

**Flt. Sgt. Ian Edward
Maitland Borley
365199 RAF**

Ian Maitland was a Wellington pilot who was killed along with his crew just 31 hours after the start of the Second World War.



He was one of the very first to die in the war, and was lost in one of the first two aircraft to be shot down in air-to-air combat. He was also the first North Irishman to be killed in the war.

Ian was the pilot of Wellington I L4268 of No. 9 Squadron, in a group of 14 Wellingtons sent by Bomber Command to attack German warships anchored off Brunsbüttel in the Elbe estuary in the early evening of 4 September 1939. At the same time 15 Blenheims were attacking shipping off Wilhelmshaven. Two of the Wellingtons – both from 9 Squadron – and five Blenheims were lost in raids in which crews were instructed not to drop bombs on the German mainland.

Ian was 30 years old, born in Rathbone, Dublin in 1909. His father Frederick had served in the British Army in the First World War, and had moved with his family (wife Jean, and Ian) to Northern Ireland in the early 1930s. Ian joined the RAF and was married to Bessie, from Axbridge, Somerset before the couple settled in Weston-super-Mare.

He and his crew took off from RAF Honington in Suffolk at 1605 hours on the second day of the war, and were reported to have been shot down by Me109s off the Elbe estuary two hours later. The Blenheims had taken off a few minutes earlier and all of their victims fell to anti-aircraft fire, thus establishing the 9 Squadron losses to be confirmed of the first air-to-air casualties of the war.

There were no survivors from L4269. Ian Borley and the members of his crew are all commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 1). The others lost from his aircraft were observer Sgt. George Miller, wireless operator/air gunners Cpl. George Park and 19-year-old LAC Harry Dore, and rear gunner AC2 Robert Henderson.

Ian's name can be found on IBCC panel 011.

Sources: *Bombers First and Last* by Gordon Thornburn; Wartime NI; Peter Green Collection (9 Squadron aircraft showing pre-war codes).