

Sergeant Edmund James Deaves, Royal Air Force,  
of Rock Cottage, Shrewsbury Road, All Stretton  
died 23 September 1943 over Germany, aged 23.

Edmund James (Jimmy) Deaves was born on 18 December 1919 in Meole Brace, near Shrewsbury. Jimmy was the eldest of three sons of Charles Frederick Deaves, a painter and decorator, and Blanche nee Price who were married in 1919.

Charles was born in Newport, and had served in the RAF during the First World War. Blanche was born in Cheshire, her father was a railway signalman so the family moved around a great deal but did spend time in Shrewsbury.

By the time of the 1921 census the family were living in Condoover. The family moved to Rock Cottage in All Stretton in 1927. Charles continued his work as a painter and decorator and was also the sub postmaster. He died prematurely at the age of 35 in 1929.

The Deaves family connection with All Stretton goes back at least to 1901 when Charles' sister Emilie and his brother Edward worked at All Stretton Stores. Edward married Edith Speake in 1906 who had family connections with the Yew Tree. He then became a commercial traveller living in Dorrington and Church Stretton. By 1922 Edward was back in All Stretton running the shop himself.

Jimmy and his brothers initially went to Church Stretton School but, following their father's death, they were sent to the Royal Orphanage School in Wolverhampton, now the Royal Wolverhampton School. This was a charity boarding school which supported children who had lost one or both of their parents.

On leaving school Jimmy worked for Bromleys a Church Stretton building firm. He then took an engineering apprenticeship with the Wolverhampton form of Turners. In 1939 he was described as a draughtsman living in digs in Wolverhampton. Blanche and her two younger sons remained at Rock Cottage.

Jimmy volunteered for active service and joined the 100 squadron RAF volunteer reserve. His service number was 1434590 and he trained in South Africa near Durban. He joined bomber command and was trained as an air bomber or bomb aimer. His job was to crawl into the nose of the aeroplane and release the bombs at the right time.

Jimmy married Betty Phillips in early 1943. Betty was also born in 1919. In 1939 she was living at home with her parents and working as a Clerical Assistant in Lanesfield in Wolverhampton. Jimmy gave his address as Lanesfield after his marriage.



Sergeant Jimmy Deaves in uniform

In 1943 Jimmy was based at Waltham in Lincolnshire and was flying with a crew on Lancaster bombers. His plane was shot down over the village of Nussdorf, two miles north of Landau during a night raid on Mannheim in Germany on 23 September 1943.

Manheim was bombed extensively during 1943, with a large raid on 5-6 September. The operations book for 100 Squadron records that this plane was the only one lost though two others were damaged. 'Target conditions were again ideal for an attack on Manheim, and although many fighters were active, a good raid was carried out and fires of good size were started in the target area.'

The crew of seven, five from the RAF, one from the Royal Australian Air Force and one from the Royal New Zealand Air Force were all killed in the crash. They were initially buried in Nussdorf before being reburied in the Rheinberg Cemetery in Northern Germany in 1948. Rheinberg Cemetery contains the graves of over 3,000 allied servicemen mainly members of the RAF.



Jimmy Deaves's gravestone at Rheinberg Cemetery

The inscription on Jimmy's gravestone reads :

1434590 Sergeant  
E J Deaves  
Air Bomber  
Royal Air Force  
23 September 1943 Aged 23  
WORTHY OF EVERLASTING  
REMEMBRANCE.

Jimmy Deaves is also remembered on a memorial at the Royal Wolverhampton School and on Church Stretton's own war memorial.

Jimmy's brother Bernard worked for the Post Office throughout World War Two. His cousins, Brian and Alan Deaves, the sons of his uncle and aunt Edward and Edith Deaves, both served in the forces during the Second World War. Brian was a pilot in the RAF and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1941. He survived the war but was killed in a road accident in 1956.

Alan served in the Army and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1941. Edward and Edith, lived in Roseleigh, Farm Lane, until their deaths in 1960 and 1976 respectively.

Jimmy's mother Blanche remained in Rock Cottage until her death in 1978. Jimmy's brother Charles Rupert and his wife continued to live there until 1987.

Betty, Jimmy's widow, died in Wolverhampton in 2006, she never remarried.

