

Sgt George (Gus) Stephenson Needler 920736 RAFVR

George, known as Gus, was born in October 1915 in Sculcoates, Hull, Yorkshire, the 2nd son of Wilfred Stephenson Needler and Muriel Elizabeth Needler nee Consitt. In July 1940 he married Nancy (Anne) Watson in Winchester, Hampshire.

Educated at Bridlington Boys School, Yorkshire, before joining the RAF and training as a Wop/AG. George was employed as a Railway Clerk.

On 15 October 1941, 11 Blenheims from 226 Sqn and one from 110 Sqn were tasked with an attack on the port of Le Havre, with the main aim an oil tanker that had been reported in dock.

At 11:15 George, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Wattisham, Suffolk in Blenheim IV Z7493 (MQ-Y) en-route to RAF Tangmere, Sussex to prepare for the op with fighter support later in the day. At 13:46 George and the crew departed RAF Tangmere with the bomber formation and fighter escort.

The formation bombed the docks from 7,000ft and scored direct hits on 2 vessels of 12,000 and 10,00 tons. Very accurate and moderate flak was encountered and 12 ME 109s attacked the bombers. Whilst in the target area, following a successful bombing run, George's aircraft was engaged for a considerable time by a Me109 and George was seen to return fire; however, the port engine caught fire and crashed in the sea, killing all on board. This was one of two 226 Sqn aircraft lost on this op.

Also killed : PO Raymond Meredith Hudson RAAF (Pilot); Sgt Derek Poulston (Observer)

George has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

George is commemorated on Wall Panel 217

Photo Source: FindaGrave

