Sgt Frank Swainson 1378205 RAFVR

Frank was born on 7 September 1913 in Bradford, Yorkshire, the son of Oscar Swainson and Florence Sarah Swainson nee Jowett. In 1939 he married Constance Ellen Smith in Leeds, Yorkshire.

Educated locally, before joining the RAF in 1940 as an Air Gunner, Frank was employed as a grocery and provisions delivery man. He also volunteered with the Leeds Auxiliary Fire Service.

On 31 October 1942, six Bostons from 226 Sqn were tasked with an attack on two power stations in Northern France - Mazingarbe and Cosnay. Frank's target was Mazingarbe.

At 11:15, Frank, operating as the Air Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Swanton Morley, Norfolk in Boston III W8363 (S), heading for Mazingarbe.

The aircraft arrived on target at 12:04 but did not attack due to damage sustained from intense accurate light flak and some heavy flak experienced near Merville Aerodrome minutes earlier. The wings were holed and battered, the engine gills torn by flak and the tail and hydraulics completely shot away. At 12:32 the bomb load was jettisoned over Oostende after the crew pumped open the bomb doors, and the aircraft headed for England.

The aircraft Captain reported the following:

" The kite had no business returning.... it was awfully hard to maneouvre".

Aware the landing would have to be made without brakes, and that he would need to bring the aircraft down at 155mph, the Pilot elected to land at RAF Marham, Norfolk, the largest airfield in this section of the country. The wheels were pumped down by emergency system and at 13:20 the aircraft stopped just short of the end of the airfield. The Pilot, Navigator and Wireless Operator stepped from the aircraft uninjured, only to learn of the death of their Air Gunner.

Frank had been killed over the target area when a direct hit sheared away the tail and gunner's cockpit.

Frank is buried in Harehills Cemetery, Leeds, Yorkshire

Frank is commemorated on Wall Panel 250