

Sgt Benjamin Brinley Wood 656588 F

Benjamin, known as Benny, was born in 1919 in New Tredegar, Monmouthshire, Wales, the son of James Richard Wood and Rosemary Ellen Wood nee Davies. In 1928 the family moved to Jersey, Channel Islands. In April 1943 he married Sadie Haggerty in Cambridge.

Educated at St Clement's School, Jersey, Benjamin was employed as a motor mechanic at the La Motte Street Garage when, in June 1940, Benjamin left the island and volunteered for aircrew duties with the RAF.

After basic training, Benjamin travelled to the USA where he completed his flight training at the Dart School of Aeronautics, Albany, Georgia with the award of his wings.

Following advanced training at 12 OTU RAF Chipping Warden and 1651 HCU RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire for conversion to the Stirling, in May 1943 Benjamin was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire.



On 22/23 June 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Mulheim, a major centre of manufacturing in the Ruhr industrial region. A combined force of 557 aircraft were allocated to the task, including fifteen 75(NZ) Sqn crews. Four crews failed to return.

At 23:40 on the 22 June 1943 Benjamin and his crew departed RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, in Stirling III EF408 (AA-P).

At 01:35 on 23 June, Benjamin's aircraft was hit by heavy flak 12 miles NE of the target and crashed at Gelsenkirchen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, killing all on board. This was Benjamin's 8th op.

Post war analysis confirmed this was a very successful attack, with 64% of the town reported as destroyed.

Also killed: FS Stuart Richard Bisset RNZAF (AB); FS George King Samson RNZAF (Nav); Sgt Cyril Benjamin Hemmings (AG); Sgt Frederick Johns Hobbs (WOp/AG); Sgt Edgar Henry Reader (WOp/AG); Sgt Stanley Lawrence Webb (FE)

Originally buried in the Gelsenkirchen-Hullen Cemetery, in May 1947 Benjamin was moved to the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

Benjamin is commemorated on Wall Panel 268

On 24 April 1943 Benjamin's brother, Sjt Windsor Walter Wood, was killed serving with the 1/4th Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment.

Photo Source: IBCC