William Turner Pickles



Rank: - Pilot Officer

Number: - 109972

Regiment: - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Died: - 18 December 1942 aged 21

Cemetery: - Batley Cemetery, Section F, Grave 141

Batley News, 9 Jan 1943

William Turner Pickles was born in 1921 (Reg. Barnet) the son of Edward Llewellyn and Maggie Pickles nee Turner who had married in the Dewsbury District in Apr Qtr 1912. Maggie was the daughter of William James Turner who built “Cheriton”, Carlton Grange, Batley whilst Edward formerly resided in Hanging Heaton where his father was prominently associated with the Ebenezer Methodist Church.

William attended Leys School, Trumpington Road, Cambridge from the age of 13 (1934). This school was established in 1874 by the Wesleyan body, to further a high-class education under Evangelical auspices to the sons of ministers or laymen of all

denominations: boys were admitted between the ages of 10 to 19, to be prepared for the Universities, professional or commercial pursuits. William was in East House. He was a Prefect, Head of House, and won First Colours at Cricket and Second Colours at Hockey. On leaving school, Pickles went up to Christ's College, University of Cambridge to read Natural Sciences. Upon graduation, Pickles joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and trained as a radio-engineer. He was killed on active service on 18 December 1942 at the age of 21, having reached the rank of Flying Officer. He was on the same plane as Old Leysian Peter Ackernley, who had gone through school, university, and RAF service with Pickles. (Thanks to Leysian website).

At the time of his death William was serving with 1474 Flight, a special duties unit operating Wellingtons from Gransdon Lodge since July 1942. At 14.21 F/Sgt Couper took off in Wellington DV 892 on a flight to test special equipment. The aircraft was seen over Hopton at 13.00 hours making towards the sea. No trace of the aircraft was found despite an extensive search. Pilot P/O Couper RAAF was found washed ashore on Vejers Beach on 15 February and was laid to rest in Fovrfelt Cemetery, Esbjerg on 18 February 1943. P/O Pickles was found on 20 December in the sea 7 miles south east of Lowestoft. The bodies of the remaining crew were never found and they are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. These men are: P/O Peter Rowland Ackernley, F/S L Edwin Francis McKenna (New Zealand), P/O Sidney Charles McLellan, F/S Arthur Taylor, and F/O John Williams.

At the time of his death his parents resided at Barnaire, High Bond End, Knaresborough and when his funeral took place at Batley Cemetery on Wednesday 6th January 1943, they were the only family mourners.

William was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal

He is remembered with Honour at Royal Air Forces Association Club, Batley and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group