

Sgt. William Cuthbertson Aitken 747920 RAFVR



William was a Wireless Operator and Air Gunner with the Royal Air Force as part of 207 Squadron based at RAF Waddington. He was killed on 21 March 1941 and was just 22 years old.

On the night of 20/21 March 1941 21 Whitleys and 3 Manchesters were dispatched to attack the U-boat base at Lorient. The Manchester L7278, piloted by Sgt. F B Harwood, was airborne from Waddington at 0200 hours and crashed at 0225 hours while trying to make an emergency landing east of Wymondham, 6 miles east of Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. The crash was attributed to a silver bearing failure in the left Vulture engine. The crew were ordered to abandon and two were killed after jumping as the machine was too low. The pilot made a belly landing in a field and the left wing struck a tree, which caused the machine to slew around and crash killing two more crew members and injuring another. William was flying in the front turret; the mid under turret had been removed from this aircraft and the later mid-upper had not yet been fitted. RAF regulations at this time stipulated that each bomber had to be crewed by a minimum of 2 pilots and 2 WOp/AGs.

The rest of the crew of Manchester L7278 were:

Sgt. F B Harwood DFM Pilot	Killed
Sgt. N Birch	Killed
Sgt. Holland	Injured
Sgt. B Hogg	Killed
Sgt Hallam	Injured

William can be found on panel 1.