

Sgt Norman Coatesworth 953084 RAFVR

Norman was born on 19 May 1916 in Barnsley, Yorkshire, the son of Benjamin Coatesworth and Nora Coatesworth nee Lockwood.

Educated locally, at the outbreak of war Norman was employed as a Clerk at Grimethorpe Colliery, Yorkshire before joining the RAF and training as a WOp/AG .

In December 1941 110 Sqn was detached from RAF Wattisham to RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, Scotland in preparation for "Operation Archery", a large combined land, sea and air attack by British and Norwegian forces on the German bases on the islands of Vaagso and Maaloy off the Norwegian coast.

On 27 December 1941, six squadron aircraft were tasked with attacking enemy shipping off the Norwegian Coast between Obrestad and Flekke Fjord with the intention of drawing off German fighters from the Commando raid.

At 09:35 Norman, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Lossiemouth, in Blenheim IV Z7422 (VE). A convoy was found and 4 of the 6 aircraft broke away from the leader near Eigeroe to attack the ships 4 miles south. Only 2 Blenheims were seen to leave the convoy and of those, one made a bad landing in the sea after being attacked by an enemy fighter and the other made a good landing in the sea with its port engine on fire.

The outcome of the operation at the time was regarded as a success with the destruction of facilities for manufacture of explosives, coastal defences, power station, nine merchant ships and four Heinkel aircraft. Although overall Allied casualties were considered relatively light, for Bomber and Coastal Commands it proved a costly exercise with the loss of eleven aircraft and thirty-one airmen killed. 110 Sqn lost 4 aircraft and crews.

Also killed : PO Robert Charles Davis RNZAF (Observer); Sgt Norman Kaby (Pilot)

Norman has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Norman is commemorated on Wall Panel 146