

Sgt. George Henry Southam 1284694 RAFVR

George was born on 18 October 1914, the son of George Henry and Mary Ann Southam (nee Parsons), of Walthamstow, Essex. He had three sisters, Doris, Lilian, and Mary, and was employed as a solicitor's clerk prior to enlisting.

He was a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner serving with 487 (NZ) Squadron, based at R.A.F. Methwold, Feltwell, Norfolk. The Squadron motto was Ki te Mutunga, translated as "Through to the end".

Lockheed Ventura I AE713 EG-T, took off at 1643 hours from Methwold airfield, on 3 May 1943, one of 12 Venturas, as part of Operation Ramrod, with an escort of 3 squadrons of Spitfires. The target, was an electricity power station, on the northern outskirts of Amsterdam. A diversionary attack unfortunately flew in too high, and too soon, thus losing the surprise and alerting the defenders of the impending attack. Caught out by low fuel, many of the escorting fighters had to leave, therefore, reducing the effectiveness of the defensive escorting force. Numerous fighters had been scrambled, a deadly cocktail of FW-190s and Bf-109s, with figures suggesting in excess of 80 enemy aircraft. AE713 was shot down by a FW 190A, from Woensdrecht airfield, and exploded in mid-air, crashing between the Zaandam-Enkhuizen railway and the Ringdijk by Zaandam killing all four crew.

In the space of only a few minutes, eleven aircraft had been attacked, ten had been shot down with the loss of 28 young RAF lives.



George is buried at Amsterdam New Eastern Cemetery, Netherlands. Plot 69. Row C. Coll. grave 8. He was 28 years old.

Sgt. George Henry Southam RAFVR, WOp/AG (killed)
Sgt. John Edward Addison RAFVR, Air Gunner (killed)
F/O Stanley Bailey Peryman RNZAF, Pilot (killed)
F/O Edward Trevor Williams RAFVR, Navigator (killed)

He is commemorated on Panel 245

Photo courtesy of www.iwm.org.uk