

FO Robert Roy Giffin J/23078 RCAF

Robert was born on 5 May 1921 in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, the only child of Clarence Roy Giffin and Violet Ada Giffin nee Tofts.

Educated at Fern Avenue Public School and St Michael's College, Toronto, Ontario and St Mary's College, Brockville, Ontario, Robert was employed as a salesclerk by the Robert Simpson Company in Toronto, Ontario when, in October 1940, he volunteered for service in the RCAF.

Called up in December 1940, Robert completed his pilot training in Canada in October 1941 with the award of his Wings and, following a short course at 31 OTU, RCAF Debert, Nova Scotia, in November 1941 he embarked for the UK. Selected for flying instructor training, Robert completed his course in August 1942 and returned to Canada for employment. In November 1942 Robert was granted a commission.



In July 1943 Robert embarked for the UK and, following additional training at 20(P) AFU RAF Kidlington, Oxfordshire, 12 OTU RAF Chipping Warden, Oxfordshire, 1651 HCU RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire and Lancaster conversion at 3 LFS RAF Feltwell, Norfolk, on 19 July 1944 Robert was posted to 514 Sqn at RAF Waterbeach.

On 28/29 July 1944, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to Stuttgart, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, the third raid in this series. Stuttgart was an important German industrial and rail communication centre, home to the Bosch, Daimler-Benz, and the SKF ball bearings factories. A combined force of 496 aircraft, including twenty 514 Sqn Lancasters, was allocated to the op. Three squadron crews failed to return.

At 21:47 Robert, operating as 2nd Pilot on his 2nd Dicky trip, departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster II LL692 JI-C2. In bright moonlit conditions, night-fighters intercepted the bomber stream over France on the outbound leg, leading to the loss of 39 Lancasters.

At 00:01 on 29 July, Robert's aircraft was intercepted 3 miles East of Chateaudun, Centre-Val de Loire, France by Lt Johannes Strassner flying a Ju88 of 2./NJG2. All the crew were able to bale out; however, Robert was found badly injured and died later the same day.

Of the surviving seven crew, one was taken as POW and the remainder were hidden by the French underground under Op Sherwood in a forest near Chateaudun with over 100 allied evaders. Under this op, once the invasion began, all evaders at 'choke points' were moved to a selected forest area nearest to them where they would not be trapped behind the front lines and would also ensure that they were not in the direct battle areas.

Robert is buried in St Cloud en Dunois Communal Cemetery, Eure-et-Loir, France

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 169

Photo Source: findagrave