

FO John Irvén Mackenzie J/9770 RCAF

John was born on 17 December 1916 in Newboro, Ontario, Canada, the son of John Smith Mackenzie and Ella Elizabeth Mackenzie nee Lyons. In October 1938 he married Margaret Doris Wallbridge in Picton, Ontario. They had three children.

Educated at Queen Mary School, Belleville Collegiate and the Ontario Business School, John was employed as a salesman in the family Wholesale Business when, in August 1940, he volunteered for service with the RCAF.

Called up in February 1941, John completed his training in Canada in December 1941 with the award of his Observer badge. Completing additional training at No. 1 Advanced Navigation School, RCAF Station Rivers, Manitoba, in January 1942 John was awarded a commission and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 3(O) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Halfpenny Green, Staffordshire, 23 OTU RAF Pershore, Worcestershire and conversion to the Stirling at 214 Conversion Flight, RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in September 1942 John was posted to 214 Sqn at RAF Chedburgh, Suffolk.

On 3/4 February 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an attack on Hamburg, a key industrial hub housing significant military production facilities, including oil refineries and factories that supported the German war effort. The port housed shipyards, U-boat pens, and was also crucial for the transportation of goods and military supplies. A combined force of 263 aircraft, including eleven 214 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op. Two squadron crews failed to return.

At 18: 37 on 3 February 1942 John, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Chedburgh in Stirling I R9197 (BU-V).

At 20:04 on 3 February whilst flying E of Utrecht, John's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Reinhold Knacke in a Me110 of 1./NJG flying from Gilze-Rijen Airfield. The Stirling crashed between Valleikanaal and the railway near Leusden, Utrecht, Netherlands, killing all on board.

During the combat with John's Stirling, the Me110 was shot down and crashed in a meadow near the Modderbeek at the Helweg Achterveld, killing Hptm Knacke.

Also Killed: PO Derek Gordon de Garis (Pilot); PO Daniel O'Neill RCAF (AG); PO Denis Hedley Smith (Pilot); WO2 William McKenzie Murdoch RCAF (AB); WO2 William Obediah Powell RCAF (WOp/AG); FS Arley Henry Thiessen RCAF (AG); Sgt Ronald Frank Evans (FE)

John is buried in the Amersfoort (Oud Leusden) General Cemetery, Utrecht, Netherlands

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 202

Photo Source: IBCC

