

William Smithson



Rank: - Flight Sergeant (Wireless Operator-Air Gunner)

Number: - 935541

Regiment: - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve 9 Squadron (Code letters WS)

Died: - 9th November 1941 aged 24

Cemetery: - Runnymede Memorial, Surrey, panel 37

Batley News, 15 Nov 1941 (photo); 30 May 1942

William was born on 9 November 1917 the son of Herbert and Ellen Smithson (nee Midwood, m. 1916, registered Dewsbury). Mary was born in 1919 and the family lived at Batley Carr. William attended Batley Carr Council School and Dewsbury Junior Technical College and was then employed by Crawshaw and Warburton, Ltd. Dewsbury. He attended Upper Road Methodist Church and was a member of the cricket club. He volunteered on the second day of the war and became a wireless-operator air-gunner with the Coastal Command but in

September 1940 transferred to Bomber Command and saw continual action since then. He took part in many flights over Germany and also Italy.

On the Friday before his birthday he took part in a heavy raid on Berlin and wrote to his parents at 21, Hirst Road, Batley Carr to reassure them of his safety. He also wrote to his fiancée Miss Martha Haley of Thornhill Lees that his gloves were frozen to his hands when he reached the base.

On his 24th birthday he took part in a night raid on Hamburg and was reported missing. At this time No9 Squadron was operating with Vickers Wellington 111s

from Honington and this was one of 37 planes not to return out of a force of 103 aircraft. The plane crashed in the Waddensee off Vieland with the loss of crew members Sgt G H Dartnell, Sgt RB Fielding, Sgt R B How, Sgt K Quick and P/O H V Wilgar-Robinson.

William was awarded the Air Crew Europe Star; 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal

He is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity, Batley Carr, Lychgate Memorial; Royal Air Forces Association Club, Batley and Dewsbury and Batley War Memorials.

**BELIEVED KILLED IN
HAMBURG RAID.**

**Sergt. Wm. Smithson's 'Plane
Among 37 Lost.**

Official news has been received that Sergeant William Smithson, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Smithson, Hirst Road, off Mill Road, Batley Carr, is believed killed in the recent heavy raid on Hamburg, when 37 of our 'planes were reported missing.

Sergeant Smithson, who had a long flying experience, took part in many raids over Germany and also "visited" Italy as a wireless-operator air-gunner. He was a former student at Dewsbury Technical College and a worker and member of the cricket team at Upper Road Methodist Church, Batley Carr. He was employed by Messrs. Crawshaw and Warburton, Ltd., Dewsbury.

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Batley News 30 May 1942



Researched by members of
Batley History Group