

## **Sgt Derek Poulston 998507 RAFVR**

Derek was born in 1917 in Wakefield, Yorkshire, the son of Sidney Poulston and Annie Poulston nee Norris.

Educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield, before joining the RAF and training as an Observer, he was a member of staff in the West Riding Education Department.

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 Derek, operating as the Observer, 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 Derek 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, Derek's aircraft was engaged for a considerable time by a Me109 and the Air Gunner 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 George Stephenson Needler (WOp/AG)

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

Derek is commemorated on Wall Panel 228

Photo Source: Ancestry

