

## **FS Donald James Gibson R/158800 RCAF**

Donald was born on 27 April 1921 in Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada, the son of George Beaumont Gibson and Harriet Winifred Gibson nee Frank.

Educated at Cobalt Public School and Kirkland High, Ontario, where he studied mechanics, Donald was employed as a business machine mechanic and sales and service representative for Remington-Rand Ltd.

In October 1941 Donald volunteered for aircrew duties with the RCAF, and was called up for Air Bomber training in April 1942.

Donald completed his training in Canada in February 1943 with the award of his Air Bomber badge; however, a shortage of this new brevet meant he was to wear an Observer badge until the new badge was available.



Arriving in the UK in April 1943, Donald completed his advanced training at 1662 HCU at RAF Blyton, Lincolnshire and on 9 November was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.

On 16 December 1943 Bomber Command crews were tasked with a raid on Berlin. Of the 498 aircraft despatched that night, 101 Sqn contributed 21 crews.

At 17:20 Donald, operating as the Air Bomber, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster I DV299 (SR-K2).

On the outbound leg, Donald's aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed into the Baltic Sea, killing all on board. Two Lancaster aircraft were shot down in this area, one at 20:45, the second at 21:30. Donald's crew was one of these losses.

Black Thursday, as the day was soon called, saw the loss of twenty-five Lancasters during the Berlin operation, but a further thirty-one lost due to the fog over England -crashed or abandoned when their crews baled out, or in the case of two unfortunate crews collided over Lincolnshire.

Of the 328 aircrew who lost their lives that night, more were the victims of the weather than enemy action.

Also Killed: PO Peter Ewan Head (Pilot); FS Wilfred Malvern Green (WOp/AG/SDO); FS Robert Alexander Cooper Wilson (Nav); Sgt Ronald Betts (AG); Sgt Harry Street (WOp); Sgt Wilfred Welby (FE); Sgt Henry Rose Lintern (AG)

Donald has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Donald is commemorated on Wall Panel 39

Photo Source: [www.veterans.gc.ca](http://www.veterans.gc.ca)