

FS John Fellows R/78046 RCAF

John was born on 28 May 1920 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, the son of James Percy Fellows and Ethel May Fellows nee Near.

Educated at Scarboro Collegiate, and Oakwood Collegiate, Ontario, John was employed as a printing and type setter when in June 1940 he volunteered for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in February 1941, John commenced pilot training but, when his training was terminated, he re-mustered as Observer. In July 1941 John's training was again suspended and he re-mustered as an Air Gunner, qualifying for his badge in April 1942.

Arriving in the UK in June 1942, John completed advanced training before he was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn.

On 17 December 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with a minor op against Fallersleben, Lower Saxony, Germany, home of the Opel works. A combined force of 22 aircraft, including five 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. This type of limited op proved to be a costly failure 8 crews were lost, and only 3 aircraft successfully bombed the Opel Works. Four 75(NZ) aircraft failed to return.

At 18:00 on 17 December 1942, John, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Newmarket in Stirling I R9247 (AA-W).

Whilst outbound, John's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Walter Milius, Fw Werner Blasius and OFw Ernst Maas of the I./NJG 3, flying a DO217 from Vechta Airfield. The aircraft crashed near Vechta Airfield, 30 miles SW Bremen, Germany, killing all on board. This was John's first op.

Also killed: PO Mervyn Oliver Clark RNZAF (Observer); FS Henry Edward Rousseau (Pilot); Sgt Christopher James Kendal RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Reginald Crosby Mocock (AB); Sgt William Wilson Morton (FE); Sgt Henry Welsh Pullar RNZAF (AG)

Originally buried in the Russian Cemetery, Vechta, Germany, in October 1947 John was moved to Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

During property development in 2019 at Vechta Airfield, the wreckage of a Stirling aircraft with human remains were found. The serial number of the aircraft was recovered and found to be R9247. DNA sampling was completed and compared with those of surviving family, allowing the remains to be positively identified and placed with those originally laid to rest.

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 163

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

