

Sgt. Dudley Brooking Allen
649497 RAF



Surrey-born Dudley Allen was a 19-year-old Whitley wireless operator/air gunner whose crew made headlines across Britain after their badly-damaged aircraft ditched in the Channel following surviving an air battle over Germany.

But three months later the crew ditched again, this time in the North Sea. Dudley was one of two members of the five-man crew who survived being adrift for over two days, only to die shortly after being rescued.

His first ditching came on the night of 9/10 June, 1940 when his Whitley went to the industrial city of Wanne-Eickel in Germany. The aircraft was attacked by fighters and managed to shoot one down before being badly damaged by another, losing an engine on his Whitley. He and his crew battled to keep the bomber flying as they headed back to England, finally having to ditch the bomber off Hastings. There were bravery awards for the pilot and observer and there was great praise for the whole crew in the national newspapers for their bravery.

On the night of 23 September, he and his crew, which included three others on board during the Hasting ditching, left Linton-on-Ouse for Berlin, the first major attack by Bomber Command on the German capital. His aircraft, P5046 KN-O, is believed to have got into difficulty over Berlin area but is reported to have dropped its bombs. With the aircraft losing fuel, the crew opted to try to land in the North Sea where they hoped the Royal Navy would be on hand.

P5046 finally ran out of fuel and at 0550 hours ditched around 80 miles off Flamborough Head and the five-man crew managed to make it into the Whitley's dinghy. At one stage they were spotted by another aircraft but it was late on 26 September when the destroyer HMS *Bedouin* found them. By that time three of the crew had died. Sgt. Dudley and rear gunner Sgt. George Riley, were picked up on September 26 and taken to Rosyth where Dudley died later in in the Royal Naval hospital there.

Dudley was later buried in Farnham Cemetery. He was the son of Ernest and Emma Dudley of Farnham. Three other members of the crew are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.

His name can be found on panel 122.

Sources: Harry Shinkfield/77 Squadron Association/Yorkshire aircraft.