor (19) were killed, while Jones and Brownlie became PoW's. Those who died are buried in Rheinberg War Cemetery, Germany.

John Baxter received a commission on 20th July 1942 and was promoted to F/O on 20th January 1943.

John Erzinger was born on 4th November 1917 in Saskatoon, Canada and was the son of John and Mary (nee Porter) Erzinger. He enlisted for RCAF service in Winnipeg on 4th November 1940 and after training in Canada he was awarded his Air Observer's badge on 19th July 1941. He then

Memorial: (WMR 88176), Halling, Kent

received a commission on 18th August 1941 and left for service overseas in September 1941. He appears to have first served in the Middle East returning to the UK in June 1942 and after training at 15 OTU and 1652 C.U. was posted to 102 Squadron on 28th February 1943. F/O John Erzinger was to be killed in mid-May 1943 when flying in Halifax JB799 on Ops to Duisburg and the aircraft failed to return. He is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

Halifax JB869 was built to contract ACFT/1808/C4 by English Electric Co. Ltd. at Samlesbury and was taken on charge by 102 Squadron at Pocklington on 24th March 1943. As a result of the damage sustained at Pocklington on 30th April 1943 Cat.A/FA damage was the damage assessment and it was swiftly repaired on site. On 5th May 1943 the aircraft failed to return from Ops to Dortmund that saw four of it's then crew killed and three being made PoW. Cat.E(m) damage was recorded on the paperwork and the aircraft was struck off charge on 8th May 1943 having a 61 hours total flying logged to it.