

40685 FLT/LT ROBERT JACK DUNLOP-MACKENZIE

106 Squadron, RAF

Reported missing in action 25 March 1942

According to the recently republished autobiography of Wing-Commander Guy Gibson (*Enemy Coast Ahead*, Penguin, 1993), Robert Dunlop-Mackenzie originally served with No. 83 Squadron, flying Hereford bombers. Indeed, it would seem he was the only pilot who had dared to fly these aircraft at night.

In March 1942, when the then Squadron Leader Gibson arrived to take up his command of 106 Squadron, one of the first people he met was Dunlop-Mackenzie, who enlightened him on the difficulties and dangers of flying the Manchester bomber with which they had just been re-equipped.

The squadron's first mission using the Manchester was on 20 March 1942, involving mine laying duties. Later, on the night of 25-6 March, six aircraft were detailed to raid the armaments works at Essen. Owing to last minute defects, two aircraft were unable to take off at 20.00 hours. Three of the four remaining aircraft reached Essen but, owing to ground haze, were unable to locate the actual target visually and were forced to drop the bombs on the estimated position using GEE, a newly developed navigation aid. When the bombers turned for home, one aircraft (L7390), flown by Flt/Lt Dunlop-Mackenzie, was reported missing (NA Ref. Air 27/832).

Aged 23 when he died, he was the son of Archibald and Mary Louise and the husband of Letitia Dunlop-Mackenzie of St John's Wood, London. He is buried in Harlingen Cemetery, Netherlands (plot E, row 1, grave 1).