

PO Robert Balfour Halliday J/6652 RCAF

Robert was born on 8 May 1917 in London, Ontario, Canada, the son of John Halliday and Minnie Halliday nee Clark.

Educated at King George Public School and North Bay Collegiate Institute, Robert was employed as a bank teller by the Royal Bank of Canada when, in July 1940, he volunteered for service with the RCAF.

Called up in October 1940, Robert completed his aircrew training in Canada in July 1941 with the award of his Observer badge. Completing advanced training at Rivers, Manitoba, in August 1941 Robert was granted a commission and he embarked for the UK the following month.

Whilst undergoing advanced training at 12 OTU RAF Chipping Warden, Oxfordshire, on 17 January 1942 Robert and his crew departed for a night flying exercise in Wellington X9931. On return from the cross country and flying in the circuit and to the NE of the runway, at 00:05 on 18 January the aircraft crashed near Redhill Wood, injuring the whole crew. After three weeks sick leave, the crew was soon back in training and on 6 April 1942 they were posted to 214 Sqn at RAF Stradishall, Suffolk.

On 14/15 April 1942, Bomber Command was tasked with an attack on Dortmund, located in the heart of the Ruhr Valley. Dortmund was home to steelworks, military production factories and synthetic oil plants, all vital to the German war effort. A combined force of 208 aircraft, including six 214 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op.

At 23:12 on 14 April Robert, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Stradishall in Wellington IC Z1148 (BU-L).

At 03:30 on 15 April Robert's aircraft was intercepted by Oblt Alois Lechner flying a Ju88 of the E./NJG2 flying from Gilze Rijen Airfield, and crashed at Overrepen, Tongeren-Borgloon, Limburg, killing all on board.

Also Killed: FS Billy Orin Gates RCAF (Pilot); FS Douglas Harold Morton Jacques RCAF (WOp/AG); FS Reginald Marcus Lawrence RCAF (Pilot); Sgt Samuel Cox (AG); Sgt Eric Mason (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in St Trond (Brustem) Cemetery, Limburg, Belgium, in January 1947 Robert was moved to Heverlee War Cemetery, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium.

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 175

Photo Source: veterans.gc.ca

