

PO Arthur Frank Stidston 42448 RAF

Arthur was born in 1920 in Pernambuco, Brazil, the son of John F Stidston, and Micaela Stidston nee Harvey.

Arthur joined the RAF as a Pilot and, in August 1939, he was commissioned on a Short Service Commission.

In June 1940 as the Germans pushed through France, Winston Churchill made a promise to the French Premier Raynaud and General Weygand that the RAF would assist them as much as possible with "maximum effort" in stemming their advance. During the daylight hours of 13 June 1940, all available Blenheims would be ready to attack, and that heavy bombers from England would be available during the night of 13/14 June.

Weather hampered the 60 Blenheims sent and, due to the distances involved, fighter cover was difficult to provide. The raids were concentrated upon various targets from the advancing Panzers to the bridges across the Seine to try and delay the rapidly advancing German army.

On 13 June 1940, 18 aircraft from RAF Wattisham, 6 from 107 Sqn, together with 12 from 110 Sqn, were tasked to attack enemy concentrations on river crossings and approaches to the River Seine at Pont De L'Arche, Les Andeleys and Vernon.

At 14:00 Arthur and his 107 Sqn crew departed RAF Wattisham in Blenheim IV R3616 (OM-F), their specific target was the troop concentrations in the Pont De L'Arche area. Whilst in the target area at Agquingny, the formation was attacked by a lone ME110 flown by Uffz. Konrad Nellescamp of 5./JG3. Arthur's aircraft was hit, and the aircraft crashed at 15:45 near Cauge, 9km West of Evreux, Normandy, killing all on board. This was his first op on 107 Sqn.

During 13 June 1940, the RAF lost 11 Battles and 6 Blenheims.

Also killed: Sgt John Raymond Browning (WOp/AG); Sgt Francis Charles Higgins (Observer)

Arthur is buried in Caugé Communal Cemetery, Eure, France with his crew, the only CWGC graves in the cemetery.

Arthur is commemorated on Wall Panel 248