Harry Mayo Richard Broadhead





Rank: - Sergeant (Air Gunner)

Number: - 1001480

Regiment: - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, 61 Squadron

Died: - 17th September 1942 aged 29 years

Cemetery: - Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Grave 11.F.2

Batley News, 3 Oct 1942 (photo)

Harry Mayo Richard was born on 20 October 1912 the youngest child of Harry and Emma Broadhead nee Berry who had married in 1893. Lewis Gledhill was born in 1894 followed by Mayo Robson 1898, twins Lilian and Elsie 1900, Doris

1902, Madge 1905, Irene Collins Knowles 1909. His father was a paper blind manufacturer at the Purlwell Mills at the time of his birth. He was also a renowned local pianist and during the 1920's, was a partner in a Morley picture house, where he accompanied the silent films. He died in 1932. The family lived at Wells House, 17, Purlwell Lane, Batley.

Harry attended Purlwell Council School and Gospel Hall, Mount Pleasant.

Harry Mayo married Agnes Hughes in April 1932 and in 1939 the family lived at 54, Beaumont Street, Batley. Harry Ray was born in 1933 followed by Victor 1935-1936, Garry 1939 and Molly 1941. When the register was taken in 1939 he stated he was a copper winder at a woollen mill but according to newspaper reports he was a Batley Postman when he enlisted in 1940.

Harry took part in 29 raids over enemy territory including the "1,000 bomber "Cologne raid. Three months before his death he had written home saying he had flown in the Cologne raid in May 1942 and spent some time in hospital with frostbite in a finger, the result of the intense cold as his aircraft flew at 22,000 feet. He had taken part in an earlier attack on Essen. He wrote "What a mess we made of both places. I saw two planes blown out of the sky by shells. Bad luck, but you don't know when it maybe your turn next". He said the squadron had lost one aircraft in each of the two raids.

After being at home on leave, three weeks later his wife received the news from the Sergeants Mess that Harry was missing and expressing their sympathy and saying how popular her husband was.

Harry had taken off from RAF Syerston in Lancaster I /W4173/QR-L at 20.04 hrs on the 16th September 1942 with the target Essen. It and the entire crew were reported missing and later investigations established it had been shot down by anti-aircraft fire and crashed at Heiligennkous-House 14 Km NE of Dusseldorf at 01.00hours 17 Sept 1942 with the loss of the entire crew.

Others with him were Sgt. J. Berry, Sgt. D J Green, Sgt. W MacPhee, W/O A W Osman, Sgt. CM Thorn, Sgt. T C Woodhouse.

WE WONDER WHY HE HAD TO DIE WITHOUT A CHANCE TO SAY GOOD-BYE. AGNES AND CHILDREN

His name was not added to Batley War Memorial until 1997 when his nieces Mrs Joyce Shaw and Mrs Marlene Margach realised his name had been omitted. They contacted the local Royal Air Force Association who had his name added to the memorial.

His name also appears on the RAF Book of Remembrance in St. Clement Danes' Church, Strand, London and the Royal Air Force Association, Batley.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group