

AC1 George Thomas Brocking 546065 RAF

George Brocking was a young Wellington air gunner 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 Allied aircraft to be shot down in air-to-air combat.

Initially George had joined the RAF as ground crew (rank AC2, eventually promoted to AC1). As WW2 approached there was a shortage of air gunners and he and his best friend Kenneth Day volunteered for this role and undertook a five-week training course together.

George and Kenneth were part of the crew of Wellington I L4275 WS-H, of No. 9 Squadron that provided six of 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 Blenheim light bombers 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.

L4275 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 Me109 fighters off the Elbe estuary two hours later. The Blenheims had taken off a few minutes earlier and all of their victims were accounted for by anti-aircraft fire, thus confirming the 9 Squadron losses to be the first air-to-air casualties of the war.

George's body was never recovered and he is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 2). The others lost from his aircraft were the pilot Flt. Sgt. Albion Turner, observer Sgt. Donald Jarvis, wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Bertie Walton and rear gunner AC2 Kenneth Day.

Twenty-two years old when he died, George was the son of William and Jessie May Brocking.

George's name can be found on IBCC panel 013.

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