

Sgt Arthur William Richardson 1294108 RAFV

Arthur was born in 1924 in Edmonton, Middlesex, the son of Arthur Charles Richardson and Edith Gertrude Richardson nee Head.

Arthur joined the RAFVR in 1940 and trained as an Air Gunner. Whilst serving with 207 Sqn, on 17/18 August 1943 Arthur and this crew participated in Op Hydra against Peenemunde. The whole crew was posted to 617 Sqn in September 1943.

On 8 December 1943, three Lancasters from 617 Sqn were sent from RAF Coningsby to RAF Tempsford on special detachment for SOE operations.

At 20:35 on 10 December 1943 Arthur, operating as the Flight Engineer, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford in Lancaster III ED825 (AJ-E) tasked with a supply drop to the Resistance in France. The mission was considered to be an "easy operation" as the area was largely undefended by fighters or anti-aircraft guns. At 21:30 as they neared Doullens, 15 miles N of Amiens, flying at very low level the aircraft was unexpectedly engaged by a mobile flak gun, based near the town's railway station. The aircraft's fuel tank was hit, resulting in an immediate fire.

The pilot banked to starboard, struggling to gain height but struck a hill that rose on the edge of town. The six men in the forward section of the bomber were killed instantly, whilst the rear gunner was found very badly injured several hundred yards from the crash. He died the following day.

It is believed that a French 'Double Agent' informed the Germans of the supply drop, and when the Lancaster arrived over the town they were waiting.

Also killed : FO Gordon Herbert Weeden RCAF (Pilot); PO Ralph Neville Jones (Navigator); WO Edward Joseph Walters RCAF (Navigator/AB); WO Robert Cummings RCAF (AG); FS Robert Geoffrey Howell (WOp); Sgt Brook Robinson (AG)

Arthur is buried in Meharicourt Communal Cemetery, Somme, France

Arthur is commemorated on Wall Panel 90

Photo Source: www.specialforcesroh.com



NOTE: Lancaster III ED825 (originally AJ-T) was one of the 24 aircraft prepared for Op Chastise and was used in the raid against the Sorpe Dam. This was the only aircraft to breach the dam. The airframe was converted back to standard fit, re-designated AJ-E and used in training sorties and standard bombing missions.