

FS George Labiuk R/182511 RCAF

George was born on 2 May 1921 in Samburg, Saskatchewan, Canada, the son of Austro-Hungarian John P Labiuk and Ukrainian born Elizabeth Labiuk nee Kowaliuk.

Educated at Kalyna School, Saskatchewan, George was employed on the family farm when, in June 1942, he volunteered for service in the RCAF.

Called up in July 1942, George completed his aircrew training in Canada in December 1942 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, and he transferred to the UK in January 1943.

Following advanced training at 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in April 1943 George was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.

On 22/23 June 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Mulheim, a major centre of manufacturing in the Ruhr industrial region. A combined force of 557 aircraft were allocated to the task, including eight 218 Sqn crews.

At 00:10 on the 23 June George, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Downham Market in Stirling III BF572 (HA-K).

At 02:09 George's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein flying a Bf110 of Stab IV./NJG7 flying from Gilze-Rijen airfield, Netherlands. The aircraft crashed into the North Sea, 25km W of Den Haag, Zuid Holland, killing 6 of the 7 man crew. The Rear Gunner survived and was taken as a POW.

Post war analysis confirmed this was a very successful attack, with 64% of the town reported as destroyed.

Also killed: FS James Brooks Hamilton Smith RAAF (Pilot); Sgt Reginald Harrison Cramm (Nav); Sgt Wyndham Henry Davies (AB); Sgt Cederic Roland Minns (WOp/AG); Sgt Gilbert Ernest Rose (FE)

George was washed ashore near Zandvoort Holland, and is buried in Amsterdam New Eastern Cemetery, Noord-Holland, Netherlands.

George is commemorated on Wall Panel 195

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

