

MOSQUITO CRASH AT OLIVES FARM

By Stuart Moye

157 Squadron arrived at RAF Hunsdon on the 13th May 1943 from Bradwell Bay with their 27 De Havilland Mosquito MK 2 night fighter aircraft. The squadron was to have some similarly equipped Mk. 6 versions of the Mosquito added to their strength in July 1943. Because of the large number of Mosquito Squadrons that were based over the war years at Hunsdon it was known as the “Mosquito Airfield”. 157 Squadron’s main role was to intercept night time German bombers attacking this part of south east England as well as some intruder raids on German fighter bases on the continent.



On the 31st of August 1943 Pilot Officers [P/O] Bernard Walter “Barney” Joblin and Frederick Thomas “Taffy” Weston were ordered to carry out a training exercise in their Mosquito, a Mk 2 numbered DZ739 their last flight having been two days previously. This aircraft had been built at Hatfield and delivered to the RAF in December 1942. It was a Mk 2 fitted with four 20mm cannon and four 0.303 inch Browning Machine Guns as befitted its night fighter role.



A Mosquito Mk 2 of 157 Squadron being refuelled at RAF Hunsdon in June 1943

They took off from RAF Hunsdon and very shortly passed over the P/O Joblin's service quarters where they could see his wife in the garden. The wings of the aircraft were waggled by way of a greeting to Mrs Joblin who watched the plane pass overhead. The pilot then opened up the throttles and turned the plane into a turning climb to head off towards the designated training area. While this manoeuvre was taking place the aircraft without warning stalled and fell to earth completely out of control. It crashed in a field belonging to Olives farm, the farm buildings of which lay about three quarters of a mile to the south west of the airfield perimeter. Both P/O Joblin and his navigator P/O Weston were killed as the plane smashed into the ground.

LEST WE FORGET

P/O Bernard Walter "Barney" Joblin RAFVR (Pilot)

He was born in 1916 at Kingston Upon Hull in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the third of four children Walter and Alice. He married Eileen who hailed from Kilkenny Ireland in late 1942. He was promoted from Warrant Office pilot to Pilot Officer on 29th of June 1943. A son was born to the couple after Bernard was killed at Hunsdon. P/O Joblin was buried in the North Cemetery in Hull.

P/O Frederick Thomas Weston RAFVFR (Navigator)

He was born in 1908 at Ebbw Vale in Wales to Mr and Mrs Thomas Weston and was educated at Ebbw Vale Grammar School and gained a BA from Cardiff University. He was subsequently an assistant master at Wallingford on Thames Grammar School and later as Master of Queens College in Guyana from 1935 to 1941. After joining the RAF he qualified as an Observer/ Navigator and wireless / radio direction operator [radar] before joining 157 Squadron as a Flight Sergeant. He was to marry Dylis in Bridgend Glamorgan on the 24th of October 1942 with one son born of the marriage. He was promoted to Pilot Officer on the 29th June 1943. He is buried in Llansantffraid Glamorganshire.

The 126 airmen who lost their lives while posted to RAF Hunsdon are commemorated on a plaque dedicated on the 23rd June 2012 at the site of the RAF airfield in Hunsdon. Among the money raised to provide the memorial were donations from family members of both P/O Joblin and P/O Weston.



Stuart Moye November 2018

Readers are recommended to view the website of the Hertfordshire Airfields Memorial Group at <http://hamg.co.uk>