

A VERY FINE D.F.M. AWARDED TO A WELLINGTON BOMBER REAR GUNNER WHO'S RECOMMENDATION DESCRIBED HIM AS A "A VERY FLAT OUT AND GALLANT YOUNG GUNNER" AND HOW "HIS SUCCESS AGAINST THE ME 109 ON 2/6/42 HAS RAISED HIM TO A STATE OF ELATION, IN WHICH HE IS PREPARED TO TAKE ON THE LUFTWAFFE SINGLE-HANDED. HIS ENTHUSIASM IS INFECTIOUS AND IS HAVING AN EXCELLENT EFFECT IN HIS SQUADRON." TRAGICALLY HE WAS TO BE KILLED 7 WEEKS LATER DURING A RAID ON HAMBURG



DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL, G.V.I.R. '635036 SGT. R. BUSH. R.A.F.'

D.F.M. *London Gazette* 27 July 1943.

The original recommendation by the Officer Commanding No. 142 Squadron, dated 25 July 1942, the day before Bush was killed:

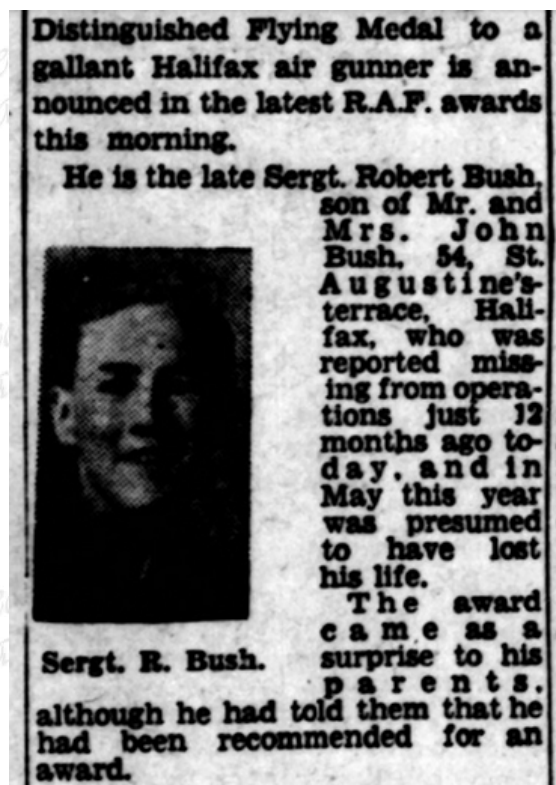
'This N.C.O. has displayed excellent qualities as an Air Gunner. During the operational sorties he has made over enemy and occupied territory he has shown an alertness under fire, and enthusiasm for his task which has proved an inspiration to all with whom he has come in contact. On many occasions his skilful handling of his guns and turret have resulted in his aircraft reaching its home base in safety. One occasion when returning from Essen his aircraft was attacked by an enemy fighter under conditions of light favourable to the enemy. However, Sgt. Bush's skill and superiority in gunnery over his opponent resulted in the enemy fighter being destroyed.'

Remarks by Station Commander, dated 25 July 1942:

'A very flat out and gallant young gunner. His success against the ME 109 on 2/6/42 has raised him to a state of elation, in which he is prepared to take on the Luftwaffe single-handed. His enthusiasm is infectious and is having an excellent effect in his Squadron. Recommended for the Distinguished Flying Medal.'

A slightly edited version of the above became the official citation for the award of the D.F.M.

"(Sorties 14, operational flying hours 70) As rear-gunner, this airman has carried out the above number of sorties since December 1941, including attacks on such targets as Brest, Wilhelmshaven, Bremen and Cologne. Throughout, he has shown great enthusiasm for his task and alertness in the face of enemy fire. On many occasions, his skilful handling of his guns and turret have resulted in his aircraft reaching its home base in safety. One occasion when returning from Essen his aircraft was attacked by an enemy fighter under conditions of light favourable to the attacker. Despite this, Sergeant Bush's skill resulted in the destruction of the hostile aircraft. His success on this occasion has proved infectious and is having an excellent effect on the other gunners of his squadron. Sergeant Bush is a gallant young gunner'



Robert 'Reg' Bush, a native of Halifax, Yorkshire, was born in February 1921 and noted as working at Halifax railway station for the London, Midland and Scottish Railway prior to joining the Royal Air Force in 1937 at the age of 16. After training as an Air Gunner, and crewed up, on 24 October 1941, the now Sergeant Bush was posted to 142 (City of Worcester) Squadron as a rear gunner on Vickers Wellington IV long-range medium bombers. Based at Grimsby, he took part in his first operational sortie on 28 December 1941 and during his second operation sortie, a raid on Brest, a shrapnel blast pierced his turret and Bush's flying jacket. His aircraft was again damaged by flak during a raid on Essen in March 1942 and again during a raid on Cologne a month later. However on the return from a raid on Essen on 2 June 1942 and after being subjected to heavy flak, Bush's Wellington was attacked by an ME109 fighter which Bush shot down. The combat report is as follows:

"Knocke, 0300 hrs, 9,000 ft, 280mph, diving, bombs dropped. Course 300 degrees. Weather fine, moon up S.E. Wellington had just previously been held S/L and subjected to heavy flak. IFF not used.

There was no track indicating from the ground or flare illuminating the Wellington. A single ME109 without lights was observed at 70 yards on green bow on same level. E/A turned in to attack from green beam from below at 100 yards firing with four machine guns and one cannon, continuing up to point blank range. Wellington rear gunner replied with seven to eight bursts, approximately in all 500 rounds and observed strikes in E/A which turned over as it was breaking away. Smoke appeared from the cockpit area and E/A dived into the sea approximately a mile off the coast., exploded and burnt for about one minute. This was seen by the rear gunner and the W/Op. in his Astro-hatch. E/A claimed as destroyed. Evasive action taken was to turn towards E/A and side slip. Wellington was not held by S/L at this time. Damage received was two machine gun holes in port wing. No casualties."

A month later, Sergeant Bush would be recommended for the D.F.C.. According to his recommendation, this aerial victory had *"raised him to a state of elation, in which he is prepared to take on the Luftwaffe single-handed. His enthusiasm is infectious and is having an excellent effect in his Squadron."* However it would not be for nearly 7 weeks that he would again take part in another sortie, a raid on Duisberg on 21 July. 5 days later, bush would take part in what would be his 15th and final sortie, a raid on Hamburg on 26 July 1942. His aircraft did not return, Bush and crew being reported Missing, believed killed.

The Crew of Wellington Z1376.M were: Sergeant N E R Carrell (RNZAF), Sergeant S W Walliter, Sergeant J V Straffen, Sergeant S J Oertel, Sergeant R Bush

Subsequently commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Bush's D.F.M. was officially gazetted exactly one year after his death.

Sergeant Bush's Operational sorties with notes:

28 December 1941 – Dunkerque
6 January 1942 – Brest – Shrapnel through Reat Turret and Bush's Irving jacket
8 January 1942 - Brest
10 January 1942 – Wilhelmshaven – Engine trouble
17 January 1942 – Bremen – Landed Hunsdon
8 March 1942 –Essen – Flak hits
15 April 1942 – Le Harve
17 April 1942 – Hamburg
27 April 1942 – Cologne – Several flak hits
19 May 1942 - Mannheim
30 May 1942 - Cologne
1 June 1942 – Essen
2 June 1942- Essen – Attacked by ME109, ME destroyed – crashed in sea off Knocke
21 July 1942 - Duisberg
26 July 1942 – Hamburg - Missing believed killed



Condition EF, lovely patina, complete with its original ribbon and pin. Sold with a most comprehensive file of copied research including confidential reports, extracts from local newspapers, Bush's operational soties and associated other papers.

A fine D.F.M. to a gallant young Air Gunner