

## **Sgt. James Hughes 997105 RAFVR**

James was born on 22 August 1920 in Bolton, Lancashire, the son of James Arthur Hughes and Emily Margaret Hughes (née Williams).

James was employed as a motor mechanic when he volunteered for aircrew duties in the RAF.

Called up in February 1941, after training as a Flight Engineer with advanced training at 103 Squadron Conversion Flight at RAF Elsham Wolds, Lincolnshire, in September 1942 James was posted to 101 Squadron at RAF Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, Yorkshire.

On the night of 6/7 December 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an attack on vital railway sidings near Mannheim, Germany. Of a combined force of 272 aircraft, 101 Squadron contributed five crews.

At 1739 hours on 6 December James, operating as the Flight Engineer, and the crew departed RAF Holme-on-Spalding-Moor in Lancaster I ED322 (SR-T).

Returning from the mission in the early hours of 7 December 1942, James's aircraft was 300 miles off course from base over the Pembrokeshire Coast, Wales. Whilst attempting to land at RAF Carew Cheriton, 5 miles NW of Tenby, Pembrokeshire, the aircraft crashed into the sea in Camarthen Bay, off Tenby, killing all on board.

The raid was a dismal failure with the loss of 15 aircraft. The target area was completely covered in cloud and only 500 incendiary bombs and some leaflets were dropped. The only damage to the city was the destruction by fire of an old wooden building, whilst a local farmer lost 25 sheep, 4 lambs, some turnips and a hay barn. There were no casualties in Mannheim or the railway sidings but a total of 55 aircrew were killed, 3 were taken POW, and a further 10 injured.

Also Killed: P/O Howard Earl Dabbs DFC RCAF (Pilot); F/Sgt. Leonard Roy Anderson RCAF (Nav); F/Sgt. Robert John Middleton RCAF (WOp); F/Sgt. Robert Gordon Smith RCAF (AB); F/Sgt. Stefan Franchuk RCAF (AG); Sgt. William Thomas Warren (AG).

On 8 December James was washed ashore at Cefn Sidan Beach, Pembrey, South Wales. He is buried in Heaton Cemetery, Bolton, Lancashire.

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 52.