

## **Sgt Ernest Vamplough 1624485 RAFVR**

Ernest, known as Ernie, was born on 23 August 1924 in Hull, Yorkshire, the son of John Henry Vamplough and Dorothy Mary Vamplough nee Bonner.

Ernie enlisted into the RAFVR as soon as he was old enough and completed his Flight Engineer training at No 4 School of Technical Training at RAF St Athan, before moving to 1657 H.C.U. It was here that the crew came together before posting to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk, in September 1943.

During the moon period of March 1944, "A" Flight, 218 Sqn was attached to RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire to augment the two existing base SOE squadrons. On the night of the 4/5 March, Bomber Command committed 76 aircraft to SOE sorties, dropping equipment to the Resistance fighters in Europe. These operations were vital for the success of the forthcoming invasion.

At 21:14 on 4 March 1944 Ernie, operating as the Flight Engineer, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford in Short Stirling III EE944 (HA-H). According to one of the surviving crew, the aircraft was hit by flak as they crossed the French Coast on the outbound leg, damaging the port outer engine. The crew continued until, on reaching Paris, it was clear that they were losing too much fuel and would be unable to complete the mission.

The crew reached RAF Tempsford in the early hours of the 5 March but were instructed by the Control Tower to go round, probably because they were approaching too high. The Pilot opened the throttles but, at 150 feet, the engine failed. Unable to prevent the port wing from dropping, at 02:17 the Stirling side-slipped into the ground, killing 5 of the 7 man crew.

Also killed : FO Bernard Denness (Navigator); PO Elwyn Hinton Edwards (Pilot); FS Peter Henry Kilsby (AB); Sgt Douglas Graham Davies (WOp/AG)

Ernie is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridgeshire.

Ernie is commemorated on Wall Panel 257

Photo Source: [stirlingproject.org.uk](http://stirlingproject.org.uk)

