Flt Lt Orlin Ronald Alexander J/4421 RCAF



Orlin, known as Jake, was born on 7 May 1914 in St Thomas, Elgin, Ontario, Canada, the only son of James Alexander and Vera Margaretta Alexander nee Masterman. In November 1941 he married Grace Wylie McChesney in Kirkland Lake, Ontario; they had one son.

Educated at Elmdale School, St Thomas Collegiate Institute and the Arthur Voaden Vocational School, Orlin attended the Ontario Agricultural College, University of Toronto where he was awarded a BS (Ag).

Orlin was employed as a mining engineer at Toburn Gold Mine, Kirkland Lake, Ontario when, in June 1940, he applied for service in the RCAF.

Called up in August 1940, Orlin completed his pilot training in Canada in March 1941 with the award of his Wings, was granted a commission and, after completing the Navigational Instructor's Course at 1 Advanced Navigation School, RCAF Rivers, Manitoba, he was posted to 1 SFTS at RCAF Camp Borden, Ontario as a Navigational Officer.



In February 1943 Orlin embarked for the UK. Following advanced training at 17(P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Watton, Norfolk, 41 OTU RAF Hawarden, Flintshire, Wales and the School of Artillery Larkhill, in July 1943 Orlin was posted to 400 Sqn at RAF Weston Zoyland, Somerset. In February 1944 the squadron moved to RAF Odiham, Hampshire.

On 20 February 1944, Orlin and his Navigator were tasked with completing a local area photographic sortie, and they departed RAF Odiham in Mosquito MM277.

After they had been airborne for 35 minutes, the crew returned to base and were observed making a "hurried" circuit for a twin engined aircraft. Orlin's approach was considered high, but he had the wheels and flaps down. On attempting to land Orlin overshot and endeavoured to go around; however, he made the wrong selection of flaps up first before the wheels with the result that, at 10:40, the aircraft mushed into the ground and hit the No 2 Guard Room, killing both aircrew and a member of the RAF Regiment returning to base from leave. Two service personnel in the Guardroom were injured.

Also Killed: PO Joseph Cosoff RCAF (Nav); Cpl Edward Hall (RAF Regiment).

Orlin is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

Orlin is commemorated on Wall Panel – Not Yet Erected

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca