

901160 SGT JOHN ALLEN WOOD

Tailgunner, 35 Squadron, RAF

Missing in action 31 March 1942

John Wood was born in 1918, the son of John and Frederica Wood, who ran the grocers shop and part-time bookmakers in premises at 25 Castle Square, **Benson**. He had two older sisters, Barbara and Eileen, and attended Benson School in Oxford Road and then Wallingford Grammar. After leaving school, he worked at the Cowley Works for some time, but much to everyone's surprise, he left and took up an apprenticeship as a chef at Brasenose College, Oxford. When qualified, he would work for approximately seven months of the year and spend the remainder touring on his motorbike. He enlisted voluntarily in the Royal Air Force on the first Monday of the war.

A tail-gunner with 35 Squadron, equipped with Halifax bombers, Sgt Wood was involved in many missions, including the following:

25.11.41 – Target Brest, one 1000lb bomb hung up, landed safely;

30.11.41 – Target Hamburg, aircraft iced up, bombs jettisoned; 7.1.42 – Target St Nazaire; 8.1.42 – Target Brest, specific details not available, but at this time the squadron was heavily engaged in trying to stop the German battleships Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen escaping from the French ports to the open sea; 3.3.42 – Target Norway, a detail of 12 aircraft and crews took off from Linton on Ouse to take part on a raid over the Norwegian coast. Three aircraft, including Halifax R9438 (H), piloted by F/Sgt Bushby, with Sgt Wood as tailgunner, failed to return.

Sgt Wood is commemorated on Panel 97 of the Runnymede Memorial (NA Ref. Air 27/379).