

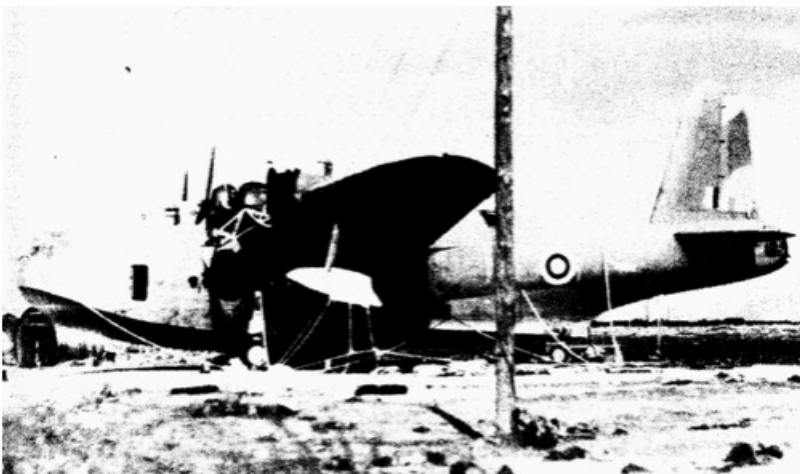
Leonard John Fowell, 1919-1940



Aircraftman 1st class, RAF service number: 622095, 204 Squadron.

Leonard was the elder son of Arthur John FOWELL and Catherine Jeanie ROOSE, both born in Pillaton. In the 1911 census, Arthur is recorded as working on his father's farm at Moditon, St.Mellion, but there were Fowells living in Pillaton in the early 1800s. Arthur and Catherine's second son was Herbert Daniel Fowell born in 1921 and lived until 1995.

We do not have access to his RAF enlistment details, but Leonard was assigned to a Coastal Command unit, 204 squadron. This squadron was equipped with Sunderland flying boats and began training on them in June 1939 at Mount Batten, Plymouth. In early 1940 Leonard was sent as part of an advance party from 204 Sqn. to prepare for the move of the squadron to the Shetlands. At the end of March 1940, 204 Sqn. was moved from Plymouth to Sullom Voe in the Shetlands. There it began to patrol the gap between Norway and Iceland being used as an escape route for U boats into the Atlantic.



Reykjavik, 1941

Short Sunderland (T9072) of 204 Squadron in

On April the 3rd, a Sunderland of 204 Squadron (no. N9046) acting as a convoy escort fought off two Ju-88s, then held off four more trying to dive bomb the convoy. Six more Ju-88s then attacked. One was shot down and another badly damaged by

the Sunderland's rear gunner. In spite of serious damage and with some of the crew injured, the aircraft got back to Invergordon and landed safely. The Squadron was to find this location far more dangerous than the Western Approaches that it had previously been patrolling

A careful watch was also being kept on Norway because it was believed that an attack on Norway was imminent. German fighter pilots were on full alert and the huge bulk of the Sunderland made it an easy target for a modern fighter aircraft. Leonard's Sunderland (No. L5799, KG-D) was lost on April 8th while searching for the German invasion fleet as described in the following official report.

The Sunderland "took off 10.30 hours from Sullom Voe, tasked with a recce mission off the coast of Norway. The Sunderland failed to return after signalling an ETA 30 minutes before it was due to start the return leg and was shot down in a running dog fight with a Heinkel 111 and crashed into the sea West of Bergen, Norway."

Source: Coastal Command Losses of the Second World War, Volume 1.

Leonard Fowell died with 8 other airmen which included some experienced men but also some young men like himself. They were: Flight Lieut. Robert Harrison aged 23, Pilot Officer Ronald Hoskins 27, Leading Aircraftsmen Albert Roberts 25 and Dennis Lloyd 19, Aircraftsmen First Class Bernard Bulmer 20 and Charles Hughes 38, Aircraftsmen Second Class Herbert Harrott and William Dolley 18. (The crew are all commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.)

Early the next morning, April 9th 1940, Germany occupied Denmark and invaded Norway.

Don King
(October 2022)

[Contact Us](#)

Edited: 17 Oct 2022