PO Cyril Preston 81070 RAFVR



Cyril was born in Northwich, Cheshire in 1916, the son of Sarah Preston

Educated at Darnhall School and Verdin Grammar, Winsford, prior to entering the RAF, Cyril was employed as a Manager for Sainsburys in one of their London Stores. After service in the ranks, he was commissioned in Jun 1940.

During the Battle of Britain, Bomber Command had two distinct objectives - to deter the German Invasion Fleet from setting sail, and to attack and destroy shipping concentrated in the French Ports of Dunkirk, Calais & Ostend. More than 1,000 ships and barges were massed for invasion, including those at Antwerp, and 600 in the Scheldt estuary.

On 18 September 1940, the Germans were busy cleaning up the Channel ports from Calais to Antwerp after Bomber Command unleashed another successful night attack on the barges. It was the biggest operation yet by Bomber Command on the barge installations with 194 bombers involved. Maintaining the pressure, another raid was planned that night with a force of 174 aircraft tasked with bombing the Channel Ports. 107 Sqn contributed 12 aircraft to the mission.

At 1930, Cyril, operating as the Observer, and his crew departed RAF Wattisham in Blenheim IV T1852 (OM) in the first wave of six aircraft. Intense, but generally inaccurate, anti-aircraft fire was experienced by the crews. Cyril and his crew failed to return and were believed to be lost over Calais.

Also killed were : Sgt Thomas David Weston Ross (Pilot), Sgt William Hutchison Kilgour (WOp/AG)

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

Cyril is commemorated on Wall Panel 228

Photo Source: Liverpool Evening Express