

PO Daniel O'Neill J/93043 RCAF

Daniel was born on 27 February 1918 in Allenby, British Columbia, Canada, the son of John William O'Neill and Margaret Jane O'Neill nee McKinnon. In September 1942 Daniel married Phylis Vidgen in Westminster, London.

Educated at Anyox Elementary and High Schools and Prince Rupert High, Daniel was employed as a foundry craneman by Granby Consolidated Mining, Smelting and Power Company, Allenby, British Columbia when, in August 1940, he volunteered for service with the RCAF.

Called up in December 1940, Daniel completed his training in Canada in October 1941 with the award of his Air Gunner badge and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at No. 7 Air Gunnery School RAF Stormy Down, Bridgend, Wales and 14 OTU RAF Cottesmore, Rutland, in September 1942 Daniel 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 Daniel, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Chedburgh in Stirling I R9197 (BU-V).

At 20:04 on 3 February whilst flying East of Utrecht, Daniel'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 Daniel'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 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)

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

Daniel is commemorated on Wall Panel 221

Photo Source: recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca

