

FO Norman James Alexander Paton DFM 106980 RAFVR

Norman was born in 1916 in Ayrshire, Scotland, the son of James Alexander and Kathleen Paton. Educated at Cambusdoon Prep School, Ayr and Newstead School, Doune, Perthshire, Norman commenced studying at the Veterinary College, Glasgow, where he joined the RAFVR. His studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war and his immediate call up.

After basic training, Norman joined 18 Course 8FTS for advanced flying training at RAF Montrose and in October 1940 he was posted to 226 Sqn at RAF Sydenham, Belfast via 12 OTU. Norman flew anti-submarine patrols out of Sydenham until 226 Sqn was posted to RAF Wattisham, Suffolk in May 1941.



On 17 October 1941 Norman was awarded the DFM. His citation read:

"This airman has participated in 14 daylight bombing attacks on enemy targets. In July 1941 he carried out a successful attack on the docks at Rotterdam. Defying intense anti-aircraft fire, Sgt Paton pressed home his attack and obtained a hit which destroyed a vessel of 1,800 tons. Three days later, he attacked a convoy and scored direct hits on a ship of 5,000 tons. In August 1941, Sgt Paton participated in an attack on Lille and, despite heavy enemy fire which hit his aircraft in several places and also wounded his observer, he successfully bombed his target. Some days later, he bombed and set on fire a 2000 ton merchant vessel in the face of heavy fire from escorting ships. Sgt Paton's aircraft received a direct hit from a cannon shell which wounded the observer and wrecked the instruments. Nevertheless, Sgt Paton flew his aircraft safely back to base. He is an excellent leader whose skill and coolness in the face of the enemy are of the highest order".

Commissioned in September 1941, in November he was posted to 2FTS at RAFC Cranwell, and after time at 6 PAFU at RAF Little Rissington, in November 1942 he was posted back to 226 Sqn at RAF Swanton Morley, Norfolk.

On 6 December 1942, 226 Sqn were tasked as part of Operation Oyster, a daylight raid on the Philips radio and valve factory in Eindhoven. The 8th Air Force operated a diversionary raid to Lille using Spitfires as escort. A low level raid in clear conditions led to very accurate bombing and the factory was extensively damaged. The raid was deliberately planned for a Sunday when few employees would have been on site. Full production took 6 months to achieve due to the level of damage. This successful raid was the biggest daylight raid of the war so far comprising 36 Bostons, 12 Mosquitos and 48 Venturas. At 11:35 Norman and his crew departed RAF Swanton Morley in Boston IIIIV V5854 (MQ-S). At 12:54 they crashed into the sea, killing all on board. Two claims were made, they were either hit by Marine Flak or shot down by Uffz. Robert Stellfeld of the 5./JG 1, flying an Fw 190 A-4.

Also killed : Flt Lt James George Annesley Maguire DFC MiD (Nav); PO James Lester Fletcher RCAF (WOp/AG)

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

Norman is commemorated on Wall Panel 223

Picture Source: RAFWatton