

Flt Lt. D.Bamford – Royal Air Force

David Bamford was born in London in 1912, the son of Nellie and James Bamford, a retired Cotton Spinner, who was born in Littleborough in Lancashire. The family lived in Hampstead before moving to Westcott where they lived in Churt House in Sandrock Road. In 1938 David married Betty Anderson of Purley, Surrey.

David Bamford took up flying in the late 1930s and gained his Aviator's Certificate in a de Havilland Gipsy Moth at Brooklands Flying Club on 6th February 1936. He joined the RAF and was promoted from Pilot Officer to Flying Officer on 10th September 1939. Exactly a year later he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant.

In August 1941 he was serving at No.3 Air School at Wonderboom, near Pretoria in South Africa. This was one of several air schools in South Africa training pilots for the RAF and its role was to give recruits basic flying instruction using de Havilland Tiger Moth aircraft. After 50 hours training, those who showed promise went on to advanced training in either single-engine fighters or multi-engine aircraft. The other trainees went on to specialise in wireless, navigation, bombing or gunnery. Given his experience, David Bamford would almost certainly have been a flying instructor at the Air School.

On 6th August 1941, David Bamford was flying a Tiger Moth DH82A over No.4 Air School at Benoni and was killed when the aircraft went into a spin and crashed into the Officers' Mess. The aircraft was an ex RAF machine N6918 which was transferred to the South African Air Force and carried the serial 528. There is no record of anyone else being killed or injured in the crash so it appears that he was flying alone at the time.

David Bamford was buried in the cemetery at Benoni which serves the town of Gauteng, near Johannesburg and contains a section holding the graves of 40 military casualties.