

War Memorial – The Green, Castle Bromwich

World War II 1939-1945

Sergeant Reginald Arthur Dawes (1914-1941) 1198393 86th Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR) died aged 27



Reginald was born on 6th January 1914, the third child to parents Arthur William and Emma Dawes (née Hadley) in Stechford, Birmingham. Reginald had two elder sisters May born 1910 and Constance born 1912.

His parents married in 1909 and by the 1911 Census Arthur, a 24 years old toolmaker, wife Emma aged 26 and their second daughter Constance, 10 months old were living at 143 Westbury Road, Ladywood, Birmingham.

Reginald married Grace Lillian Bryant (known as Jeanne) in January 1937 in Islington, London. They had a son Philip Bryan Anthony born 19th March 1939.

By the 1939 Register, Arthur a foreman electric motors engineer, Emma a ladies outfitter shop keeper and daughter Constance an assistant at the shop were living above it at 322-324 Bradford Road, Castle Bromwich. Reginald, an advertising consultant, Jeanne and Philip were living at 3 Temple Terrace, Pound Lane, Billericay, Essex.

For the war effort, Reginald joined the RAFVR assigned to 86th Squadron. The squadron was attached to coastal command, the unit flying reconnaissance air-sea rescue missions, anti-shipping strikes and anti-submarine patrols. The squadron was formed on 6th December 1940, initially flying Blenheim light bombers on convoy escort duties. During March 1941 the squadron moved to Wattisham, Suffolk and began convoy escort patrols off the East Anglian coast, with a move to North Coates, Lincolnshire in May. In June 1941 the squadron was re-equipped with Beaufort torpedo bombers and began minelaying sorties on 15th July.

On 7th September 1941 Beaufort 1 W6542 took off from RAF North Coates crossing the North Sea. During the flight the aircraft encountered engine failure and had to make an emergency landing in the North Sea in the Ijsselmeer area, off Den Oever in the Netherlands.

The crew, pilot Sergeant Reginald Dawes, co-pilot Sergeant William Udale, flight engineer Sergeant Sidney Longhust and wireless officer Sergeant Edward Butt all perished. On 25th October 1941, some six weeks later, the body of Sergeant Butt was washed ashore and was buried at Nes General Cemetery, Frisian Island, Ameland.



Beaufort 1 bomber

Sadly, Jeanne was left destitute by the loss of Reginald and she was forced to give up Philip to a children's home. Ironically in 1966, Philip married Edith Kosanke, a German, who grew up among the war-torn ruins of Berlin and emigrated to UK in the early 1960s where they met.

Reginald is remembered, along with his crew, at the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey. Reginald is also commemorated at the Castle Bromwich war memorial, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham.