

FO Gervase Francis Benton Newport Tinley DFC 108998 RAFVR

Gervase was born on 6 November 1922 in Rajcot, Bombay, India, the only son of Lt Col Francis Benton Newport Tinley MC Indian Army and Cicely Sophia Newport Tinley nee Baring-Gould.

Educated at St Petroc's, Bude, Cornwall and Stowe School, Buckinghamshire, Gervase joined the RAF on his 18th Birthday and trained as a Pilot.

In March 1942 Gervase joined 138 Sqn at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire from 10 OTU, RAF Abingdon, Oxfordshire.

On 13 November 1942 Gervase was awarded the DFC for his actions on the night of 23 October 1942. His citation read:

"FO Tinley was captain of an aircraft and while flying at a height of 1,400 feet over the north French coast the aircraft was heavily fired on by anti-aircraft guns. He went on and successfully completed his task, but on the return journey the starboard engine caught fire. The fire was extinguished but with only one engine working FO Tinley could not maintain height and reached the English coast flying at only 80 feet in bad weather. Unable to clear the cliffs - by superlative airmanship he succeeded in bringing his aircraft down on to the sea without injury to his crew. This officer who has participated in many operational sorties has always displayed high courage and determination to complete his allotted task".

At 22:45 on 22 December 1942, Gervase and his crew departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in 138 Sqn Halifax II W7775 (NF-R) bound for Holland. Their mission, "Operation Marrow 12", was a container drop of weapons for the Dutch Resistance on a moor near a forest in the Ijhorsterveld.

Whilst passing the Dutch coast, Gervase's aircraft was hit by Flak, but the aircraft was still serviceable and he made the decision to continue with the operation.

The drop-zone area at Ijhorst was found without any problems and the agreed light signal was sighted. On the second pass, at low speed and low altitude, the containers were dropped. Immediately after the containers left the aircraft, the Halifax was heavily shelled by an unknown German Flak unit who were on exercise in the area.

At 01:03 the aircraft crashed near De Wijk, 6 km ESE of Meppel, Holland. Six of the eight man crew were killed in the crash, the surviving two were taken POW and finally returned to the UK in September 1944 as part of an exchange of POWs.

Also Killed: WO Charles Anthony Howard DFC (Nav/AB); FS Henry Charles Taylor (WOp/AG); Sgt Brenard Stearman Nixon (FE); Sgt Ben Michael Pick (Pilot); Sgt Cyril Clifford Hayes (AG)

Gervase is buried in Staphorst (Ijhorst) General Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands.

Gervase is commemorated on Wall Panel 218

Photo Source: www.teunispats.nl

