

In Memory of
Sergeant Flight Engineer
Frederick Stanley Tristram Pittard

572542, 49 Sqn., Royal Air Force who died on 31 January 1943 Age 23

Son of Frederick Tristram Pittard and Mabel Grace Pittard, of Hyndland, Glasgow.

Remembered with Honour
Scampton (St. John the Baptist) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

572542 Sergeant Frederick Stanley Tristram PITTARD, RAF was killed when Lancaster ED428, crashed at Reepham level crossing at 0715hrs on 31st January 1943

The aircraft, callsign 'E-Easy' of 49 Squadron, had taken off at 0226 that morning from RAF FISKERTON on a mission to Hamburg. Letters to the next of kin of the crew tell how, after successfully completing the mission, the aircraft undershot the runway of Fiskerton aerodrome while coming in to land, struck a tree and crashed at Reepham Crossings, ¼ mile north west of the aerodrome (and 2 miles east north east of Lincoln).

A circumstantial report prepared on behalf of Wing Commander SLEE, Commanding 49 Squadron, states that, from questioning Sgt PHILLIPS, the sole survivor, it would appear that the wrong QFE (air pressure at ground level) was set on the aircraft altimeter. This would cause the altimeter to indicate that the aircraft was at a greater height than it actually was.

Six of the crew were killed:

[401302](#) F/Sgt Elliot Livesey COLE - Pilot RAAF(Age 23)

[111535](#) Fg/Off Frank RIDLEY (Nav.B) (Age 21)

[404849](#) Sgt James Arthur Gerald BROWNE (WT/AG) RAAF (Age 25)

[403187](#) F/Sgt Llewellyn GREY RAAF (Age 26)

[572542](#) Sgt Frederick Stanley Tristram PITTARD (F/E) (Age 23)

[1324081](#) Sgt William Charles WOOD(R/G) (Age 22)

1001700 Sgt E PHILLIPS, the Mid Upper Gunner survived but was injured.

F/Sgt COLE, Fg/Off RIDLEY, Sgt BROWNE and F/Sgt GREY, rest with Sgt PITTARD in Scampton (St John the Baptist) Churchyard.

Frederick Stanley Tristram PITTARD was born in 1919 to Frederick Tristram PITTARD and Mabel Grace PITTARD of Hyndland, Glasgow.

Perversely, due to government information policy, it is easier to find details of his Australian comrades from half way around the world than those of Frederick, but we know from his service number that Frederick initially joined the RAF as an Apprentice, one of Trenchard's famous 'Halton Brats'.

Unlike many of his comrades, Frederick was not initially recruited for flying duties and only became a member of aircrew because of the increasing size and complexity bomber aircraft. The workload of a four engine bomber was too much for a single pilot and in brutal maths of war the RAF decided that they could not provide, and potentially lose, two pilots per aircraft. It was recognised that it would be best use of manpower if men with mechanical aptitude could be found to manage all aspects of the aircraft engines in flight for the pilot. The RAF had a large number of very competent ground crew and they, and others, were encouraged to apply to become Flight Engineers.

This is the route that Frederick took and as a highly trained apprentice he would have been particularly welcome. He would, being already serving, have been aware of the considerable casualty rates within Bomber Command and the substantial additional danger he was facing by volunteering.

After completing further training of up to 6 months at No.4 School of Technical Training at St Athan, Frederick and his fellow Flight Engineers, by now presented with their Flight Engineer's Brevet and promoted to at least Sergeant, were posted to complete crews converting from two to four engine aircraft.

We first find Frederick in the 49 Squadron records, flying with F/Sgt HEARD on a mission to DUISBERG on the night of 06/09/42.

The next day, on 07/09/1942, he is shown posted, with Sgt TOWNSEND's crew, from 49 Squadron Conversion Flight to operational duties on 49 Squadron. At this point the crew had 'converted' to the Lancaster from the Manchester. Frederick would only have joined his crew at the 'conversion' stage as only 4 engine bombers like the Lancaster had Flight Engineers, not the Manchester.

The order of flying with a 'strange' crew before operating with his own may seem odd, and the records may be in error, but 49 Conversion Flight was part of 49 Squadron and the niceties of keeping the same crew together were often subordinated to 'get the mission done'.

After his first mission with F/Sgt HEARD, further missions followed, all as a part of Sgt TOWNSEND's crew, except the final one;

Mining off SWINEMUNDE on 18/09/42

Mining off BORNHOLM ISLAND on 24/09/42

WISMAR on 01/10/42

OSNABROOK on 06/10/42

WISMAR on 12/10/42

COLOGNE on 15/10/42

GENOA on 07/11/42, 09/11/42 and again on 15/11/42

TURIN on 28/11/42 and 09/12/42

ESSEN on 21/01/43

DUSSELDORF on 23/01/43

When Sgt PITTARD took off on his final mission to HAMBURG on 30/01/43, he was in the same situation as on his first mission, not with his usual crew. For the mission in ED 428 that night, Sgt PITTARD had replaced Sgt BRAMLEY, the regular Flight Engineer of F/Sgt COLE's crew. It was a change that was to save Sgt BRAMLEY's life but cost that of Frederick Stanley Tristram PITTARD.