

Sgt Cyril Clifford Hayes 1331642 RAFVR

Cyril, known as Cliff, was born on 10 December 1921 in Brighton, Sussex, the son of Clifford Hayes and Rose Pretoria Hayes nee Willett.

In January 1939, Cyril signed on as a Merchant Seaman, working as a Bell Boy and Steward until joining the RAF in late 1940 as an Air Gunner.

At 22:45 on 22 December 1942 Cyril, operating as the Air Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in 138 Sqn Halifax II W7775 (NF-R) bound for Holland. Their mission, "Operation Marrow 12", was a container drop of weapons for the Dutch Resistance on a moor near a forest in the IJhorsterveld.

Whilst passing the Dutch coast, Cyril's aircraft was hit by Flak, but the aircraft was still serviceable and the Captain made the decision to continue with the operation.

The drop-zone area at IJhorst was found without any problems and the agreed light signal was sighted. On the second pass, at low speed and low altitude, the containers were dropped. Immediately after the containers left the aircraft, the Halifax was heavily shelled by an unknown German Flak unit who were on exercise in the area.

At 01:03 the aircraft crashed near De Wijk, 6 km ESE of Meppel, Holland. Six of the eight man crew were killed in the crash, the surviving two were taken POW and finally returned to the UK in September 1944 as part of an exchange of POWs.

Also Killed: FO Gervase Francis Benton Newport-Tinley DFC (Pilot); WO Charles Anthony Howard DFC (Nav/Bomb Aimer); FS Henry Charles Taylor (WOp/AG); Sgt Brenard Stearman Nixon (FE); Sgt Ben Michael Pick (Pilot)

Cyril is buried in Staphorst (IJhorst) General Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands.

Cyril is commemorated on Wall Panel 179

Photo Source: www.teunispats.nl

