

Wing Commander Eric Arthur Benjamin **DFC & Bar 77777 RAFVR**

Eric Benjamin was the 25-year-old master bomber on a raid deep in eastern Germany in February 1945, who died along with his navigator when their DH Mosquito was shot down.

His aircraft, Mosquito XXV KB401 AZ-E, was brought down by flak - the only loss on the raid which had involved 254 No. 5 Group Lancasters and six Mosquitoes from No. 627 Squadron. The loss of his aircraft occurred early in the attack on the synthetic oil plant at Bohlen, south of Leipzig on the night of 19/20 February. It is believed to have greatly contributed to the lack of success of the raid.



Eric was based in 54 Base at Coningsby and was 'borrowed' from 627 and flown over from nearby RAF Woodhall Spa. This allowed him to lead the raid, on one of the final fuel producing plants in Germany.

Born in Kingston-on-Thames in June 1919, Eric was the son of Albert and Beatrice Benjamin. He was educated at Thames Valley Grammar School in Twickenham and, after joining the RAF, he trained as a pilot and served with 61 Squadron. He gained his first Distinguished Flying Cross on 7 September 1943 and was awarded his DFC, again with 61 Squadron, in January 1944. He and his wife, Betty, lived in Twickenham.

He was killed along with his navigator, F/O John Heath DFM, and is now buried in Berlin War Cemetery, grave ref 1. Z. 13. Eric is also remembered on Thames Valley Grammar School memorial and in St James' Church, Hampton Hill.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 008.

Sources: War Widows' Association/Aircrew Remembered/Teddington Online WW2 Memorial.