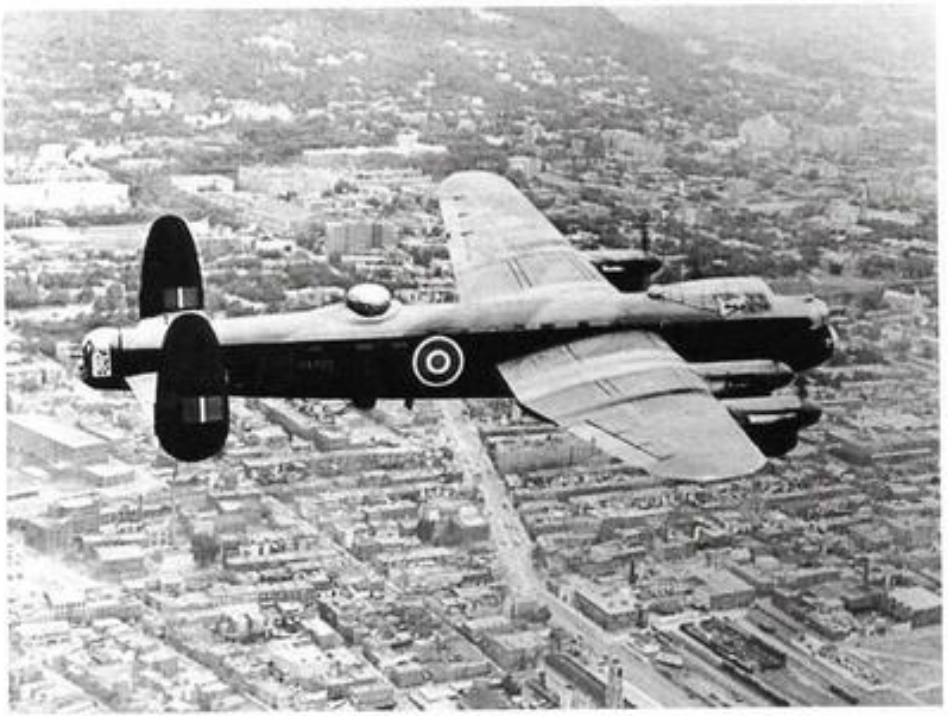


A Rededication Service for

Flying Officer Leslie Markland Hough RAAF
Pilot Officer John Henry Tales RAFVR
Sergeant Henry Charles Burnside RAFVR
Sergeant John Lawson RAFVR

Wednesday 7 October 2026 at 11:00 hours
CWGC Venray War Cemetery, Netherlands



On the 8 December 1944, Lancaster PD374 of No.218 Squadron took off from Methwold in Norfolk at 08:25 hours on an operational sortie to attack the Neerbeck oil plant at Homberg, in the Ruhr Germany alongside more than 130 Lancasters. The weather over the target was clear and fair; the flak was intense, but no fighters were sighted. Whilst over the target, PD374 was hit by flak and was later seen that morning on fire and losing height gradually heading towards Horstgen. The aircraft sustained severe damage, with engines and fuel tanks catching fire. At around 10:30 hours, 2 km East of Horstgen, the aircraft suddenly nosedived and crashed into a field. Four parachutes were seen to open before the aircraft hit the ground with three of the men later being taken Prisoner of War. The fourth was tragically killed on the ground by members of the SS. Three went down with the plane.

Flying Officer LM Hough RAAF (Les)
Pilot Officer J H Tales (Jack)
Flight Sergeant J A Clifford (Allen)
Flying Officer J H Barron (John)
Sergeant H C Burnside (Harry)
Sergeant J Lawson (Geordie)
Sergeant S K Lee (Stan)

All four casualties were taken to the local cemetery in Dachsberg where they were buried. A team from the RAF's Missing Research Enquiry Unit went to the area to investigate the reported crash and burial in July 1946 but found the bodies had been previously exhumed and moved by military personnel. Enquiries were made to establish who had moved the bodies. In 1949 it transpired an American team had visited Dachsberg in May 1945 and exhumed the graves concentrating them to the large American cemetery at Margraten. On the reports however, the location was incorrectly recorded and abbreviated to "Dachs". When the remains were returned to the British in 1949 efforts to locate "Dachs" (with incorrect coordinates and map references) resulted in the British concluding that "the place does not exist". They believed it could have been misspelt for a place 4km's away where they were investigating the loss of another crew. When these investigations led to a dead-end, the graves in Venray were listed as unknowns.



Flying Officer Leslie Markland Hough

Leslie was born on 26 November 1917 at Waverley, New South Wales. Raised largely in North Adelaide (South Australia), he completed his Intermediate School Certificate and worked as a clerk and booking manager prior to military service. A Methodist by faith, he initially enrolled in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve on 25 September 1941 before enlisting for pilot training in the Royal Australian Air Force on 25 April 1942.

Hough undertook his initial military training at No. 4 Initial Training School, Victor Harbour, South Australia. He then completed pilot training at No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School, Parafield, followed by No. 6 Service Flying Training School, Mallala. He was awarded his Flying Badge on 5 March 1943 and commissioned as a Pilot Officer on 10 March 1943. His promotions subsequently included Flying Officer on 11 September 1943.
Following his qualification as a pilot, Hough embarked for the United Kingdom aboard the USAT *William A. Holbrook*, departing Australia on 6 May 1943 and arriving in Britain on 7 July 1943. He completed advanced flying training with No. 21 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit at Kidlington and operational bomber training at No. 26 Operational Training Unit before being posted to No. 218 Squadron RAF at Methwold, Norfolk, on 10 August 1944.

By November 1944, Flying Officer Hough had completed thirteen operational sorties and was undertaking his fourteenth mission as captain of Lancaster Mk I PD374 (code HA-C).

Contemporary accounts describe Hough remaining at the controls until the final moments of the aircraft's flight, ensuring other crew members had the opportunity to escape. The crew's final mission represented one of the many costly Bomber Command operations conducted against Germany during the latter stages of the war. A surviving crew member said "with that last glance I saw Les Hough, that kindly, raucous, irreverent, competent, sometimes irascible and very Australian skipper, sitting there stubbornly keeping a burning wreck airborne while his crew bailed out. Like the good Aussie he was, he stuck by his mates to the end"

"I wish to thank you for all the letters I have received from the Department & kind message of sympathy."
Letter from Hough's mother dated 7 October 1945.



Pilot Officer John Henry Tales

Pilot Officer John Tales was born on 31 December 1917 in Attercliffe, Sheffield to Charles Tales and Edith Frost. He was one of eleven children. Prior to enlistment his occupation was that of a Poster Writer, a skilled signwriter whose job it would have been to produce advertising and publicity posters by hand. In an area such as Sheffield John was possibly producing posters for local steel and engineering firms, as well as Department stores, cinemas and theatres. The role required excellent handwriting and lettering skills, artistic ability and accuracy of spelling and layout.

Tales enlisted into the RAF in September 1939 and spent time at RAF Cardington, which served as a major RAF recruitment and initial training centre from 1936. His service records show he was 5ft 6ins with fair hair and grey eyes. His religion is recorded as Church of England. Tales' conduct throughout his 5-year service was "very good". He was promoted to Sergeant in Dec 1942 and Flight Sergeant a year later when he was also authorised to wear flight engineer insignia - known as brevets or wings on their uniforms, this embroidered half-wing badge was sewn on the left breast above their medal ribbons and can be clearly seen in his photograph.

Tales married his wife Megan Stringer on 27 Jul 1940 at St Serf's Church, Glasgow. On their marriage certificate Megans occupation is described as a Comptometer Operator, they were 22 years old. He had been stationed at 209 Sqn in Scotland; it is possible this is where they met. Sadly, Megan died exactly one year later on 27 Jul 1941 at home in Glasgow with her father present, of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. At the age of only 23 Tales was a widower.

Tales moved to 149 Sqn in Suffolk as an instructor and here he volunteered to join the crew as a Flight Engineer. Tales was experienced and competent but was discouraged as he had already completed a full tour of operation, but he explained his whole life had been tied up with the RAF and they were now his family. He was posted to 218 Sqn on 22 August 1944.

"I would like you to know he was one of the grandest sons that ever lived, and was proud to fight for his country, from a heartbroken Mother."
Tales' Mother in an undated letter around August 1945.



Sergeant Henry Charles Burnside RAFVR

Sergeant Henry Burnside was born on 14 July 1922 in Brentford to Robert Burnside and Winifred Hobbs. His father was born in Durham but moved to London when he was 16 years old. He had two sisters Winifred and Mabel. Prior to his enlistment into the RAF on 9 May 1942, aged 20, he was a shop assistant. His record of service described him as 5ft 8ins, with brown hair and blue eyes, his religion is recorded as Church of England.

Burnside's conduct throughout his service was described as "very good". He is recordED as being "absent" from station on 12 Apr 1943 from 0001 hrs to 0710 hrs, but this obviously didn't affect his career as he was promoted to Sergeant in December 1943.
He attended AGS (Air Gunner School) in October 1943 where he would have been trained in defensive combat, target tracking and operating powered gun turrets. In Mar 1944 he was posted to No 26 Operational Training Wing in Buckinghamshire where he would have undergone intensive night bombing and cross-country training. It was here he met John Lawson who was undergoing training at the same time. From here Burnside transitioned to a 6-week Heavy Conversion Unit at RAF Wratting Common in Suffolk to learn to fly four- engine heavy bombers such as the Stirling. They would have practised every drill and at the conclusion they were described as a crew that had a hard core of competence and were a well knitted together. Burnside was posted to 218 Sqn in August 1944 and allocated to "C" flight.

Burnside was described by other members of his crew as one with "immaculate appearance, he was always well dressed, his uniform was clean and pressed, his shirts and collars spotless and even his shoes and buttons were regularly shined". In mid Jul 1944 Burnside and the crew began training on the Lancaster. His role was as a Wireless Operator and Air Gunner,

"Please have your photo taken and try and make Mum, Dad and Mabel have theirs taken as I would like to keep them with me always...well cheerio Sis, all my love, God Bless you Harry"
Letter to his sister Winifred 2 Sept 1942.



Sergeant John Lawson RAFVR

Sergeant John Lawson was born on 15 February 1923 in Houghton, Durham to Robert Lawson and Isabella Bryce, he had four brothers. His father was a Coal Miner Trolleyman and John followed his father into this industry. In 1943 he was working as "Token Man" which was commonly referred to as a Tallyman or Token Taker. John would have been working on the surface of a Durham colliery and held a vital role around safety

tracking and production accounting. The role was critical as the Token Man would track exactly who was underground, this prevented men being left behind in the event of an explosion. John's father died young and his mother Isabella remarried in 1941.

Lawson enlisted into the RAF in July 1943. Throughout his service his conduct and character is described as "very good" his service records describe him as 5ft 7ins, with dark hair and grey eyes. His religion is recorded as Methodist. His mother is listed as his NOK as his father had died.

Lawson was posted to No 26 Operational Training Wing in Buckinghamshire where he would have undergone intensive night bombing and cross-country training. It was here he would have met Burnside and other members of "C" flight who were undergoing training at the same time. From here he transitioned to a Heavy Conversion Unit to learn to fly four- engine heavy bombers such as the Lancaster.
He was posted to 218 Sqn in summer 1944. His role was as an Air Gunner. The Stirling aircraft were by this time virtually obsolete following heavy losses and had been principally used to drop supplies to the French resistance. Lawson along with the rest of the crew started flying the Lancaster at Feltwell in mid July 1944.
Affectionately known to other members of the crew as "Geordie", Lawson's accent would often be the brunt of jokes from the Aussie Pilot Hough.

Order of Service

conducted by
Reverend (Group Captain) Ruth Hake MBE KHC
Deputy Chaplain-in-Chief

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with you all.

We are gathered here today in this place of remembrance to honour our fallen in conflicts past.

We remember with thanksgiving Flying Officer Leslie Hough, Pilot Officer John Tales, Sergeant Henry Burnside and Sergeant John Lawson. They, alongside so many others, served with honour and gave their life in service, counting service to others greater than service to self.

Their sacrifice is summed up in Jesus' words to His disciples:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. **John 15:12-13.**

Bidding Prayer

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we remember with thanksgiving all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us in time of war. We thank you that the offering of these aviator's lives was not in vain. By your grace, enable us this day to dedicate ourselves anew to the causes of justice, freedom and peace; and give us the wisdom and strength to build a better world, for the honour and glory of your name. **Amen**

Reading
The Lancaster
Read by Wing Commander Wayne Baylis, Assistant Air and Space Advisor - London, Royal Australian Air Force

She lifted into the morning sky,
Her four great Merlins calling clear:
A Lancaster bound for distant skies,
With seven men who conquered fear.

Some came from Britain's ancient shores,
One from Australia's sunlit land;
But once they climbed aboard that plane,
They flew as one – a single band.

The darkness held no thought of rank,
No measure made of where they'd grown.
The trust that bound a bomber crew
Was stronger far than flesh and bone.

For some, that flight became their last,
The stars receiving their final breath.
Their youth was given for our peace,
Their courage shining beyond death.

The Lancaster returned no more,
Yet neither did their spirit fade,
For every life they touched endures,
And every debt is still repaid.

So let us stand in grateful silence,
Remembering those who dared to fly.
Not British only, nor Australian
But brothers beneath one sky.

Scripture Reading:
John 15:9-17
Read by Captain Ian Stubbs Royal Navy, Defence Attaché, The Hague

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Address

The Reverend Ruth Hake RAF

Reading:
Lie in the Dark and Listen (excerpt) - Noel Coward

Read by John Lawson, Nephew of Sergeant John Lawson RAFVR

Lie in the dark and listen.
It's clear tonight so they're flying high,
Hundreds of them, thousands
Deep in the earth they've left below. perhaps,
Riding the icy, moonlit sky.
Men, machinery, bombs and maps,
Altimeters, guns and charts,
Coffee, sandwiches, fleece-lined boots,
Bones and muscles and minds and hearts,
English saplings with English roots

Lie in the dark and let them go;
Lie in the dark and listen.
There's one debt you'll forever owe.
Lie in the dark and listen.

The Act of Dedication

So, let us now bless and dedicate these graves as the final resting place of the mortal remains of Flying Officer Leslie Hough, Pilot Officer John Tales, Sergeant Henry Burnside and Sergeant John Lawson.

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ was laid in a tomb: Bless and dedicate, we pray, these graves as the place where the mortal remains of your servants Flying Officer Leslie Markland Hough, Pilot Officer John Henry Tales, Sergeant Henry Charles Burnside and Sergeant John Lawson rest in peace, in the knowledge they now abides in your glory through the merits of your Son, who is the resurrection and the life; who died and is alive and reigns with you now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Airman's Prayer

Pilot divine, and Lord of all on high
Thine are the starry squadrons of the sky!
Lead us whose wings for freedoms sake now soar,
Into our hearts Thy faith and courage pour
Oh hear our prayer.

Set Thou our course whose trust is laid in Thee!
Oh Thou who chartest all eternity!
Through cloud and sunshine, through darkest night
Guide Thou our wings who battle for the right
Oh hear our prayer.

Father and friend, in whose almighty name
We dedicate our lives to freedom's flame,
Bless now our wings as on through space we wend.
Bless us who to Thy care our souls commend
Oh hear our prayer.

Amen.

The Exhortation
Read by Corporal Taryn Anderson-Lang RAF

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.
We will remember them.

Last Post

Trumpeter of the Band of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force
(The Trumpeter plays by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council)

Silence
Reveille

Kohima Epitaph
Read by Corporal Taryn Anderson-Lang RAF

When you go home tell them of us and say:
'For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'

Laying of Wreaths

Let us pray.

God of peace and compassion,
as we lay these wreaths, we honour those
who gave their lives in service to others.
We remember with gratitude Flying Officer Leslie Hough, Pilot Officer John Tales, Sergeant Henry Burnside and Sergeant John Lawson, and all who have fallen in the pursuit of justice and peace.
May their courage never be forgotten,
their sacrifice never in vain,
and their example inspire us to live with integrity,
compassion and hope for a better world.
Grant peace to the departed,
and to us who remain, the strength to uphold the values
for which they gave their lives. **Amen**.

Collect of The Royal Air Force

Almighty God, who makest the clouds Thy chariots and walkest upon the wings of the storm, look in mercy we beseech thee upon the Royal Air Force.

Make us a tower of strength to our King and to our country. Help us to do our duty with prudence and with fearlessness, confident that in life or in death the eternal God is our refuge and strength.

Grant this for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer (all)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Blessing

Go out into the world in peace; be brave and strong. Hold on to what is good; do not repay evil with evil; encourage those who are discouraged; support those who are weak. Help anyone who is suffering; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord with joy, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit. May God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**



Members of the crew of Lancaster PD 374 HA - C "Charlie".

John Barron, Harry Burnside, Les Hough
Allen Clifford, Geordie Lawson, Stan Lee.



The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, is responsible for the research, identification and burial of all British casualties worldwide.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the graves, memorials, records and memory of the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars.

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