

FS William Wilfred Henry Lavers R/83468 RCAF

William, known as "Wilf", was born on 27 August 1919 in Grand Mere, Quebec, Canada, the only child of Robert Henry Lavers and Maria Theresa Lavers nee Kennedy. In July 1941 he married Marie Delia Cloutier in Windsor, Ontario. They had one daughter.

Educated at Kennedy Collegiate Institute, Windsor, Ontario, William was employed as a pipe fitter's assistant when, in February 1941, he applied for service with the RCAF.

Called up the following month, William completed his Observer training, with additional Bombing & Gunnery training, in Canada with the award of his Observer badge in December 1941.

Transferring to the UK in February 1942, after completing advanced training at 22 OTU, RAF Wellesbourne Mountford, Warwickshire, in August 1942 William was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk after spending one month with 101 Sqn.

On the night of the 10/11 September 1942, 479 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Dusseldorf. Thirteen 75(NZ) Sqn Wellingtons participated in the raid.

Shortly after 21:00 on 10 September William, although an Observer/Bomb Aimer he was operating as the Front Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Mildenhall in Wellington III BJ968 (AA-W) named "Rosaline". Homeward-bound, the aircraft vanished into the North Sea, possibly shot down by a Ju 88 of III./NJG 2 based at Gilze-Rijen, Netherlands, killing all on board.

The op was considered a success, with the city hit in all areas other than the North. The industrial area was heavily damaged, limiting production for a considerable time; however, the raid took its toll on Bomber Command with 33 aircraft lost, 60 crew killed and 13 taken POW. Three 75(NZ) Sqn aircraft failed to return with the loss of 15 men.

Also Killed: PO Randolph Cruickshank Smart RNZAF (Obs); FS Frank Burrill RCAF (Pilot); FS Ralph Ernest Gorman RCAF (AG); FS Michael Bertram St. Louis RCAF (WOp/AG)

William has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 197

Photo Source: findagrave

