

Sgt George Benjamin Holt Birdsell 938323 RA

George was born on 21 April 1918 in Sheffield, Yorkshire, the only son of Benjamin Birdsell and Dorothy Maude Birdsell nee Holt.

Educated at King Edward VII School, Sheffield and Hipperholme Grammar School and Halifax Technical College, Halifax, George originally joined the RAF in March 1938 but left shortly afterwards to work for the Blackburn Aircraft Company.

On the outbreak of war, George re-joined the RAF and trained as an Observer. In January 1941 George was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF West Raynham, Norfolk from 17 OTU at RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire.

On 3 April 1941, Bomber Command were tasked with an attack on shipping in Brest Harbour. A combined force of 90 aircraft, including ten 101 crews, were allocated to the op.

At 19:15 George, operating as the Observer, and the crew departed RAF West Raynham in Blenheim T2439 (SR).

Poor weather and low visibility forced 4 aircraft to return to base before reaching the target area, with the crews reporting the weather conditions "hazardous". A further 2 abandoned the task whilst en route due a mix of poor weather and instrument failure. One had to return whilst above Bath and diverted to RAF South Cerney, Gloucestershire and one abandoned the task 15 miles South of Lyme Regis and landed at RAF Shrewton, Wiltshire.

The raid over Brest was completed between 21:25 and 22:55 and George and the crew set to return to RAF Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. The weather continued to deteriorate and the crew were diverted to RAF Warmwell, Dorchester. Whilst trying to locate RAF Warmwell, George's aircraft crashed and exploded at Frampton, 5 miles NW of Dorchester, killing all on board.

Also Killed: Sgt Peter Ian Burrows (Pilot); Sgt Hugh Raymond Perry (WOp/AG)

George is buried in Holy Trinity Churchyard, Warmwell, Dorset

George is commemorated on Wall Panel 131

Photo Source : Findagrave

