FO William Warfield J/19095 RCAF



William, known as Bill, was born on 20 January 1923 in New York City, USA the only child of Lt Col William Warfield and Corinne Rosalys Warfield nee Wendell.

Educated at Saltus School, Hamilton, Bermuda, Staunton Military Academy, Virginia, USA and Blair Academy, Blairstown, New Jersey, USA, William had just left education when he crossed into Canada and, in June 1941, he enlisted in the RCAF.

Completing his aircrew training in Canada in September 1942 with the award of his Wings, in October 1942 William embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 5 (P) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Ternhill, Shropshire and 59 OTU, RAF Milfield, Northumberland, in March 1943 Willliam was posted to 421 Sqn at RAF Croughton, Northamptonshire.

In May 1943 William was detached on temporary duty to North Africa, returning in August 1943 and rejoining 421 Sqn at RAF Lashenden, Kent and awarded his commission.

On 16 June 1944 421 Sqn was, along with the other squadrons of 127 Wing, the first to arrive in Normandy, France after D-Day. Moving across Europe in support of the Allied ground campaign, by November 1944 the squadron was based at B.56, Evere, Brussels, Belgium.

On 3 December 1944, twelve aircraft of 421 Sqn were tasked with a fighter sweep of the Dulmen Area, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany.

At 11:37 William departed B56 Evere, Brussels in Spitfire IX MK232 (AU-), operating as Pink 5.

On the return, bad weather was encountered by the formation, and the Sqn Cdr ordered the sections to return to base separately. On approaching base above cloud, William (Pink 5) and Pink 6 agreed to descend individually and Pink 6 descended from 23,000 feet, breaking cloud at 500 feet and landed successfully.

William called on R/T for homing, which was given, and shortly later he made a 2nd call reporting he was short of fuel and intended to bale out. Nothing more was heard from William; however, an allied ground unit reported an aircraft crashing on the road from Nivelles to Charleroi, Belgium, 3 miles SE Nivelles between Nivelles-Charleroi and Nivelles-Namur Highways and 3 miles SSW of B.75 Nivelles, Belgium. On arrival at the crash site the unit discovered William deceased in the cockpit.

On inspection of the crashed aircraft and William's equipment, it was believed that he did try and bale out in cloud, but he probably lost control and crashed at full speed, vertically.

Originally buried at the 104 Staging Post, on 8 December 1944 William was moved to the Brussels Town Cemetery, Belgium

William is commemorated on Wall Panel – Not Yet Erected

The wreckage of William's aircraft was recovered in 2020

Photo Source: veterans.gc.ca