

Sgt William Owen R/58067 RCAF

William was born on 21 November 1921 in Shanghai, China the only son of William Owen and Frances Alice Owen nee Ferris. In 1927 the family re-located to Canada and settled in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Educated at Windsor Street School, South Burnaby High School and Duffus School of Business, Vancouver, William was a student when, in April 1940, he applied for service with the RCAF.

Called up in June, William completed his training in Canada in February 1941 with the award of his Wings, and in April 1941 he embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 12 OTU RAF Benson, Oxfordshire, in June 1941 William was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

On 24 July 1941 Bomber Command was tasked with a daylight attack against the German Battleship Gneisenau and heavy cruiser the Prinz Eugen which were moored at Brest, France. A combined force of 100 aircraft, including six 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. The 75(NZ) Sqn crews were to attack the Gneisenau.

At 10:40 on 24 July William, operating as the 2nd Pilot, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell in Wellington Ic N2854 (AA-U).

Brest was heavily defended by a balloon barrage, anti-aircraft guns and fighters. On approach to the target William's aircraft was hit by flak and, with the bomb doors open, they began to lose speed and dropped out of formation, becoming a prime target for the fighters. As William's aircraft was engaged, the accompanying squadron aircraft endeavoured to give covering fire and his Air Gunners were able to destroy a Me110 before they were critically hit by a Me109 and crashed in the sea, killing all on board.

Also Killed: Sgt Rodney Patrick Carling (Obs); Sgt Robert Samuel Carson Craig (AG); Sgt Donald Frederick Streeter RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Reginald James Turner (WOp/AG); Sgt Graham Stuart Walker RNZAF (AG)

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

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 221

Photo Source: findagrave

