Flt. Sgt. Walter John Edward Line



Walter was born on 8 January 1918 in Walkerton, Ontario, Canada, the son of Elmer and Arnetta Lines (née Reis). In May 1941 he married Dorothy Mae Black in Toronto.

Educated at Hanover Public and Upper Schools, in Ontario, Walter was employed as a drug store clerk when, in January 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in September 1940, Walter completed his flying training in Canada in April 1941 with the award of his observer badge, and embarked for the UK in June.

Following advanced training at No. 19 OTU RAF Kinloss, Scotland, Walter was posted in October 1941 to 78 Squadron at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, Yorkshire. In January 1942 Walter was posted to 138 Squadron at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire.

On 20/21 April 1942 three 138 Squadron crews were tasked with a Nickel raid over St. Etienne, East Central France. At 2100 hours on 20 April Walter, operating as the Observer, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford in Whitley V Z9158 (NF-V). Routing via RAF Benson, Selsey Bill and the mouth of the River Somme, Walter and the crew arrived over the target to discover increasing cloud and a significant blackout that hampered the completion of the op.

On conclusion of the op, the crew had been briefed to land at RAF Tangmere, West Sussex, however, thick mist had descended and an order was given to divert to RAF Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. Despite the use of searchlights to aid the crew, the flarepath was missed due to poor visibility and, at 0415 hours on 21 April, the aircraft crashed at Porton Down Range, Wiltshire, probably as the aircraft was in a turn at low altitude, killing four of the five man crew.

Also killed were the pilot P/O Ivan Anderson Miller RCAF, 2nd pilot Sgt. Raymond Fred Shaddick and wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Sydney William Francis Leigh. The injured survivor was the air gunner Sgt. K Hubbard.

Walter is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey.

Walter is commemorated on Wall Panel 199.

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca