

FS Leslie Gordon Smith R/155648 RCAF

Leslie was born on 7 November 1922 in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, the only son of Charles Smith and Maggie Smith nee Williams.

Educated at Thomson Regina and Balfour Technical College, Leslie was employed as a steel burner by the United Steel Company, Welland, Ontario when, in January 1941, he volunteered for service with the RCAF.

Called up in February 1942, Leslie completed his training in Canada in October 1942 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, and he embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 81 OTU RAF Ashbourne, Derbyshire and 1656 HCU at RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, on 16 May 1943 Leslie was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor, Yorkshire.



On the night of the 23/24 May 1943, after a nine day break in ops, Bomber Command was tasked with a raid on Dortmund, a major industrial centre in the Ruhr Area and home to collieries, coking plants and power stations, and location of chemical, steel and iron industries.

A combined force of 826 aircraft, including twenty five 101 Sqn crews, were allocated to the task, the largest raid of the Battle of the Ruhr.

At 22:30 on 23 May Leslie, operating as one of the Air Gunners, and the crew departed RAF Holme on Spalding Moor in Lancaster I W4919 (SR-A).

At 02:33 on 24 May, whilst on the homeward leg, Leslie's aircraft was intercepted by Oblt Manfred Meurer of 3./NJG 1 flying a Bf 110 from Venlo Airfield. The aircraft crashed 2km East of Bergen, Limberg, just inside the Dutch border, killing all on board. This was the crew's first op.

Also Killed : FS John Henry Terence Hayes RAAF (Pilot); Sgt Walter Randall Cook (FE); Sgt Percy George Eames (Nav); Sgt John Warwick Craven Evans (WOp/AG); Sgt James Park (AB); Sgt Owen Hugh Sibson RCAF (AG)

Originally buried in Venlo Military Cemetery, Limburg, Netherlands, in September 1947 Leslie was transferred to the Jonkerbos War Cemetery, Nijmegen, Gelderland, Netherlands.

Leslie is commemorated on Wall Panel 99

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca