

FO Donald Edward Stephens J/40767 RCAF

Donald was born on 21 March 1924 in Alberni, British Columbia, Canada, the son of Martin McDonald Stephens and Edith Grace Stephens nee Brown.

Educated at Alberni Public and High Schools, Donald was employed as a radio despatcher by British Columbia Forestry Service, Vancouver when, in October 1942, he enlisted in the RCAF.

Donald commenced pilot training in Canada; however, when his training was terminated in July 1943, he re-mustered as Air Bomber. Donald completed his aircrew training in January 1944 with the award of his Air Bomber badge, was granted a commission and embarked for the UK in April.

Following advanced training at 7(O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Bishops Cleeve, Co Down, Northern Ireland, 28 OTU RAF Wymeswold, Leicestershire and Lancaster conversion at 11 Base, Donald was briefly posted to 90 Sqn at RAF Tuddenham, Suffolk, before he was posted to 514 Sqn at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire in January 1945.

On 3/4 February 1945, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to attack the Hansa Benzol Plant at Huckarde- Dortmund, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany. A combined force of 149 aircraft was allocated to the op, including eleven 514 Sqn crews.

At 16:19 on 3 February Donald, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster III LM685 (JI-B2).

Returning crews reported slight to moderate heavy flak in the Dortmund and Ruhr areas, combined with considerable searchlight activity throughout the Ruhr. On the run up to the target, Donald's aircraft was coned by searchlights and hit by flak, crashing near Gelsenkirchen, Nordrhein- Westfalen, killing all on board.

Also Killed: FO Alan Quillam Downward (Nav); FO Warren James Keating Fisher RCAF (Pilot); PO Alfred Hector Morrison RCAF (AG); FS Ronald Hardy RAAF (WOp); FS William Barclay Warr (FE); Sgt Albert Richard McWhinney RCAF (AG)

Originally buried in Gelsenkirchen Cemetery, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany, in June 1949 Donald was moved to the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany

Donald is commemorated on Wall Panel 247

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

