Sqn. Ldr. James Anderson Pitcairn Hill DSO DFC MiD 33201 RAF



Jamie Pitcairn Hill was one of the outstanding young airmen of Bomber Command in 1940. Within a year of the outbreak of war he had been awarded a DSO, DFC and become flight commander of No. 83 Squadron at RAF Scampton.

The son of an Ayreshire vicar, Jamie – or simply 'Pit' as he was known to many at Scampton – had won a scholarship at RAF Cranwell and by the time the war began was flying Hampdens. By late August, with the Battle of Britain approaching its height, he led an attack by 11 Hampdens from Scampton (five from 83 and six from 49 Squadron) to attack the Munster viaduct on the Dortmund-Ems canal. His was the first aircraft to bomb, attacking through a hail of ground fire, earning him his DSO. One of the other attackers, 'Babe' Learoyd of 49 Squadron, was to be awartded a Victoria Cross in the raid.

'Pit' made it back to Scampton in his badly damaged Hampden and was also to survive a landing in the North Sea when his Hampden ran out of fuel coming back from Berlin, ditching his aircraft alongside a Grimsby trawler off Skegness.

But his good fortune ran out on 18 September 1940 when he led an attack on Le Havre. His Hampden, P1183 OL-K, was hit by flak and crashed in the Seine estuary. His body and those of two others in his crew were later washed ashore and he was buried in the churchyard at Luc-sur-Mer, overlooking what was to become one of the D-Day beaches. The other members of his crew were the observer P/O Arthur Peter Linsdell, wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Charles Gordon McCarthy and rear gunner P/O Victor Arthur Rendell.

Jamie was the son of the Rev. Colin Pitcairn Hill and Minnie Pitcairn Hill and he came from Kilbirnie in Ayreshire. He was 24 at the time of his death.

Jamie's name can be found on IBCC panel 085.

Photographic source: Patrick Otter collection.