

FS David Harrison Freeland 979399 RAFVR

David "Harry" Freeland was born on 26 February 1916 in Jackson Hall, Ballygrainey, Co Down, Northern Ireland, the only son of David Freeland and Helen Freeland nee Keith. In 1942 he married Sgt Sarah "Peggy" McDowell WAAF, in Ballygilbert, Craigavad, Northern Ireland.

Educated at Sullivan Upper School, Holywood, Belfast followed by Coleraine Academical Institution, on leaving school David worked for Messrs McMullan's of Ireland Ltd., Belfast, Petrol and Oil Distributors.

David joined the RAFVR in February 1940 and was called up in February 1941. Following pilot training, in September 1941 David was posted onto 78 Squadron.

In January 1942 David was posted to 138 Squadron at RAF Stradishall, Suffolk before they moved to RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in March 1942. The Crew flew their first op together in May.

On the night of 26 September 1942, the crew departed RAF Tempsford in Whitley V Z9275 (NF-G), their 4th op in 8 days, in an endeavour to complete INCOMPARABLE I which bad weather had thwarted 3 nights previous. Their destination was Belgium.

At 06:00 on 27 September 1942, following a hit by flak, they were forced into an emergency landing in a field near Merville, Northern France. Avoiding cottages and high power cables, unbeknown to the crew a small stream ran across the selected field. The Whitley's wheels struck the bank of the stream, ripping off the undercarriage and breaking the aircraft in two, killing David and 2 other crew members. The surviving crew members became POWs.

Also Killed: FS Edmund George Hayhoe (Pilot); FS Frederick George Green (WOp/AG)

David is buried in Merville Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

David is commemorated on Wall Panel 166

Photo Source: IBCC

