

Sgt Arthur Colling 580571 RAF

Arthur was born in 1920 in Darlington, Durham, the son of John Parker Colling and Annie Colling nee Dillon.

Educated at Darlington Grammar School, he briefly worked for LNER before he joined the RAF in 1938 and trained as an Observer.

Following a desperate plea from the Belgians, who had lost 6 out of 9 battles attacking bridges over the Albert Canal near Maastricht, 23 Blenheims from 110 and 21 Squadrons, were ordered to attack the same targets.

On the afternoon of 11 May 1940, 11 Blenheims from 110 Sqn departed RAF Wattisham to attack the bridges at Maastricht. Arthur, operating as the Observer, and his crew departed at 14:50 in Blenheim IV N6208 (VE). Intense anti-aircraft fire was encountered and only three aircraft returned without damage. Two squadron aircraft failed to return.

Arthur's aircraft crashed in flames near Fouquières-les-Béthune, Pas de Calais, on the southern outskirts of Béthune. The crew survived the crash but Arthur subsequently died from his injuries.

In total, four aircraft were lost (two from each squadron) and none of the bombs hit the intended target. A follow up attack by LeO 451 bombers of the French Air Force also failed to destroy the bridges.

Arthur is buried in Fouquies Churchyard Extension, Pas de Calais, France

Arthur is commemorated on Wall Panel 146

Photo Source: FindMyPast

