

Alexander (Alec) Abrahams was born on 3 April 1921 in Blackwood, Monmouthshire to Ephraim and Esther Abrahams. His father Ephraim was born in Stepney and his mother Esther Isaac was born in Paris. Alec's paternal grandparents originated from Poland. Alec was the penultimate of 13 children. All 6 of his brothers enlisted in the Army but Alec was the only one who joined the RAF and the only one who did not return.

In Sept/Oct 1942, Alec was on a navigation and bombers course in Grahamstown in South Africa. He met a young woman called Beatrice from Cape Town and they fell in love. It was Alec's intention to return to after the war, marry Beatrice and settle down in South Africa. Sadly, this was not to be and when Alec's letters to his intended ceased, sadly she never knew of his fate.

In 1943 Alec was posted to 1663 Heavy Conversion Unit at RAF Rufforth in Yorkshire. On the evening of 26th Nov 1943, Alec's crew, Sgt Colin Walker (Pilot); Sgt Frederick Hughes (Flight Engineer from Liverpool); Sgt John Sutherland (Navigator, RCAF from New York City); Sgt Peter Carmino Gizzi (Wireless Op/AR from Rhyl, Wales); Sgt Kenneth Charles Southward and Sgt George Armstrong Shield from Northumberland, (both Air Gunners), flew out on Halifax EB183 from Rufforth airfield. In the process of taking off at 20.00 hrs to undertake a training flight, as the aircraft picked up speed on the runway, a swing developed. The plane left the runway, crossed the grass and struck a pile of rubble which removed the Halifax's undercarriage. Two members of the crew sustained minor injuries (Sgt Walker and Sgt Shield).

A couple of months after this incident, on 8 January 1944, the crew were assigned to 76 Squadron at Holme on Spalding Moor in Yorkshire. At 20.00 hours on 20th January 1944, the same crew flew from their base in a Halifax V LL.185 ("G") on what was to be their first and last operation for 76 Squadron. Their mission was to bomb Magdeburg. Tragically, on its return journey home, the plane crashed into the North Sea west of Walcheren, Holland.

The Ops sheet read: "Aircraft missing. Last message received at 04.45 hours (21 Jan) that the aircraft was being ditched. No further news" It turned out to be a terrible night for 76 Squadron with a total of 5 aircraft lost.

My Uncle's body sadly remained in the water until 2 May. He would have been 24 on 3rd April. His body was washed up at a beach near Horntje and he is buried in Den Burg cemetery on Texel Island, Holland (K, Row 7 Plot 154). Sgt Fred Hughes was washed up on the beach at Wissekerke on 16 March and is buried in Kamperland General Cemetery in Zeeland, Holland (Row VR, Grave 5). The other five members of the crew have no known graves and are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

On Sunday 16th January 1944, just days before Alec Abrahams died, he wrote to his sister Fay from the Sgts Mess at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. This was a very new camp for Alec. In the letter he describes the long journey he had by train from Blackwood, via Newport to the camp in Yorkshire. He also said he had completed the News of the World crossword with just two words wrong so he was pleased with his effort as he "had not done that crossword for a long time"! He said his new camp had "several snags - the food was not as good as at the previous camp (RAF Rufforth) and transport facilities for getting to town were very bad. However, he said he "had got organised and everything is OK this end. Cheerio, (signed) Alec".

Five days later he was dead

