

Wg. Cdr. Vyvian Quentery Blackden 16236 RAF



Wing Commander V Q Blackden

Vyvian Blackden took command of 12 Squadron in June 1940 when the unit and its Fairey Battles returned from France where it had been part of the Advanced Air Striking Force. The squadron went to the then-new airfield at RAF Binbrook and continued to operate its Battle light bombers until November when it began converting to Wellingtons. The conversion itself took longer than expected because of the poor state of the grass runways at Binbrook in what was a very wet winter.

Finally, on the night of 9/10 April 1941, the squadron was operational on Wellingtons and Blackden led four aircraft to join a small-scale attack on Emden. He was flying Wellington II W5375 (PH-D) which left Binbrook at 2230 hours. Two and a half-hours later his aircraft was attacked by a Me109 flown by Luftwaffe ace Oblt. Egmont Prinz zur Lippe Weissenfeld over Holland and the two fought a running battle with the fighter making at least five attacks on the Wellington before an engine caught fire and it eventually crashed into the IJsselmeer, killing all six crew members. It was Weissenfeld's unit's 100th victim of the war.

Vyvian Blackden's body was later recovered by the lifeboat 'Hilda' and he is buried in the war graves section of Lemsterland General Cemetery. He was 34 years old.

Vyvian was the fifth of six sons of Brigadier General Leonard Blackden CBE and Mary Blackden MBE of Mardon, Kent. His father had been GOC in Jamaica in the First World War when his 18-year-old son Arthur was killed on the Somme. A third son, Walter, was killed in 1944 when his Liberator was shot down while attacking a U-boat in the Bay of Biscay.

Killed with Wg. Cdr. Blackden were the second pilot F/O John Bond, observer F/O John Broughton, wireless operator/air gunners Flt. Sgt. Duncan McDougall and Sgt. George Bishop and air gunner F/O Harold Marshall.

His name can be found on IBCC panel 010.

Photographic source: William de Jong: Friesland Wartime History.