Sgt Kenneth Harold Sanders 942722 RAFVR



Kenneth was born on 1 December 1919 in Northampton, the only son of Harold Sanders and Florence Sanders nee Tebbutt.

Educated at Campbell Square Intermediate School, Northampton, Kenneth was employed by A Bell & Co, Tile Manufacturers, Northampton when, in December 1939, he volunteered for aircrew service.

By the Autumn of 1940, Kenneth had qualified as a WOp/AG and, before posting to 107 Sqn in March 1941, was operating in Coastal Command.

The year 1941 was known as the "Year of the Circus". Circus Operations were the designation for fighter-escorted daylight bombing raids by light and medium bombers of Bomber Command against targets in German-occupied northern Europe. The bombers were used as bait to entice the Luftwaffe into the air over France where the RAF fighters could destroy them.

On 23 June 1941, six 107 Sqn crews, together with a fighter escort from 242 Sqn and 303 Sqn, were tasked with a Circus Op (20) against Mardyk Aerodrome, France. Two Blenheims failed to return.

At 18:58 Kenneth, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed from RAF Massingham, Norfolk, in Blenheim IV Z6271 (OM).

Shortly after crossing the coast, the formation was broken up as a result of an Anti Aircraft shell bursting between them, followed by an attack by twenty Me109s. Despite close fighter support, the crews were forced to defend themselves during a sustained attack.

Kenneth's aircraft engines were heavily damaged; however, the pilot managed to get the Blenheim back to the UK and made a crash landing at Dover. Kenneth did not survive the attack and landing.

Kenneth is buried in Dallington Cemetery, Northampton

Kenneth is commemorated on Wall Panel 237

Photo Source: Northampton Mercury