

War Memorial – The Green, Castle Bromwich

World War II 1939-1945

Flight Sergeant Geoffrey Thomas Cox (1922-1944) 1426000 21st Squadron, Royal Air Force (Voluntary Reserve) RAFVR died aged 22



F/S Geoffrey Cox

Geoffrey's parents Thomas and Annie (known as Nancey) Cox (née Chick) were married in Kings Norton in July 1920. Geoffrey was born towards the end of 1921 in West Bromwich, Staffordshire.

He was a former pupil of Central Secondary School, and a promising Birchfield Harriers athlete. While at school he won the mile and cross-country events three years in succession and broke a 16-year record for the mile. At this time the family home was on Coleshill Road, Castle Bromwich.

The 21st Squadron operated from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, from June to October 1940, to attack German shipping off the coast of Norway and to deter any German invasion across the North Sea. At the end of 1941 the squadron moved to Malta to attack Italian shipping. The squadron was disbanded in Malta on 14 March 1942.

On the same day a new 21 Squadron was formed at RAF Bodney, Norfolk re-equipped a few months later with the Lockheed Ventura aircraft. This aircraft was never really suitable for the squadron's activities and they were replaced by October 1943 with the Mosquito. Geoffrey was posted to the squadron on 25th May 1943. The squadron turned to night raids on continental Europe; it also carried out precision daylight raids including a notable attack on Gestapo headquarters in Denmark, and involvement in Operation Jerico.

By 1944 the squadron was operating out of RAF Hunsdon in Hertfordshire.

On 5th February 1944 Geoffrey, acting as navigator, and his pilot Flight Sergeant James Anderson were flying in a de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito FB Mk VI number LR386 when it was brought down by as 'ground flak' (German aircraft defence canon). The target was construction works at Bois Mègle, Northern France and LR386 was one of eight aircraft from the squadron on the operation that afternoon. The aircraft was last seen over Yuetot by the squadron. Anderson had set a westerly course down the Channel and on approaching Cherbourg turned south and 'fired the colours of the day.' Enemy guns opened fire, other aircraft turned on correct course and later saw black smoke rising from Cherbourg district, indicating that L386 had hit the ground and was burning.



Geoffrey Cox gravestone

Geoffrey and James are both buried at Cherbourg Old Communal Cemetery, Manche, France. Geoffrey's gravestone is inscribed "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them." He is also commemorated at the war memorial at The Green, Castle Bromwich. Probate dated 2nd November 1945 records his father Thomas Cox, a commercial traveller living at 310 Coleshill Road, Castle Bromwich.