

Brian Gordon Louch, Railway Arms



Rank	Flight Sergeant 624360
Regiment	RAF 97 Squadron & RAF 106 Squadron
Date of death	21 st December 1942
Died	Crashed at Beaufort-en-Argonne, France
Age at death	21
Commemorated	The Runnymede Memorial
Marital status	Married Margery Ellen Kimber in 1941
Address	Railway Arms <i>aka</i> Station Hotel, Bentley

Brian Gordon Louch, known as Josh, was born in **1921** in Egypt to Arthur Charles Innes Louch and Helen Elizabeth Perrett. His father was a Telegraph Engineer for the Egyptian State Telegraph during the First World War. Returning to England, Brian went to Farnham Grammar School and his father was the landlord of the Railway Arms opposite the station in Bentley from about 1933. Brian joined the RAF in **1939** aged 17.



Initially Brian was in 97 Squadron. On his sixth raid, with only 38 hours operational flying time, he was First Wireless Operator on the Augsburg Raid (also referred to as **Operation Margin**). During the daylight hours of 17th April **1942** he was in one of twelve Avro Lancasters attack on the diesel U-boat engine plant in Augsburg, Bavaria. He received the Distinguished Flying Medal for his *'skill and determination, in spite of the aircraft being hit in a number of places'*.

'Josh' transferred to 106 Squadron where Guy Gibson (best known for the 'Dambusters' raid) was the Commanding Officer.

On 21st December **1942** at 16:50hrs the Lancaster R5574 departed from the airbase Syerston as part of a raid on the city of Munich in Germany. For unknown reasons the plane crashed in Beaufort-en-Argonne killing all crew. At the cemetery in Beaufort-en-Argonne are five war graves; these are the graves his colleagues P/O AM Camplin, F/L GC Cooke, P/OBC Goodwin, Sgt F Morrell and Sgt M Reynolds. Flight Sergeant Brian Gordon Louch is missing, his body never found. He had just been commissioned and his officer's uniform was hanging in his mother's wardrobe awaiting his return.

Brian is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial which commemorates those airmen and women who died in Western Europe and have no known grave.



Above: Lancasters of 97 Squadron race past the French countryside at low level during the Augsburg Raid, 17 April 1942

Below: 106 Squadron with a Lancaster at RAF Syerston

