

BRIAN has TALKED about one of our 100 Clapham World War ONE DEAD – I will now talk a little about one of THE 50 Clapham Boys we LOST in World War TWO **Ricardo Pedrazzini**

Warrant Officer Richard (Ricardo) Pedrazzini was born on 14th JULY 1914 to **Battista and Harriet Pedrazzini in Clapham, less than a mile from the College.**

The family owned and ran restaurants in Balham, Clapham and Brixton. Ricardo spoke perfect French, Italian and German and was remembered by his family as being **charismatic and very impulsive**, thinking nothing of cycling from London to Devon to visit his cousins on a whim. **He was at Clapham College from 1927 to 1929 [together with his brother Pedro]**

He joined the RAF after leaving Clapham but was to suffer the embarrassment of being **discharged from the RAF** when Italy entered the War on Germany's side; Ricardo's father was declared an **"enemy alien"** while his mother was dismissed from the Air Raid Protection Corps. Although not subject to internment like many others, Ricardo & his family were **restricted to a five-mile** radius of their home and could not possess any means of **transportation, nor have access to a wireless radio**. Just imagine the "mixed emotions" of Ricardo, a Clapham boy **who lived all his life in London, trained as a pilot, and the being deprived of the job he loved? After a few months, however, he regained his place in the Air Force with his time away registered as "leave", his parents freedoms were reinstated, but the suspicion of local people had been aroused!**

Ricardo fought to be allowed to fly again and quickly got his wish, flying **mission after mission** over enemy territory. His **final sortie** was as a Navigator aboard a Lancaster Bomber on an operation to **Russell Heim**, an industrial town in Germany, that housed the key target of the **Opel Plant, which was manufacturing Junkers Aircraft**. The RAF were following a policy of **night-time "area bombing"** of cities around River Main. Ricardo's Lancaster departed **Downham Market in Norfolk** on 12th January 1944, but was shot down and crashed around midnight near **Liege in Belgium**, the crew of seven died instantly.

Ricardo was in had been involved **three previous crashes** and he confided to his brother that he regarded himself as a bit of a **"Jonah"**, worrying that he brought bad luck to his crew members. His brother Pedro was serving with **431 Squadron** [when he heard of his brother's death]. Ricard was posthumously awarded the **1939/45 Star, the Atlantic Star (Aircrew Europe), the Defence Medal and the France & Germany Star**, he was just **30 years old**.

Ricardo Pedrazzin was a brave young man, he flew over 50 bombing missions in Halifax and Lancaster Bombers. During the 1920s he would have sat through Mass in this same Chapel we are in today.

We should appreciate that those soldiers, like Ricardo, were not just fighting for their country, they were fighting for our freedom.

So today, there should be pride in his brave acts [and the 150 others], as well as sorrow for their ultimate sacrifice.

We will remember the fallen not just with sadness, but also with eternal respect and gratitude, in the knowledge that we are living the future they fought for.

May his Soul and the Souls of the Faithful Departed Rest in Peace - AMEN