

War Memorial – The Green, Castle Bromwich

World War II 1939-1945

Sergeant John Edwin Savage (1917-1943) 612613 Royal Air Force 3225 SCU died aged 26



John Savage

John Edwin was born on 12th November 1917 at the Maternity Hospital, Loveday Street, Birmingham, the eldest of four children to parents John Thomas Savage and Ida Ann Smith of 15 Staniforth Street, Birmingham.

His father John Thomas served in WW1 with the Worcester regiment. He volunteered in October 1915 and after being drafted to France, in the following summer was in action on the Somme for some considerable time. He was wounded at Ginchy in November 1916 and was invalided to England. On his recovery he was transferred for duty in Ireland where he served until his discharge from the Army in 1917. He married Ida Smith on 20th May 1916 whilst serving with the Worcester's and died of tuberculosis at City Hospital, Birmingham in 1926 aged 44.

John Edwin was nine when his father died. With four children to provide for, in December 1927 his mother married Frank Hall and had two further children. Sadly in 1932 Frank died, and with six children to care for Ida married again to William Simmons. William and Ida had two further children. It was around 1937 that the family moved to Castle Bromwich.

It is understood that John Edwin enlisted in the RAF before the start of WWII and later joined the Servicing Command Unit. There were fifteen Servicing Commandos Units on active service. No. 3225 Servicing Commando was formed at RAF Station Old Sarum, Wiltshire on 27th July 1942.

A Servicing Commando Unit comprised between 150 and 170 other ranks with two or three Technical Officers, one appointed as Commanding Officer. It would normally be equipped with about 15 three-ton trucks, a jeep for the officers and two or more motorcycles.

Following months of training, aircraft servicing and refuelling in March 1943 SCU 3225 sailed to Egypt via Freetown and Durban in South Africa and Aden to Port Tewfik (now called Suez Port) Egypt. They were stationed at No21 PTC, Kasfareet and moved on to RAF Hadera, Palestine, where they worked throughout the summer. In September 1943 John Edwin was in command of a detachment that flew to Kos, Greece to do essential maintenance on a Dakota aircraft. This was during the Battle of Kos, where the island was finally lost to the German forces on 4th October with many British and Italian's taken prisoners of war.

Returning to Palestine, in late October the Unit proceeded from RAF Ramat David to 180 MU 17 Kilo 17 Fayoum Road Egypt. On 22nd October Sgt John Edwin was killed whilst acting as despatch rider to the convoy of 12 vehicles. He was killed instantaneously. The accident occurred on the Mus-Mus Track near Musherifa village in the direction of Hadera.



Funeral of John Edwin Savage

An ambulance and medical officer were summoned and the body was transferred to No 32 General Hospital, Nazareth. The autopsy revealed a complicated skull fracture and a lacerated forehead.

John Edwin was buried on 23rd October at British New Cemetery Haifa. Full military honours were afforded by a detachment from RAF Ramat David under the command of F/Lt HT Hill.

He is buried at the cemetery now known as Khayat Beach War Cemetery, Haifa, Israel. The original cross was inscribed *"A voice we loved is still'd, A place is vacant, At our hearth, Which never will be filled"* has been replaced with the standard CWGC head stone. A memorial to the fallen of Servicing Commando Units was placed at the National Memorial Arboretum, Lichfield, and a tree is dedicated to Servicing Command Unit 3225. He is also remembered on the memorial plaque in St Mary and St Margaret's Church and at the war memorial at The Green, Castle Bromwich.



National Arboretum Memorial

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