

G/C Anthony Caron Evans- Evans DFC MiD 19018 RAF

At the age of 43, Anthony Evans-Evans was the oldest senior RAF officer to be killed while flying operations with Bomber Command. He was the commanding officer of RAF Coningsby and is believed to have formed a 'scratch' crew to fly as a Pathfinder operation to breach yet again the key Mittelland canal on the night of 21/22 February 1945.

Coningsby was the home of the 5 Group Pathfinders of 83 and 97 Squadrons and he was flying an 83 Squadron aircraft crewed by very experienced men from both squadrons and from 49 Squadron at nearby Fulbeck. His Lancaster, NE165 OL-Y of 83 Squadron, was shot down by a night fighter in an attack close to the Dutch border, crashing in Gertruda Farm in the village of De Rips, near Helmond. Only the rear gunner in the eight-man crew survived and Group Captain Evans-Evans and his men are now buried in Mierlo War



Cemetery. A monument now marks the spot where the Lancaster crashed.

Anthony (*who is seen above right with Guy Gibson VC in 1944*) came from a military family, his father, Arthur, serving as a Lieutenant-Colonel in the British army. Anthony was born in Cardiff in 1902, his father and mother, Margaret, moving to Stilton, near Peterborough in 1911.

He was a student at Nottingham University before joining the RAF in 1928, two years before he and his wife, Joyce, were married. By the outbreak of war, Anthony had reached the rank of Squadron Leader and went on to command 115 Squadron at Marham and commanding airfields at Polebrook, Tempsford and Mildenhall before going to Canada to command 43 Operational Training Unit at Pennfield. He returned to England in 1943 to take command of RAF Coningsby, flying as often as he could. Five days before he was killed, he was awarded his DFC, the citation referring to his 'splendid example' and 'undiminished enthusiasm' for flying operationally and saying that his leadership helped the success of the two Pathfinder squadrons at Coningsby.

Two of his brothers joined the RAF, and one, F/L Gwynne Evans-Evans, was killed fighting with the armoured cars of 2804 RAF Regiment in Belgium in the autumn of 1944.

The others who died on NE165 were flight engineer F/O Sidney Marsh, navigator S/L William Wishart DFC & Bar, second navigator F/O Desmond Ball DFM, bomb-aimer F/L William Fitch DFM, GM, wireless operator Flt. Sgt. Richard Takle and mid-upper gunner F/O Clifford Coombes. The survivor was rear gunner P/O E Hansen RAAF.

His name can be found on panel 033.

Sources: Pathfinders history/RAF Officers in 1939-45/rootsmagic/Bomber Command Losses 1945 by Bill Chorley/Facebook.