



Woodford Remembers

Flying Officer Colin G E Crouch

10 July 1912 – 4 May 1941



Family

Colin Glynn Eustace Crouch was born in Woodford on 10 July 1912 and was one of a family of five children; Ivan, Doris, Roy, June. His parents were Fred and Ethel Crouch nee Berridge of Sunflower Cottage, Woodford.

He attended the village infant school from 11 July 1917 and junior school from 13 September 1920, before winning a scholarship to Kimbolton Public School (Cambridgeshire (formerly Huntingdonshire)) from 1 August 1924 to which he travelled daily by train.

He excelled and became what was known as a pupil teacher at nearby Finedon (Northants) before attending the Bangor Training College between 1935 and 1937.

Following qualification he taught at Newton Road Junior School in Corby Northants, where he taught the scholarship class – i.e. those hoping to gain a scholarship.

Following the outbreak of the 2nd World War and despite being in a protected profession he joined the RAF in October 1940.

Colin Crouch married Doris Jarvis in early 1941

Air Force Service

Following training he qualified as a Pilot Officer and on 4th May 1941, he visited Shrewsbury for a final fitting of his Officer's uniform. In the afternoon, just days before the Passing Out Ceremony, and knowing that his flying hours were a little low he decided to take a flight. One of the plane's engines failed just after take-off and with insufficient height to bail-out or attempt an emergency landing the plane crashed.

The full extract from the War Diary for 11 Flying Training School:

4th May 1941; "Oxford N4563 at Moreton Corbett. The pupil LAC C G E Crouch (1202561) had just taken off and climbed to about 500 feet when he commenced to turn to the right and lose height. He finally hit the ground when steeply banked to starboard, being killed instantly. The aircraft was a total wreck. An investigation and an Air Investigation Branch (AIB) inquiry was called for.

6th May – Squadron Leader A D Foster of No 5 SFTS of Tern Hill commenced an investigation into the fatal accident on 4th May. Evidence was taken from the pupil's instructor, Sgt L N Burgess (968268) and from the maintenance personnel and eyewitnesses of the accident. F/Lt T J Mammatt of the accident branch, Air Ministry, was also given permission to state what he had discovered from the wreckage.

The weather was fit for full flying. The IO (Investigating Officer) held the opinion that the starboard engine had failed after take off, the pupil throttled back his good engine but was too inexperienced to effect a forced landing.

He thought that the starboard engine seized and put the aircraft into a spin. The IO did not consider, however, that there was any evidence of seizure, although the accident was probably caused by failure of one engine. Further investigation is being carried out by the engine makers for the AIB report.

Footnote: - *Colin Crouch was one of at least 70 airmen killed serving with 11 FTS (later 11 Pilots Advanced Flying Unit) in Shropshire during 1939-1944). It must be said that a number of these fatalities occurred during engine failures.*

Burial / grave

Woodford St Mary's Churchyard

Dependants

Wife – Doris Crouch

Commemoration

Woodford Village Memorial

Woodford St Mary's Church Memorial