

Flt Lt Gwilym Ivor Lewis 44668 RAF

Gwilym was born in 1915 in, Whitchurch, Glamorganshire, the youngest son of Gwilym John Lewis and Edith Maud Lewis nee Jones. In 1941 he married Barbara Estelle Farrow in Birmingham, Warwickshire. Their son was born after his death.

Whilst studying for his degree at Birmingham University, Gwilym was a member of the OTC and was commissioned in the 1st Battalion Monmouthshire Regiment in June 1939 (seniority 1937).

Employed as a Master at Newport High School, in September 1940 Gwilym transferred to the RAF and trained as a pilot. In the Summer of 1941, Gwilym was operating with 226 Sqn at RAF Wattisham, Suffolk.

On 12 August 1941, 2 Blenheims from 226 Sqn were tasked as navigational leaders to 30 Spitfires operating in support of a raid on the Cologne/Knapsack Power Station. This raid was the first daytime attack on German territory. Gwilym and his crew were to lead the fighter escort to link up with the main Bomber force on the return down the Scheldt where heavy flak batteries were situated.

At 10:00 Gwilym and his crew departed the fighter base of RAF Martlesham Heath, Suffolk in Blenheim IV V5859 (MQ). Post sortie the lead pilot of the fighter wing reported that Gwilym and the crew led the fighters accurately to the rendezvous, then turned off with a two fighter escort.

Whilst on return at 300 feet, the Blenheim was hit by light flak, but was able to continue; however, the heavy flak from Scheldt was to hit the aircraft again. Losing height, and with the port engine on fire, Gwilym's aircraft struck a water tower and lost a wing. At 12:53, the Blenheim crashed in a field next to a farmhouse near the village of Philippine, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Netherlands, one mile from the Scheldt and south of Flushing on the Dutch/Belgian border, killing all on board and one civilian sheltering in the farmhouse.

Also killed : FS Nevill Southwell Cardell (Observer); FS Jack Cecil Woods (WOp/AG)

Gwilym is buried in Flushing (Vlissingen) Northern Cemetery, Zeeland, Netherlands

Gwilym is commemorated on Wall Panel 198

Photo Source: Youtube-Hans Groen

