

# **Walter James GARFIELD**

## **A recipient of the Battle of Britain clasp**

### **A tribute from his 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, once removed, that he never knew**

Walter was one of only 2,936 aircrew in World War Two who was entitled to the Battle of Britain clasp. To qualify for the clasp, you had to have:

1. Served as an aircrew on a fighter aircraft.
2. Been engaged in the Battle of Britain between 10<sup>th</sup> July 1940 and the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1940.
3. Flown at least one operational sortie.

The clasp was worn on the ribbon of the 1939/1945 Star.

A family member, he was my dad's 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, as a result of my grandmother and Walter's father being siblings.

The Garfield's had a proud record in the First World War but that is perhaps a story for another day.

Walter was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1915, the son of Walter and Emma Garfield of Warmington near Oundle.

He was called up on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 and became Sergeant 740997 Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

In September, according to the 1939 registry, he was, while on active service, staying with his parents at 27 Priestsic Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield.

From July 1940 he served with 248 Squadron at Sumburgh in the Shetlands. 248 Squadron had been serving with Fighter Command at RAF Dyce with an attachment based at Montrose in the first few months of the war. On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1940 the squadron transferred to Coastal Command for reconnaissance flights off the Norwegian coast in order to attack German shipping.

### **Walter's Final Flight**

He was captain of a Blenheim IV, Serial Number L9451, Code Number WR-V which failed to return from a reconnaissance of the Feje Island/Stadlandet peninsula area of the Norwegian coast on 13th September 1940.

The other crew members were Sergeant Archibald KAY and Sergeant Bertram William MESNER.

The aircraft took off from RAF Sumburgh on the third reconnaissance operation of the day. The weather was poor with rain and cloud. Nothing was ever heard of from the aircraft after take-off.

The kill was claimed by Fw. Dyck of 4. /JG77 which was a Luftwaffe Fighter Wing, (Dyck was later shot down and killed on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1941 while serving on the Russian Front).

All three were killed, Walter's body being found while there was no trace of his comrades.

Walter is buried in Mollendal Cemetery, Bergen, Norway.

Norwegian Police Officer Magnus Ulland submitted this report:

Coast Pilot Gunnar Forre was on board the SS Union at 10:20hrs. Mr. Forre saw an English aircraft and two German fighters. This was between Holmengra and the lighthouse Utvaer. The English aircraft tried to climb but was attacked by the two German fighters who came in from both sides, the English aircraft being shot down. The aircraft sank at once and no one was saved. No wreckage appeared on the surface and in addition there was poor visibility.

So why did Walter get the Battle of Britain clasp.

1. He served on a fighter / bomber, the Blenheim.
2. He was engaged during the required dates.
3. We may never know the sortie/sorties that Walter flew in order to qualify.

A point of interest is the Battle of Britain was not fought just over the channel, Kent and Sussex etc. The Germans attacked Scotland and the northeast of England from bases in Norway.

Photos on following pages:

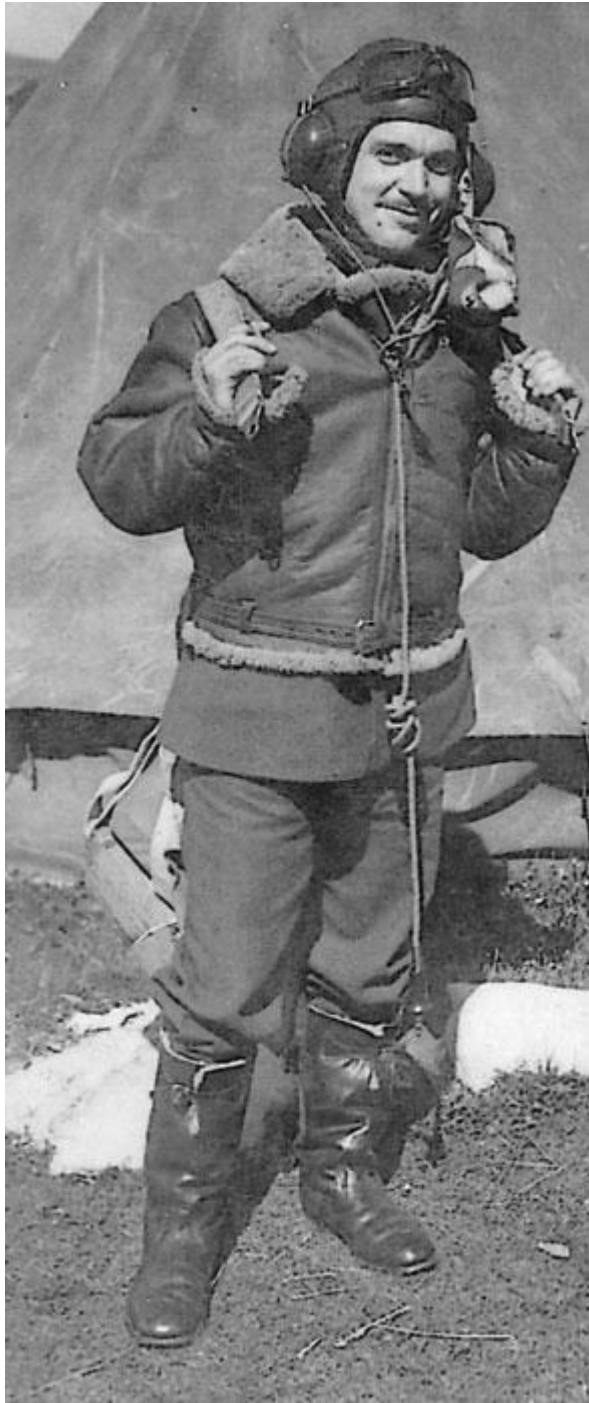


**Walter James GARFIELD**



**Left to right:**

**Walter Garfield, Pilot Officer A.L. Fowler, Pilot Officer E. H. McHardy,  
Pilot Officer S. R. Gane, Pilot Officer H. R. Sharman and Sgt J. H. Round.**



**Walter James Garfield**





**Grave of Walter James Garfield**



**Walter James Garfield, in the rear seat before a training exercise.**

**Roger Negus.**