

Sgt. Benjamin Thomas Hallett 1176108 RAFVR



Benjamin's Headstone



ED 549 Lancaster III

Benjamin was the son of Mr and Mrs W H Hallett, of Fratton, Portsmouth. He was only 23 years old when he died.

Benjamin was a Flight Engineer on Lancasters with 100 Squadron. The squadron had only recently reformed, as part of Bomber Command, having previously been overseas. Following work-up the squadron undertook its first operational mission on the night of 4/5 March 1943. Benjamin was part of this operation and the Flight Engineer of the crew that left RAF Waltham (Grimsby) at 1832 hours local time in a Lancaster III, ED 549 HW-S. Along with 7 other 100 Squadron aircraft their mission was to conduct mine laying operations, known as 'Gardening', around the French port of St Nazaire.

Following a successful mission, ED 549 came back to RAF Waltham (Grimsby), but had to divert due to poor weather. The pilot, Flt. Sgt. Avey, attempted 2 landings at other airfields before making an approach to RAF Langar. Sadly the aircraft crashed 1/4 mile away from RAF Langar. All but one of the crew, including Benjamin were killed. Subsequent examination of the aircraft revealed a mechanical problem with the port inner engine.

The full crew comprised:

Flt. Sgt. G R Avey RCAF Pilot - killed
Sgt. B T Hallett Flight Engineer - killed
Sgt. A H Spence Navigator - killed
Sgt. G D Cumberbatch Air Bomber - killed
Sgt. J Robinson Wireless Operator - killed
Sgt. D S Davies Air Gunner - injured
Flt. Sgt. R S Landry RCAF Air Gunner - killed

Benjamin is buried in Portsmouth (Kingston) Cemetery, Plot 102 (Taylor), Row 11, Grave 12.

Benjamin is commemorated on panel 044

Photo source: www.portsmouth.co.uk and www.lancaster-ed559.co.uk