FS John Murray Nickleson
R/69892 RCAF



John, known as Jack, was born on 7 January 1922 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, the youngest son of James William Nickleson and Edna Irene Nickleson, nee Bulmer.

Educated at John Fisher School and North Toronto Collegiate, he graduated in June 1940 and enlisted immediately for service in the RCAF.

Originally volunteering for service as an Air Gunner, in October 1940 he was tested and graded as above average as a pilot and re-mustered. Training at 1 EFTS and 2 SFTS, Ontario, in February 1941 John was awarded his wings.

John was sent overseas in March 1941 and, following further training, in July 1941 he was posted via 17 OCU to 18 Sqn at RAF Horsham St Faith, Norfolk with his crew.

Of their 11 Ops, one of the most famous was "Op Leg" on 19 Aug 41. On 16 August 1941, 18 Sqn were detached to RAF Manston, Kent for a series of "Circus Ops". On 19 August 1941, six aircraft were ordered to attack a power station at Gosnay, France. Whilst flying over St Omer on route to the target, John's crew was additionally tasked with dropping a replacement leg for Wg Cdr Douglas Bader who had lost his right prosthetic leg when he bailed out on 9 August, and was recovering in the Luftwaffe Hospital in the town. This was successfully achieved.

On 20 September 1941, eight Blenheims from 18 Sqn were ordered on a low level mission to attack shipping off the Dutch Coast.

At 12:37 on 20 September 1941 John and his crew departed RAF Horsham St Faith, Norfolk, in Blenheim IV R3843 (WV-F)

Whilst bombing a convoy off Zandvoort, North Holland, John's aircraft flew through the bomb burst of another Blenheim and, at 14:18, was seen to crash into the sea with the starboard engine on fire.

Also killed: Sgt Walter Meadows (Observer); Sgt John Edward Pearson (AG)

John has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 219

Photo Source: probusbasingstoke.club