

WO Thomas McBride J/58174 RCAF

Thomas, known as Tommy, was born on 22 November 1914 in Canongate, Edinburgh, Scotland, the son of Pte William Glover McBride, King's Own Scottish Borderers and Helen Walker McBride (née Fairholme).

Thomas's father was killed serving during WW1 and, following his mother's re-marriage, in 1923 the family emigrated to Canada, settling in Vancouver.

Educated at Burnaby North High School, Thomas was employed as a district circulation manager for the Vancouver "Daily Province" newspaper when, in May 1940, he volunteered for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in June 1940 as an under-training air gunner, after basic training Thomas re-mustered as observer in September 1940. Thomas completed his training in Canada with the award of his Observer badge in February 1941 and, following advance navigation training, he embarked for the UK in May.

After completing training at No. 20 OTU, RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland, in August 1941 Thomas was posted to 57 Squadron at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk. Returning to 20 OTU for instructor duties in December, Thomas was posted in June 1942 to 101 Squadron at RAF Oakington, Cambridgeshire. In early August 1942 Thomas moved with the squadron to RAF Stradishall, Suffolk.

On 17/18 August 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Osnabrück, Germany. A combined force of 139 aircraft, including twelve from 101 Squadron, was despatched. Two squadron aircraft failed to return.

At 2145 hours on 17 August 1942 Thomas, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Stradishall in Wellington III X3654 (SR-K). At 0202 hours on 18 August, whilst on the homeward leg, Thomas's aircraft was intercepted by Oblt. Ludwig Becker, flying a Do215 of the 6./NJG 2 from Leeuwarden Airfield. The bomber crashed 3 miles south of Harlingen, Friesland, Netherlands, killing all on board.

Also killed were the pilot P/O Earl Herbert Brown RCAF, 2nd pilot Sgt. Eugene Sydney Thomas, wireless operator/air gunners Flt. Sgt. Douglas Haig Methven and Sgt. William James Justice and air gunner Sgt. John Skipsey.

Thomas is buried in the Kimsward Protestant Churchyard, Wonseradeel, Netherlands.

Thomas is commemorated on Wall Panel 207.

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

