

FO William Ross J/26796 RCAF

William was born on 6 January 1921 in Greenock, Scotland, the only son of William Ross and Mary Currie Ross nee Campbell. The family emigrated to the USA in 1927.

Educated at Davis High School, Mount Vernon, New York, and two years at New York University, William was employed as the personal secretary to the personnel manager of Arthur Andersen & Co, Wall Street, New York, USA, when he applied for service with the USAAF. As he was not yet a USA citizen, William was refused service and wanting to serve, in December 1941, he applied for service with the RCAF.

Called up in May 1942, William was employed on ground duties as a security guard until October 1942 when he re-mustered as pilot.

William completed his training in Canada in May 1943 with the award of his Wings. Granted a commission, William embarked for the UK in June.



Following advanced training at 28 OTU RAF Wymeswold, Leicestershire and conversion to the Lancaster at RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, on 16 August 1944 William was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.

On 25/26 August 1944 Bomber Command was tasked with three major raids to Russelsheim, Rhein-Main, Germany, Darmstadt, near Frankfurt, Germany and Brest, France. A combined total of 1311 sorties was achieved, a new record for Bomber Command. Ten 101 Sqn crews were allocated to the op, with two crews failing to return.

At 20:32 on 25 August William, operating as the 2nd Pilot, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster I NN705 (SR-O) tasked with ABC duties to Russelsheim.

At 01:53 William's aircraft was intercepted by Oblt Hermann Leube flying a JU88 of 4./NJG 3 operating from Gutersloh Airfield. The Rear Gunner reported that they were 30 minutes into the return from Russelsheim and flying at 15,000 ft when they were attacked from below. The starboard wing was quickly engulfed by flames and, despite the order to bale out given, the Rear Gunner was the only crew member to escape before the aircraft crashed ESE of Florennes, France, killing the rest of the crew. At the time of his death, William had been granted US citizenship and was awaiting transfer to the USAAF.

Also killed: FO Malcolm Joseph Steel RNZAF (Pilot); FS John MacDonald Reid (AB); FS Eric Schofield (Nav); Sgt Julian Charles Bracegirdle (AG/SDO); Sgt John William Briers (FE); Sgt Joseph Peter Rowley (WOp); Sgt Harry Twell (AG)

Originally buried in Grand Faillly American Cemetery, France, in February 1947 William was moved to Choley War Cemetery, Meurthe-et-Moselle, France.

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 92

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca