

PO Arthur George Maskall DFM 127532 RAFVR

Arthur, known as Jack, was born on 4 August 1911 in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, the eldest son of Sidney George Maskall and Lily Beatrice Maskall nee Gillson. In 1937 he married Doris Grace Daniels in Cambridgeshire. They had one child.

Arthur joined the RAF before the outbreak of war, and following WOp/AG training served on 57 Sqn where, in June 1942, he was awarded the DFM, which was presented at Buckingham Palace later that year. His citation read:

"Since 11th June 1941, this Wireless Operator has taken part in 35 operational sorties involving a total of 199 hours. This includes 2 sorties to Berlin and one in daylight to Brest on 24 July 1941. He has at all times shown great keenness in his work as a gunner or Wireless Operator and the utmost coolness and efficiency in the air during operations. His cheerfulness under the most trying conditions was an inspiration to his crew. His general bearing was an example to all members of the squadron"

Arthur received his commission in August 1942.

Arthur served on 57 Sqn twice, and also spent some time on 1483 Gunnery Flight, where he carried out air sea rescue flights, before he was posted on to 161 Sqn at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire.

At 23:34 on 31 May 1944, Arthur, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in Hudson III V9155 (MA-Q) on "Operation Beziqez", aiming to drop 2 Agents to the East of Eindhoven. Given the number of Dutch Agents that had been captured on landing, the two men were to be dropped blind.

Due to a Navigation error, the aircraft strayed over the heavily anti-aircraft defended Luftwaffe fighter base at Gilze-Rijen. Hit by flak, at 01:20 the aircraft crashed just outside the airfield near the water tower at Gilze, 10km East of Breda. All but the Air Gunner were killed instantly and, on the orders of the German authorities, were buried the following day in a communal grave in the Roman Catholic Cemetery at Gilze-Rijen. At the end of 1945, the crew were exhumed and reburied in Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands

Also killed : Flt Lt Warren Macauley Hale RCAF (Pilot); FO John Gall DFC RNZAF (Nav); FO Michael Henry Hughes (Air Gunner); 2nd Lt Cornelis Martinus Dekkers (Agent); 2nd Lt Gerrit Jan Kuenen (Agent)

Arthur is buried in Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands

Arthur is commemorated on Wall Panel 205