

PO Henry Stephen Penton Hulton 33428 RAF

Henry was born on 12 April 1919 in Eastbourne, Sussex, the only son of Lt Col Henry Horne Hulton DSO and Isobel Hope Millicent Hulton nee Jackson.

Educated at Eton, Henry entered RAFC Cranwell in 1937, graduating in July 1939 and was appointed to a Permanent Commission in October 1939. Following further training, Henry was posted on to 18 Sqn.

At 08:00 on 21 March 1940, Henry and his crew, plus a fitter from the Sqn, departed Rosieres-en-Santerre, France in Blenheim I L1427 bound for Kemble via Tangmere tasked with an airframe exchange.

The crew crossed the English coast East of Shoreham, disappeared into cloud over the hills North of Brighton and, still in cloud, crashed on a hill-top known as Jeffries Point, Portslade. The Blenheim caught fire on impact and travelled for a distance of 300 yards coming to rest in a gorse bush on the side of the hill. The grass and gorse caught fire from the point where it first struck the ground to the point where it finally came to rest.

The crash was witnessed by three men who were working in a field a few yards from where the aircraft first touched the ground. One of these men, Gerald Winter, an agricultural worker of the East Sussex Agricultural Committee immediately ran to the scene, and directed by one of the crew who had escaped, immediately extricated another crew member.

Mr Winter then climbed into the gun turret in an endeavour to locate the remainder of the crew. He saw two figures at the front of the machine but they were beyond his reach. Climbing from the turret he tried with great gallantry to approach the nose of the aircraft but was unable to do so owing to the explosion of the ammunition and the intense heat of the flames. In addition, the gorse plantation in the middle of which the aircraft had come to rest was also on fire. For this action, Mr Winter was awarded the EGM, later changed to a George Cross. Henry and the Observer could not be saved.

Also killed : Sgt Oliver William Dumbreck (Observer)

Henry is buried in St Brelade Church Cemetery, Jersey

Henry is commemorated on Wall Panel 186