

## **Flt Lt Christopher Daniel Lawson MiD RAF 46731**

Londoner Christopher Lawson was an experienced bomber pilot who died after his Halifax, struck by lightning during a 'raging' thunderstorm, began to break up and crashed in the Fens on the evening of 16 June 1943.

He was the pilot of Halifax II HR832 of 405 (Vancouver) Squadron RCAF which was taking part in a routine cross-country exercise when the lightning struck. Having lost part of a wing, the aircraft crashed on Clifton Farm near the village of Clenchwarton, near King's Lynn. Six men were killed instantly, and the seventh, an American George Medal holder from a previous Halifax crash, died shortly afterwards.

HR832 had taken off from Gransden Lodge planning to take a route to King's Lynn, to Bradford, and then Coventry before returning to its base near Cambridge. Eyewitnesses said the aircraft was seen emerging from a 'raging' thunderstorm over the Fens before crashing at 19:05. Wreckage was scattered over a two-mile area, where six bodies were found, along with a seventh nearby, who had died trying to search for help.

Christopher, an experienced pilot in 405 Squadron, which was now part of Bomber Command's Pathfinder Force and had been Mentioned in Dispatches for his time with the Squadron. He was the 27-year-old son of Christopher and Kathleen Lawson and came from Maida Vale in London. He is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery.

He is commemorated on a plaque in Clenchwarton which serves as a memorial to the crews of five aircraft lost in crashes in the parish during the Second World War, including a second which crashed in Clifton Farm.

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt Malcolm Holliday, navigator FO Roland Agassiz RCAF, bomb-aimer PO Lawrence Frewin, wireless operator Sgt Arthur Faulkner, mid-upper gunner Flt Sgt Clinton Pudney GM RCAF and rear gunner FO Walter Davies RCAF.

Christopher's name can be found on panel 197.

Sources: Bomber Command Losses by Bill Chorley/Lynn News/405 Squadron Association.



A MEMORIAL TO THE AIRCREW WHO DIED  
WHEN THEIR AIRCRAFT CRASHED IN  
THE PARISH OF CLENCHWARTON

STIRLING W 5623  
216 SODN  
RAF MARNHAM  
CRASHED IN  
INGRAMS FIELD  
23rd APRIL 1942

SOY. S.V. DAVIDGE  
SOY. W.J. RISTER  
SOY. A. SQUIRES  
SOY. J. HARTLEY  
SOY. J.K. PAUL  
SOY. A.J. THORBURN  
SOY. W.J. COOK

MOSQUITO DD 717  
141 SODN  
RAF WEST RAYNHAM  
CRASHED AT  
NORTH FARM  
29th MAY 1944

WO. A.L. POTTER  
F. SOY. R.E. GRAY



HALIFAX NR 832  
405 (VANCOUVER) SODN  
RAF GRANSDEN LODGE  
CRASHED AT  
CLIFTON FARM  
16th JUNE 1943

PL. C.D. LAWSON  
SOY. M.K. HOLLIDAY  
WO. L.W. FREWIN  
SOY. A. FAULKNER  
FO. R.E. AGGASIZ RCAF  
SOY. C.L. PUDNEY GM RCAF  
FO. W.C. DAVIES RCAF

HURRICANE W 9206  
56 OTU  
RAF SUTTON BRIDGE  
CRASHED AT  
FAIRFIELD FARM  
21st JANUARY 1942

SOY. E. EVES RCAF

OXFORD PH 414  
No 7 SFTS  
RAF SUTTON BRIDGE  
CRASHED AT  
EAST ANGLIAN FARM  
13th AUGUST 1945

CPL. V. MAESTRACCI  
M. SOY. C. MOITTESSIER

BLENHEIM 27278  
114 SODN  
RAF WEST RAYNHAM  
CRASHED AT  
CLIFTON FARM  
14th OCTOBER 1941

SOY. W.J. ANSTEY  
SOY. A.J. SOUTHWOOD  
SOY. J.W. KERRISON

LIVE THOU FOREVER FREEDOM  
WE FOR FREEDOM DIED  
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.

