

FO Alan Quillam Downward J/41672 RCAF

Alan was born on 2 April 1924 in Peel, Isle of Man, UK, the son of QMS Joseph Gordon Downward, Royal Canadian Army, and Mona Anna Downward nee Quilliam. The family emigrated to Canada in 1929 and settled in Ontario.

Educated at McMurrich School and Oakwood Collegiate, Toronto, following a short time employed as a laboratory assistant by the Queens Park Toronto Research Foundation, Alan was back in education when, in November 1942, he volunteered for service in the RCAF.

Called up in April 1943, Alan completed his training in Canada in February 1944 with the award of his Navigator badge, was granted a commission and embarked for the UK in April.



Following advanced training at 7(O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Bishops Cleeve, Co Down, Northern Ireland, 28 OTU RAF Wymeswold, Leicestershire and Lancaster conversion at 11 Base, Alan was briefly posted to 90 Sqn at RAF Tuddenham, Suffolk, where he completed 3 ops before he was posted to 514 Sqn at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire in January 1945.

On 3/4 February 1945, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to attack the Hansa Benzol Plant at Huckarde- Dortmund, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany. A combined force of 149 aircraft was allocated to the op, including eleven 514 Sqn crews.

At 16:19 on 3 February Alan, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster III LM685 (JI-B2).

Returning crews reported slight to moderate heavy flak in the Dortmund and Ruhr areas, combined with considerable searchlight activity throughout the Ruhr. On the run up to the target, Alan's aircraft was coned by searchlights and hit by flak, crashing near Gelsenkirchen, Nordrhein- Westfalen, killing all on board. This was Alan's 8th op.

Also Killed: FO Warren James Keating Fisher RCAF (Pilot); FO Donald Edward Stephens RCAF (AB); PO Alfred Hector Morrison RCAF (AG); FS Ronald Hardy RAAF (WOp); FS William Barclay Warr (FE); Sgt Albert Richard McWhinney RCAF (AG)

Originally buried in Gelsenkirchen Cemetery, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany, in June 1949 Alan was moved to the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany

Alan is commemorated on Wall Panel 157

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca