

Squadron Leader DONALD GEORGE LONG, DFC, AFC

40722, 57 Sqdn., Royal Air Force

who died age 24 on 31 January 1943

Son of George William Henry and May Elizabeth Long;

husband of Iris Evelyn Long (née Hudman), of Shuthonger, Gloucestershire.

Remembered with honour in the HAMBURG CEMETERY



I am indebted to his widow, **Mrs. I Long**, for her support and kindness. It was a great privilege to meet her.

Squadron Leader Long was born on 23 February 1918, the third son (of seven children) of George William Henry and Mary Elizabeth Long, of the Moat Farm, Strensham. He attended *Redland Hill Boarding School* in Bristol, enjoying all out-door activities, until illness forced him to leave school at 16 and work for his father.

After recuperation, he joined the R.A.F. in March 1938 and, after qualifying as a pilot, joined 150 Squadron, flying *Newton Fairy Battle planes* amongst others.

He married **Iris** at Twynning Church on 3 September 1939, the day war was declared. He then transferred to Chalons-sur-Marne where he remained until France fell in 1940. He flew his plane back to the UK on 15 June 1940 but much was lost, including

his own log-book.

His subsequent war service was as follows:

- 1940 (September) bombing French Docks
- 1941 (Jan-March) converted to *Wellington* Bombers, with night bombing of Germany.
- 1941 (March-July) posted to USA for Trans-Atlantic Ferrying service (of planes under the 'Lend-Lease' scheme).¹
- 1941 (Aug.) to 1942 (September) training on bombers such as *Wellingtons*, and *Lancasters*.
- 1942 (October) bombing operation on, for which he was awarded **D.F.C.**: "*for untiring efforts, skill and leadership, aircraft was detailed to attack Genoa, Shortly after crossing enemy territory, engine trouble developed, despite this, Squadron Leader Long continued his mission, reached his target, and bombed it. Soon after leaving the target area, the port outer engine caught fire, and ceased to function, displaying fine airmanship, he flew his aircraft back to Britain*".²
- 1942 (Nov-Dec.) & 1943 (Jan.) bombing of Turin (Italy) for which he was awarded the **A.F.C.** and was twice '**Mentioned in Despatches**'; in Germany, Berlin, Dusseldorf - and Hamburg.
- **30/31 January 1943** (his 40th Operation): after much secret training, his plane was shot down during an attack on **Hamburg** - he had suffered a premonition about this city. He crashed on *Luneburg Heath* but, after intervention from General Montgomery, their bodies were moved to *Olsdurf Cemetery*, Hamburg which Mrs. Long and her son have

¹ This was a form of 'Hire-Purchase', whereby the USA, then neutral, sent us war equipment, which had to be paid for after the war. However in return, we gave them bases in the West Indies; for example Antigua.

² Tewkesbury Register 13/04/1946: *AIRMAN WHO GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY - Widow receives decorations*

visited. Had he lived he would have flown with the *Dambusters* under *Guy Gibson*³ with whom he was training before his death.

Mrs. Long had a son, **David**, born seven months after his father died - his father had posted a £1 note "*to buy something for the baby*". He has two children and two grandchildren. **Mrs. Long**, who was a teacher in the Cheltenham area and a member of the Dyslexia Association, considers that, because of the child that was born posthumously to them, that "*we have been truly blessed*".



³ On 16 May 1943, Guy Gibson led the famous raid which dropped '*Bouncing Bombs*' in a high precision raid on German Dams in order to flood an industrial area.