

JAMES HENRY HACKETT, 10905

Pilot Officer, Observer, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, 612 Squadron

James Henry was the son of James John Hackett and Fanny Elizabeth, née Stark. James (senior) was born in Lambeth in 1886 and Fanny Elizabeth in Bermondsey in 1889. By the time of the 1911 census both were living with their families in Deptford, James was a labourer and Fanny a 'solder in the tin trade'. They married in Deptford in 1915. Their son James Henry was born in 1916 and their daughter Patricia in 1922.

James Henry Hackett married Gladys Irene Stannard in Deptford in 1940. Their son's birth was registered in Derby the following year.

James gained a commission in September 1941. When he died in 1942, he was a Pilot Officer in 612 Squadron. His wife was living in Dale Cottages, Main Street, Repton. She continued living at the same address after his death and after her re-marriage in 1947.



612 Squadron

We stand guard by vigilance

The squadron was formed 1 June 1937 at Dyce in Scotland as an army co-operation unit and flew during World War II in a general reconnaissance role. Between 15 December 1941 and 18 August 1942 the squadron was based at RAF Reykjavik. At that time the squadron was equipped with Armstrong Whitworth Whitley aircraft. The base was built by the British army on the south coast of the Reykjavik peninsula. Construction began in October 1940. The Black Watch regiment built the first (grass) runway, constructing the piste over sunken oil barrels. The airport was handed over to the Icelandic government in 1946. It is now a domestic airport.

The Whitley aircraft, Mk V, Z6807, code WL-J, took off from RAF Reykjavik at 10.51 on 15 March 1942. At the first attempt at take off the port engine cut out and the aircraft braked and stopped on the runway. During the second attempt the plane got off the ground but the port engine cut out again and the aircraft swung around and hit an American pillbox, before being destroyed by fire. James and the rest of the crew died.

The burial of the crewmen at Fossvogur Cemetery.



The cemetery at Fossvogur was consecrated in 1932 and is situated close to central Reykjavík, on the hillside east of Öskjuhlíð and west of Fossvogur.

The graves of the seven crewmen. Front row, left to right:

Pilot Officer, Pilot, Clare **HARRISON**, 101080, aged 28, son of John W and Esther Elizabeth Harrison of Bradshaw, Lancs.

Pilot Officer, Obs, J H **HACKETT**.

Flight Sergeant, W Op/Air Gnr, Lawrence (Ginger) Steele **COLLINS**, 978790, aged 21, the son of Herbert Leo and Elsie May Collins of Southport, Lancs.

Sergeant, W Op/Air Gnr, Glynnly Herbert Frederick **McCLAY**, 932199.

Flight Sergeant, W Op/Air Gnr, John (Jackie) Gerard **TURNER**, 745913, aged 21, son of James and Lillie Turner of Bolton Lancs.

Leading Aircraftman James Watson Fraser **ALLAN**, 817078, aged 26, the son of John Reid and Mary Allan of Aberdeen, husband of Henrietta Allan.

Aircraftman 1st Class Francis **RYAN**, 1341600, aged 20, son of Francis and Lizzie Ryan of Dundee.



PILOT OFFICER
J. H. HACKETT
OBSERVER
ROYAL AIR FORCE
15TH MARCH 1942 AGE 25

IN LOVING MEMORY
"PEACE PERFECT PEACE"

Fossvogur Cemetery, October
2013