

David James HANSON

Sub-Lieutenant (A), Royal Navy
died Monday 1st May 1944, aged 22

Memorial Book text:

Son of the late Mr James and Mrs Florence Minnie Hanson who lived in 'The Chantry', High Street, Olney.

1941 – A/LA 46 Observers Court, 73 Hut, RNAS., Piarco[?], Trinidad, BWI.

1942 – Royal Naval Air Station, Malta.

1943 – Sub. Lt. (A) RNVR., RAF Station Drem, East Lothian.

1944 – HMS Jackdaw – Mentioned in Despatches. Reported 'Missing'. Died on 1 May 1944 – no grave but the sea.

The photograph of David was supplied by Mr J A Hanson, brother of David, of Mill Close, Olney.

David's name is inscribed on the family grave in Olney Cemetery. He is commemorated by name on Bay 5 Panel 5 of the Lee-on-Solent Fleet Air Arm Memorial. This information kindly given by Mrs June Lord and by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, in Maidenhead.



CWWG information:

Sub-Lieutenant (A), H.M.S.
Jackdaw, Royal Navy.
Son of James and Florence
Minnie Hanson, of Olney.
Died Monday 1st May 1944,
aged 22.
Named on Bay 5, Panel 5, of
the Lee-on-Solent Memorial

Additional information:

Query posted on the 'RAF Commands' Discussion Forum web site 7th June 2004 by a French aviation historian:

Dear friends ... I am preparing a new exhibition about Plouguerneau commune, north west Brittany, where several aircraft crashed during WW II, as a 7 Sqn Stirling s/n W 7436 (December 18, 1941), a Catalina s/n FP 138 (April 7, 1943), a 616 Sqn Spitfire s/n BS 245 (April 16, 1943), an unknown Sqn Whitley (July 5, 1943) , and two 838 Sqn Swordfish that were lost on the night of April 30, May 1st, 1944. The crash site of two of the three lost planes that night are known, one being in the water, but not far from the coast in the "Baie des anges" (Angels Bay), and the second on the coast.

Also, just in the case someone may provide a picture of such an aircraft or crew, they carried the code letters K (s/n NE946), F (NE906) and G (NE923).

A contact with any next of kin of these airmen would of course be dearly appreciated :

A friend of mine and I have found very few remains from the one that crashed on the Lilia-Plouguerneau Coast. But no way to identify which one, between Sub-Lieut (A) I.L.R. Wilson (NE906) and Sub-Lieut (A) L.F. Hayward crew (NE923) it was.

The crew was still on board when NE946 aircraft was salvaged from the sea by the Germans, and was later buried at Brest Kerfautras cemetery, but one the two up mentioned crew was buried in Plouguerneau communal cemetery as « An unknown soldier of the 1939-45 War » and the date, one being reported as Sergeant.

Lieut. (A) COOK James Benjamin HMS Gadwall KIA
P.O. Airman GRAPES Richard Crawford FX.87259 KIA
Sub-Lieut. (A) SUCH Stanley Frederick HMS Gadwall KIA

Sub-Lieut. CLARK Edward T. H.M.S. Gadwall KIA or MIA
P.O. ROCKLEY Albert FAA/FX. 86788 H.M.S. Vulture KIA or MIA
Sub-Lieut.(A) WILSON IAN L. R. RNZNVR HMS Gadwall KIA or MIA

Sub-Lieut.(A) HANSON David James H.M.S. Jackdaw KIA or MIA
Sub-Lieut.(A) HAYWARD Leslie Frank idem KIA or MIA
Leading Airman ROWNTREE Brian L. FX87018 (Vulture) KIA or MIA

Many thanks for any help you can provide

Gildas

My reply was:

Gildas,

I believe I can add a little on the Swordfish shot down as one of the airmen came from a town near my home here in North Bedfordshire (apologies if you know the following already).

Swordfish NE923

From the following sources ...

1. Fleet Air Arm Aircraft 1939 to 1945 by Ray Sturtivant with Mick Burrow:

One of 350 FAIREY SWORDFISH II & III ordered from Blackburn Aircraft Ltd under Contract No. B31192/39. Built at Sherburn. NE923 was a Mk.II. (690hp Bristol Pegasus 30). Deld. 19.11.43

2. For Your Tomorrow; A Record of New Zealanders Who have Died While Serving With The RNZAF and Allied Air Services Since 1915.

Volume Two: Fates 1943-1998 by Errol W Martyn:

Strike against German torpedo boat T27 beached on the Isle Vierge, Brittany, France.

838 Squadron FAA (Machrihanish, Argyllshire – HMS Landrail; attached to RAF Harrowbeer, Devon).

Swordfish II NE923/G – took off on a rocket projectile strike against the beached torpedo boat which had been driven ashore during an engagement with Canadian destroyers two nights earlier. The Swordfish was shot down by flak at 0015, one of three which failed to return. The pilot is commemorated on the RNZN Memorial at Devonport, Auckland, while the RNVR observer is remembered on the FAA Memorial at Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire. The body of the telegraphist-air gunner was later recovered and is buried at Manchester.

Pilot: Sub-Lt (A) Leslie Frank HAYWARD, RNZNVR – Age 24.

I found something on how the torpedo boat came to be there at http://webhome.idirect.com/~jproc/haida_ext/backgroundunder/haphaida.html

extract from 'HAPPY HAIDA' - THE TRIBAL THAT SURVIVED By Thomas G. Lynch.

'Operation Hostile' sweeps were started on the 28/29th of April by HAIDA, in company with ATHABASKAN, another Canadian Tribal. Mixing it up with a group of German destroyers, the Flotilla rapidly became separated into small groups in hot pursuit of individual ships. As ATHABASKAN steadied onto an intercept bearing with a fleeing Elbing, she was struck by a German torpedo and numerous fires broke out, defying the best efforts of fire control parties.

She was eventually abandoned and sank. 44 survivors were recovered; 128, including Lt.-Cdr. J.H. Stubbs, the C.O. were missing and 83 became P.O.W.'s. HAIDA Avenged her sister ship moments later by hammering T-27 until she elected to ram herself hard aground on the reefs of Ile de Vierge, where HAIDA shelled her further until she turned into a blazing hulk. Later the next day, rocket-firing Beaufighters [sic] finished the job and T-27 was written off.'

David Hanson (22) was the son of James and Florence Minnie Hanson, of Olney, North Buckinghamshire. His name is inscribed on the family grave in Olney Cemetery and is commemorated by name on Bay 5 Panel 5 of the Lee-on-Solent Fleet Air Arm Memorial.

I have a picture of David Hanson which I can let you have if you can give me an e-mail address.

Sadly his brother, who supplied the photograph, died several years ago, and his brother's wife more recently. I know of no other local relatives although there is a chap who remembers him well and went canoeing on the river with him (he still has the boat!).

All the best - Colin



a rocket firing Fairey Swordfish