FO Richard Gainford Askew J/36378 RCAF



Richard was born on 12 March 1923 in Briercrest, Saskatchewan, Canada, the son of Edward Askew and Mary Agnes Askew nee Black.

Educated at Briercrest School and Moose Jaw High, Saskatchewan, Richard was employed as a laboratory assistant by the British American Oil Company, Moose Jaw when, in October 1942, he enlisted in the RCAF.

Richard completed his aircrew training in Canada in October 1943 with the award of his Navigator badge, was granted a commission and, in October 1943, he embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 8(O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Mona, Anglesey, Wales and 16 OTU RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, in May 1944 Richard was posted to 69 Sqn at RAF Northolt, London when the squadron re-assembled with Wellington aircraft as part of 34 Wing of 2TAF for night reconnaissance duties, beginning operations on the eve of D-Day using flares to locate enemy troop movements.

On 24/25 July 1944 eight 69 Sqn crews were tasked with reconnaissance of road and rail in France. Richard's crew was allocated an area along the road from Elbeuf to Lisieux, France.

At 23:10 on 24 July 1944 Richard, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Northolt, London, in Wellington XIII ME929.

In the early hours of 25 July, Richard's aircraft crashed at St. Jean d'Elbeuf, Normandy, Seine-Maritime, France, ten miles SW of Rouen, killing all on board. The circumstances of the loss remain unknown.

Also killed: FO Douglas Thayne Leavitt RCAF (AB); PO Peter Ernest Rushton (Pilot); Sgt Thomas Spencer Higgott (AG)

Originally buried in the St Jean Communal Cemetery, Elbeuf, France, and later re-interred in the St Andre US Military Cemetery by a US Graves Unit, in June 1945 Richard was moved to the Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

Richard is commemorated on Wall Panel - Not Yet Erected

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca