

F/O John Edwin Henry Davies 176652 RAFVR



The joint graves of the crew of BQ-S and John Davies



During July 1944 Bomber Command launched three attacks on rail yards at Revigny in eastern France as part of the campaign to cripple the French transport network. Each were costly affairs and John Davies and his Lancaster crew fell victim in the first of these.

He was the pilot of Lancaster III LM647 BQ-S, of No. 550 Squadron, which was shot down during the first of these raids on the night of 12/13 July, a 1 Group attack that cost 550 two Lancasters with a third abandoned out of fuel, while neighbouring 166 Squadron lost four. This was the crew's second operation with 550.

According to Oliver Clutter-Brock's 'Massacre on the Marne', BQ-S was the eighth Lancaster to be shot down, a victim of a night fighter attack, crashing near the village of Vignory, in the Haute-Marne region of northern France. Six of the crew were killed while the mid-upper gunner died shortly afterwards from his injuries.

John Davies was a former pupil of the Northern Grammar School in Portsmouth and is now remembered on the war memorial on what is now the Mayfield School in the city. He was the son of William and Olive Davies of North End, Portsmouth.

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. Alfred Baker, navigator Sgt. Douglas Mackenzie, bomb-aimer Sgt. Cyril Pyke, wireless operator F/O Norman Davies, mid-upper gunner Sgt. George Taylor and rear gunner Sgt. Daniel Donoghue. All seven are buried in Vignory Communal Cemetery.

John's name can be found on IBCC panel 027.

Photographic sources: CWGC and 550 Squadron Association.