

Sgt Ronald Tebbutt 125448 RAFVR

Ronald was born on 7 October 1910 in Cheddington, Buckinghamshire, the youngest son of Vince Tebbutt and Martha Ann Tebbutt nee Worsencroft. In 1938 he married Ida Gray in St Albans, Hertfordshire and in 1941 their daughter was born, but sadly died when just a few months old.

Ronald was awarded a scholarship to Wolverton School from the Bletchley Road School in Buckinghamshire. Following his education, he was employed as a Bank Clerk for Barclays Bank at Leighton Buzzard and Woburn Sands, Bedfordshire and was a Special Police Constable. Ronald joined the RAF in 1940 and trained as a Navigator.

On 31 October 1942, seventeen Bostons from 88 and 107 Sqns were tasked with attacking the power stations in the vicinity of Lille (Rijsel) and Bethune, France. Ronald and the crew from 107 Sqn were flying an 88 Sqn airframe. Four Bostons aimed for Mazingarbe, four to Gosnay, six to Pont-a-Vendin and three to Comines. Ronald and his crew were headed for Pont-a-Vendin.

At 11:27 Ronald, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Great Massingham, Norfolk, in Boson III Z2179 (RH). Whilst over Jonkershove, Belgium the aircraft was attacked by two FW190s of 8/JG26s from Wevelgem-Kortijk, Belgium. The lead aircraft was piloted by Lt Paul Galland, the younger brother of the air ace Adolph Galland. Although the two air gunners returned fire, the shells from Galland's guns had set the aircraft on fire. An eye witness on the ground reported that, before the final fatal landing, the pilot had made an attempt to land the aircraft but was forced to pull up due to a row of trees blocking the approach. After this failed attempt, the aircraft was flown towards Noordschote. The eyewitness saw the burning aircraft crash land near Jonkershove, Belgium, sliding along the field until it flipped over and exploded. All on board were killed.

This was Lt Galland's seventeenth victory and his last. Five hours later he was killed when he was shot down into the sea by a Spitfire whilst returning from an escort mission for the bombers to Canterbury.

Also killed : FO Henry Philemon Collings (Pilot); Sgt Stanley Walter Nash (WOp/AG); Sgt Francis Rex Pickering (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in Woumen Churchyard, Diksmuide, Belgium, in August 1967 Ronald and the crew were transferred to Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Ronald is commemorated on Wall Panel 252