

Flt Lt John Dickinson DFC 79538 RAFVR

John was born in 1920 in Crook, Durham, the son of John Dickinson and Margaret Annie Dickinson nee Allan.

John enlisted into the RAFVR in 1938 as a pilot under training and was commissioned in May 1940. He first flew with 110 Sqn in July 1940.

In January 1941, John was awarded the DFC in a joint citation with his Air Gunner. The citation read:

"Pilot Officer Dickinson and Sergeant Thompson were the pilot and air gunner respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack a target at Gelsenkirchen. Owing to adverse weather conditions they were unable to locate their primary objective but successfully bombed a factory near Recklinghausen as an alternative. After passing Rindhoven, on the return journey, an illuminated dummy flare path was observed. Pilot Officer Dickinson thereupon altered course for Gilze-Rijen aerodrome where two hostile aircraft, showing navigation lights, were seen flying in a westerly direction. Pursuing one of these for about 30 miles, Pilot Officer Dickinson skillfully manoeuvred his aircraft and enabled Sergeant Thompson to engage and eventually shoot down the enemy. Pilot Officer Dickinson and Sergeant Thompson showed great courage and initiative throughout the operation."

Between February and March 1941, 110 Sqn was on detachment to RAF Horsham St Faith, Norfolk from RAF Wattisham.

On 13 March 1941, Bomber Command tasked 139 aircraft against targets in Hamburg. At 15:00, nine 110 Sqn crews were briefed on the targets and at 20:27, John and his crew departed RAF Horsham St Faith in Blenheim IV R2278 (VE). Whilst over the Dutch province of Groningen, John's aircraft was identified on German Radar and night fighters were sent to intercept. At 22:48, whilst flying over the town of Zevenhuizen, a ME109 flown by Oberfeldwebel Paul Gildner of 4./NJG 1 attacked and shot down the aircraft. The Blenheim crashed near Tolbert, Groningen, Netherlands.

Also killed : Sgt Charles William Fry (Observer); Sgt Robert Mower (WOp/AG)

John is buried with his crew, and a crew from 214 Sqn who died on the same day, in a collective grave in the Groningen (Esserveld) General Cemetery, Groningen, Netherlands

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 155