

## W/O J.E.R.Ede – Royal Air Force

**John Ernest Richard Ede was born on 21st June 1921, the youngest son of James and Kathleen Ede (nee Hunt) of Watson Road, Westcott. James was born in Coldharbour in 1878, had served in the First World War and died in 1923 at the age of 45, leaving Kathleen to bring up John and his four older siblings. In 1941, Kathleen married Abraham Crocker and lived at 50 Bailey Road.**



**John joined the RAF and, after training, served as a flight engineer with 467 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force, which was formed at Scampton in November 1942. Although intended as an Australian squadron under Article XV of the Empire Air Training Scheme, most of its personnel were originally British, and their replacement by Australians was a gradual process. The squadron moved to Bottesford and then to Waddington in 1944. Flying Lancaster bombers, the Squadron's operations for much of the war were part of the strategic bombing offensive against Germany.**

**The Squadron was also employed in support of ground operations in north-west Europe after the D-Day landings and in removing the threat posed by the V1 and V2 rocket attacks on Britain. In July 1944 the VI campaign was at its height and it was crucial to reduce its effectiveness. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944, 467 Squadron took part in an attack on the Courtrai triangle rail junction, a key point on the route used by the Germans to supply their armies in the west and to transport the flying bombs (known as 'doodlebugs') from Peenemunde in northern Germany, where they were produced, to their launching sites in north east France.**

**On that night John Ede was the flight engineer in Lancaster Mk I serial number LM101 coded PO-J. The aircraft had been delivered to the Squadron from Armstrong Whitworth in May. Airborne at 23.29 from Waddington, it appears to have been over the target when it was brought down, as it crashed near Marke in the south-west outskirts of Courtrai. All seven of the aircraft's crew were killed. John Ede was the only crew member from the RAF and he and five others are buried in Wevelgem**

**Communal Cemetery; the Captain, Flying Officer D.B.Jeffery RAAF, is buried in the town's St-Jean Communal Cemetery. Lancaster LM119 also from 467 Squadron and eight other Lancasters were lost. Over three hundred aircraft took part in the raid - 55 aircrew lost their lives; 17 survived of whom 10 evaded capture; the other 7 survivors were captured and became prisoners of war.**

**During the course of the war 467 Squadron flew over 3,800 operational sorties and suffered heavily in the course of its operations – 118 aircraft were lost and 760 personnel were killed.**