

F/O Edson Gilroy Armour, C/4685, Royal Canadian Air Force.



Edson Armour was born 4 January 1917 in Brantford, Ontario, Canada, to parents William Lindsay and Pearl Lillian Armour. After completing his basic education, he undertook a correspondence course in Sanitary & Heating Engineering and then spent 3 years at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh where he took a course in Mechanical Engineering.

Enlisting into the RCAF on 10 June 1940 as Air Crew, he was at that time found medically unsuitable for flying duties. He was remustered back to ground duties, with the rank of Flying Officer, non-flying list, on 8 March 1941, and was employed as officer in charge of operations at RCAF Station, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Remustering back to aircrew on 24 October 1942, he took a navigation course at No.4 Air Observers School, London, Ontario, and graduated on 19 February 1943, and reclassified as Pilot Officer, Navigator. Then posted overseas, he arrived in England and was attached to 434 Squadron.

434 (Bluenose) Squadron was, at the time, equipped with the Handley Page Halifax V bomber and operated out of RAF Croft in Yorkshire.

On 18 March 1944 Edson Armour was the navigator and part of the crew of eight, which took off at 1834 hours from RAF Croft, Yorkshire, in Halifax LL178, Code WL-R, (which bore the name "The old straw Hat"), to undertake a mine laying operation in the Heligoland area. This operation was a diversionary raid whilst Frankfurt was being bombed by 846 other aircraft. This aircraft was one of 98 which had taken off for this diversion.

All went well on the outward trip, with the mines being successfully dropped. Returning home, the crew were advised that bad weather had developed over Croft. For reasons unknown, LL178 descended through cloud over the North Yorkshire Moors, something they and all crews were briefed not to do. The crew may have thought that they were over the last hill and in poor visibility, began their descent to land. The aircraft struck the ground and crashed near Kepwick Bank Top, 7 miles ESE of Northallerton, at 2300 hours killing all on board. The crash report stated that the aircraft crashed whilst flying at a steep angle. Edson was 27 years old. He left a wife Winnifred and 3-year-old son Ralph.

Edson Armour is buried in the Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery, Yorkshire.

He is commemorated on IBCC Panel 123.

Photo source: www.veterans.gc.ca.