

# Leading Aircraftwoman Sybil Antoinette MULLINS

Service number 2127023  
Women's Auxiliary Air Force  
282 Squadron, RAF  
Died on 31 July 1944, aged 19

A descendant of Henry VII who was born in Wells, Sybil joined the WAAF in early 1943 and trained as an Aircraft Mechanic. She was posted to 282 Squadron at Davidstow Moor, near Camelford in North Cornwall. On 31 July 1944, she went on a test flight of a Warwick ASR1 aircraft which crashed on take-off, killing Sybil and all of the crew.



A Warwick ASR1 from Sybil's squadron  
Part of the R.S. Punnett Collection © IWM MH 5337  
(<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205126839>)

Sybil was born on 18 November 1924 to George Edward Mullins and Kathleen Maude née Nash, of 2, New Street, Wells. She had three sisters and one brother. Her father was a GP, who went on to become the Medical Officer of Wells Cottage Hospital, Divisional Surgeon to the St John Ambulance Brigade, and who held many other posts. He and his wife were pillars of the Wells community.

Sybil went to Wells High School for Girls at 9, New Street. In 1941, she was a Patrol Leader in the 5<sup>th</sup> Wells (The High School) Guide Company, and in 1942 she left the school, having passed her Oxford School Certificate.

In early 1943, Sybil joined the WAAF. Most likely (given the date) she did her two weeks' basic training at RAF Innsworth, near Gloucester, followed by training as an Aircraft Mechanic for 18 weeks at the No. 1 School of Technical Training at RAF Halton, near Wendover, Buckinghamshire.

After her training Sybil was posted to RAF Davidstow Moor, near Camelford in North Cornwall, as an Aircraft Mechanic. There she serviced the Vickers Warwick ASR1 aircraft of 282 Squadron which provided air-sea rescue cover for the Western Approaches, i.e. out into the Atlantic Ocean.

The following details of Sybil's death are taken from the *Remember Them* website (<https://scarletboy44.tumblr.com/>):

On the 31st July 1944 [Sybil] was aboard a [Vickers] Warwick [ASR1] aircraft which was undergoing an air test. During the flight an engine caught fire which quickly spread to the wing. In an attempt to land the aircraft the pilot chose a field off the end of the runway, which proved too small and the aircraft bounced and broke its back on a hedge at Trenuth Farm, Camelford. The tail fell back into the first field whilst the forward half of the fuselage

containing the aircrew, the burning engine and fuel tanks crashed into the next field and erupted into a ball of fire. All aboard were killed.

Sybil's funeral service was held in St. Thomas' Church on 11 August 1944, and she was buried in Wells Cemetery in Section A. Row F. Grave 15. Sybil is also remembered on the rolls of honour at Wells Town Hall and Wells Cemetery.

According to Paul Theroff's *Royal Genealogy Site* (<http://www.angelfire.com/realm/>), Sybil was a descendant of Henry VII.

At the start of the war her father, Dr Mullins, lent his collection of boarding pikes from HMS Victory to the Wells Home Guard.