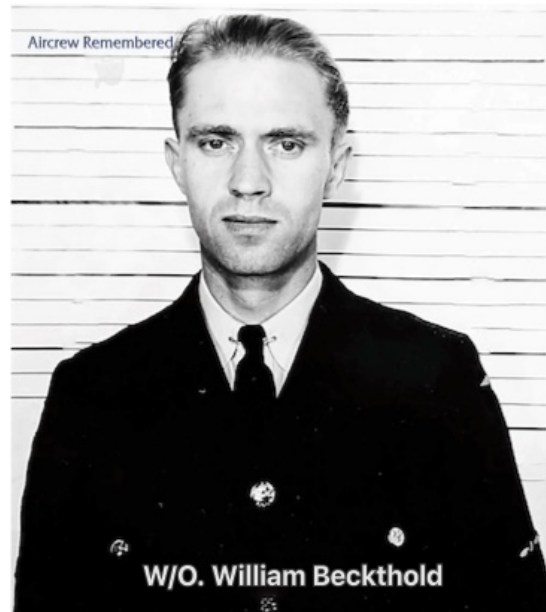


Warrant Officer William Beckthold R/77965 RCAF



William Beckthold served with the Royal Canadian Air Force in of No. 50 Squadron, based at RAF Skellingthorpe. He was an Air Gunner (Lancaster rear gunner).

At 2304 hours on 8 October 1943, William and his crew took off from Skellingthorpe in Lancaster DV324 VN-N. They were part of a force of 496 aircraft despatched to carry out a raid on Hanover in Germany. Sadly, after bombing their target, they were hit by flak, the aircraft crashing at Wilkenburg 5 miles south of Hanover. Five of the crew had managed to bale out safely and became prisoners of war but two of the crew including William were killed, and are buried in Hanover War Cemetery (Coll. grave ref. 2. D. 1-4A).

William was 21 years old. His parents were Swiss-born father Karl Beckthold and Russian-born mother Elisabeth Beckthold. He had six siblings: Charles, born in 1907; Hilda, in 1913; Theresa and Gertrude in 1915; Aupelonia in 1920 and Leonard Henry in 1926. William attended Balfour Technical College, Regina, where he studied Motor Engineering. He later spent a short time at the American School in Chicago studying Civil Engineering. After a variety of jobs including truck driving and working in road construction, he worked for the Eastern Irrigation District Co. as a carpenter for two years prior to enlisting at Calgary on 30 January 1941. He boxed occasionally and played baseball.

Other crew members were:

Pilot: P/O. John Cecil Philip Taylor 149547 PoW No. 3014 Camp: Stalag Luft III Sagan and Belaria

Flight Engineer: Flt. Sgt. J. Handley 519566 PoW No. 259877 Camp: Stalag Luft III Sagan and Belaria

Navigator: Sgt. Frank William Dock 1336361 RAFVR Age 20. Killed

Bomb Aimer: F/O. Stewart Dare Stubbs 80577 PoW No.3015 Camp: Stalag Luft III Sagan and Belaria

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner: Sgt. H.J. Whitwell 1129137 PoW No.259922 Camp: Stalag Luft III Sagan and Belaria

Air Gunner: WO. J.S. Gray 776389 PoW No.259874 Camp: Stalag Luft III Sagan and Belaria

William's name can be found on IBCC Panel 7

Aircrew Remembered

<http://www.aircrewremembered.com/taylor-jcp.html>