

Sgt Basil Henry Schofield 1119084 RAFVR

Basil was born on 30 September 1920 in Boston, Lincolnshire, the youngest son of Edgar Schofield and Fanny Schofield nee Burton. In May 1940 he married Queenie Beecham in Boston, Lincolnshire and they had 2 children.

Educated at Staniland School, Boston, before joining the RAF Basil was employed as a Lorry Driver for a Haulage Company. A talented footballer, Basil played as the Goalkeeper for Boston United and was also a member of the local Salvation Army Band.

Basil joined the RAF in 1939 and spent 18 months of that time in Iceland. A trained Flight Engineer, in February 1944 Basil was on the strength of 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.

On the night of the 30th March 1944, 795 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Nuremberg. This was the last act of Bomber Harris's "Battle of Berlin", an attempt to destroy German morale by battering its cities night after night before the bomber force turned its attentions to preparing the way for D-Day in June. A direct route, full moon and a new German weapon, the upward firing gun fitted to many fighters, would make this an incredibly challenging and dangerous mission. More than 200 night-fighters based around the Ruhr and the Rhine took to the skies this night. Twenty-six 101 Sqn Lancasters participated in the raid.

At 22:05 on 30 March 1944 Basil, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire in Lancaster I LL832 (SR-K2), tasked with ABC duties for the raid.

At 00:15 whilst outbound, the aircraft was hit by flak and crashed near the village of Rubenach, 5km WNW of Koblenz, killing all on board.

Seven 101 Sqn aircraft were lost, 47 men killed.

The raid was a major disaster for Bomber Command with the loss of 105 aircraft - Bomber Command's heaviest loss of the war. There were 721 casualties: - 542 men died, 6 injured, 161 POWs, with just 12 airmen evading capture. The damage to Nuremberg itself was slight - 256 buildings destroyed and 75 enemy dead.

Also Killed: FO Leslie Simpson (AG); PO Gordon Lewis Preece (Nav/Special Duties Operator); FS Gerald Tivey (Pilot); FS Henry Royston Butterworth (Air Bomber); FS Leonard Lockwood (Nav); Sgt Alexander David Dickson (AG); Sgt Albert Walter Verdun Farley (FE);

Originally buried in Rubenach Cemetery, Koblenz, Germany, in June 1947 Basil and the crew were moved to Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Basil is commemorated on Wall Panel 94

Photo Source: Boston Guardian

