



AIRCRAFTSMAN 926312 R W BENNETT

Robert William Bennett was born in about 1916; his service number was 926312 and he served with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve at RAF Scampton as part of 5 Group Bomber Command. He served as an Aircraftman 2nd Class and came from Rainham, Essex.

The RAFVR was formed in July 1936 to provide individuals to supplement the Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) which had been formed in 1925 by the local Territorial Associations. The AAF was organised on a Squadron basis, with local recruitment similar to the Territorial Army Regiments. Initially the RAFVR was composed of civilians recruited from the neighbourhoods of Reserve Flying Schools. Recruits were confined to men of between 18 and 25 years of age who had been accepted for part time training as Pilots, Observers and Wireless Operators. The object was to provide a reserve of aircrew for use in the event of war. By September 1939, the RAFVR comprised 6,646 Pilots, 1,625 Observers and 1,946 Wireless Operators

When war broke out in 1939 the Air Ministry employed the RAFVR as the principal means for aircrew entry to serve with the RAF. A civilian volunteer on being accepted for aircrew training took an oath of allegiance ('attestation') and was then inducted into the RAFVR. Normally he returned to his civilian job for several months until he was called up for aircrew training. During this waiting period he could wear a silver RAFVR lapel badge to indicate his status.

By the end of 1941 more than half of Bomber Command aircrew were members of the RAFVR.

During 1943, the decision was taken by the Air Ministry to raise an order for members of the RAFVR to remove the brass and cloth 'VR's worn on the collars and shoulders of officers and other ranks (respectively), as these were viewed as being divisive.

A/C Bennett was killed in the summer of 1940. He died on 21 July 1940.

He was shown in official records as having 'died on active service'.

AUGUST 8, 1940

FLIGHT

117.

SERVICE AVIATION (CONTINUED)

Roll of Honour

AIR MINISTRY CASUALTY COMMUNIQUE No. 41.
THE Air Ministry regrets to announce the following casualties on various dates. The next of kin have been informed.

KILLED IN ACTION (WHILE FLYING IN OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY). A/C2 P. Abner, 425421; P/O J. T. Allen, D.F.C., 70008; P/O W. Appleby, 42975; P/O C. A. Bird, 41543; Sgt. J. A. Buck, 742235; Act. Flt. Lt. D. G. Donald, 33506; P/O A. Finnis, 79158; P/O J. T. T. Fleming, 41277; P/O G. R. Gont, 41919; P/O D. A. Hewitt, 76579; Flt. Lt. P. G. Kettle, 57185; P/O E. P. J. Osborne, 40781; Flt. Lt. C. D. W. Price, 57935; Cpl. W. C. Royle, 516667; Sgt. Ldr. A. T. Smith, 90337; P/O R. C. Stead, 77981; L.A/C. K. E. Wether, 557545; L.A/C. M. H. Winship, 540854.

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED "MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED," NOW PRESUMED "KILLED IN ACTION."—Sgt. T. R. Barker, 580937; L.A/C. R. H. Hindle, 551612; L.A/C. C. F. Hudson, 524576; Sgt. R. J. Pascock, 562854; L.A/C. D. M. Rowson, 550760.

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED "MISSING," NOW PRESUMED "KILLED IN ACTION."—Flt. Lt. T. G. W. Appleby, 34227; L.A/C. J. A. Barrow, 550716;

Flt. Lt. 25668; P/O V. C. R. Morrison, 43204; P/O G. H. Muirhead, 42632; Sgt. F. Nelson, 516778; Sgt. P. D. Nixon, 580671; Sgt. W. P. O'Hara, 443564; Sgt. E. W. Jones, 550835; P/O A. D. Paxton, 33311; P/O R. T. Pearson, 42079; P/O R. L. Patterson, 77529; P/O C. D. Peel, 50109; Act. Flt. Lt. F. Phillips, D.F.C., 37827; Sgt. F. H. E. Phillips, 567099; P/O F. H. Pooner, 41735; Sgt. J. N. Pseudograt, 420735; Sgt. C. E. Read, 580828; A/C2 L. Rodiere, 441120; Sgt. G. Read, 746818; P/O R. H. Rigby, 42149; Sgt. C. Rose, 651369; P/O R. M. Sneyd, 59579; Sgt. D. M. Stiller, 524312; Sgt. E. W. Smith, 56415; Sgt. G. B. Smith, 563381; P/O J. D. Smith, 43901; L.A/C. W. B. Smith, 565173; A/C2 E. Sneyd, 935024; Sgt. R. A. Steele, 751178; Sgt. Ldr. J. F. Stephens, 22024; Sgt. L. R. Stride, 540871; Sgt. J. Sutter, 617488; P/O M. B. Tagg, 42544; A/C1 G. E. Tanner, 625471; Sgt. J. Tansley, 653130; L.A/C. J. G. Taylor, 520188; P/O C. R. D. Thomas, 42093; L.A/C. T. J. T. Tricker, 635359; Sgt. R. W. Turner, 525711; L.A/C. K. P. Turrell, 531102; Sgt. H. J. F. Tust, 506095; Sgt. L. A. N. Walker, 755505; Sgt. F. S. Walker, 633350; Sgt. F. Watson, 560745; P/O P. G. A. Watson, 74345; Act. Flt. Lt. R. H. Way, 35403; Sgt. J. V. Wood, D.F.M., 515941; A/C1 J. A. McI. G. White, 567830; Sgt. I. Winberg, 735919; Sgt. F. J. B. Winch, 640276; Sgt. G. A. Wright, 580504; Sgt.

KILLED." NOW REPORTED "KILLED ON ACTIVE SERVICE."—A/C2 E. South, 643394.

WOUNDED OR INJURED ON ACTIVE SERVICE.—Sgt. F. Alexander, 741120; P/O D. I. Baggot, 41696; P/O D. E. Bond, 41148; P/O T. M. Burfield, 33508; Sgt. R. B. Capes, 741013; L.A/C. R. P. Charnel, 749779; L.A/C. N. A. Cooper, 561553; P/O S. G. Cooper, 42501; P/O A. R. Davies, 50820; Sgt. D. D. S. Edgar, 741842; A/C1 W. C. Gallagher, 626774; A/C2 A. H. Gerratt, 1160701; P/O R. Gery, 72081; L.A/C. R. H. Jones, 585527; Cpl. D. P. J. Lenn, 550910; A/C2 J. H. Maudersall, 567850; W/O H. T. Sharp, 335415; L.A/C. J. L. Walker, 535585.

DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE.—Cpl. G. W. Lorne, 517879; A/C2 R. W. Bennett, 568312; Sgt. J. E. Catchpole, 794642; A/C2 C. E. Clark, 1163223; A/C2 N. W. Darby, 1350820; A/C1 F. S. R. Fletcher, 49824; L.A/C. E. Garner, 751876; A/C2 A. J. Godwin, 1157569; A/C2 S. Hague, 953419; Sgt. F. S. King, 514418; A/C2 G. D. Protheroe, 1163626; A/C2 L. J. Rushton, 963743; Flt. Sgt. F. G. Wells, 342671.

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED "MISSING," NOW REPORTED "SAFE."—L.A/C. J. A. Wall, 752255. PREVIOUSLY REPORTED "MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED," NOW REPORTED "PRISONER OF WAR."—L.A/C. R. D. Erskine, 591506; P/O F. Hugill, 45422.

Sharp, 335415; L.A/C. J. L. Walker, 535583.

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Prisoners of War

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED "MISSING," NOW REPORTED "PRISONER OF WAR."—Sgt. I. Ashdown.

Bennett was buried at the Church of St John the Baptist, Scampton. He was 24 years of age. His grave is marked by a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

County: LINCOLNSHIRE		GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM						Schedule No.: 1	
PLACE OF BURIAL: SCAMPTON (ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST) CHURCH, UNITED KINGDOM DISTRICT									
Controlling Authority:									
The following are buried here:									
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	
P.R.G.	No. and Rank	Initials, Name and Honours	Unit	Date of Death	Details of Grave marking including Screen Wall	By whom maintained, if at Commission expense state for payable	Ownership of Grave	REMARKS	
NEW GRAVES									
SCAMPTON CEMETERY (OLD PART)									
1	43715	P/O C.H. LAUNDERS	85 Sqdn. R.A.F.	8.7.40	Q/H	All by P.O.C.			
		(Plot)				at 5/- 00.			
2	326312	A.O.2 R.W. BENNETT	R.A.F. (V.R.)	20.7.40	Q/H				

Lincoln Coroner's "Don't" for Pedestrians at Night

PEDESTRIANS should not walk on the left side of the road at night said the Lincoln City Coroner (Dr. G. C. Wells-Cole) at an inquest last night on Aircraftman Robert William Bennett (24), whose home is at Wilfred-avenue, Rainham, Essex.

Bennett died in the Lincoln County Hospital early on Sunday after being knocked down by a motor car on the Lincoln-Market-Rasen road late on Saturday night. Returning a verdict of "accidental death" the jury exonerated the car driver—also named Bennett.

Pte. Edwin Atkinson said he was walking from Nettleham to Dunholme when Bennett caught up with him and they walked on together. Bennett was on the outside.

He heard a bump and a car which had been pulled up. Bennett was

lying on the verge injured. He did not hear the car coming. They were walking on the left side of the road.

In reply to Mr. P. H. Race, for the military authorities, Atkinson said he had never been quite clear about the side of the road on which to walk at night.

Driver Belgium Francis Bennett, R.F.C., said he was driving a car towards Market Rasen. As he was rounding a bend he saw two objects in front of him. If he had not swerved the car to the right he would have hit both men. The car struck one of the men and he picked up immediately.

Clouds obscured the moon, but he said "neither light nor dark," and his headlights could not illuminate the road under those conditions.

Major J. E. Urwin, R.F.C., who was in the car, said as they were on a gentle bend in the road he

(Continued on Page 1)

LINCOLN CORONER

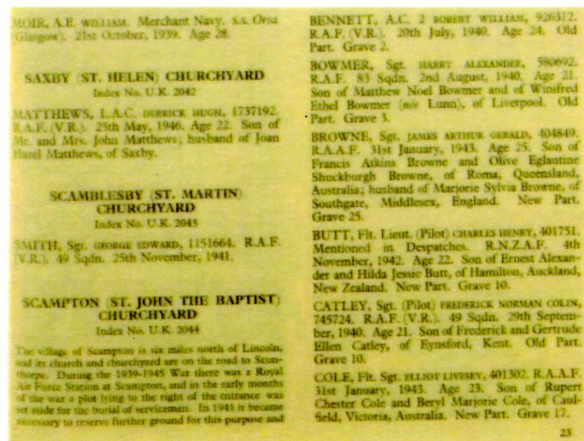
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pedestrians three or four feet in front of the car walking in the same direction. At the same time the driver swerved out to the right and he felt an impact. Their speed must have been less than 30 m.p.h.

His driver, Bennett, had been with him on active service in France and was a careful and reliable man.

Dr. W. Y. Cornock, senior house surgeon, said Bennett had a fracture of the right thigh and at the base of the skull. He died 30 minutes after admission.

P.A. Lewis said there was an "S" bend in the road and the accident occurred half way between the bends. From the position of the marks on the car it appeared that the driver had nearly avoided the accident.



The exact circumstances of his unfortunate death were revealed initially in the Lincolnshire Echo on 22 July 1940. A brief report in that newspaper related A/C Bennett's death in Lincoln County Hospital the day before after being involved in an accident on the Lincoln to Dunholme Road on the night of 20 July 1940.



A Coroner's inquest took place fairly quickly when more detailed particulars and evidence emerged about the incident. This was reported in the Echo on 23 July 1940. At the time in question A/C Bennett was in the company of a Private Atkinson and the two men were walking on the Lincoln to Market Rasen road (probably the A46) in the dark. It seems that Bennett was walking nearer to the road than his companion who heard a bump. A car then pulled up in front of them. The vehicle was being driven by a member of the Royal Engineers who told the inquest he would have struck both pedestrians had he not swerved. The airman suffered a fracture of the skull and died within twenty minutes of arrival at hospital.