

Flt. Sgt. Russel Wilbert Lewis Mills
R/86929 RCAF



Russel Mills was a 20-year-old Canadian wireless operator/air gunner who died when his Wellington crashed in the North Sea after developing engine problems during a raid on Bremen in the early hours of 5 September 1942.

He was part of the crew of Wellington Z8595, of No. 12 Squadron, which had taken off from RAF Binbrook at 0025 hours as part of a 251-aircraft force heading for the port of Bremen.

As Z8595 approached the Dutch coast it developed serious problems and the crew decided to turn back, dumping their bombs in the sea. The aircraft still struggled to maintain height and, finally, at 0230 hours the Wellington crashed about 20 miles off Cromer.

Only the pilot, Sgt. Tom Smith, managed to get clear and despite being injured climbed into the bomber's dinghy. He was found three hours later by the Harwich-based destroyer *HMS Hambledon* and later taken to hospital in Felixstowe.

Russel came from Edmonton in Alberta and was the son of W W and Lillie Mills. He was educated at the Sacred Heart and Victoria High schools in Edmonton and enlisted in February 1941. He was posted to complete his training in England in December that year.

The others who died with him were the observer P/O Arthur 'Sandy' Needham, bomb-aimer Sgt. Frank Smith and rear gunner Sgt. Stanley Bland. Their bodies were never recovered and all are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 105).

Russel's name can be found on IBCC panel 074.

Sources: Canadian veterans/Aviation Safety Network/Bomber Command Losses 1942 by Bill Chorley.