

In Memory of Flight Sergeant Murton Lawrence McClay

1920 - 1943

(102 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force)

Age: 22

Parents: Thomas McClay & Bella Hall

Conflict: World War II

Country Enlisted In: Canada

Country of Death: Germany

Relation: Maternal 4th Cousin 2X Removed



Murton Lawrence McClay was born in 1920 in Belmont, Manitoba, where he was raised and educated. Before the war, he worked as a driver for Webster Brothers Trucking, contributing to the local economy and community life in rural Manitoba.

He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force on 1 December 1941 in Winnipeg, answering the call at a time when aircrew losses were already mounting and the strategic bombing campaign over Europe was intensifying. After training, he was posted overseas and became an air gunner, one of the most exposed and dangerous roles aboard a heavy bomber.

Flight Sergeant McClay served with No. 102 Squadron, operating Handley Page Halifax bombers as part of RAF Bomber Command. His squadron took part in night operations against heavily defended targets deep inside Germany.

On the night of 31 August 1943, Halifax II JN 909 took off from RAF Pocklington on an operational attack against Berlin, during what became the largest RAF raid on the German capital to date, involving more than 700 bombers. The raid encountered intense enemy resistance.

During the mission, Halifax JN 909 was shot down near Saerbeck, Germany. Of the seven-man crew, four were killed, two were taken prisoner of war, and one reached neutral territory.

Flight Sergeant McClay was killed in action.

*Flight Sergeant
Royal Canadian Air Force*



He was initially buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Saerbeck, later exhumed and reinterred at the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Kleve, Germany, where he now rests among thousands of Commonwealth airmen who fell over occupied Europe.

Flight Sergeant Murton Lawrence McClay was twenty-two years old. He did not return to Manitoba, but his name and service endure—representing the young aircrew who flew into the night skies over Germany, knowing the odds, and went regardless.



*Reichswald Forest War Cemetery
Kleve, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany*

