

WO Samuel Joseph Magee 370460 RAF

Samuel was born on 22 October 1905 in Belfast, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, the son of Michael and Agnes Magee. Before joining the RAF in August 1925, Samuel was employed as a Butler in a private household in London. Trained as an Aircraft Hand, Samuel served at home and abroad, including service in the Middle East.

In 1941, Samuel was the Station Armament Officer, and persuaded the 107 Sqn Commanding Officer to allow him to go on an op as an extra gunner on board one of the Blenheims. It is not known how often he did this, and he is not on the official crew list for this op. A station character, during low level bombing raids against the station whilst others took cover, he would set up his .303 Vickers Gas Operated Gun (VGO) with its wooden butt and special trigger and had blasted away at the incoming Dorniers and Ju88s.

On the op as a 4th member on board, Samuel would be positioned aft of the bomb, armed with his VGO and several magazines of tracer. Settled on to the small ledge behind the bomb well camera hatch, Samuel could see through the small perspex panel in the centre of the door which could be removed just before the target and he could hurl a 40lb GP bomb through it whilst still operating his VGO.

On 4 July 1941 the RAF flew their 69th raid on Bremen with 12 aircraft from 105 Sqn and 107 Sqn. The main target areas were the harbour, the armaments factories Weserflug and the Atlas-Werke, and the railroad area with the main station and the large marshalling yard in Gröpelingen.

At 05:15 Samuel and the crew departed RAF Massingham, Norfolk, in Blenheim IV V6193 (OM-W). In order to present more problems to the AA gunners the pilots attacked in line abreast, with a couple of hundred yards' spacing between each aircraft. The Blenheims of 107 Sqn took up station on the left of the line, with 105 Sqn on the right.

Bremen's anti-aircraft gun emplacements attempted to repel the air attack. At 08:10 Samuel's Blenheim was hit by Flak and it crashed in the harbour area.

The Pilot was the only crew member to escape and was taken POW. Samuel's aircraft was one of two Blenheims claimed by the 8th (Motorised) Flak Division operating from Bürgerpark, and was one of 4 lost in the raid.

Also killed : Sgt David Arthur Dupree (Observer); Sgt Allan Ernest Routley (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in Bremen-Walle Cemetery, Bremen, Germany, in March 1947 Samuel and the crew were transferred to the Becklingen War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany

Samuel is commemorated on Wall Panel 203