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### LEONARD SMITH

Violet was in the WAAF on a posting to the Royal Canadian Air Force station at Bournemouth, when she first met Leonard SMITH; an RAF officer. These are her memories of Leonard SMITH.

Leonard SMITH left school at 14 and started work in a metalwork company eventually progressing to the position of postman.

He was told when he tried to join the RAF that he would never fly, but he managed to persuade the recruiting panel to accept him and passed his maths exam by only one per cent over the minimum. He quickly became one of the elite flyers at RAF Tempsford. Leonard became Pilot Officer SMITH DFC, but he never explained to Violet how he had won the award.

In a Halifax 'W' Leonard SMITH flew with his crew of Jock HUNTER (navigator), George BROOKS (engineer), Joe WILFORD (wireless operator), Isaac SHELLENBERG (despatcher), Tommy THOMAS (rear gunner) and Harry EAST (bomb aimer) on 38 missions. These missions were very dangerous and were carried out alongside Special Duties 161 Squadron, parachuting agents into France at night. Leonard SMITH'S last op of the war was to low-fly a Halifax over the D-Day beaches. After this he went on to other flying duties.

Leonard and Violet SMITH had kept in touch throughout the war and were married in Ventnor on 31st March 1945. They continued to live in Ventnor where they had a son and daughter. They moved to Ryde when he retired as senior draughtsman after 40 years of work.

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*Source: Extracts from an article in the IW County Press 11 Sept 2015, written by Violet Smith, wife of Leonard Smith.*

Typed by Tracy Welstead