

Sgt. Joseph Atkinson 810060 RAFVR

Sgt. Joseph Atkinson from Birkenhead was the son of Anthony Wordsworth and Florence Jane Atkinson. He was born in Penrith, Cumberland in December 1916 and died on 8 November 1942 aged 25.

Following training at 27 OTU and RAF Litchfield, Joseph joined 142 squadron on 17 October 1942. Joseph was Navigator on BK198 QT-P which took off from Grimsby on the night of 7 November 1942 on a Gardening Op to 'plant' mines off Texel. The crew took off at 2243 hours and it is believed that the pilot may have lost control, due either to flak or to intense searchlight glare, with the bomber coming down at 0038 hours 7km west of Bergen into the North Sea. The Wellington was claimed to be hit on 8 November 1942 at 0041 by Flak unit 3.Lei.Abt/845.



The crew members were:

Sgt. Richard Francis HILL RAF, Air Gunner
Sgt. Joseph ATKINSON RAF (Aux AF), Navigator
Sgt. Noel Briggs COLLINS RAFVR, Air Bomber
Flt. Sgt. Thomas WOODHOUSE RAAF, Pilot
Flt. Sgt. Martin Randolph HEHIR RAAF, Air Gunner

The Germans recovered the body of Flight Sergeant Thomas 'Tombo' Woodhouse from the sea near Bergen aan Zee. German sources (Totenliste 124 and a Death card) mention three other unidentified airmen were also washed ashore at that time. They were believed to be members of the same crew.

Sgt Woodhouse was buried in grave 141; grave 140 was eventually exhumed by the Imperial War Graves Commission and the remains identified as Sergeant Atkinson. The graves of the other two unknown were mentioned in the German Totenliste but the 5th missing airman could not be located. As the aircraft carried a crew of five, it was impossible to make any definite statement regarding the fate of the other three crew members. It was therefore decided to include the names of Hill, Collins and Hehir on the Runnymede Memorial in Englefield Green, Egham.

Sgt Joseph Atkinson is commemorated on Panel 4 and also on the WW2 memorial in the Wirral Museum, Birkenhead.

SOURCES:

Royal Air Force Bomber Command Losses of the Second World War Vol.3 1942. Chorley, W R.

www.rafcommands.com forum

<http://www.go2war2.nl/artikel/4680/Crash-of-Wellington-BK198-near-Bergen.htm>

PICTURE:

www.go2war2.nl