FS Rayburn William Thomas Ulens R/191540 RCAF

Rayburn was born on 30 April 1923 in Parkhill, Middlesex, Ontario, Canada, the son of Gordon Lawrence Ulens and Flavica Ulens nee Hill.

Educated in Corbett, Ontario, Rayburn was employed as a lorry driver by Parkhill Creamery Company and his father's haulage business when, in September 1942, he enlisted in the RCAF.

Rayburn completed his aircrew training in Canada in July 1943 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, before he proceeded to 34 OTU RAF Pennfield Ridge, New Bruswick where he converted to multi crew ops on the Ventura. In October 1943 Rayburn embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 13 OTU RAF Bicester, Oxfordshire, in May 1944 Rayburn was posted to 226 Sqn at RAF Hartford Bridge, Hampshire.

Throughout May and June, 226 Sqn was one element of the round the clock aerial support for the D day landings and subsequent move inland.

On 18/19 June 1944, 226 Sqn was tasked with a night flare dropping patrol over La Haye-du-Puit, Normandy, where the American forces were engaging the Germans. Five 226 Sqn crews were allocated to the op.

At 23:45 on 18 June 1944 Rayburn, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Hartford Bridge, in Mitchell II FL192 (MQ-Q).

Damaged by flak over the target, the crew attempted to return home but, at 02:15 on 19 June they were forced to ditch in the Channel close to Guernsey's North coast. Despite a Search and Rescue mission mounted by the squadron the next day, nothing further was seen of the aircraft or a dinghy.

Also killed : FS Donald Algernon Joseph Ahearn RAAF (WOp/AG); FS David George Badgery RAAF (Nav); FS Conrad Peter Vivian Biddlecombe RCAF (Pilot)

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

Rayburn is commemorated on Wall Panel - Not Yet Erected