

129 962 1946.09.15

"Dakota aircraft 962 took off at Minot, North Dakota at 0930 hours CST 15 September 1946 and proceeded to Estevan, Saskatchewan, arriving at approximately 1015 hours CST. The aircraft was without fore and aft control aside from the slight amount available from the use of the trim tab.

"The pilot of 962 decided to attempt a landing at Estevan at 1015 hours and carried out a normal or possibly a bit wider than normal circuit with the wheels down at approximately half flap until the aircraft was at the down-wind end of the runway at an approximate altitude of 75 feet. The aircraft then levelled out and commenced to climb. After climbing approximately 100 feet, the aircraft levelled out momentarily and then commenced to climb again with the wheels retracting. The second climb was very steep and was maintained until the aircraft stalled, dropped the port wing, and dove vertically into the ground and exploded on impact."

It appears that the pilot filed his flight plan by radio AFTER taking off from Minot (most unusual) and that there was no further radio communication from Dakota 962. It was speculated that the pilot knew the condition of his elevator almost immediately after take off but maintained control through use of trim tabs and elected to continue to Estevan, to effect a landing with a slightly reduced fuel load.

The unit is No. 124 (Fy) Squadron as opposed to Communications as indicated in a number of sources.

The pilots had already ferried the Cornells to Estevan and were heading back to R.C.A.F. Station Rockcliffe when the Dakota Mk. IIIN accident occurred.

At the time of the unfortunate flying accident, No. 124 (Fy) Squadron, under the command of Squadron Leader E. A. Bland AFC, was part of the Royal Canadian Air Force's No. 9 (T) Group.

Twenty RCAF pilots and one ground crew man were killed at Estevan airport Sunday morning when a Dakota transport aircraft crashed and burned near a runway in the northwest corner of the of the landing field. Considering the death toll it is western Canada's worst flying tragedy and the second most serious fatal flying accident in Canadian aviation history, with the human factor, known and recognized as the cause of the great majority of flying accidents, being indicated by air force headquarters in Ottawa as the main cause of this crash. The tragedy occurred a few minutes after ten o'clock Sunday morning and the field was closed immediately by RCAF officials to everyone except ambulances, fire trucks, doctors and air officials. A guard was placed on the charred remains of the aircraft and no unauthorized person was allowed inside the boundaries of the airport. Information released by the RCAF on Monday indicated that one possible cause for the crash might have been the fact that the starboard stabilizer lock had not been removed prior to the start of the fatal flight. From this bit of evidence, gleaned from the burned wreckage of the twin-engined transport, air force officials and former airmen were able to piece together a probable picture of the flight. An official Air Force court of inquiry was held on Monday and Tuesday with Wing Commander J. J. McDonald, DFC, Squadron Leader Underhill and Squadron leader Kerkcaldy, all of No. 2 Western Air Command headquarters, Winnipeg, in charge. A full investigation of the tragedy is underway, but the official statement made clear the

main factor in the crash: The aircraft was seen to approach the airport normally with its wheels lowered. For some reason the pilot decided not to land on his first approach and opened up the engines to go around again. During this manoeuvre the pilot apparently lost control and the aircraft crashed. A technical examination of the wreckage has shown that the control lock on the starboard elevator was in position and had not been removed before the flight commenced. Standard procedures as laid down before take-off requires positive evidence of removal of all the control locks. In view of the fact that all members of the crew of the aircraft lost their lives, it appears doubtful that a full explanation of this regrettable error will ever be ascertained. The statement was sufficient to give the average pilots fairly clear picture of what probably happened, although several experienced pilots insisted that it never is possible to know all the factors involved in a tight spot unless you have been in one yourself. Normally, they said the ground crewman with the plane would have been responsible for seeing the locking device clamped on to prevent wind damage when the plane is on the ground was removed before take-off. On the other hand, the pilot, before taking off, normally checks all his controls to make sure they move freely. It is considered possible for the elevator control may have been slightly moveable sufficiently so for the pilot to believe that all was in order. After the take-off run was started, however, there would be nothing the pilot could do to change his mind. The aircraft would become airborne gradually, and by the time the pilot realized he could not control his elevator, it would be too late. Once in the air, he might be able to control his elevation weakly, gaining or losing height by the use of throttle and possibly by manually operation the trim tabs on the elevator. But his main control of elevation would be gone. The aircraft would turn normally by use of the ailerons and the rudder, but altitude control, basically the functions of the elevator, would be practically non-existent. The elevators the moveable part of the aircrafts tail-plane do not move independently and a locking device on the starboard side simply meant no elevator control whatever. The pilot then was faced with the question of whether to attempt a landing or order the passengers to bail out. Since 20 of the Dakotas 21-man complement were pilots it is probable that consultations were held as to what should be done and apparently it was decided to attempt a landing. The plane could then have made a wheels-up approach and a belling landing, or, as was attempted, a normal approach. This could be done only by wheeling it on and waiting for the tail to drop as the plane- travelling 80 to 90 miles-an-hour lost speed. By shifting the crew to the rear of the plane, the tail could be brought down more quickly. So far it has not been determined whether this was attempted. What apparently happened was that the pilot, dissatisfied with his approach, decided to try another. On opening his throttles full to go around again, the nose immediately went up in the air, and without elevator control the pilot was powerless to stop it, with the result that the aircraft stalled and crashed. Former airmen said it seemed likely the pilot, using this standard procedure for going around again, had not counted on the tendency of the nose to rise when the throttles were opened. But, the emphasized, it is impossible to know all the factors the pilot faced. The large Dakota was attempting to land at Estevan airport at the time of the accident. It was returning to Estevan from Minot where the group of ferry pilots had stayed overnight after having flown some Cornell type trainers from Estevan to Fargo, N.D. They had stayed in Minot because of the lack of accommodation for them at Estevan. These pilots as well as others have been engaged for several weeks in ferrying lend-lease aircraft from Estevan to the United States. About 60 such aircraft still remain at Estevan to be returned to American authorities. These Cornell trainers have been stored at the Estevan airport for several months. According

the eye-witness stories, the aircraft appeared to be coming in low from the north for a landing on the north and south runway at the west edge of the landing field. It then seemed to climb slightly before nosing over and diving into the ground from a height of a few hundred feet. The plane seemed to explode and burst into flames immediately. It crashed into the ground just to the west of the paved runway and at the northwest corner of the field. All the men in the machine were members of No. 124 Communication Squadron, RCAF, from Rockcliffe, Ont. Airport. According to airmen, the fact that the stabilizer lock had not been removed from the aircraft would not make it difficult for the pilot to take off, but it would seriously hamper the handling of the plane when an attempt might be made to gain altitude in a case of over-shooting or under-shooting an attempted landing. A stabilizer lock is placed in the tail assembly of aircraft when it is parked outside on a field. Purpose of the lock is to prevent stabilizers and rudder from being damaged by wind. Such locks are removed before an aircraft is flown. The crash occurred a few minutes after ten o'clock Sunday morning and the field was immediately closed by RCAF officials to everyone excepting ambulances, fire trucks, doctors and air officials. A guard was placed on the charred remains of the aircraft and no unauthorized person was allowed inside the boundaries of the airport. Several of those killed in the accident were known locally. One was Pilot Officer Harry H. Cowan, DFC, who was a son of Capt. A. B. Cowan of Ottawa and a brother of Rev. J. E. B. Cowan of Estevan, pastor of the local Free Methodist Church. Lieut.-Colonel Eric Cowan, Ottawa, is another brother and Brigadier G. A. Cowan of the Salvation Army, Africa, is an uncle. Editorials Air Tragedy Profound regret will be felt by every Canadian over the tragic loss of 21 young airmen in Sunday's crash of an R.C.A.F. Dakota aircraft at Estevan. It was the worst tragedy of its kind to happen in Western Canada and the second most serious flying accident to occur in the Dominion's history. During the war years when thousands of the Commonwealth's youth were taking their flying training in Canada, a number of these fatal crashes occurred from time to time and, tragic enough as they were, the fatalism bred of war accepted them regretfully as the grim harvest of wartime. The accident at Estevan is felt the more keenly because it happened in peacetime. The death of these 21 R.C.A.F. fliers is even more tragically underscored by the fact that the crash occurred on Sunday, the day the people of Britain were observing the historic turning point in the Battle of Britain and paying tribute to the gallant members of the British and Dominion air forces who gave their lives in the skies of England to down in a single day 185 German aircraft and forever end Hitler's dream of world conquest. Unofficial observers of the accident have given it as their opinion that the aircraft undershot the landing field and crashed after an attempt to regain altitude. This may be correct, and it may not. A court of inquiry is to be held by the Royal Canadian Air Force to determine the cause of the accident and it is important that the inquiry should leave no stone unturned to find out what actually happened. Whatever the cause, whether by mechanical or human error, it should, if at all possible, be eliminated as a factor that might lead to a repetition of the Estevan tragedy. Canada cannot afford to lose her young citizens in accidents of this type. Regina Leader Post. Roy Flower, an Estevan farmer whose farm is located adjacent to the western boundary of Estevan airport, was one of the eyewitnesses to the aircraft accident at the airport on Sunday. Mr. Flower was doing his customary chores at the farm and paused for a moment to watch the Dakota come in for a landing. I saw the plane come in from the north. It seemed to be circling around the field. It was flying low with its wheels down. Then it seemed to rise quickly for a short distance and the engines stopped, Mr. Flower said. It tipped over the tail went up and then the plane came straight down and crashed. There was a loud explosion and

the plane burst into flames as soon as it hit the ground, Mr. Flower said. Noticing that the flames were spreading, Mr. Flower said he took his tractor and started to plough a fire-guard along the road allowance on the west side of the airport. His home was about 500 yards from the point where the Dakota crashed. Mr. Flower did not go onto the airport ground as other help had arrived at the plane at once. Gordon Dryden, 13, working on a farm near by the airport said he watched the plane pass over and disappear behind the airport buildings. The plane appeared to be flying normally, the thought. He said he heard a loud crash and saw a huge column of dense black smoke rising. Gordon Dryden, 13, working on a farm near by the airport said he watched the plane pass over and disappear behind the airport buildings. The plane appeared to be flying normally, the thought. He said he heard a loud crash and saw a huge column of dense black smoke rising. Another eyewitness who asked that his name be withheld said he watched the aircraft come in to the field at a height of about 200 feet. He said the plane appeared to undershoot the attempted landing and then, lifting its undercarriage, seemed to climb sharply for a short distance. Then, he said, the engines seemed to stall and the plane hung in the air for an instant before it plunged to the ground and exploded.

Names released of Crash Victims Identification of all 21 R.C.A.F. personnel killed in the crash of a Dakota transport at Estevan, was completed Monday night when air force headquarters issued the names of the last four members of the crew. Five Saskatchewan men were killed in the crash. The Estevan Mercury, Thursday, Oct. 3, 1946

The names with addresses of next of kin, follow:

F/L James Stewart Lees, DFC.: Mrs J. S. Lees (wife), & Thomas Lees (father) Abbotsford, B.C.,
F/L Edward Chester Stewart, DFC., D.F.M.; Frank B. Stewart (father) Camrose, Alta.,
F/O Ned Jordan, DFC.; Edward Jordan (father), 238 Talbot Ave., Winnipeg.,
F/O William Albert Perry; Mrs W. A. Perry (wife) Belleville, Ont.,
F/O Robert James McIntyre; Mr Peter McIntyre (father), Carman, Man.,
LAC Vitantos Luke Kirko; Miss Mary Kirko (sister), Toronto.,
F/O Raymond Avard Brandser; Mr H. S. Bransor (father), Glen Bain, Sask.,
F/O Max Thomas; Mrs E. Thomas (mother) 652 Saskatchewan Crescent E., Saskatoon , Sk.,
F/L Leonard Edgar Turtle, N. Battleford, Mrs Zola Maxine Turtle (wife) 26 Hazel Ave., Ottawa.,
F/O Stephen Pond, Mrs. Constance Marie Pond, Montreal.,
F/L Stanely Wright Proctor, Mrs Helen Isabelle Proctor (wife), Toronto.,
F/L Louis Eric John Murphy; Mrs L. E. J. Murphy (wife) Ottawa.,
F/L Morris Crosby Cuthbert; Mrs B. W. Cuthbert (wife), Ottawa.,
F/L James Pyle Jesse, DFC., Mrs Marjorie Eleanor Jesse (wife).,
F/O H. H. Cowan, DFC., of Ottawa.,
F/L Clifford Sommerville Coppin; Mrs C.S. Coppin (wife), Kamsack, Sask.,
F/L Lawrence Victor Kirsch; Mrs L. V. Kirsch (wife), 174 Tupper Avenue, Yorkton, Sask.,
F/L William Jacob Louis Weicker, DFC+ bar; Mr/Mrs William Weicker (parents) N. Kitchener, ON
F/L Robert Cowan McRoberts, DFC, Mrs R. McRoberts (wife) 288 Yale Avenue, Winnipeg.,
F/L Joseph Alphonse Camille Bouchard, DFC.; Mrs A. A. C. Bouchard (wife), Longeuil, Que.,
F/L William Murdock Jackson; Mrs. W. M. Jackson (wife) Lansing, Ont.,

Mass funeral services with full military honours were held in the drill hall at Estevan airport Wednesday afternoon for the 20 of 21 RCAF personnel who met their deaths in the crash of

their Dakota transport plane at the airport Sunday morning just as other parts of the world were holding thanksgiving services in commemorating victory in the Battle of Britain. These airmen, many of whom wore decorations for valour, were killed in the line of duty just as the others who had given their lives in the defence of Britain. All Canada felt the loss in this second greatest air tragedy in Canadian aviation history, and Estevan, in particular, showed its feeling of sorrow by turning out in mass to mourn with those relatives who were able to be present. A special train from Winnipeg brought 150 members of the RCAF funeral party and high ranking officers including Air Vice Marshal K. M. Guthrie, Officer Commanding No. 2 Western Air Command, Winnipeg; Wing Commander C. C. Underhill, Officer Commanding No. 435 Transport Office; Squadron Leaders F. W. Kirkaldy, P. Janz and A. J. Leveque, in addition to Lt.-Col. R. C. Clark, acting District Officer Commanding MD 12, Regina, and Inspector Nichols of the RCMP, Weyburn, as well as other officials. Requiem high mass was said by Monsignor Hughes and SL A. J. Leveque in St. John the Baptist Church in the morning, followed by the mass funeral service at the airport and later the funeral parade when full military honours were accorded. Twenty flag-draped caskets rested on seven Air Force trucks in the drill hall where the services were conducted and many floral tributes were placed at intervals in the solemn setting. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. So read Rev. Frank H. Morgan, B.A., of St. Paul's United Church, Estevan. Funeral prayers and benediction given by S.L. Janz followed the usual ritual of the Lutheran Church. SL Leveque began the Roman Catholic part of the service with the address to the dead, followed by the committal service and benediction. Nearer, My God, to Thee, was played by the RCAF band as the funeral parade formed outside the drill hall. The funeral party boarded buses for an assembly point in Estevan and the cortege of cars behind stretched for a distance of nearly four miles. Each of the seven trucks carrying the caskets was escorted by a separate escort party of Air Force officers. Decoration awards won by the dead airmen were carried on a purple cushion by a fellow officer. The band, muffled drums, played The Dead March of Saul as the procession moved by slow march from the edge of town through the streets to the railway station. Crowds lined the streets for blocks and all places of business in Estevan were closed. Flags were at half-mast. The solemn tolling of the bell of nearby St. Giles Anglican Memorial Church brought an even more solemn note to the tragic scene. Led by their teachers, public school children were assembled at various points. Members of Estevan and Bienfait Legion and Legionnaires from nearby American towns were in the procession. The procession halted at the station where the firing party, under WO2 Les Halliwell, fired three volleys, interspersed by strains of Abide with Me played by the band. Trumpets, with a background played by the entire band, sounded Last Post and Reveille. The caskets were then placed on the special train to be taken to homes of the men for burial. The body of P O H. H. Cowan, DFC, wartime bomber pilot of City of Hamilton squadron, had been sent by plane previously to Ottawa for burial. His mother is seriously ill. Individual floral tributes were also placed on the train, but a number of these from Air Force headquarters and other groups were placed on the cenotaph at Estevan. Tribute was paid to the Town of Estevan and its mayor and citizens for the splendid cooperation given to Air Force officials and to the forty or more relatives who were able to attend the services. Others specially mentioned were Rev. Frank Morgan and Adutant Stan Mattison who took charge of the billeting and transportation arrangements, and McNeil and Lee who were in charge of funeral

arrangements. Also thanked for their work were the many others who worked unceasingly from the time the first word of the tragedy was known.



	<p>My Genealogy and History Page of Estevan Saskatchewan Canada</p> <p>Dakota Airline Crash Sept 15, 1946</p>	
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Listed as one of Canada's Largest Disasters

2nd worst in Canadian Aviation History at the time

The Dakota plane that crashed at Estevan Airport,
was originally a US Air Force plane
A Douglas C-47A-DK Skytrain
SN#92713 (c/n 12544)
transferred to the RCAF
as Dakota III #962, (12544).

The plane crashed and burned at 10:20 a.m. (CDT)
Sept 15, 1946, Killing 20 RCAF Pilots,
plus one ground crew man who was on board.
It crashed near a ravine
at the west end of one of the runways,
in the NW part of the Landing field,
a place that had become known by local residents
as "Death Valley",
because of a number of R.C.A.F. accidents
which took place there during the war.

The Estevan airfield was formerly No. 38 Service Flying Training school,
and then became the headquarters of No. 4 Equipment Holding Unit.
It was the scene of several crashes during the war.

The DC3 started in production in 1935.
This plane was only built in 1944
seating capacity 34
2 Piston Engines
also known as a DC3
Registration: 962
Msn / c/n: 12544

Some records say Sept 6,
others 15th, others 16th
One record says a Dakota MKIII.
Some records say 20 lives lost, some 21, some 22.
the real date, Sunday, September 15, 1946.

It left Minot ND at 9:30am flying to Estevan
when it crashed and burned.

The victims were all members of No. 124
Communications Squadron, RCAF, from Rockcliffe, Ontario
At the time of the accident they were being sent to Estevan
to fly Cornell trainers out of Estevan.
These planes were being returned to Hector Airport, Fargo ND.

Their names were:

F.O. Henry (Harry) Hugh Cowan

b- ca 1915, d- Age 31

Svc Number- J85095

Buried in Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa.

Sec. 27. Lot G. Grave 14

lived in Ottawa, ON

Distinguished Flying Cross

Father- Capt. Alexander Benson Cowan,

Mother- Frances Elinor Cowan, of Ottawa ON

Brother- Rev. J. E. B. Cowan of Estevan,

**(Pastor of the Estevan Free Methodist Church).
Brother- Lieut.-Colonel Eric Cowan, Ottawa,
Uncle- Brigadier G. A. Cowan of the Salvation Army,
Africa**

**Harry Cowan's body was flown back home,
all those below were sent home via a Special train.**



Flt. Lt. James Stewart Lees

b- ca 1914, d- Age 32

Svc Number- J20727



Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross in 1943

Posted overseas, August 1942

**Buried in Royal Canadian Legion Cemetery,
Little Mountain, BC**

**Son of Thomas and Susan Lees, Abbotsford, B.C.
Husband of Evelyn Gladys Lees, Abbotsford, B.C.**

Flt. Lt. Edward Chester Stewart

b- ca 1918, d- Age 28

Svc Number- J17000



**Distinguished Flying Cross,
The Distinguished Flying Medal,
was presented by the King of England, April 1943**

Went overseas in Nov 1941

Completed 2 tours of duty over enemy territory.

48 sorties without a scratch.

June 21, 1945 returned to Canada

**Buried in Plot 6 Row 1,
Holden Cemetery,
Holden, Alberta, Canada**

**Son of Albert T. Stewart and Lottie M Stewart,
Brother of Frank Brisbin Stewart of Camrose AB,
the BA Oil Agent in Camrose at the time of the
accident.**



F.O. Ned Jordan

b- Dec 1, 1919, d- Age 27

Svc Number- J18919

(Headstone says Flt. Lt.)

Distinguished Flying Cross, summer 1945

Buried in Elmwood Cemetery,
88 Hespeler Ave, Winnipeg, MB.

Father- Edward Marsh Jordan,
who lived at 238 Talbot Ave., Winnipeg, MB.

Mother- Annie Jordan

Brother of Edward M. Jordan of Winnipeg, MB

F.O. William Albert Perry

b- ca 1918, d- Age 28

Svc Number- J51726

Buried in St. James Cemetery, Kemptville ON

Wife- Bernice M. Perry, Belleville, Ont.

Nephew of Mrs. R. J. Torgensen, 40 Kingston Row,
and Grandson of Mrs. W. P. Perry, 37 Kingston Row

Father- Melville Perry

Mother- Olga Perry, of Hawarden, SK

F.O. Robert James McIntyre

b- ca 1923, d- Age 23

Svc Number- J19103

Buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Carman MB

and baffled the police for a while.

FO. Stephen Pond

b- ca 1912, d- Age 34

Svc Number- J29113

Buried in Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal QC

Wife- Mrs. Constance Marie Pond, Montreal.

Son of John and Annie Pond, of Montreal

The Oldest of all the men on board

Flt. Lt. Joseph Alphonse Camille Bouchard

b- ca 1918, Ste.Anne de la Pocatiere, Quebec

d- Age 28

Svc Number- J26027

Distinguished Flying Cross

Buried in Notre Dame Roman Catholic Cemetery,

Ottawa ON

Wife- Ruth Bouchard, Longueil, Que.

Son of Georges and Marie C. Bouchard, of Ottawa,

Ontario

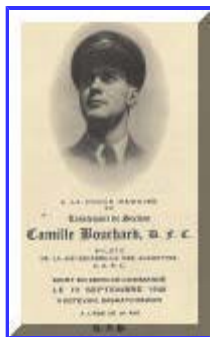


Photo courtesy Pierre Lagace Blog, link below

Flt. Lt. William Murdock Jackson

b- ca 1922, in Winnipeg MB, d- Age 24

Svc Number- J15733

Buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto ON.

Wife- Kitty Marie Jackson, Lansing, Ont.

Father- George Richmond Jackson

Mother- Isobel Jackson, of Winnipeg, MB

Flt. Lt. Charles Stanley Wright Proctor

b- 1917, in ON, d- Age 29

Svc Number- J6150

Wife- Mrs. Helen Isabelle Proctor, Toronto.

248 Heath Street West, Toronto

Buried in Park Lawn Cemetery, Toronto, ON

awarded Distinguished Flying Cross, Feb 2, 1943

Served overseas, and was commended for his

Navigator Bomb aiming ability, on enemy targets.
Living in Edmonton AB with his parents in 1921.
He had 3 brothers and a sister in 1921.
Father- Charles Russell Weller Proctor
b- Mar 16, 1871 in Brighton, Northumberland Co. ON
d- 1930
Bank Manager in Edmonton in 1921
Mother- Mona Louise Wright
b- 1884 in Quebec
d- 1974
Grandfather- John Edward Proctor
b- Mar 29, 1824
d- 1911

Flt. Lt. Morris (Maurice) Crosby Cuthbert

b- ca 1918, in BC, d- Age 28
Svc Number- J16223
buried Pinecrest Cemetery, Ottawa, ON
Plot South half 597. Sec. D. Grave 1.
Wife- Mary Beryl W. Cuthbert, Ottawa, ON.
2 Memorials 1947 says his name was Maurice C.
Cuthbert
one signed Mother and Dad Whiting
other his wife Beryl.
Father- John Cuthbert, b- ON, age 47 in 1921
worked in Grocery store in 1921
Mother- Edith Eliza Cuthbert, nee Husband
of Vancouver BC, b- ON, age 41 in 1921
family living in Vancouver BC in 1921
he had 3 brothers and 2 sisters in 1921

Flt. Lt. Clifford Somerville Coppin*

b- June 22, 1923 in Kamsack, SK, d- Age 23
Svc Number- J85255
Buried in Riverview Cemetery, Kamsack, SK.
Plot 1. Block 6. Grave 7
Wife- Amelia E. Andrews, Kamsack, SK
b: July 13, 1922 in South Ockendon, Essex
Father- George Sommerville Coppin
Mother- Elizabeth Morden
Coppin Lake in NW SK named after him

Flt. Lt. Lawrence Victor Kirsch

b- ca 1918, d- Age 28
Svc Number- J11048
Distinguished Flying Cross
Home- Yorkton SK



Buried in Yorkton Cemetery, Yorkton, SK.
Block 11. Lot 41. Grave A.
Wife- Beryl Kirsch, 174 Tupper Avenue, Yorkton, SK.
Father- Henry Kirsch of Yorkton SK
Kirsch Lake in Northern SK named after him.

Flt. Lt. Louis (Lew) Eric John Murphy

b- ca 1923, d- Age 23
Svc Number- J20191
Born in 1923 in Moberly, Cheshire, England
October 6, 1944 awarded the Distinguished Flying
Cross (DFC)
- No.427 Squadron
Wife- Mrs. L. E. J. Murphy, Ottawa.
Discrepancy- one records says
husband of Delys D Murphy of Charlottetown PEI,
Son of Squadron leader Ernest Eric Murphy and
Edith Gladys V. Murphy of Britannia Heights,
Buried in Pinecrest Cemetery,
Plot 598 Sec D Grave 1, Ottawa ON.
Memorial notice 1947, signed Patricia, Bridget, and
Jacqueline
another signed his Mom and Dad, and brothers
Eric and Kenneth
Aug 1944 he piloted an aircraft of a bomber force
detailed to attack Forte De Nieppe
His airplane sustained severe damage,
but he still flew it back to base.
He had completed many sorties by this time.



Flt. Lt. James Pyle Jessee

b- Feb 2, 1920, in Spring City, Russell Co., Va. USA
d- Age 26
Svc Number- J26908
- Distinguished Flying Cross - No.184 Squadron
Buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Burnaby BC
Wife- Mrs. Marjorie Eleanor Jessee, nee Southerland,

of Vancouver BC
married ca 1945, had a daughter Carolyn Lee Jessee
James was an American from Lebanon Va, USA
joined RCAF in 1941,
Father- Conn Trigg Jessee
b- Mar 25, 1885 in, Russell Co., Va.
d- Aug 2, 1934 in, Russell Co., Va.
Mother- Margaret Augusta (Gussie) Pyle Jessee,
both of Lebanon, Virginia, USA
James was fourth of 10 children.
6 brothers, 4 daughters.
one of 5 brothers who served in WWII.
a 6th brother was not old enough,
and served later in Germany.
Grandfather- John Henry Jessee

**Info and pictures above and below
from his nephew Jim Jones, May 29, 2013
(son of Dorothy Jessee, sister of James Pyle Jessee)**

James was quite a daredevil, and had joined the U.S. Army Air Corps because he believed that war with Germany was imminent and wanted to get ready. James had completed his second year at Milligan College in Johnson City, Tennessee when he joined the Army. He received his pilot training in 1940 at Chanute Field, Champaign, Illinois as a member of the Fourth School Squadron (Air Corps), where he was considered an outstanding pilot. Apparently some of the pilots would take the planes and dogfight at night, James being one of them. Once caught, the offenders were offered the choice of taking their entire training course again or leaving the service. Several chose to leave because they considered themselves fully trained and capable pilots and chafed at the thought of repeating their entire course of training. James and several of his friends joined the R.C.A.F. because they could begin flying immediately; the R.C.A.F. was happy to get trained pilots.



James Pyle Jessee



James and Marjorie in Halifax

During WW II, James and his best friend from the R.C.A.F. were assigned to No. 184 Squadron RAF,

based originally at RAF Colergne in England but which moved to many other RAF airfields and then to Normandy, the Netherlands, and finally Germany itself. The 184 Squadron claims to be the first based on German soil (21 March 1945). The only plane we are certain James flew was the Hawker Typhoon. James flew 150 missions over Germany, for which he received the DFC. He told the family he didn't feel right about the fact that of all his close compadres, he was the only one to come back alive from the war. James got out of service, went to work for the father of his best friend (who did not come back) at a trucking company in Vancouver. But his love was flying, and that is what he wanted to do, so he re-joined the R.C.A.F. After the Estevan crash, James' brother Harold, himself a WW II hero with a number of bomber missions over Germany, met James' wife and daughter, Marjorie and Carolyn, in Canada and drove cross-country to Vancouver, where another service was held for James prior to his burial in Burnaby BC. In 1949, Marjorie came from Vancouver, and some of James' family -- his mother Gussie, sister Dorothy, and brother Harold -- traveled from Lebanon, Virginia to Ottawa to attend the ceremony at Government House in Ottawa where James posthumously received the DFC from Viscount Alexander, Governor General of Canada.

Flt. Lt. William (Bill) Jacob Louis Weicker

b- ca 1916, d- Age 30

Svc Number- J15301

D.F.C. and bar,

Family Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross

- No.405 Squadron

**Buried in St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery, Kitchener,
ON**

Father- William Weicker

Mother- Emma E. Weicker,

North Kitchener, ON.



F.O. Robert (Sandy) Cowan McRoberts,

b- ca 1918, d- Age 28
Svc Number- J12537

-Family Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross
- No.421 Squadron

Wife- Mrs. Rose Anne McRoberts
288 Yale Avenue, Winnipeg, and Sudbury ON.
Son of Henry Hunter McRoberts
and Jessie Park McRoberts of Calgary;
Buried in Burnsland Cemetery.
Lot 105. Block 11. Sec. G., Calgary AB.

Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Vitantos Luke Kirko

b- ca 1926, d- Age 20
Svc Number- R276396
Buried in Mount Hope Cemetery,
Range 45 Sec18 Grave 121, Toronto ON.
Sister- Miss Mary Kirko, Toronto.
Son of Kaiton and Victoria Kirko of Toronto

*Note- Clifford Somerville Coppin's name
was corrected by his daughter
Valerie Palmer Sept 12, 2006

F.O.= Flight Officer
Flt. Lt. = Flight Lieutenant

The official RCAF statement quoted in the Mercury stated
the "aircraft was seen to approach the airport
normally with its wheels lowered."

"For some reason the pilot decided not to land
on his first approach and opened up the engines to go around again.
During this manoeuvre the pilot apparently lost control
and the aircraft crashed.

A technical examination of the wreckage

has shown that the control lock on the starboard elevator was in position and had not been removed before the flight commenced."

Ground Crew error, but should have been seen by the Pilot, on his pre flight inspection.

I have read somewhere one assumption says the pilot was aware that he had a problem, and asked the men in the plane to get into the rear of the plane for landing, so he could get the nose up, but when something happened on his landing, and he gave it full throttle, the plane couldn't recover from the weight imbalance and crashed.

If they would have stayed sitting they might have survived. But who really knows if this is true.



The Crash Site

Photo courtesy Ingrid Beahm's collection

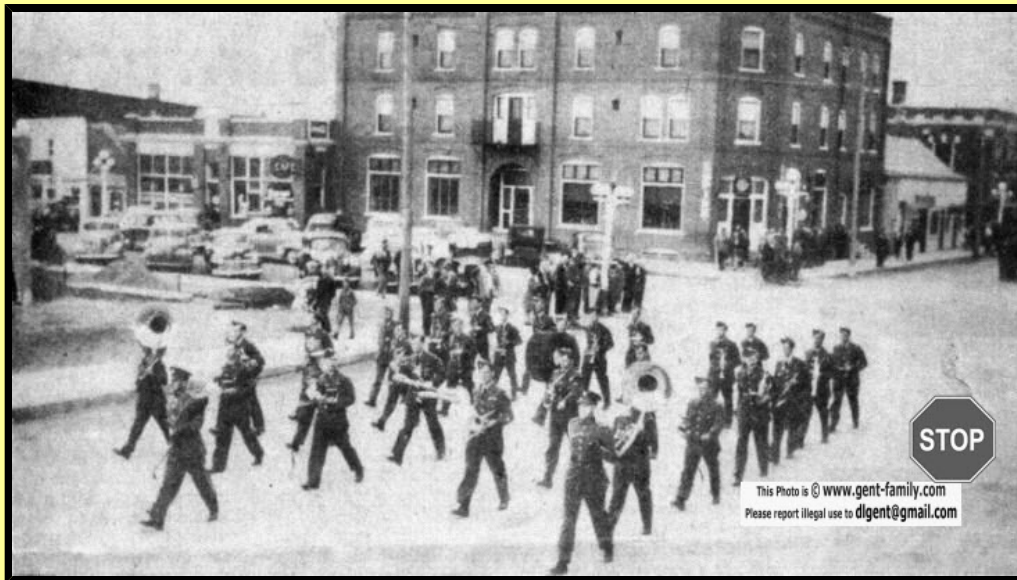
Pictures of the Funeral Procession

The date of the funeral was Wednesday afternoon, Sept 18, 1946, in a drill hall at the Estevan airport.

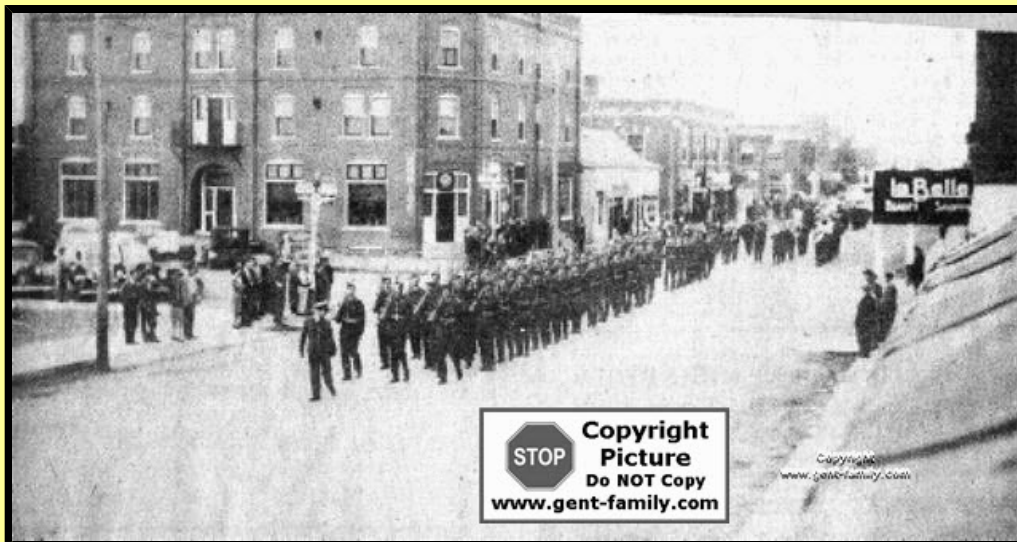
McNeil and J. Lee who were in charge of funeral arrangements



**Caskets entering town, Highway 47 Hill,
South end of the City
20 Caskets on 7 Air Force Trucks**



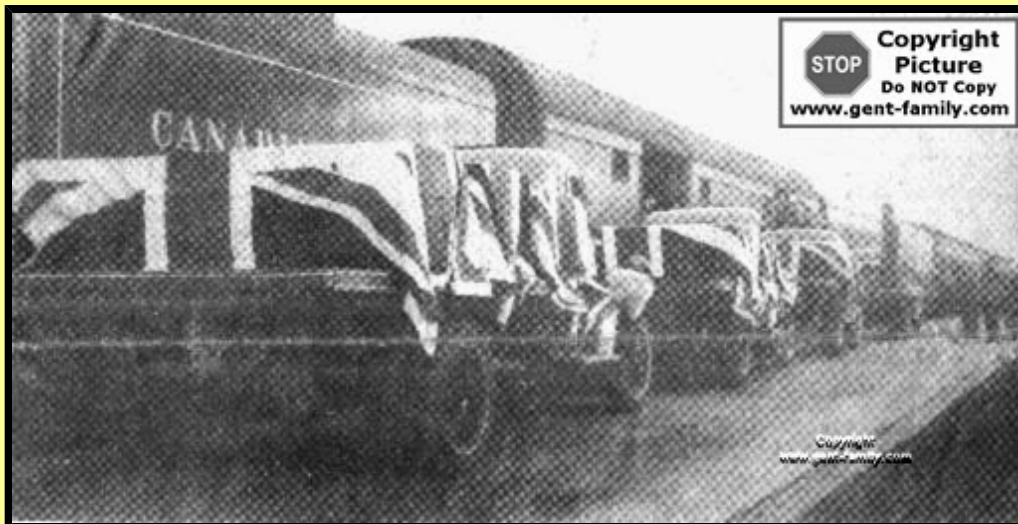
**Military Band leads the Funeral Procession,
on 12th Ave**



**Military Guard for the funeral Procession,
on 12th Ave**



Military Guard corner 4th St and 12th Ave



**Caskets being loaded onto the train,
Sept 18,1946**

**These pictures were in my Mom's scrapbook
and no doubt from the Estevan Mercury at the time.
I thank to photographer and the source, whoever it may be.**

Brief Plane History

**A large order was placed in 1940 for the military DC-3,
which was designated C-47 and became known as "Skytrain,"
a name it would soon be asked to live up to.
more than 10,000 were built under various names and designations,
including SKYTRAIN, C-53, C-117
and DAKOTA (British designation), .
These aircraft played a major role and served
in every theatre of operations during the Second World War.
Thousands continued to serve in both military**

and civilian roles after the war.

124 Communications Squadron

Rockcliffe, Ontario

After going through several name changes,
(RCAF Unit Ottawa, RCAF Technical Depot Stores),
the station was re-named Royal Canadian Air Force Station Ottawa in
1936.

This name change would be short lived as the station
was again re-named RCAF Station Rockcliffe in 1940.

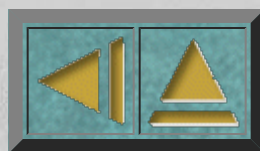
Some of the station's other units at this time
consisted of No. 7 General Purpose Squadron, Air Transport Command,
No. 124 Communications Squadron and the newly opened RCAF Hospital

Above the Piano bar at
the Billy Bishop Legion,
1407 Laburnum Street, Vancouver, British Columbia,
is a propeller from a Cornell Trainer from Estevan, Saskatchewan

Ext Links
not my sites

Pierre Lagace Blog, re Bouchard

<http://425alouette.wordpress.com/2014/03/16/camille-bouchard-dfc/>



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