

Sgt George Thomas Birkhead 538032 RAF

George was born in 1915 in Langley Mill, Nottinghamshire, the eldest son of Lt James Byron Birkhead RFC and Agnes Madeline Birkhead nee Podesta. In 1939 he married Winifred Maud Hyde in Surrey. George was a member of RAF Wattisham Ground Crew, employed as an Armourer.

Still at the height of the Battle of Britain, throughout the 29 October 1940, the Luftwaffe continued attacks on airfields across East Anglia, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire. RAF Wattisham was one of many targets.

A lone Dornier 17 of 6./KG.2 attacked RAF Wattisham and, in addition to damaging some aircraft, it also dropped a number of the new SD-2 anti-personnel "butterfly bombs". The airfield was declared unusable for operations, and needed to be cleared as soon as possible. As an armourer, George was one of those tasked with helping to dispose of those that had failed to explode. On 30 October 1940 whilst in the course of this task, George was one of two airman killed when one of the bombs exploded.

Also killed : FS William Fisher

George is buried in Epsom Cemetery, Surrey

George is commemorated on Wall Panel 131

George's brother, Sgt Robert Neville Birkhead, also died in Bomber Command on 29 April 1941.