

Robert Butler



Flying Officer 218 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Service Number 102576,

Died 23 September 1942 Age 28

Memorial Runnymede

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/1530984/butler,-robert/>

Son of William and Lucy Hannah Butler, of Netherfield, Nottinghamshire.

William and Lucy (nee Smith) were married in 1906, registered in the Basford registration District in the March quarter of that year

A daughter Edith Margaret was born on 8 January 1907, registered in Basford registration district, On the 1911 census William Lucy and Edith are living at number 2 Victoria Road Netherfield just behind the railway station. William is listed as working at home and is a Fruiterer who employs others in the business.

Robert was born on 27th July 1914

Edith married Richard B. Heslop in 1929 (Basford Registration District September (July August September) quarter.

Robert Joined the RAFVR in 1938

Robert's father William died before the 1939 registration (possibly in 1931) as on this Lucy is listed as a widow and is a florist and fruiterer with Robert as a shop assistant. They are now residing at 12 Victoria Road Netherfield.

Robert was mobilised as soon as war broke out and was assigned to 218 Squadron. A bomber squadron, part of Bomber Command, in early 1942 the squadron was based at the new RAF Downham Market. By the time that Robert was "missing in action" he had taken part in over 50 flights over enemy territory His mother was told straight away that he was missing in action.

On 23rd September 1942 218 squadron took part on a raid to Vegesack (Bremon) where there were submarine and ship building yards.

<https://218squadron.wordpress.com/history/>

On the 23/24th, (September) twenty four Stirlings were sent to attack the shipyards at Vegesack. Only one failed to return, R9187 of 218 Squadron, which contained the crew of flight commander S/L Raymond, and no clue to their fate has ever been uncovered.

In the Nottingham Evening Post on June 4th 1943 was a report that '*Flying Officer Robert Butler RAF of 12 Victoria Road Netherfield is reported missing presumed killed in air operations in September 1942.*

Robert Butler is commemorated on the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede

Details of this can be seen on the website

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2139034/runnymede-memorial>

and a copy of the panel with Robert Butler's name

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15246809/robert-butler>

OVER FIFTY FLIGHTS

Netherfield Officer Missing After Night Bombing Raid

Mrs. L. Butler, of 12, Victoria-road, Netherfield, has received official information that her only son, Pilot-Officer R. Butler, R.A.F., is missing after a flight over enemy territory on Wednesday night, September 23.

Pilot-Officer Butler was a member of the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve, having joined up in 1938, and been mobilised since the outbreak of war. He had about 50 flights over enemy



PILOT-OFFICER R. BUTLER

territory to his credit, and was expecting to reach his 60th flight very shortly, when he might have been promoted to other important work.

Mrs. Butler, his mother, is hoping for the best, but is fully aware of the very dangerous hazards which her son would have to encounter if shot down over enemy territory or over the sea.

"He has had several very narrow escapes before," Mrs. Butler told our reporter, "having returned with his machine practically riddled with bullet holes. He also just reached the coast on one occasion and had to land through lack of petrol. Each time he has come through safely, and I naturally hope that further news will arrive informing me that his life has been saved."

Before joining the R.A.F. Pilot-Officer Butler was employed with his mother in the shop on Victoria-road, Netherfield. He was educated at West Bridgford Secondary School, and was a keen tennis player. His age was 28, and he was still unmarried. He lived at home with his mother, his father having died about 12 years ago. He has one sister, Margaret, who is married to Mr. Heslop and their home is at West Bridgford. They have one son aged 10 years.

Pilot-Officer Butler was classed in the R.A.F. as a pathfinder. He was well known in Netherfield, and his many friends are all hoping for his safe return.