

P/O Geoffrey Hutt 176159, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve



Geoffrey Hutt was born in 1923, the son of Albert and Beatrice Hutt. The family home was at 23, Clifford Road in Loughborough in Leicestershire. He had three younger sisters.

He attended Limehurst School in Loughborough and after leaving school he was employed by the building and contracting firm of Thomas Barker and Sons of Loughborough where he had completed an apprenticeship after completing his school education.

He enlisted into the RAF in July 1942 and completed most of his initial training in Scotland. Achieving his qualification as a Flight Engineer, he was posted to 1659 HCU at Topcliffe where he joined with the remainder of his crew for operational purposes. Being further posted to 434 Squadron, his first operational flight was over Berlin on 22 November 1943. He received his commission to the rank of Pilot Officer on 10 March 1944 just a week before his death.

434 (Bluenose) Squadron was, at the time, equipped with the Handley Page Halifax V bomber, and operated out of RAF Croft, in Yorkshire.

On 18 March 1944 Geoffrey was the flight engineer and part of the crew of eight, which took off at 1834 hours from RAF Croft, Yorkshire, in Halifax LL178, Code WL-R, (which bore the name "The old straw Hat"), to undertake a mine laying operation in the Heligoland area. This operation was a diversionary raid whilst Frankfurt was being bombed by 846 other aircraft. This aircraft was one of 98 which had taken off for this diversion.

All went well on the outward trip, with the mines being successfully dropped. Returning home the crew were advised that bad weather had developed over Croft. For reasons unknown, LL178 descended through cloud over the North Yorkshire Moors, something they and all crews were briefed not to do. The crew may have thought that they were over the last hill and in poor visibility began their descent to land. The aircraft struck the ground and crashed near Kepwick Bank Top, 7 miles ESE of Northallerton, at 2300 hours killing all on board. The crash report stated that the aircraft crashed whilst flying at a steep angle. Geoffrey was 21 years old and this was his twelfth mission.

Geoffrey Hutt is buried in the Cemetery of Thorpe Acre (All Saints) Church, Loughborough.

He is commemorated on IBCC Panel 187.

Photo source: www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk.