## Sgt Richard Cecil Morrison R/121748 RCAF

Richard, known as Dick, was born on 14 February 1920 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the son of Richard Wesley Morrison and Clara May Morrison nee Lyons. Educated at Highlands Public School and Edmonton High, Richard was employed as a truck driver in Edmonton when, in August 1941, he enlisted in the RCAF.

Richard completed his flying training in Canada in November 1943 with the award of his Air Gunner badge and embarked for the UK in January 1944. Following advanced training at 23 OTU RAF Pershore, Worcestershire, 22 OTU RAF Wellesbourne Mountford, Warwickshire and 1666 HCU RAF Wombleton, Yorkshire, in July 1944 Richard was posted to 415 Sqn at RAF East Moor, Yorkshire.

On the night of 10/11 August 1944 a 415 Sqn crew had flown Halifax III MZ633 (QO-B) on an operational flight to bomb U-Boat pens at La Pallice, France. Just before reaching the target area, the aircraft's port outer engine caught fire. Fortunately, the fire went out after the propeller was feathered and the engine was shut down, and a precautionary landing was made at RAF Exeter, Devon. The damaged engine was replaced at Exeter, and the squadron planned the collection of the aircraft.

On the morning of 21 August 1944, 415 Sqn aircraft Halifax III NA609 departed RAF East Moor with a crew of six, plus a second crew of six to fly MZ633 back to RAF East Moor. Arriving at RAF Exeter without incident, the repaired aircraft was signed over to them. At 17:04 Richard and the crew, plus one ground crew mechanic, departed RAF Exeter in Halifax III NA609 (QO-X), flying in formation with Halifax III MZ633. At 18:20 the two aircraft collided and then broke up in the air, crashing between the villages of West Haddlesey and Birkin, 5 miles SW of Selby, Yorkshire, west of the York to Doncaster Road, killing all 14 onboard the two aircraft.

The subsequent examination of the crash sites found that the starboard aileron of Halifax MZ633 was found on the ground with the Browning machine gun from the nose of Halifax NA609 sticking through it, indicating that the nose of NA609 had struck the rear portion of the starboard wing of MZ633. One suggestion for the collision occurring was put down to a propeller of Halifax NA609 breaking off, leading to the damaged aircraft then swinging into Halifax MZ633. This suggests that MZ633 was flying as the lead aircraft and NA609 was formated on it, so when the propeller dropped off NA609 a swing would initially occur, and with the two aircraft being so close together there was no time to avoid a collision with the lead aircraft. Most of the crew lost were squadron Section Leaders and this, combined with the loss of the Sqn Commanding Officer, temporarily affected 415 Sqn's operational efficiency just 3 weeks after beginning operations in Bomber Command.

Also Killed: Wg Cdr John Gordon McNeill DFC RCAF (Pilot); Flt Lt Andrew Harold Adelbert McBain DFC RCAF (AB); Flt Lt George Everette Steel-Davies RCAF (Nav); PO Herbert Ronald Wilkinson Fox RCAF (Wop/AG); Sgt Thomas Crerar Guthrie (FE); Sgt Ernest Henley RCAF (Ground -Fitter IIE); Sgt James Walton Mitchell RCAF (AG)

Richard is buried in Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery, Yorkshire

Richard is commemorated on Wall Panel - 215