

War Memorial – The Green, Castle Bromwich

World War II 1939-1945

Flight Lieutenant Theodore Norman Gerald Winning (1913-1945) 116985 Royal Air Force (Voluntary Reserve) 51st Squadron died aged 31



Gerry Winning

Castle Bromwich.

Theodore Norman Gerald Winning (known as Gerry) was born on 27th May 1913 in the district of Paddington, London to parents Theodore Norman Winning, an accountant and Florence (née Bonner). He was baptised on 25th June 1913 at Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, London.

On 4th July 1932, aged 19, Gerry gained his Aviators' Certificate as a member of the Midland Royal Aero Club flying a de Havilland DH.60 Moth (Cirrus engine). This was a British two-seat touring and training aircraft. At the time, the family were living at The Dingle, Church Road, Shirley, Warwickshire.

He married Joan Habberfield Short in 1937 at Sutton Coldfield. In 1939, the Electoral Register has his father Theodore, now a barrister, mother Florence and brother Patrick Winning living at Hawkesford House, 23 Chester Road,

Gerry joined the 51st Squadron and from October 1942 spent the rest of the war operating from Snaith in East Yorkshire. On the night of 17th February 1945, 298 aircraft took off from various airfields in the East of England, including 247 Halifax bombers, their target being Wesel in Germany. On arrival at the target area the cloud cover was so thick that only eight Halifax aircraft were able to release their bombs. The master bomber ordered the raid to be stopped. No aircraft were lost over Germany, but three Halifax aircraft crashed over England.

The Halifax Mk III No MZ765 flew with out of Snaith, but on the outward journey over Oxford a fire broke out in the inner starboard engine that could not be extinguished. In spite of Pilot Gerry Winning turning back to find a suitable landing area, he finally ordered the crew to abandon the aircraft before it crashed. For unknown reasons the Bomb Aimer Sergeant J Webb failed to vacate before the crash, at Mannings Heath Golf Course, Horsham and was killed. All other members Sergeant VC Gilbert, Flight Lieutenant AS Russell, Flight Officer P Haselton, Flight Sergeant RS Heseltine and Wireless Operator A Hughes successfully bailed out. However, Pilot Gerry succeeded in getting out of the aircraft but tragically slipped through his harness and fell to his death.



Halifax Mk III

Gerry is buried at St Nicholas Churchyard, Elmdon, Solihull. The inscription states *"Killed whilst piloting a Halifax Bomber. In sacred memory, Joan and daughters Olga and Ann."* There is a memorial plaque to the crew and the recovered propeller blade displayed at Mannings Heath Golf Club. Gerry is remembered locally at the Castle Bromwich war memorial as G Winning. At the time of his death, his wife and daughters were living at Tanners Green, Worcestershire.