

Sgt W.J.Tucker – Royal Air Force

William John Tucker was the son of William and Edith Tucker who ran ‘The Prince of Wales’ public house. He was born on 4th April 1923 and went to Westcott Village School from 1929 to 1937.

William was called up into the Royal Air Force Reserve and became a Wireless Operator serving with 115 Squadron at RAF Witchford in Cambridgeshire. This distinguished Squadron was re-formed in 1937 and in 1940, flying Wellington bombers, it made the first RAF bombing raid on a target in mainland Europe, near Stavanger in Norway. In 1942 it undertook the inter-service trials of *Gee*, the first Radar navigational and bombing aid.

From spring 1944 the Squadron flew Lancaster bombers and it was in one of these, Lancaster LM738 A4-B, captained by Flying Officer L.Wibberley RAF, that William Tucker was serving as a wireless operator. On 27th September 1944, the squadron was tasked with bombing enemy strong points in the Calais area of northern France. It was to be a daylight raid which was particularly hazardous. The squadron took off from Witchford at 0735 hrs and LM738 A4-B crashed with great force in the target area. Only one of the crew survived – Flt/Sgt J.T.Gibbs RNZAF, the bomb aimer, who suffered a broken arm.

The crew members who died are buried in various cemeteries in the area. William Tucker is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery which contains 5,577 Commonwealth graves of the First World War and 224 graves from the Second World War.