Flt Sgt Kenneth Rhoden1623310 RAFVR



Kenneth was born in 1923 in Atherton, Lancashire, and was the only son of Frank Rhoden and Ethel Rhoden, nee Grundy.

Before joining the RAF in 1942, Kenneth had been a member of the Air Training Corps and was employed by local firm Gregsons of Tyldesley.

Kenneth flew as a Navigator/Radio Operator in Mosquitos with 169 Squadron from RAF Great Massingham, Norfolk, where he was crewed with pilot Flt Sgt Douglas P Williams. Their last operational mission was flown on the night of 2 May when they successfully carried out a low level napalm attack on Westerland Airfield on the German island of Sylt.

On the 6 May, despite high winds and overcast conditions, the Squadron prepared for a low level formation flying exercise. Flying Mosquito MM637 he, with Flt Sgt Williams in control, departed RAF Great Massingham at 1425 in formation with his Flight.

The route for the exercise took them over Sussex where the weather was reported as low cloud, rain and fog, completely obscuring the Downs below. At 1540, whilst navigating through the rough weather, the flight lost sight of Williams' and Rhoden's Mosquito. The aircraft had crashed into the South Downs near the Dyke road, one mile south of the Saddlescombe junction killing the crew instantly. These two men were the last crew to be lost by RAF Bomber Command in the war.

Kenneth is buried in Atherton Cemetery, Lancashire

Kenneth is commemorated on Wall Panel 231

Photo source: https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/