

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JOHN LIVINGSTONE HOPKINS ELIOTT



John Elliott was born on 24 January 1916 in New York, USA, to Sir Gilbert Alexander Boswell Elliott and Lady Dora Flournoy Elliott (née Hopkins). His father was British, worked in London as a Stock Broker and partner in Elliott Young & Co. He relocated to Rye, Connecticut, USA. His mother was born at Atlanta, Georgia, USA. He had sisters Charlotte Elgitha and Jean Cecelia and a brother Captain Arthur Francis Elliott. The schools he attended were Elstree School Hertfordshire 1926-1929; Harrow 1929-1934 followed by Trinity College, Cambridge University 1934-1937 where he attained a BA degree in Economics. His sports interests were golf, tennis, riding, swimming and shooting. He also had a private pilot's certificate, issued in the USA. John worked at Elliott Young & Co. in London as a clerk from 1937-1938 and later was a partner with Gilbert Elliott & Co. New York. They also lived at Wolfelee, Hawick in Scotland.

John Elliott crossed the USA/Canada border, as many did, and enlisted into the RCAF on 19 September 1940. He was given the RCAF service number of R73781 and had the lowest rank of Aircraftman Second Class. Following aptitude tests and a medical, he was recommended for training as a Pilot. He was called forward on 29th of November 1940 to attend Initial Training School at Regina, Canada. On the 1st January 1941 he was sent to Elementary Flying Training School at Goderich, which he passed out – “above average” and was graded as no 3 out of 50 students. From the 5th of March 1941 to the 16th of May 1941, he attended No 1 Service Flying Training School at Camp Borden, Ontario, where he flew Yales and Harvards. He was promoted to Leading Aircraftman during this course and was graded 6th out of 50 students at the end. John Elliott was awarded his pilot's flying badge on the 16th of May 1941 and commissioned as a Pilot Officer the following day with a new service number of J5332. He was sent to No 1 Personnel Depot, Halifax awaiting a ship to take him to UK. On arrival in the UK, he was sent to a Personnel Reception Centre, then to an Operational Training Unit, where he would have crewed up. John and his crew were posted onto No 9 Squadron at RAF Honington, Suffolk where he was a Wellington bomber captain. Records to hand do not show his posting date, but it is assumed to be

October 1941. Eliot with some different crew members flew at least 7 Ops before the end of the year and at least 8 Ops in the spring of 1942.

On the 9th March 1942, John and his crew took off from RAF Honington at 0013 hours in Wellington X3637 to bomb Essen. Whilst climbing through 18,000 feet over the English Channel their starboard engine seized. They immediately turned round to head back towards UK to divert to the nearest useful airfield which was RAF Manston in Kent. As they were descending the port engine started misbehaving. They jettisoned all the bombs and flares in the English Channel and reached RAF Manston on one engine. John misjudged the approach into Manston and was too high on approach, landed a long way down the runway and crashed into a barbed wire fence at the far end of the airfield. He reported this as an error of judgement. The Station Commander agreed that this was an unfortunate error of judgement.

8/9th March 1942.					
Wellington III	S/L TURNER SGT. RILEY HARRIS P/O BULLOCK SGT. WALKER 2nd/Lt. PULLAN SGT. JAMES	Attack target at ESSEN	0007	0422	Flares dropped West and South of Marshalling Yards. Bombed close to aiming point, slightly South West.
3346					
3463	P/O COOPER SGT. LANGTON P/O MITCHELL P/O CLAYES SGT. WELLOCK SGT. WALKER	Do	0015	0529	Essen not reached owing to engine trouble. Turned back at 5125 N 0645 E. Bombs jettisoned safe in sea.
3637	P/O ELLIOTT P/O BROOKE SGT. STEVENS SGT. CAMERON Lt. BULLOCK SGT. WATERSON	Do	0013	0 -	Turned back with engine trouble. Crashed landed at Manston, Kent.

Above is the Form 541 Operations Record Book for 8/9 March 1942, showing Sqn Ldr Bob Turner as the senior pilot on duty. Notice they were a six-man crew.

The Elliot crew flew several more times in March and April 1942.

3594	SGT. INTRICK SGT. TRUBBIE SGT. POLLARD SGT. DARLING SGT. CALVER SGT. CLARKE	do	2250	0155	Turned back at REMBOL owing to oxygen failure. 630 x 4 incendiaries jettisoned in sea from 16,000 ft. 180 x 4 incendiaries brought back.
3713	P/O SWINNEY P/O TETTERBORN P/O LANGDON SGT. BROWN SGT. FORTNEM	do	2245	0430	Bombs dropped on STUTTGART, identified by bend in river, and were seen to ignite. Other fires seen in area on leaving.
3469	S/L TURNER P/O BULLOCK SGT. ONIONS SGT. BEATON SGT. HOWE	do	2250	0010	STUTTGART not attacked owing to overheating of starboard engine, and oil pressure dropping to zero. Furthest point reached was 5120N 0223E, 310 x 4 incendiaries jettisoned in sea at this point at 2330 hours.
3346	P/O ELLIOTT P/SGT. HUDDOCK SGT. CAMERON P/O BLAIN SGT. WATERSON	do	2251	0441	Bombs dropped over town (possibly STUTTGART) and small incendiary fires started.

Above is the Form 541 Operations Record Book for 5 May 1942, again showing Sqn Ldr Bob Turner as the senior pilot on duty. Most of the crews on this Op were a five-man crew. The Elliott crew reported that: "Bombs dropped over town (possibly Stuttgart).

The Elliot crew took off at 2229 hours on the 8th of May 1942 to bomb Warnemunde, north of Rostock . Flying Officer Elliott was the captain.

The observer was Flying Officer Bullock.

The wireless operator was Sergeant Cameron.

The front gunner was Pilot Officer Blaine.

The rear gunner was Sergeant Waterson.

Elliott and crew took off much later than the rest of the cruise. The seven other Wellingtons in the attack that night from IX Squadron took off at 2155, 2200, 2201, two at 2203, 2207 and 2220, showing the Elliot crew were between 36 mins and 9 mins behind the rest of the formation.

1615	SGT. PATRICK SGT. TRUSTON P/SGT. POLLARD SGT. DARLING SGT. OLIVER SGT. CLARKE	do	2220	0540	Bombs dropped N.W. of town, and were all seen to burst.
3369	P/O ELLIOTT P/O BULLOCK SGT. CAMERON P/O BLAIN SGT. WATERSON	do	2229	-	Nothing heard of this aircraft after take-off.

Above is the Form 541 Operations Record Book for 8 May 1942.

Nothing was heard of this crew after take-off and they failed to return.

They were possibly shot down by flak near Rostock.

They all rest in the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery.

Flt Lt John Livingstone Hopkins Elliott RCAF

Fg Off Henry John Bullock

Sgt James Douglas Cameron

Fg Off Leonard Manley Blain

Sgt Robert Reid Waterston

There are 67 pages of RCAF records about Elliott, digitised here:

https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/result?q_type=1&q_1=j5332&search_type=search_basic&ecopy=44486_83024_005550_0729-00064

The photo below came from the family of Sgt Waterson, the rear gunner.

It is believed that Elliott is seated.

