

Sgt Norman Blanchard 903776 RAFVR

Norman was born on 5 March 1916 in South Shields, Durham, the son of Thomas Blanchard and Ann Susannah Blanchard nee Lawson. In 1936 he married Mabel Kathleen Austin in Bromley, Kent. They had two children.

Employed as a fitter, when war was declared Norman joined the RAF and trained as a Flight Mechanic. Norman volunteered for aircrew duties and trained as a Flight Engineer, before crewing up at 1657 Conversion Unit RAF Stradishall, Suffolk. The crew was posted to 161 Sqn at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire, in March 1943.

On 22 June 1943, Norman's mission (Operations St Paul, Harrow and Catarrh) was to blind-drop 2 Dutch Agents and their equipment into Holland in the area of Marienberg, east of the Overijssel town of Ommen.

At 23:35 Norman, operating as the Flight Engineer, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford in Halifax V DG405 (MA-Y). Both Agents, the container with equipment and transmitting equipment were dropped successfully, and the aircraft set course for home.

At 02:06 on 23 June, the Halifax was engaged over the Noordoostpolder by Major Helmut Lent of the Stab IV./NJG1, flying a Bf110 from Leeuwarden airfield. The Halifax crashed into the IJsselmeer, 7km West of Urk, killing all on board.

On 29 June Norman's body was recovered near Urk and transferred to Amsterdam where he was buried at the local cemetery.

Also Killed: PO Robert Geoffrey Higgins (Pilot); FS Maynard Hazlett Moore RCAF (Nav); Sgt George Noel Cochrane (AG); Sgt Gordon George (AB); Sgt Frank Groom (WOp/AG); Sgt Charles William Hartin (Nav); Sgt Robin Douglas Pryde-Watson (AG)

Norman is buried in Amsterdam New Eastern Cemetery, Noord-Holland, Netherlands

Norman is commemorated on Wall Panel 132

Photo Source: www.teunispats.nl

