

In Memory of Sergeant Russell George James

1923 - 1943

(419 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force)

Age: 20

Parents: W.T. James & Florence Belford

Conflict: World War II

Country Enlisted In: Canada

Country of Death: Germany

Relation: Maternal 2nd Cousin 1X Removed



Russell George James was born in 1923 in Hyndford, Ontario. Before the war, he worked as a weaver and spinner at the Collie Woollen Mills in Appleton, and was well known locally as an exhibitor of prize cattle, having won several championships in the Calf Club division at the Ottawa Exhibition. Quiet by nature, he was remembered as determined to do his part in bringing the war to a successful conclusion.

He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force at Ottawa on 22 September 1942, and after training was posted to No. 419 Squadron, an RCAF heavy bomber squadron operating as part of Bomber Command. In the weeks before his death, he had already taken part in three operational attacks, including two of the recent heavy raids on Berlin, reflecting the intensity and pace of operations for young aircrew in 1943.

On the night of 5–6 September 1943, Sergeant James was a member of the crew of Handley Page Halifax JD210, which took off on an operational attack against Mannheim. The aircraft failed to return from the mission and was initially reported missing on active service.

During the night, the four-engined bomber crashed on the east bank of the River Altrhein, approximately three kilometres west of Huttenheim, Germany. On 6 September 1943, six bodies were recovered from the wreckage, with the seventh found on the opposite bank of the river. All seven crew members were identified.

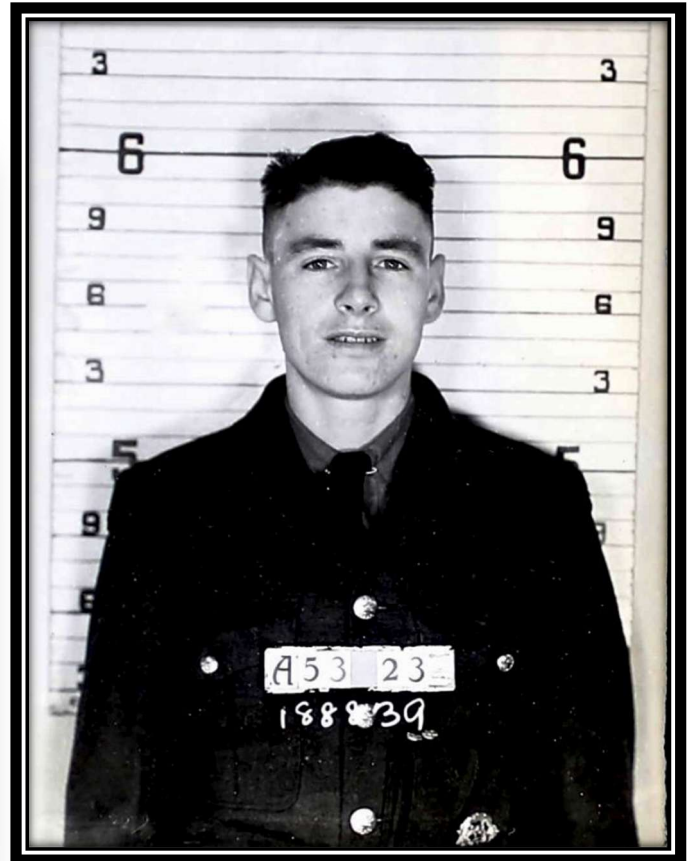
*Sergeant
Royal Canadian Air Force*



They were buried on 7 September 1943 in a large communal grave alongside the north wall of Huttenheim Cemetery. After the war, the crew were reinterred at the British Military Cemetery at Bad Tölz (Durnbach), where they now rest together.

Sergeant Russell George James is buried at the Durnbach War Cemetery, where many Commonwealth airmen who fell over Germany are laid to rest. He was twenty years old.

Sergeant James did not return. He is remembered as a young Canadian airman whose service took him from rural Ontario to the night skies over Germany, and whose life ended in the course of duty during one of the war's most demanding air campaigns.



*Durnbach War Cemetery
Tegernsee, Bavaria, Germany*

