

FS Arley Henry Thiessen R/122988 RCAF

Arley was born on 18 December 1918 in Dalmeny, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, the son of Peter Henry Thiessen and Tina Thiessen nee Peters.

Educated at Dalmeny Public and High Schools, Arley was employed as a truck driver and service station attendant when, in August 1941, he volunteered for service with the RCAF.

Called up in September 1941, Arley completed his training in Canada in March 1942 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, and he immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at No 3 Air Gunnery School, RAF Castle Kennedy, Dumfries, Scotland, 24 OTU RAF Honeybourne, Worcestershire and conversion to the Stirling at 1651 Conversion Flight, RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, in December 1942 Arley 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 Arley, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Chedburgh in Stirling I R9197 (BU-V).

At 20:04 on 3 February whilst flying East of Utrecht, Arley'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 Arley'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); PO Daniel O'Neill RCAF (AG); WO2 William McKenzie Murdoch RCAF (AB); WO2 William Obediah Powell RCAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Ronald Frank Evans (FE)

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

Arley is commemorated on Wall Panel 252

Photo Source: IBCC