

## Geoffrey George GATES

**Born:** 1922

**Patents:** Son of George Walter and Florence Gates of Bognor Regis, West Sussex

**School Years:** - 1933 - 1939

House – Sherborne

Oxford School Certificate 1939 – Passed with Credits

The Martlet – ‘Roll of Service’ – A/C2 R.A.F.

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### Armed Forces Record

**Service Rank:** Flight Lieutenant-Navigator

**Service No.** 126651

**Operational Base:** R.A.F. Oakington

**Operational** 86 Squadron

**Date of Death:** 18 November 1944



*"We fly to freedom"*



*Consolidated B-24 Liberator*

Entering the Royal Air Force before the war Geoffrey George GATES joined No. 86 Squadron as a navigator.

On ops flying out of R.A.F. Oakington Consolidated Liberator aircraft BZ943 carried out regular sorties providing Convoy Escorts – Mine Laying.

During an Anti- Submarine Reconnaissance on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1944 Liberator BZ943 attacked U-865 outward bound from Trondheim which did some damage to the submarine. However, it in turn using its powerful flak barrage inflicted damage to the attacking aircraft setting two engines on fire. Both U-boat and aircraft were forced to return to their respective bases. Interestingly *Searched War Records Free* there appears a post war request by a relative of a U-boat 865 crewman enquiring as to the fate of Gates aircraft which attacked it in July 1944.

On 18 November 1944 Liberator BZ943 took off from RAF Oakington on a training exercise and later crashed into the sea. The mixed RAF, RAAF and RNZAF crew of five including *old boy* Geoffrey George GATES were all lost.

Geoffrey Gates was twenty two

Commemorated

Chichester High School for Boys

Chichester War Memorial

Bognor Regis War Memorial

Runnymede

Chichester Observer 12 May 1945

Births, Marriages, Deaths

“Reported ‘Missing’ believe killed on 18 November 1944 Flt.Lt. Geoffrey G. Gates younger son of C.W. Gates and Mrs Gates of 69, Kyoto Court, Bognor Regis”

Fate of U-865 – Commander Dietrich Stellmacher. Missing since 9 September 1944 in the Norwegian Sea. There is no explanation for its loss. 59 dead (all hands lost).