

WO2 William McKenzie Murdoch R/79291 RC.

William was born on 11 December 1921 in Brownsburg, Quebec, Canada, the youngest son of George David Murdoch and Katherine Louisa Murdoch nee McKenzie.

Educated at Chatham Consolidated School, Brownsburg and Lachute High School, Quebec, William was employed as an assistant shipper and office clerk by Canadian Industries Ltd when, in January 1940, he volunteered for service with the RCAF.

Called up in February 1941, William commenced pilot training; however, when his training was terminated in August 1941, he re-mustered as Observer.

William completed his training in Canada in January 1942 with the award of his Observer badge and, following additional training at No. 2 Advanced Navigational School, RCAF Pennfield Ridge, New Brunswick, in March 1942 he embarked for the UK.



Following advanced training at 2 (0) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Millom, Cumbria, 23 OTU RAF Pershore, Worcestershire and conversion to the Stirling at 214 Conversion Flight, RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in September 1942 William 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 William, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Chedburgh in Stirling I R9197 (BU-V).

At 20:04 on 3 February whilst flying East of Utrecht, William'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 William's Stirling, the Me110 was shot down and crashed in a meadow near the Modderbeek at the Helweg Achterveld, killing Hptm Knacke.

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

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

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 216

Photo Source: IBCC