

PO Gordon Lewis Preece J/94374 RCAF

Gordon was born on 25 June 1924 in Churchbridge, Saskatchewan, Canada, the son of Thomas Stanley Preece and Ethel Margaret Preece nee Driver.

Educated at Simon Fraser and King Edward Schools in Vancouver, before joining the RCAF Gordon was employed as an administrator with the Vancouver Sun Newspaper.

Gordon enlisted in October 1942 and completed his training as a Navigator in Canada with the award of his badge in October 1943. Posted overseas the same month, Gordon completed advanced training before joining 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire in early March 1944 as a Nav/Special Duties Operator.



On the night of the 30th March 1944, 795 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Nuremberg. This was the last act of Bomber Harris's "Battle of Berlin", an attempt to destroy German morale by battering its cities night after night before the bomber force turned its attentions to preparing the way for D-Day in June. A direct route, full moon and a new German weapon, the upward firing gun fitted to many fighters, would make this an incredibly challenging and dangerous mission. More than 200 night-fighters based around the Ruhr and the Rhine took to the skies this night. Twenty-six 101 Sqn Lancasters participated in the raid. This was Gordon's 10th op.

At 22:05 on 30 March 1944 Gordon, operating as the Special Duties Operator, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire in Lancaster I LL832 (SR-K2), tasked with ABC duties for the raid.

At 00:15 whilst outbound, the aircraft was hit by flak and crashed near the village of Rubenach, 5km WNW of Koblenz, killing all on board.

Seven 101 Sqn aircraft were lost, 47 men killed.

The raid was a major disaster for Bomber Command with the loss of 105 aircraft - Bomber Command's heaviest loss of the war. There were 721 casualties: - 542 men died, 6 injured, 161 POWs, with just 12 airmen evading capture. The damage to Nuremberg itself was slight - 256 buildings destroyed and 75 enemy dead.

Also Killed: FO Leslie Simpson (AG); FS Gerald Tivey (Pilot); FS Henry Royston Butterworth (Air Bomber); FS Leonard Lockwood (Nav); Sgt Alexander David Dickson (AG); Sgt Basil Henry Schofield (WOp); Sgt Albert Walter Verdun Farley (FE);

Originally buried in Rubenach Cemetery, Koblenz, Germany, in June 1947 Gordon and the crew were moved to Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Gordon is commemorated on Wall Panel 86

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca