

PO Jack Edward Kristjan Hannesson J/87269 RCA

Jack was born on 13 November 1922 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, the only son of Karl Oscar Hannesson and Dorothy Constance Hannesson nee Pritchard.

Educated at Principal Starling School, Winnipeg and Magee High School, Vancouver, British Columbia, Jack was employed as a warehouseman by Western Wholesale Drug Company, Vancouver when, in January 1942, he volunteered for service in the RCAF.

Called up in April 1942, Jack completed his pilot training in Canada in May 1943, with the award of his Wings and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 18 (P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Church Lawford, Warwickshire, 84 OTU RAF Ossington, Nottinghamshire, 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk and 31 Base RAF Feltwell, Norfolk, in May 1944 Jack was posted to 514 Sqn at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire.



On 30 June/1 July 1944, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to bomb a road junction at Villers-Bocage, SW of Caen, Normandy, through which the tanks of two German Panzer divisions would have to pass in order to attack the advancing Allied forces in Normandy that night. A combined force of 266 aircraft, including twenty-nine squadron crews, was allocated to the op.

At 18:18 on 30 June Jack and his crew departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster III PB178 (JI-P). This was a late departure for the crew due to a last-minute change in bomb load.

The formation was due to assemble over Luton, Bedfordshire but due to the delayed take-off Jack's aircraft arrived late. The Rear Gunner spotted a group of Lancasters approaching from the rear and Jack turned to formate on the group and visually identify them. The Bomb Aimer then reported another aircraft was closing in and Jack dived to avoid a collision. Another aircraft was then spotted slightly below the first aircraft causing Jack to steepen his dive.

At 19:25 the cockpit area of Jack's aircraft struck the underside of the tailfin of the second aircraft, instantly killing Jack and the Flight Engineer. Immediately afterwards the port inner prop cut off the starboard fin and the port outer prop removed the rear turret. The Bomb Aimer and Wireless Operator successfully baled out before the aircraft crashed at Pittsham Farm, near Midhurst, Sussex, killing the remainder of the crew.

Also Killed: PO Andrew Lorne George RCAF (AG); FS Beverley Gordon Lee RAAF (Nav); Sgt Kenneth Edward Arthur Fox (FE); Sgt Harry James Morgan (AG)

Jack is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

Jack is commemorated on Wall Panel 176

In October 1944 Jack was posthumously commissioned, backdated to 14 June.

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca