

Flight Sergeant William Ballantyne Martin

998173 RAFVR - Tiree 1942.

The letters were written in April and May 1942 by my uncle, Bill Martin to my father Jimmy Martin. Bill was at the time stationed with 244 Squadron Coastal Command at Tiree.

Bill Martin was born at Shawlands in Glasgow in 1916 the youngest of three brothers. Jimmy was the eldest. A middle brother was Jack. They had a younger sister Mary. The Martin's were pawnbrokers in Glasgow, but Bill being the youngest son, much to his pleasure, was not required in the family business and he therefore became a motor mechanic which fitted in nicely with his hobby of motor cycle racing. He was a member of both the Glasgow Sporting Motor Cycle Club and the Greenock Motor Cycle Club. He took part in the 1938 Manx Grand Prix, the last occasion it was held before the outbreak of the Second World War.

On the outbreak of war Bill volunteered for the RAF and following training he qualified as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner. He was posted to 224 Squadron Coastal Command in 1941 who at that time were flying Hudson aircraft at St Eval in Cornwall. In April 1942, 224 Squadron were posted to Tiree. In June 1942, 11 Hudsons from 224 Squadron were detached to North Coates where they took part in one the 1000 bomber raids on Bremen. Whilst at Tiree 224 Squadron converted to Liberator Bombers. On the 9th. September 1942 the Squadron moved south to Beaulieu in Hampshire for anti submarine operations over the Bay of Biscay. Bill Martin was commissioned as Pilot Officer in May 1942 and went south with his Squadron.

On the 30th October 1942 his aircraft became lost in fog returning from operations. It collided with one of the barrage balloons protecting Plymouth and crashed killing all on board.

Bill is buried at St Andrews Church, Buckland Monachorum on the edge of Dartmoor. He was married to Joan but had no children.

I am proud to have been named after him.