Herbert Richard Willacy





Rank: - Sergeant (Air Gunner)

Number: - 1378115

Regiment: Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve 9 Squadron (Code letters WS)

Died: - 8th November 1942 aged 27

Cemetery: - Heckmondwike Cemetery, Section G (Con) Grave 4

Batley News, 14 Nov 1942 (photo)

Herbert Richard was born on 29 Apr 1915, the son of George Brooks and Alice Louisa Willacy (nee Hinstry, m. 1903, registered Dorking, Norfolk). Ivy was born in 1912 and Muriel 1918 and in 1939 the family lived at Field Head Farm, White Lee Road, Batley where George was a dairy farmer.

Herbert was educated at Dewsbury Moor Council School and at one time attended St. John's Church, Dewsbury Moor. Before joining the RAF, in 1940, he worked with his father at Field Head Farm.

In 1939 he married Muriel Senior who came from Shaw Cross and they had a daughter, Pauline in 1940.

Herbert joined the 9 Squadron and took part in the 1,000 bomber Cologne raid, the first of the daylight raids, and bombed Kiel, Hamburg, Bremen and Osnabruck and been over Italy several times.

On 7 November 1942 they left Waddington at night in a Lancaster bomber R 5916 to go to Genoa, but on their return, they collided with another 9 Squadron Lancaster (W 4265) in the circuit. Fellow service men with him were: - Sgt KTJ Adams, Sgt A R Billington, F/O K A Mackenzie, Sgt J J Taaffe, Sgt R E Werren and Sgt D J Wicks.

He was buried at Heckmondwike Cemetery the following Wednesday.

Herbert was awarded the Air Crew Europe Star; 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group