

Aircrew Remembered Aviation Personal Histories and Databases

Kelvin Youngs
13–16 minutes

14/15.06.1944 424 (Tiger) Squadron, RCAF, Halifax III LW121, Flt Lt. Peter C. Hamilton

Operation: Cambrai, France

Date: 14th/15th June 1944 (Wednesday/Thursday)

Unit No: 424 (Tiger) Squadron, RCAF, 6 Group, Bomber Command

Type: Halifax III

Serial: LW121

Code: QB:X

Base: RAF Skipton-on-Swale, Yorkshire

Location: Cambrai, France

Pilot: Flt Lt. Peter Cameron Hamilton J11556 RCAF Age 24. PoW No: 5501 * **(1)**

Flt Eng: Sgt. Walter Lawrence Cousins 2201368 RAFVR Age? PoW No: 255 **

Nav: Fg Off. Donald Robert McCormick J24223 RCAF Age 24. Evader **(2)**

Bomb Aimer: Flt Sgt. Robert Charles McCubbin R156217 RCAF Age 21. Evader **(3)**

WOp/Air Gnr: WO2. Charles Gordon Pallett R141179 RCAF Age 21. PoW No: 616 ** **(4)**

Air Gnr (Mid Upp): Sgt. Calvin Becker Cornelius R210069 RCAF Age 19. PoW No: 53308 ** **(5)**

Air Gnr (Rear): Sgt. George Alexander Edward Compton R124448 RCAF Age 22. Id No: 78434 ***, PoW No: 8079 * **(6)**

* Stalag Luft 3 Sagan-Silesia, Germany, now Żagań in Poland.

** Stalag Luft 7 Bankau nr. Kreuzburg O.S." (O.S. standing for Oberschlesien, Upper Silesia). Today called Bąków nr. Kluczbork (Poland).

*** Buchenwald concentration camp established on Ettersberg hill near Weimer, Germany in July 1937.

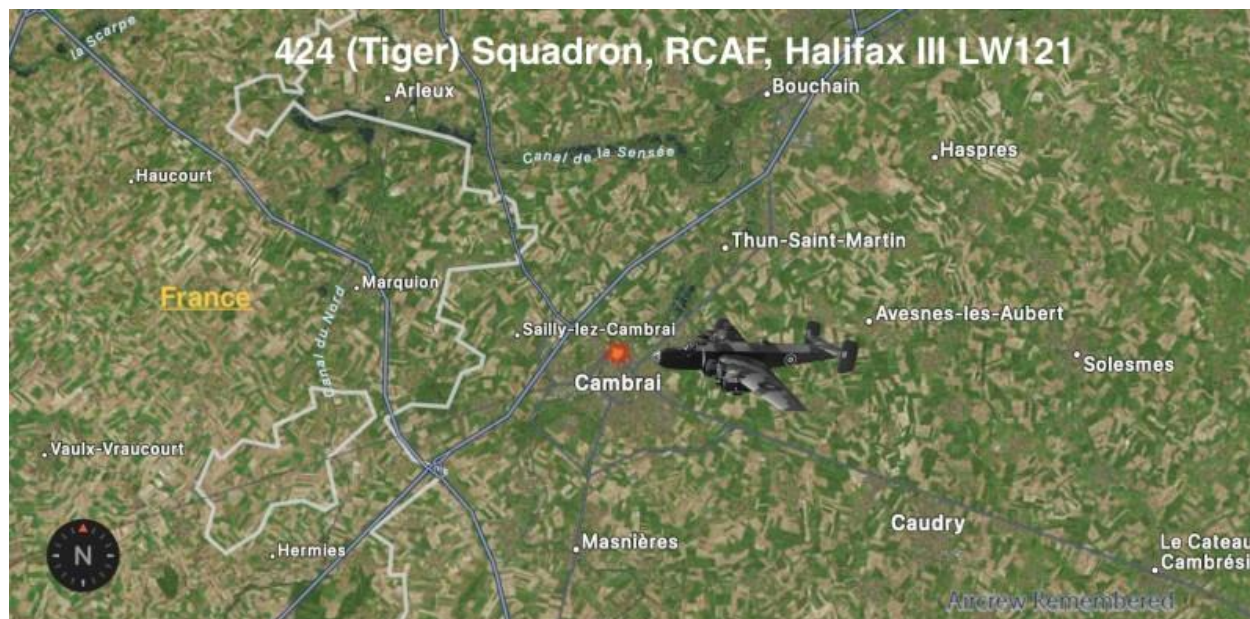
REASON FOR LOSS:

Halifax III LW121 was one of 19 aircraft from the squadron that took off from RAF Skipton-on-Swale at 22:51 hrs on the 14th June 1944 and joined a combined force of 330 aircraft tasked with attacking the railway marshalling yards at Cambrai, Douai and St-Pol in France. The squadron was detailed to attack Cambrai.

LW121 was claimed by Uffz. Kurt Leitner, his 1st Abschuss, from 2./NJG4 over Cambrai at 3.300m at 01:00 hrs. (*Nachtjagd Combat Archive (12 May 1944 - 23 July 1944) Part 3 - Theo Boiten*).

Uffz. Leitner was KiA on the night of the 21st/22nd June 1944 when he was shot down by an intruder shortly after take-off from Florennes and crashed at Rance west of Cerfontaine. LW121 was his only Abschuss.

On fire, the Halifax was abandoned by the crew from 11,000 ft over target area.



(1) After the statutory visit to Dulag Luft, Oberursel Flt Lt. Hamilton was transferred to Stalag Luft 3, Sagan-Silesia.



Above Flt Lt. Hamilton reported missing (Courtesy of The Leader Post, dated

29th June 1944)

On the night of the 27th January 1945, with Soviet troops only 26 km (16 mls) away, orders were received to evacuate the PoWs to Spremberg which is to the West in Germany. After a 55 km (34 mls) march, the PoWs arrived in Bad Muskau where they rested for 30 hours. The PoWs were then marched the remaining 26 km (16 mls) to Spremberg where they were housed in empty garages, storerooms and in military barracks. There they were provided with warm soup and bread.

Flt Lt. Hamilton was amongst the PoWs from the North, East and remaining West compound prisoners at Spremberg who were sent to the Malag und Milag Nord PoW camp.

Note: *Malag = Marinelager (naval prisoner of war camp) and Milag = Marine-Internierten-Lager (naval internment camp), Nord (North). Located at a former Luftwaffe (German Air Force) barracks near Westertimke NE of Bremen in Germany.*

On the 2nd April 1945 the Commandant announced that he had received orders to leave the camp with most of his guards, leaving only a small detachment behind to hand over the camp to Allied forces, who were already in Bremen.

However, that afternoon a detachment of over a hundred *SS-Feldgendarmerie* entered the camp, mustered over 3,000 men and marched them out, heading east. Flt Lt. Hamilton was in this column.

Over the next few days the column was attacked from the air several times. Finally the Senior British Naval Officer (SBNO), who was later killed in a strafing attack by RAF aircraft, offered the Germans the PoW's parole, in return for being allowed to rest during the day and march at night. The Germans agreed. The column slowly headed east, finally crossing the River Elbe, north of Hamburg, on the 18th April 1945.

On the 28th April, the column finally arrived at Lübeck on the Baltic coast. They were liberated by the British 11th Armoured Division on the 1st May 1945.

At the Malag-Milag Nord camp the guards fled on 9th April 1945 and were replaced by elderly civilian guards. Those remaining at the camp were liberated by the British Guards Armoured Division on the 27th April 1945.