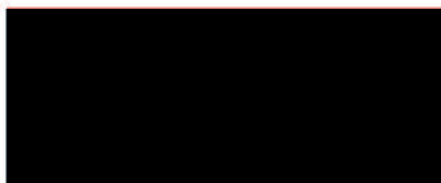




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Our Reference
D/AHB(RAF)8/27
Date
6 June 2002



Thank you for your letter dated 19 April 2002 seeking information on the circumstances of death of Pilot Officer Gerald Leslie Tudor, an RAF serviceman who sadly lost his life during World War 2 whilst serving with 218 Squadron, RAF Bomber Command. This letter has been passed to me from the Personnel Management Agency at RAF Innsworth for further action.

Our records state that Sgt Tudor was killed on a minelaying operation (codenamed 'Gardening) on 21st August 1942. He was a Navigator on Stirling Bomber Mark I Number W-7573 HA-U. This aircraft took off from its base at RAF Downham Market in Norfolk on the evening of 20 August 1942 for a mission to lay mines in the Fehmarn Channel (north German coast) from which, sadly, it failed to return. It was part of a Bomber Command force of 57 aircraft that laid mines at many places from Brest to Danzig on the night of 20/21 August 1942. Overall, 6 aircraft (3 Stirlings and 3 Wellingtons) failed to return from operations.

Regrettably, the precise circumstances of the loss of Stirling No. W-7573 are not fully known. Surviving records in this Branch state that it crashed between the towns Brodersby and Geel, northeast of Schleswig in the early hours of 21 August 1942. The most likely cause of loss would have been enemy flak or a Luftwaffe nightfighter. Had it been due to weather or mechanical failure then the aircraft would almost certainly have transmitted a radio message.

All 7 crewmembers on board Stirling No. W-7573 sadly lost their lives in the crash and their full details are as follows:

AUS/404685 F/O O J Sanderson RAAF – Pilot
116028 P/O G L Tudor – Navigator
568305 Sgt R T Higgins – Flight Engineer
1114842 F/Sgt J Farrimond – Wireless Operator/Air Gunner
R. 82839 Sgt C D Dixon RCAF – Wireless Operator/Air Gunner
1209164 Sgt C Smith – Wireless Operator/Air Gunner
914837 Sgt F J James – Air Gunner

The crew of W-7573 are all buried today in Kiel War Cemetery. P/O Tudor is laid to rest in Grave No. 10, Plot 2, Row J.

I am afraid that our records of Spitfire crashes are not filed by geographical location. However, if you could provide me with any details about the crash of the Spitfire at Cardiff Golf Club (such as either the date of the crash, the serial number of the Spitfire or the name of the pilot) then I should be able to shed some light on it.

Meanwhile, I hope the information I have provided is helpful.

*Yours sincerely,
Russell Smith*

Mr R O Smith
AHB5(RAF)