

Sgt Horace Bedford 1543670 RAFVR

Horace was born on 12 February 1909 in Leeds, Yorkshire, the 4th son of Thomas Bedford and Selina Bedford nee Atkinson. In 1929 he married Alice Rowena Dacombe in Amesbury, Wiltshire. They had two sons.

When war was declared, Horace was working as a Master Joiner, Painter and Decorator and was an Air Raid Warden.

Horace joined the RAF and trained as a Wireless Operator, and crewed up whilst undergoing advanced training. He was posted to 138 Sqn at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in May 1944 with his crew.

At 22:00 on 8 August 1944 Horace, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford in Halifax V LL308 (NF-Q), the first of six aircraft bound for Belgium. Their mission, "Operation Osric 45", was a parachute delivery of arms and equipment to the resistance.

At 03:10 on 9 August 1944, Horace's aircraft was shot down by Oblt Ernst-Georg Drünkler, from 1./NJG5 in the Troyes area, his 22nd claim. Why the aircraft was flying in this area is unknown.

The only survivor, the rear gunner, baled out and landed 2km SW of Geraudot, 18km E of Troyes. After burying his parachute, harness and Mae West he walked to a farm on the outskirts of Courteranges, 4 miles SW of where he landed, where he was given shelter. On 12 August he attended the funeral of his crew members, the 5 crew members who were killed in the crash and the Bomb Aimer, who the Resistance informed him was wounded in the crash and was shot at the scene by the Luftwaffe. On 26 August he was able to contact the Allied Forces and, on 8 September, was flown back to Tempsford when he was able to report the fate of his crew.

Also Killed: PO Graham Warren Paterson RNZAF (Pilot); PO Lewis Paul Searell RNZAF (Air Bomber); PO Alfred William Atterton (Nav); Sgt Stanley Raymond Curtis (FE); Sgt Condor Charles Dowse (AG)

Horace is buried in Lusigny-sur-Barse Communal Cemetery, Aube, France.

Horace is commemorated on Wall Panel 129