Sgt John Patrick Sullivan 532602 RAF



John was born in 1918 in Barry Dock, Glamorganshire, Wales, the son of John Sullivan and Honora Sullivan nee Sullivan.

John was educated in many schools in South Wales as his father, a Policeman, was frequently moved but he did complete his studies before he joined the RAF in June 1936. John attended the Electrical & Wireless School at RAFC Cranwell and when he joined 226 Sqn at RAF Harwell, Oxfordshire in October 1937 he was a fully qualified Wireless Operator. He completed his Air Gunner training in Spring 1938.The day before war was declared in September 1939, the Sqn deployed to France operating with Fairey Battles.

After the fall of France, the Sqn returned to anti submarine patrols in Northern Ireland before they converted to Blenheims and moved to RAF Wattisham, Suffolk in May 1941.

John joined his new 226 Sqn crew on 16 July 1941 at RAF Wattisham, to replace a wounded WOp/AG, and on his first op with them was trapped in his turret when the aircraft suffered complete hydraulics failure - the turret was worked by hydraulic pressure. Within a few days the crew was posted to 21 Sqn who were on detachment from RAF Watton to RAF Manston, Kent in preparation for anti-shipping ops in the Channel.

At 14:00 on 23 July 1941 John, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Manston in Blenheim IV Z7438 (YH-D) as part of a 6 ship, with fighter escort, tasked with a daylight attack on shipping. A 4000 ton tanker accompanied by 4 Flak ships was identified off Ostend. Approaching the Belgian coast at Ostend, John's aircraft was shot down by flak. John was killed, the Pilot and Observer managed to escape to become POWs.

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

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 249

Photo Source: Wattoninfo