

Sgt John Ridley Stokes R/205581 RCAF

John was born on 29 January 1923 in Birmingham, Warwickshire, the son of Henry Stokes and Kathleen Stokes nee O'Calaghan. The family emigrated to Canada in 1925 and settled in London, Ontario.

Educated at St Mary's School, London, Ontario, and H B Beal Technical and Commercial College, John was employed as a bottler in the Coca Cola factory in London when, in November 1942, he applied for service in the RCAF.

Called up in April 1943, John completed his aircrew training in Canada in December 1943 with the award of his Air Gunner badge. In March 1944 John embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 83 OTU RAF Peplow, Shropshire, and Lancaster conversion at 11 Base, on 31 August 1944 John was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.

At 19:05 on the 13 September 1944 John, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster III PB456 (SR-D) on a cross country training flight.

At 22:10 on 13 September, witnesses described the aircraft breaking cloud and, already on fire, the Lancaster broke up before hitting the ground 3 miles East of Drymen, SE of Loch Lomond, killing all on board. The forward and rear fuselage, tailplanes, outer wings and outer engines had separated from the main body of the aircraft before impact.

Despite an investigation by the Accident Investigation Branch, the cause of the crash was not determined.

Also killed: FO Clare Edward Brooks RCAF (Pilot); FO Lloyd George Peardon RCAF (AB); FS Victor Jack Ward (WOp/AG); Sgt Francis Alfred William Blerkom (FE); Sgt Edmund Foweather (Nav); Sgt James Watt RCAF (AG)

John is buried in Dumbarton Cemetery, Dunbartonshire, Scotland

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 102

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

