

WO2 HUGH ALEXANDER FISHER



Hugh was born in Canada on 13 April 1920 and following school, became a tractor driver and mechanic. He enlisted into the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) on 17th July 1941, in Winnipeg, as an Aero Engine Mechanic with the rank of Aircraftman Class2 (AC2). Following RCAF basic training and trade training, he was sent to No 10 Repair Depot in Calgary. He was promoted to AC1 on 24 January 1942 and to Leading Aircraftman on 1 July 1942. (On 6th of October 1942 he was charged with having dirty boots on the early morning parade and was restricted to barracks for three days.) He applied for aircrew shortly after that and was sent to Toronto University for a "pre aircrew education course", which he completed on 12 February 1943. He then passed his aircrew aptitude tests and medical selected for training as a Bomb Aimer. He was sent to No 6 Initial Training School in Toronto on 29 May 1943, where his end of course report states:

An individualist who is a bit of a showman. Keen on sports and capable of doing a good job academically but requires a restraining influence.

Hugh was then sent to No 1 Bomber and Gunnery School, Jarvis Ontario from 31 May - 20 August 1943, where his end of course report states:

Just average. Did not apply himself very keenly.

Hugh kept going and was sent to No 9 Air Observers School at RCAF St Jean, Quebec (St John) on 22 August 1943. His end of course report states:

This student's work improved from poor, sloppy efforts and log keeping, to fairly neat and complete records of work done in the air. When he grasps what is required of him, he carries out these requirements satisfactorily. He has some queer characteristics and mannerisms in class where he appears inattentive, lazy and extremely sure of himself. He certainly does not work very hard and yet does well enough in his examinations. This student does not inspire confidence and will need watching. Not recommended for commissioning. Positioning in class 21 out of 25.

On 1 October 1943 Hugh was promoted to (war temporary) Sergeant and presented with a Bomb Aimers flying badge. He was sent to RCAF No 1Y Depot on 15th October 1943, and embarked for UK, arriving on 30th October 1943. Hugh was sent to No 3 RCAF Personnel Reception Centre at Bournemouth on the English Riviera and then to an “aircrew toughening up course” at RAF Whitley Bay in Northumberland on 15th December 1943 until 12th January 1944. His end of course results were: *44%. Failed the course.*

Hugh was sent to No 4 (Observers) Advance Flying Unit at RAF West Freugh, Scotland on 1st February 1944, although during that course he spent some time in hospital. His end of course report stated:

A fairly keen Air Bomber who was severely handicapped by time in hospital, consequently his practical work was limited. Both practical and theory Navigation – average.

His next course was a posting to No 14 Operational Training Unit (OTU) at RAF Cottesmore, Rutland on 7th March 1944. This is where he crewed up with Jeffs, Mousley, McMillan and one Air Gunner, a crew of 5 ready to fly the Wellington. Perhaps this was the motivation he needed, or perhaps things just started to click, now he was part of a crew, that he knew he would go to war with, and maybe die with. His end of course assessments at No 14 OTU, were very different from previous ones:

*Knowledge of bombs and components - **exceptional.***

Pyrotechnics - above average.

Bomb sight theory - above average.

Map reading – average.

Release gear and wiring - above average.

The Jeffs crew were posted to 51 Base, RAF Swinderby on 20 May 1944, where they were joined by Flight Engineer Higgins and a second Air Gunner, a crew of 7, ready to fly the Lancaster bomber. Hugh was promoted to (war substantive) Flight Sergeant on 1 July 1944. The Jeffs crew were posted onto 9 Squadron on 18 August 1944. They flew several training missions then flew their first Op on 24 August 1944. Hugh was promoted to (war temporary) Warrant Officer on 1 January 1945.

The Jeffs crew were:

Fg Off	Alfred E	Jeffs	Pilot	179570	Aged 29
Sgt	Clarence V	Higgins	Flt Eng	1218992	Aged 23
Flt Sgt	Kenneth C	Mousley	Nav	1252823	Aged 36
WO2	Hugh A	Fisher	Bomb Aimer	R/117477	RCAF Aged 24
Flt Sgt	Campbell M	McMillan	W Op/AG	1821038	Aged 20
Flt Sgt	William	Thomas	Air Gunner	1592730	Aged 20
Flt Sgt	Gordon J	Symonds	Air Gunner	1853705	Aged 20



Higgins, **Fisher**, Thomas, Mousley

McMillan, Jeffs, Symonds

On the 18th February 1945, Warrant Officer Hugh Fisher applied for a Commission.

Remarks of the Squadron Commander:

I do not consider that this NCO has the makings of an Officer. His general slackness and lack of sense of responsibility have been pointed out to him in the past, without any apparent improvement. His application for a commission is not supported.

Signed Wing Commander Jim Bazin, Officer Commanding 9 Squadron

Remarks by the Station Commander:

I agree with the remarks at Para c above. The remarks of the Squadron Commander are completely substantiated by reports from this NCO's Flight Commander, Bombing Leader and Captain. Not recommended for a Commission.

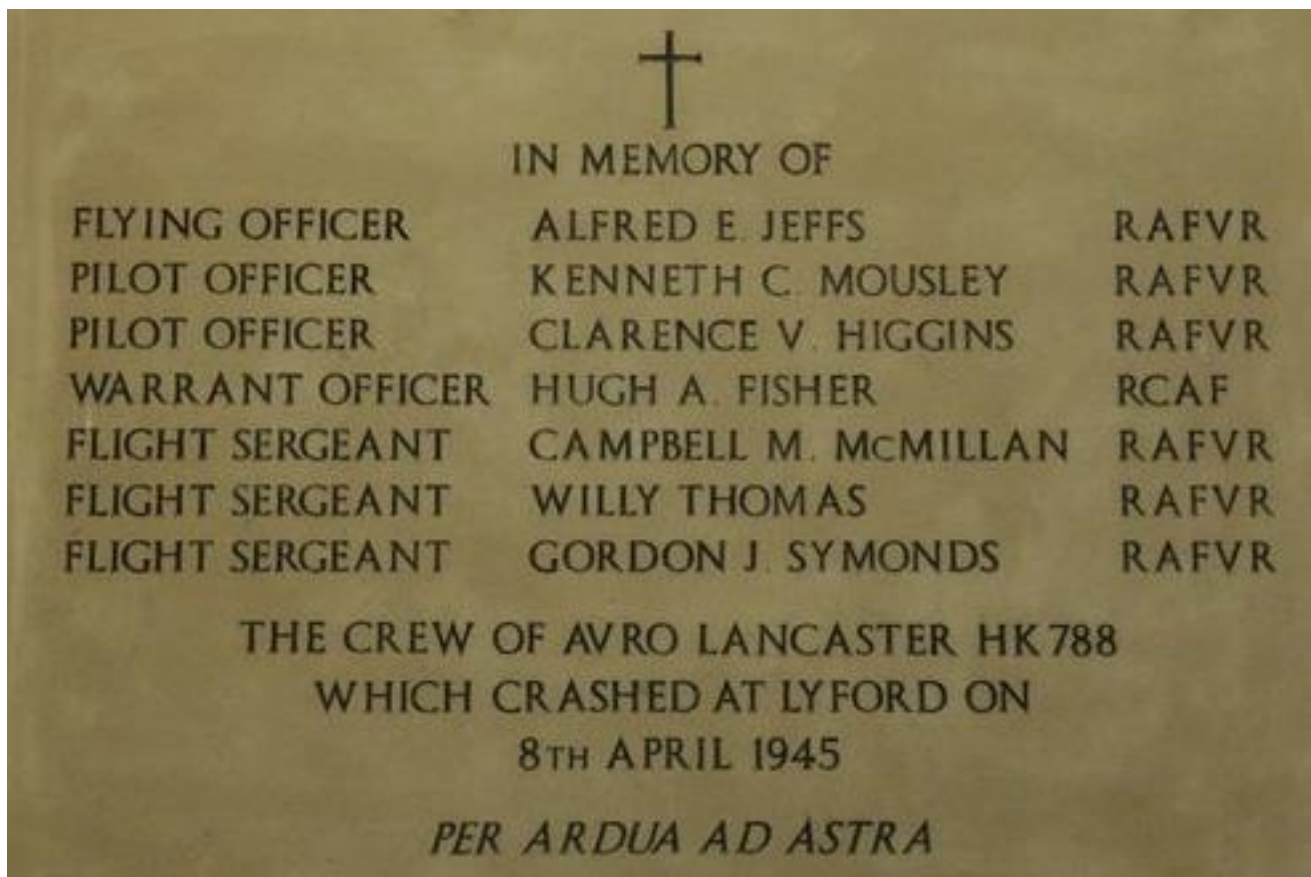
Signed Group Captain Colin Campbell McMullen, Commanding Officer RAF Bardney

Dated: 28 February 1945.

Hugh's crew flew the following Op missions:

OP	DATE	TARGET	REMARKS
1	24 August 1944	Ijmuiden	
2	<u>26 September 1944</u>	Karlsruhe	
3	<u>27 September 1944</u>	Kaiserlautern	
4	<u>05 October 1944</u>	Wilhelmshaven	
5	<u>06 October 1944</u>	Bremen	
6	<u>11 October 1944</u>	Flushing	
7	<u>19 October 1944</u>	Nurnberg	
8	<u>12 November 1944</u>	Tirpitz	Tallboy
9	<u>17 December 1944</u>	Munich	
10	<u>18 December 1944</u>	"Lutzow" at Gdynia	
11	<u>01 January 1945</u>	Ladbergen	
12	<u>12 January 1945</u>	Bergen	Tallboy
13	<u>16 January 1945</u>	Brux	
14	<u>06 February 1945</u>	Altenbeken	
15	<u>14 February 1945</u>	Altenbeken	Tallboy
16	<u>22 February 1945</u>	Altenbeken	Tallboy
17	<u>24 February 1945</u>	Ladbergen	Tallboy
18	<u>11 March 1945</u>	Essen	
19	<u>12 March 1945</u>	Dortmund	
20	<u>13 March 1945</u>	Arnsberg	Tallboy
21	<u>15 March 1945</u>	Arnsberg	
22	<u>19 March 1945</u>	Vlotho	Tallboy
23	<u>07 April 1945</u>	Molbis	1 x 2000lb HC, 7 x 1000lb MC, 4 x1000lb GP

On the night of the 7 April 1945, 175 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitos were tasked by 5 Group, to destroy the benzol plant at Molbis, near Leipzig. (Benzol in a key ingredient of aviation fuel) Situated south of the city, and less than two miles east of Böhlen, Molbis had become a familiar destination for 5 Group via a well-trodden route across Belgium to pass south of Cologne. 9 Squadron prepared 12 Lancasters, each loaded with 1 x 2,000lb HC, 7 x 1,000lb MC and 4 x 500lb GP. They took off from RAF Bardney between 18.31 and 18.46hrs. The whole force found itself delayed by wrongly forecast head winds, and although it would reach the target area, not every aircraft would do so in time to participate in the attack. Green target indicators (TI) were released from 15,000 feet at 22.48hrs and the flare force followed up between 22.50 and 22.57hrs to enable the low-level Mosquitos to drop red and green TIs among the chimneys of the plant. The approaching main force crews were greeted by clear skies and the highly accurate and visible marking was an invitation for them to plaster the aiming-point with high explosives. Hugh and his crew in Lancaster HK788 were reported to have arrived back over England on fire and dived into the ground at Lyford, Oxfordshire, killing all seven crew, who were on their twenty-third operation. The crash site is shown below.



On the top of this memorial in Lyford Church is a small part of the crashed Lancaster HK788