The Story Behind the Story

Squadron Leader BN Jost, the Crew of JD147, 419 Squadron - RCAF

A Monograph on the history of the Crew of JD147, 419 Squadron – RCAF

(in context of its time)

Prepared for the Guysborough Historical Society, Guysborough Nova Scotia

Prepared by Major (Ret'd) Gerry Madigan, CD, Canadian Armed Forces

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10 October 2025

Abstract

This monograph documents the acts of courage, accounts of survival, and the dedication exhibited by Squadron Leader B.N. Jost (RCAF) and his crew aboard Halifax MKII bomber (JD147) of 419 Squadron, which was lost on the night of 24/25 June 1943.

On the night of 24-25 June 1943, the crew of JD 147 from 419 Squadron (RCAF), part of the newly reorganized Canadianization Squadrons within 6 Group RCAF, participated in an operation targeting Wuppertal;- Elberfeld. Bomber Command assembled six hundred and thirty aircraft from various airfields in England for this raid. 419 Squadron contributed sixteen planes and was supplemented by two aircraft from the 428th Squadron.

Jost's crew on this night consisted of 3 Canadians including himself, 3 British, and 1 New Zealander:

1. Navigator Sgt. B Pope (RAF)
2. Bomb/Aimer F/S A.W.A. Bruce (RNZAF)
3. WAG F/O R.O.E. Goodwin (RCAF)
4. F/E Sgt. J.B. Johnson (RCAF)
5. A/G Sgt. L Barker (RAF)
6. A/G Sgt. R.C. Austen (RAF)
7. Sqn L B.N. Jost (RCAF)

Tragically, JD 147 was brought down during this raid, resulting in the loss of Squadron Leader Jost, Flight Engineer Johnson, and Wireless Air Gunner F/O Goodwin—all members of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The other four crew members—Navigator Sgt. B Pope (RAF), Bomb Aimer F/S A.W.A. Bruce (RNZAF), Air Gunner Sgt. L Barker (RAF), and Air Gunner Sgt. R.C. Austen (RAF)—survived the crash.

The deaths of three Canadians are particularly notable, especially those of Sqn L Jost and Sgt Johnson. Both men demonstrated exceptional bravery as they tried to save their aircraft and crew against impossible odds, taking careful steps to prevent harm to civilians. Eyewitness accounts from surviving crew and local residents highlight their dedication, suggesting they were deserving of recognition such as the Victoria Cross—especially Sgt Johnson, who chose to remain with Jost to support him until the very end. F/O Goodwin's story is also a sobering example of many Canadians who died alone in distant battlefields.

Although he survived the initial crash, Goodwin lay injured in a farmer's field, his cries for help unanswered.

This story recounts their experiences in service, with particular emphasis on Jost’s journey through the system—a path shared by many, shaped by training and policies that affected countless individuals, both in life and in loss.

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Author's note:

Permission to use material from Dennis Bjorn Stevens's story originally published in 1997, "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew – 419 Moose Squadron on 25 June 1943" granted 25 October 2025 with proviso that the rights to all Stevens citations belong to the original owner – used with permission.

An Acknowledgment by Dennis Bjorn Stevens - Research Done by Mr. Theo Van der Steen

Email: 25 October 2025

Re: Dennis Bjorn Stevens's story originally published in 1997, "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew – 419 Moose Squadron on 25 June 1943"

Thanks for getting back to me. Sorry it has taken a few hours for me to go over your research. The document is very well done and I am only to happy to help out where I can. FYI, I picked up a lot of the information that I provided for Archives from the excellent research that was done by Mr. Theo Van der Steen. Theo was a young boy at 7 years old back 24/25 June 1943 when all hell was breaking loose overhead and Halifax JDV 147 C was hit and in flames over the small village he was living. It was in about 1982 that he completed his very thorough research and put together the document that I have cherished over the years. When I was at work, I always kept a binder of that last flight. I was meeting with Supt. Laine Schapp from the Rotterdam Police who asked if he could read the documentary. After he went back to the Netherlands, he went to Roermond and visited with the Mayor of Roermond a Mr. J.H.J. Daniel's. It was through that visit that I was presented with a copy of the crash report of the Halifax.

As you are aware, I have made many attempts to get special recognition for Squadron Leader Jost and my uncle Barney Johnson to no avail. Those attempts were very frustrating for me and truly showed the attitude of the Government at the time.

I believe a lot more of the credit for the research done should have gone to Mr. van der Steen. Otherwise, your document is very well done.

Thanks again for all the work you have done and still working on. If you need further clarification or help, please give me a shout.

Barney Stevens

Setting a new course for another project

Over the course of the past year, I have been involved in a project with the Guysborough Historical Society. I was approached by Mark Haynes, a member of the Society, with a view to re-publishing an e-book. Mark wished to republish this work in hard copy for their Society's use. Given the Society's objectives to promote local history, I readily and eagerly agreed. This has also led me to a collateral project to investigate the life and times of a local airman who fought and was lost during the Second World War, Squadron Leader Burton Norris Jost.

That investigation began with a presentation to the Guysborough Historical Society, Sunday August 24th , 2025. My original book, "War on the Homefront – The Canso Defence Area" was of local interest depicting what happened in the largely rural areas of Nova Scotia during the Second World War, particularly Guysborough County. The book was subsequently retitled to "War on the Homefront: The Canso Defence Zone." I was asked if I would give a short talk at the book launch to discuss its origins, why I wrote it, and its context for Canada in "Total War."

The book along with my co-presenter, Mark Hayne's who also released two fine works, Fort St Louis à Chedabucto and Amazing True Stories of Guysborough County, co-authored with Jamie Grant, were met with great enthusiasm.

In the glow of this successful day Mary Armstrong, Curator of the museum, gave me and my wife Melodie a tour of the facility. In and amongst her archives was a story that was of interest to me given my military career. This story written by Dennis Bjorn Stevens was originally published in 1997 as "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew – 419 Moose Squadron on 25 June 1943." It was released on our Canadian Thanksgiving Day, 13 October 1997.

Mary expressed an interest in expanding this story and learning more of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C"'s pilot Squadron Leader Burton Norris Jost who had his roots in the town of Guysborough.

Steven authored this story in memory of his uncle Sergeant Julius Bjorn Johnson who sadly lost his life along with Jost the evening of 24-25 June 1943. It was much to my surprise that much of his content was devoted to the life and times of Squadron Leader Jost. It is a very complete work in detail and there is little that I can add to it but bits and pieces found here and there.

Many young Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders and British airmen lost their lives over the course of the war in the cause of freedom and ridding the world of a grave peril.

Their lives and times were greatly influenced by the policies and conditions under which they served in what came to be not just a war, but total war.

This tale attempts to juxtapose the eventual loss of Squadron Leader Jost, his crew, and his aircraft JD147 on the night of 24/25 June 1943 against the many influences that impinged on them in the context of "Total War." Total war was not simply the case of men against men, machine against machine, but it was also the story behind the politics of war that involved all of a nations might, materiel , and will in which the job was done. It is also the story of an enemy's will to resist that effort. This is their story behind the story.

What follows is my small contribution to the task – Remembrance.

Preface on "Total War"

The Second World War had a profound impact on the world and Canada. The war changed everything. It went far beyond military mobilization that required the coordination and control of industry, productivity, and economy affecting all Canadians.

Also, mobilization brought to our country a great movement of humanity. The many sons of the Commonwealth from Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain all came to Canada for air training on Canadian soil through the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

The major impact with it saw full employment soon across the land. It also brought the end of the Depression for Canada. It was also a great mixing of people whose values that ultimately bound all to a common goal. It was ironic too that the war brought prosperity, something not felt in a generation! But such prosperity also placed Canada and its Allies on a footing towards "Total War."[1]

"Total War" was a new, unanticipated, and unexpected paradigm in which the ambitions of many nation's politicians had not anticipated. The unexpected was the steady gravitation towards greater commitments and liabilities. The gravitation towards total war was a byproduct of our participation that occurred in Canada despite Mackenzie King's government's reluctance to "get involved." [2]

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[1] Wright, Gordon. 1968. *The Ideal of Total War 0 1939-1945*. Waveland Press Inc, Prospect Heights, Illinois, USA

[2] Pierre Berton, *The Great Depression - 1929-1939* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2001), , 499, and Canada, Minister of National Defence, ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS -THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA 1939 – 1945, C. P. STACEY, S.M., O.B.E., C.D., A.M., Ph.D., D,Litt., LL.D., F.R.S.C. ,Colonel (Retired), Canadian Army, Late Director Historical Section, General Staff, Professor of History, University of Toronto, The Queen's Printer for Canada Ottawa, 1970, 137-145

The greater story of the Second World War goes beyond the mobilization of military forces and requirements. What is often lost are the concomitant impacts on the world economy but more importantly its other impacts on a nation's industrial capacity and the balancing of resources therein. Its tentacles often led to deepening commitments in manpower, industrial, economic policies, and surprisingly, in social policies as well that affected the very social fabric of many nations.

The war footing caused a fundamental "paradigm shift" in all aspects that began Canada's transition to a modern economy and middle power in the 20th century. That didn't necessarily happen over night. But the war certainly set Canada on a significant path for change. [3] And this proved much the same for all allies and belligerents as well.

The world found that slowly and subliminally that they had moved to a deeper "Total War" footing as the war progressed. It was both a cancerous and serendipitous transformation of society based both on revolution and evolution. That transformation was identified by the changing state of politics, of societal norms, and in the mood of citizens and their psychology that transformed a nation's intellectual and cultural life. [4]

The Story of a Crew and Their Downfall

Dennis Bjorn Stevens's story originally published in 1997, "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew – 419 Moose Squadron on 25 June 1943" is a complete work that stands on its own. Stevens went into much detail about several crew members, their life history, enrolment, training, and operational duties.

Surprisingly to this observer, he accurately identified the crew of the night fighter that led to the demise of JD147, its approach, attack and the means of its destruction on the night of 24-25 June 1943. Why so? I have conducted similar searches and work with the assistance of my own library, internet, and google. It is an onerous task, fraught with pitfalls, frustration and disappointment even with modern tools. But to his credit, Stevens' successfully concluded his work on his own without modern aids.

But Stevens left me with a conundrum, with a work so complete, how do I add anything meaningful to it? I needed a new approach.

Like Stevens' I reached out to colleagues for their assistance and through the kind efforts of G Christian Larsen, **Pennfield Parish Military Historical Society**. Christian was able to

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[3] Brady, Alexander, and F.R. Scott. 1943. *Canada After The War – Studies in Political, Social, and Economic Policies for Post-War Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1945), 348pg

[4] Wright 1997. *The Ordeal of Total War ,* 234-267

obtain several service records for me starting with Sqn Leader Jost Service Records, 1 September 2025.

The service record is a short form of what is contained in the member's actual service file(s). It is written in service jargon and short hand and blocked into various sections:

1. Postings
2. Reclassification, Promotions, etc.
3. Medical History
4. Trade and Character
5. Course Test
6. Leave

A service record is usually only a single page that becomes a written synopsis of a serviceman's history. Its interpretation requires a knowledge of military abbreviations and short hand to understand its content. Fortunately, that was my military background and the acronyms have remained largely unchanged since the Boer War!

So piece by piece you can splice together the person's military history. That became the framework for the dissection of Squadron Leader BN Jost career that has been the mainstay of this investigation. Time and other commitments do not permit me to follow through with an investigation of the remainder of the crew. But Jost's story is the one that is common to them all.

Canada declared war on Germany on 10 September 1939. The tenth of September marked the starting point of significant change and circumstance for many Canadians. It was to become a time of high adventure and drama. In fact, for many it was the defining moment of their lives.

Many flocked to recruiting centres to join up to do "their bit." An influx of humanity soon arrived from near and far in the hurry to join up. People moved about in common cause and purpose. Strangers from all parts of Canada, even different parts of the world, were brought together for the fight and the trials and tribulations ahead.

The movement within Canada's population was unprecedented. The great mobilization brought together men and woman of differing backgrounds and circumstances as they volunteered and recruited for military service. The sudden presence of uniformed men and women was the simple reminder to all, that Canada, was indeed at war.

Jost was amongst the growing throng to do so. Burton Norris Jost enlisted at North Bay, Ontario, 20 December 1940. However, Jost's career path wasn't a straight line to becoming a pilot.

In early 1940, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) expanded its numbers from approximately 4,000 officers to 8,000. The first group of airmen for RCAF Overseas Headquarters departed from Halifax, marking the beginning of overseas deployments. In total, forty-eight RCAF squadrons would serve abroad during the war.[5] The RCAF Overseas Headquarters was stood up and came into being New Year's Day 1940. Jost eventually became a part of that expansion.

In the meantime, when the BCATP commenced, eligibility was limited to applicants who had completed junior matriculation or high school. "ITS" specialty training adopted a format similar to post-secondary or university education. But it wasn't a luxury school. Men began their duties at the lowest levels and given mundane, non-skilled tasks just to keep them occupied.

Aircraftmen transitioned from tasks such as cleaning livestock pens to attending initial lectures. The material and tone of these sessions reflected the seriousness of their commitment made at recruiting centres. Such training was aimed to assess the recruits suitability for aircrew roles. But in the end it was to weed out the group and answer the penultimate question and desire for many: "Will I make a pilot?"[6] This was the organization, found in the time and place, that made the decision for Jost and many candidates, through the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP).

This and other events and policies is the story behind the story in understanding Jost and other young lives as they advanced through the system to operational duties and status overseas. It is not only the story of the individual that must be told. But it necessarily involves the story of government policies and practices that held sway over the use of their very young lives and existence. This was especially true of various Canadian government policies and actions, in which intransigence often affected many young Canadian servicemen's lives during the Second World War.

Let's Begin at the Beginning

Canada's commitment to the Second World War began 10 September 1939 with its own separate declaration of War against Germany. It was a matter of great concern to Prime Minister Mackenzie King. King set expectations and limits to Canada's participation from the onset. King, like many Canadians, had little desire or thirst for the role of "active"

[5] Barris, Ted.1992. *Behind the Glory – The Plan that Won the Allied Air War (Training heroes in Canadian Skies).* Macmillan Canada Toronto*, 58*

[6] Barris 1992, 59

service for the armed forces. The open sores of the Great War were still far too fresh for many who had lived through it and remembered its lingering horrors all too well.

King wished to limit Canadian participation as far as possible.[7] It matched the public's interest at least at the very beginning of the war. Canadians wanted to be supportive yet without full engagement in all aspects of war. The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) was designed as the sop to that end.

King's plans for the BCATP were ambitious in 1939. The facilities simply did not exist and had to be created, virtually built from the ground up. Mackenzie King's declaration of 17 December increased the Canadian defence establishment that set-in motion commitments toward a growing contribution to the war effort. The act that brought the BCATP into being, set Canada's economy firmly on a war footing.

Mobilization of Canada's economy happened under extremely tight deadlines. In fact, there already had been a flurry of activity involving the Army, Navy and Air Force prior to the declaration. The confluence of these activities brought Canada ever closer to total war in 1939 despite the prevailing opinion for limited war.

The Army quickly mobilized. And it was quick too! The Strait of Canso Defence Area for example in Nova Scotia was quickly mobilized for area defence and protection from U-boat operations. The Pictou Highlanders was placed on active service there in September 1939 prior to war's declaration.[8]

The first major elements of the Canadian Army were trained, dispatched and convoyed to Great Britain 16 December 1940 on a 27,000-ton motor vessel Capetown (sic) Castle. The elements of the army were also accompanied by some senior staff of the RCAF.

Air Vice Marshal (AVM) LS Breadner and entourage were also aboard Capetown Castle.[9] AVM Breadner's presence aboard is significant to this story. He was there to coordinate the Royal Canadian Air Forces participation at the start of the war.

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[7] Pierre Berton, *The Great Depression - 1929-1939* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2001), pg., 499

[8] Canada, National Defence, Dead Files 46-4-2, File 200-1-4, S**&T Services, Accommodation for Troops, Strait of Canso Area, 321.009 (D265) Correspondence, Reports, Returns, Requests, Etc. RE ACCN for Troops in Strait of Canso Area, D/15 Sep 1939 / 16 Mar 1940, Correspondence on file:** 1, Accommodation Arrangements for Pictou Highlanders, H.200- -4 15 Sep 1939, pg. 2/ 97

[9] Canada, National Defence, Directorate of History and Heritage, Historical Reports, **CMHQ Report 1 – Major (Colonel) C.P. Stacey letter dated 31 December 1940, Historical Officer CMHQ,** 1986, pg.1-3/11

But it was only early days. The main effort was concerned with the start date of the BCATP commencing 17 December 1939 onward. The BCATP plan had to be implemented by 29 April 1940. The effort to get there was enormous.[10] Nine hundred and eighty-nine million dollars were set aside to commence monthly training of 850 pilots, 510 air observers - navigators and 870 wireless operator/air gunners. In total, the annual training target was to produce 29,000 qualified aircrew.[11]

Canada with only 235 RCAF pilots on strength in August 1939, was a relatively small and an insignificant air force. But this small number was the seed upon which Canada's pledge built the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) signed 17 December 1939.[12]

The BCATP became an important obligation and priority to King and the country. In the end, it was a decidedly successful program that saw 130,000 personnel trained as pilots, navigators, flight engineers along with sundry flight and ground crew.[13]

The reality of December 1939 was that its outcome was truly in doubt. The "Plan" was to commence only a few short months away. The start date set for April 1940, saw much left undone and accomplished in the meantime at the height of the Canadian winter!

But a great enterprise grew from very humble beginnings that December. The whole enterprise and organization were essentially built from the ground up. Stating intent in December 1939 was all well and fine. However, the looming reality stretched the bounds of reason and practicality.

It took no less than thirty-three thousand air force personnel and an additional six thousand civilians to make the plan fully functional. This mass of humanity created its own set of problems that had to be resolved. They required administrative infrastructure, sundry buildings, airfields, classrooms, impedimenta, and other paraphernalia in which to properly conduct training.[14] None of that even existed December 1939 in any quantity whatsoever.

The problems were exacerbated by the fact the RCAF had no administrative structure of its own. The RCAF relied on the cooperation of the Army to provide many of its pre-war requirements.

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[10]F.J. Hatch 1983. **Aerodrome of Democracy: Canada and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan 1939-1945**, Department of National Defence Directorate of History, Monograph Series No. 1, © Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 33

[11] Hatch 1983, 16

[12] Hatch 1983, 5

[13]Hatch 1983, 1-2

[14] Hatch 1983, 33

The scope of the plan soon demanded that the RCAF hire its own, separate, and independent support structure. This was the necessary first step to getting on with the execution of the plan. In quick time, the RCAF engaged administrative, pay, medical, dental support, and most importantly, its own construction and engineering requirements. Jost skills and education were of value and he could have easily fit into the RCAF here.

Jost skills would have been invaluable in the management of the BCATP infrastructure and aerodrome building program. That was simply the most ambitious part of the plan to be implemented. The program required detailed organization, thought, and planning. This is where Jost entered the picture. It was the priority that Jost likely fought against. But then again, the RCAF also may not have recognized the talent and opportunity dropped in their laps in the midst and the heat of starting up.

Still, BCATP facilities were often functional within an incredibly short space of eight weeks. It was a testament to Canadian ingenuity, skill, tenacity, and sheer determination. The quick construction of facilities ensured the BCATP commenced its training by 29 April 1940. This success meant they were able to greet and train the influx of trainees not only from Canada , but Britain, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere too.

*Figure 1 Alexander Turnbull Library, Reference: DA-00658-F (**https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.285537**).*

Young Pilot Officer Jost was firmly integrated into the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) training system. The BCATP programmes were administered through four distinct Training Commands, each responsible for operations within a specific Canadian region:

- **No. 1 Training Command** (Toronto, Ontario): Oversaw activities throughout southern Ontario.
- **No. 2 Training Command** (Winnipeg, Manitoba): Managed northwestern Ontario, all of Manitoba, and sections of Saskatchewan.
- **No. 3 Training Command** (Montreal, Quebec): Directed training across Quebec and the Maritime provinces.

- **No. 4 Training Command** (Regina, Saskatchewan): Covered most of Saskatchewan as well as the entirety of Alberta and British Columbia. Its headquarters was subsequently relocated to Calgary, Alberta, October 1941.[15]

It was a small beginning. Eventually all the schools were fully operational by April 1942.[16]

Jost Educational Background

Every military member's career follows a similar path. Jost's military foundation commenced with training at a manning depot. During this period, recruits were instructed in personal hygiene, including bathing and shaving, as well as proper maintenance of boots, buttons, and uniforms, in accordance with established standards. The daily schedule included two hours dedicated to physical education and comprehensive training in marching, rifle and foot drills, saluting protocols, and other essential routines.[17]

Education was the key to success in the RCAF. To ensure all 17 and 18-year-old trainees met the Royal Canadian Air Force's academic requirements, remedial high school education was often provided as needed. Additionally, each recruit completed the standard RCAF Classification Test to assess aptitude.[18]

Jost did not require this additional help nor education. He was in his early 30s at the time and was a trained engineer. It would seem that the RCAF should have employed him elsewhere based on his skills, but he wasn't. That is the story behind the story that most likely lies hidden in the main service records.

The personnel record is a huge file containing all course reports, memorandum, amongst many things. It often holds the sundry change of personal circumstances or decisions concerning education, postings, and courses. It is in this ephemera that is found the reflection of decision paths taken over a member's career.

There was likely much discussion on what was best for the service, but Jost was likely adamant that he wished to be a pilot. Given his age, the RCAF though encouraged him to train as a navigator.[19]

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[15] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada." List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada - Wikipedia. This page was last edited on 23 February 2024, at 11:43 (UTC).
[16] Hatch 1983, 33
[17] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada"
[18] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada"
[19] D.B. Stevens. 1997. "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew – 419 Moose Squadron on 25 June 1943." Canadian Thanksgiving Day 13 October 1997, Pg6/68:

But it wasn't as easy as that. In the normal process, following a period of four to five weeks, a selection committee determined whether the trainee would be assigned to either aircrew or groundcrew stream. Aircrew candidates for the Wireless Air Gunner position proceeded directly to a Wireless School, while those pursuing roles as Air Observers or Pilots attended an Initial Training School.[20]

During interim periods, trainees were frequently assigned to "tarmac" duty to keep them occupied. This was likely Jost's fate for a time. Assignments varied: some individuals were sent to factories working on mundane tasks; such as counting inventory or moving stock such as hardware, nuts, and bolts. Others were dispatched to flying schools and various RCAF facilities often raising hopes. It was a chimera experience. Some responsibilities there included security, cleaning, painting, and polishing while awaiting initial training. In the end the duration of "tarmac" duty could be extended for several months or longer.[21]

Jost's advancement through the system proceeded progressively fast. Perhaps it was because he had joined up early at a time when needs were greatest. There may have been an initial momentum within the system to flow candidates rapidly. Later enrollees faced many roadblocks because the initial surge resulted in excess capacity within the system.[22] In that surge and surplus, some had their aspirations dashed. Many faced tarmac duty not just for several months but often, much longer in years.

Many took to ingenious methods to break the bounds of officialdom. Notorious trouble makers were a "systemic" hindrance that the "system" would not tolerate. So, the system had the "troublemakers" posted overseas immediately just to be rid of them. My late father-in-law was one of them, but rather than posted overseas, he was posted to Goosebay, but that's another story. But Jost was a troublesome candidate in his own right. He wanted to be a pilot not a WAG, Observer, or Navigator, but a pilot.

Career Path

Jost was taken on strength in the RCAF at Toronto 21 December 1940 at the lowly rank of AC2. He spent a short time there undergoing basic training and assessment. He was subsequently struck off Strength 6 January 1941, promoted to LAC. He was sent on to

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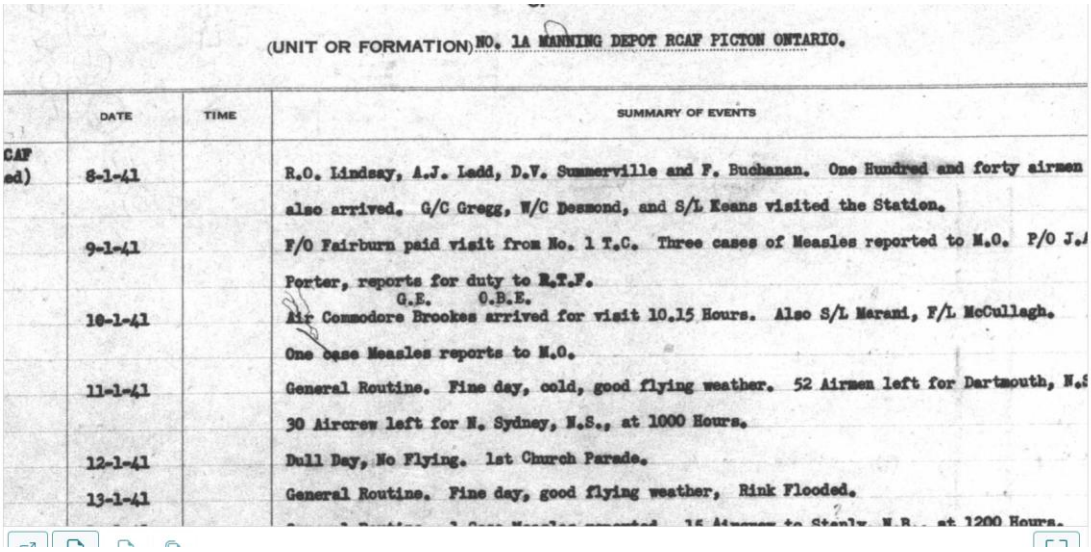
[20] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada"
[21] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada"
[22] Madigan, Major Gerry D. CD, MA (Retired). 2016. *At the Crossroads of Time* ***The Story of Operational Training Unit 31, RCAF No. 7 Squadron, and RCAF Tiger Force at Debert, NS .*** **madiganstories.com,** madiganstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/At-the-Crossroads-of-Time-Gerry-Madigan-edition-1.pdf, 147-148

1AMD Picton, a manning depot, where he was eventually streamed as an officer and subsequently promoted to Pilot Officer.[23]

Jost's presence at an Initial Training School (ITS) was pivotal. This was a course of pre-flight training, an essential phase for RCAF volunteers. During this period, Aircraftman Second Class (AC2) personnel were promoted to Leading Aircraftmen (LAC), with their daily pay increasing from $0.70 to $2.00, plus an additional $0.75 per day, flying pay. That pay increase in of itself was significant as it set the candidate on a clear course towards "aircrew."

The selection process was rigorous, with only the most qualified recruits assigned to one of four aircrew specialties: pilots, observers, navigators, or wireless operator/air gunners. For many, attaining the designation of "pilot" was the primary goal. The four weeks spent at ITS were pivotal in determining that particular career path.[24]



(UNIT OR FORMATION) NO. 1A MANNING DEPOT RCAF PICTON ONTARIO.

	DATE	TIME	SUMMARY OF EVENTS
CAF ed)	8-1-41		R.O. Lindsay, A.J. Ladd, D.V. Summerville and F. Buchanan. One Hundred and forty airmen also arrived. G/C Gregg, W/C Desmond, and S/L Keans visited the Station.
	9-1-41		F/O Fairburn paid visit from No. 1 T.C. Three cases of Measles reported to M.O. P/O J. Porter, reports for duty to R.T.F.
	10-1-41		G.E. O.B.E. Air Commodore Brookes arrived for visit 10.15 Hours. Also S/L Marani, F/L McCullagh. One case Measles reports to M.O.
	11-1-41		General Routine. Fine day, cold, good flying weather. 52 Airmen left for Dartmouth, N. 30 Aircrew left for N. Sydney, N.S., at 1000 Hours.
	12-1-41		Dull Day, No Flying. 1st Church Parade.
	13-1-41		General Routine. Fine day, good flying weather, Rink Flooded.

Figure 2- Daily Diary Picton Jan 1941 -https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c12379/1596

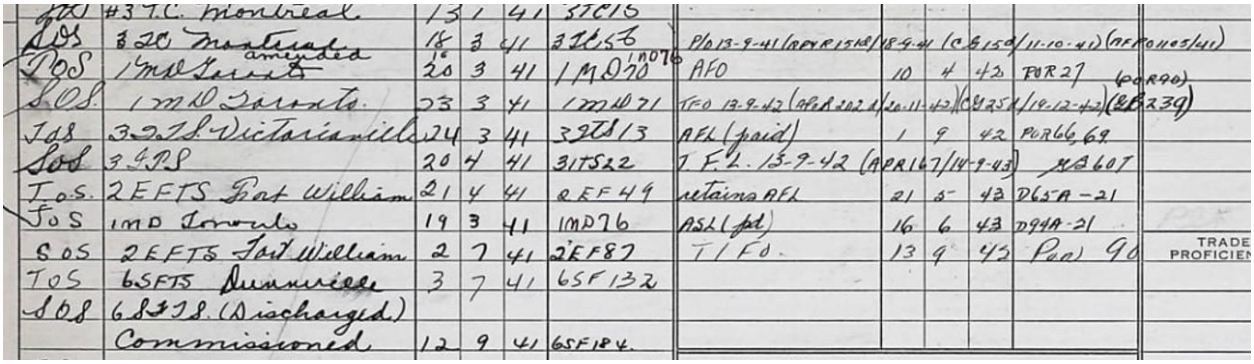
Jost's stay at 1AMD Picton was short-lived. On 13 January 1941 he was posted to No. 3 TC Montreal. There he undertook Elementary Flight training for 3 months until 18 March of that year. He remained on 1 AMD books though until 14 January which seems unusual, suggesting that it took time for the paperwork to catch up with him.

A turning point

Jost remained with No. 3 TC Montreal until 18 March 1941. Here Jost's service record reads like a puzzle at this point. That suggests an administrative conflict may have endured and

[23] G Christian Larsen, **Pennfield Parish Military Historical Society**, Sqn Leader Jost Service Records, 1 September 2025
[24] Barris 1992, 58-59

only at that point did the system take his request to become a pilot seriously. That seems to have been reflected in the bouncing back and forth within the training establishment.



A significant turning point in Jost's training and career occurred on 23 March 1941, when he was transferred from 1AMD Toronto to No. 3 Sacred Heart College, Victoriaville, Quebec, on 24 March. It was at this institution that Jost encountered his most substantial challenge. No. 3 Sacred Heart College, Victoriaville, Quebec, served as a centre for Pilot and Air Observer candidates, who commenced their 26- or 28-week training programs with an initial four weeks at an **Initial Training School** (ITS). [25]

Candidates at No 3 Sacred Heart College engaged in theoretical coursework and underwent a series of assessments. Theoretical instruction encompassed topics such as navigation, flight theory, meteorology, officer responsibilities, air force administration, algebra, and trigonometry. Evaluations included interviews with psychiatrists, the comprehensive four-hour M2 physical examination, sessions in a decompression chamber, and proficiency tests using a Link Trainer, alongside academic assessments. Upon completion of the program, postings were assigned. In some cases, candidates were redirected to the Wireless Air Gunner stream following the Initial Training School (ITS). Jost was lucky as his career path took him to No. 2 Fort William, Ontario where he was taken on strength 21 April where he trained on the venerable Tiger Moth.[26] He successfully completed his initial training 2 July 1941. He was subsequently posted to No. 6 Dunnville, Ontario , a **Service**

[25] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada." - No 3 Sacred Heart College, Victoriaville, Quebec

[26] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada." No.2 Fort William, Ontario (Moth)

Flying Training School (SFTS), on 3 July where he trained on either the Harvard or Yale aircraft.[27]

Service Flying School

Graduates who successfully completed EFTS "learn-to-fly" program then proceeded to a **Service Flying Training School** (SFTS) for a comprehensive 16-week course. The training was structured as follows: an initial 8 weeks spent with an intermediate training squadron, followed by 6 weeks in an advanced training squadron, and concluding with 2 weeks at a Bombing & Gunnery School. Service schools were military institutions overseen by the RCAF or RAF.[28]

Two distinct types of Service Flying Training Schools existed. Trainees on the fighter pilot track attended an SFTS such as No. 14 Aylmer, where instruction took place using the North American Harvard or North American Yale aircraft. Those pursuing bomber, coastal, or transport pilot roles trained at an SFTS like No. 5 Brantford, mastering multi-engine operations in aircraft such as the Airspeed Oxford, Avro Anson, or Cessna Crane.[29] Once again Jost was a successful candidate. He was commissioned as a Pilot Officer 12 September 1941.

September 1941 held several varied appointments of very short duration for Jost. He was held in a holding pattern of sorts between 13-15 September at Dunnville and Trenton. This marked the end of his time in Canada. The newly promoted Pilot Officer (PO) Burton Norris Jost was taken on strength 1 Y Depot, 27 September 1941 and then struck off strength the same day.

Heading Overseas

No. 1 "Y" Depot in Halifax, Nova Scotia, was a key RCAF embarkation hub for airmen heading to Europe during WWII. Named "Y" after other letters were used, it was located near Windsor Park, Exhibition Grounds, CNR Station, and Pier 21, which aided troop

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[27] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada." No. 6 Dunnville, Ontario (Harvard and Yale)

[28] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada." No. 6 Dunnville, Ontario (Harvard and Yale)

[29] Wikipedia. 2024. "List of British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facilities in Canada." No. 6 Dunnville, Ontario (Harvard and Yale)

movements. Overcrowding pushed its capacity to nearly 3,000. The depot later moved to Lachine, Quebec, becoming No. 1 "Y" Embarkation Depot.[30]

PO Jost was soon on his way overseas to Europe, where he was subsequently taken on strength at 3 PRC Reception centre, 13 Oct 1941.

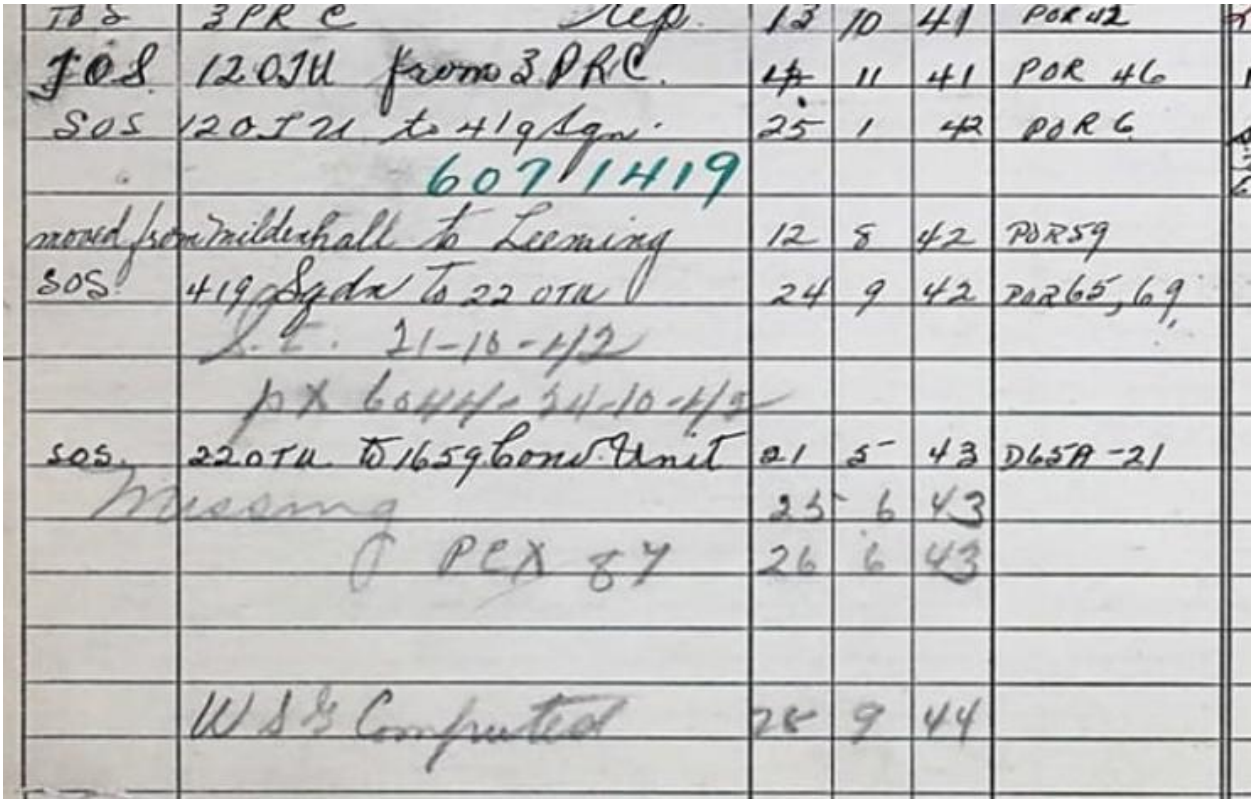

Figure 3- PO Jost Service Records -Arrival in UK

Thousands of young aircrew had much the similar experience upon completion of their training in Canada under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan(BCATP). Many held similar aspirations to be a fighter pilot. Regrettably, many found themselves posted to aircrew largely in either Bomber or Coastal Command. Of that number, less than 25 out of 100 bomber crews would survive their first operational tour.[31]

An unknown fate awaited many qualified air crew upon their graduation. It's not as if the risks were unknown. In spite of the known risks, they were proud to do their duty. They all

[30] Christmas 1943: From No. 1 "Y" Depot in Halifax, Nova Scotia - News Article - Royal Canadian Air Force - Canada.ca

[31] Peden, Murray. 1988. *A Thousand Shall Fall – The True Story of a Canadian Bomber Pilot in World War Two.* Published in 1988 by Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited 895 Don Mall Road, 400-2 Park Centre Toronto, ON M3C IW3, Introduction

had endured the same level of training whether as part of the aircrew stream; Wireless Air Gunner, Air Gunner, Observer, Navigator, or pilot training.

The badge of honour for many candidates upon promotion was promotion to the rank either of Sergeant or Flight Sergeant. For those marked as extraordinary; the honour of a commissioned rank to Pilot Officer was offered. These were ascertained upon graduation day after which all appropriate logs were signed off, equipment handed in, and clearances completed before graduates were given a short embarkation leave to visit family or friends. This brief period was followed by their collection at No.1 'Y' Depot in Halifax before posting overseas.[32]

Their stay at No.1 'Y' Depot in Halifax was consider by many to be a short rest cure after their arduous training in Canada. Many had time to visit the sites and surrounding area. But more often than not, their time was taken up with routine administration, medicals, inoculation, and sometimes additional leave.[33] Having completed this protocol, they subsequently boarded a ship and then were convoyed under guard of the RCN and RN to the United Kingdom. Their journey was a hazardous one always subject to the dangers of a U-Boat attack.

The ubiquitous U-boat was present in so many theatres, that it threatened to swamp limited Allied naval resources. The situation demanded alternative solutions to fill the security gaps.[34] Men and material were lost on both sides in what became known as the Battle of the Atlantic. It was the longest running battle whose course ran the whole length of the war.

Many lives were lost in great number on both sides of the conflict during the Battle of the Atlantic.[35] During the Second World War 28,000 of 40,900 German U-boat crew lost their lives in this raging battle. Five thousand were taken prisoners of war. On the other side of the ledger 30,000 men of the allied merchant service died, not including the untold number of Allied naval personnel." The Atlantic transit was a deadly business causing Winston Churchill to declare the "Battle of the Atlantic" to deal with it. It became the longest running battle of the Second World War. [36]

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[32] Peden 1988, 88
[33] Peden 1988, 92
[34] Madigan, Gerry.2018. *Operational Training and Antisubmarine Air Warfare on Canada's East Coast - The Second Word War -Collected Papers.* **madiganstories.com,** Collected-Short-Stories-Operational-Training-and-Antisubmarine-Warfare-on-Canada's-East-Coast.pdf (secureserver.net) , 83
[35] Madigan 2018, 183
[36] Madigan 2018, 184

Arrival – Getting Ready

Jost spent his first weeks in the UK in the RAF administrative mill from 13 October to 4 November 1941. BCATP graduates were received at the Personnel Receiving Centre upon arrival. This unit was charged with administering candidates for further flying operations for service conditions overseas.

This step was gradual as there was a great influx of personnel and candidates would be posted to advanced Flying Units when space became available. But the candidates' time was kept busy enough with issues of new battle dress and issuance of clothing coupons that had to be bought. Flying equipment; suits, silk and fleece-lined boots, chamois gloves, helmets and goggles, the stuff of real aviators were also issued. New arrivals were paraded twice a day at 9AM and 1:30PM invariably to be summarily dismissed.

Time weighed heavy on their hands that led many into mischief and trouble. The chief entertainment was found in games of chance often difficult to finance for they weren't being paid directly. Individual banking arrangements had to be made and pay was subsequently disbursed into these accounts for later withdrawal. And then again, it would seem the system allowed the hangers-on leave to do with what they will.[37]

Invariably candidates did enter into the operational training scheme in the United Kingdom. It began all over again with Elementary Flight Training and its bumps and grinds but with a twist. They lay of the land in Europe was much different than training over the plains and valleys of Canada. It was an ancient landscape with its own nuances that had to be recognized and learned.

Once EFTS was completed the airman was certified and sent off to an operational training unit for conversions and training onto type, normally a Wellington bomber at this point. The graduation exercise was often concluded with the dropping of bales of propaganda leaflets over occupied territory.[38] It has been cast as a propaganda effort but many also felt that this only enhanced the enemy's stocks of available toilet paper.[39]

Jost was finally assigned to an operational training unit and taken on strength by O.T.U. 12. His assignment here ended on 25 January 1942 when he was assigned to 419 Squadron then a part of the RAF at Mildenhall.

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[37] Peden 1988, 112-113
[38] Peden 1988, 133
[39] Bing Videos

First Operational Tour – 419 Squadron (RAF)

Once a pilot received his certification, he was ready to crew up. Crewing up more often than not was left up to the devices and intuition of the individual members. Potential members would seek out the best from available course records and rank, hoping that academics would convert into skill and safety, others acted on instinct and choice. In any case, the pilot was left 10 days to gather his own crew otherwise he would be left with the dribs and drabs. Waiting too long meant the delay would leave the pilot with the possible misfits and leftovers when the RAF finally assigned him a crew.[40]

On May 17th, 1942, Pilot Officer Burton Jost was assigned to 419 Squadron along with his initial crew: Navigator Pilot Officer Thompson, Wireless Air Gunner Sergeant Johnston, Air Gunner Flight Sergeant Cassidy, and Air Gunner Sergeant Hart. Between May 30th and September 1st, Jost and his crew completed what appears to be 19 operational sorties. On September 20th, he was transferred to No. 22 Operational Training Unit (OTU) as an instructor, commencing his instructional duties on September 29th.[41]

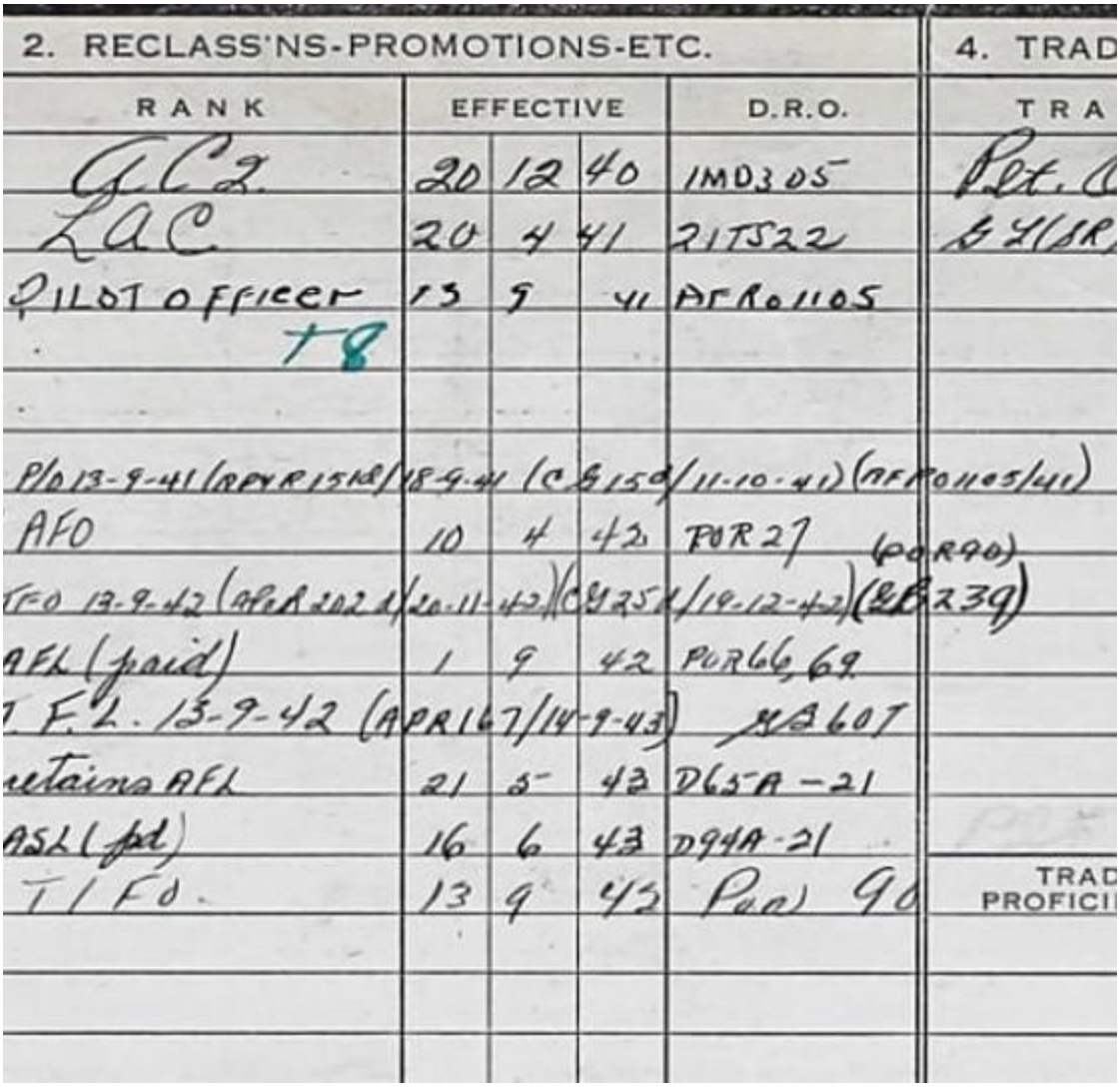
419 Squadron was moved from Mildenhall to Leeming at that time. Jost was struck off strength and posted to a conversion unit, 22 O.T.U., 24 Sep 1942. He was subsequently struck off its strength 21 May 1943 and then returned to 419 Squadron, now RCAF. One month later the records show he went missing on 25 June 1943.

Second Operational Tour - 419 Squadron (RCAF)

Flight Lieutenant Jost rejoined 419 Squadron on 12 June 1943, assuming command of "A" Flight. His crew comprised Navigator Sgt. B Pope, Bomb Aimer F/S A.W.A. Bruce, Wireless Operator/Air Gunner F/O R.O.E. Goodwin, Flight Engineer Sgt. J.B. Johnson, Air Gunner Sgt. L Barker, and Air Gunner Sgt. R.C. Austen. On their third operation together, the crew was aboard Halifax aircraft serial number JD147, which was subsequently lost.[42]

Jost's promotion history as an aside, tells its own story that fills in some of the blanks of Jost's career as he rose through the ranks from a lowly AC1 at enrolment to the higher stratosphere of senior rank of Squadron leader at his demise.

[40] Peden 1988, 167-173
[41] 419 Squadron RCAF 1941 to 1945 S/L Burton Jost
[42] 419 Squadron RCAF 1941 to 1945 S/L Burton Jost



2. RECLASS'NS-PROMOTIONS-ETC.					4. TRAD
RANK	EFFECTIVE			D.R.O.	TRA
G/C 2.	20	12	40	IMD 305	Plt. O
LAC	20	4	41	21T522	& A/SR
PILOT OFFICER +8	13	9	41	AFRO 1105	
P/O 13-9-41 (RPAR 1518/	18-9-41	(C	$150/	11-10-41) (AFRO 1105/41)	
AFO	10	4	42	POR 27 (POR 90)	
FO 13-9-42 (APAR 202	20-11-42	(C	$125/	19-12-42) (2B 239)	
AFL (paid)	1	9	42	POR 66, 69	
F.L. 13-9-42 (APR 167/	14-9-43)			AFRO 607	
retains AFL	21	5	43	D65A-21	
ASL (pd)	16	6	43	D94A-21	
T/FO.	13	9	43	Paid 90	TRAD PROFICI

Jost arrived in the United Kingdom as a Pilot Officer after his initial training was completed in Canada. We tend to have the misconception that after 250 hours of training in Canada that the crew were fully trained and capable of operations. In fact, they had a lot more to learn about operations and were sent for additional training at operational training units in England to ease them into the job.

Jost remained a pilot officer from 13 Sep 41 to 10 Apr 1942 when he was promoted; acting mind you, Flying Officer. It was meant to be a temporary appointment initially unpaid at the rank until 1 September 1942. He later started to receive substantive pay at that level while still as temporary Flight Officer (FO). He went up a rank to Flight Lieutenant (FL), 13 Sep 1942 paid substantively. He remained at that rank until 16 Jun 1943 when promoted to

acting Squadron Leader. Jost must have proven his worth to the system because they were loath to invest an extra penny if they could get away with it.[43]

It is interesting to observe that Jost was in training and posted to an operational unit between 4 Nov 1941 to 25 Jan 1942. He was then posted to an operational unit 419 Sqn RAF from 25 Jan to 12 Sep 42. He would have been involved in the historical "thousand bomber raid."

The story Behind the Story– the hidden details

On May 17th, 1942, Pilot Officer Burton Jost was assigned to 419 Squadron. Between May 30th and September 1st, Jost and his crew completed what appears to be 19 operational sorties. Jost was awarded the DFC on November 2nd 1942 for his actions during the time on Wellingtons with 419 Squadron.

Jost's entry into the war came at a fortuitous time for him at that stage of the war. The RAF had learned some hard lessons along the way that likely saved not only his life but that of others for the moment.

The RAF learned early in the war that its Wellington Bomber was outclassed by its Luftwaffe rival. For example; 23 December 1939 the RAF undertook to bomb the German naval base at Wilhelmshaven in broad daylight. It was a complete disaster. Of the 22 Wellingtons who reached their target area, 12 were shot down, three crash landed upon returning to base, and the remaining seven made it back safely. The RAF effectively lost 55% of its attacking force proving such tactics were untenable. [44]

The Wellington was the best armed of the bombers available to the RAF. The Wellington carried an array of twin .303 turret guns; one set mounted in the nose, another in the tail, plus two manually operated .303s in beam stations. It wasn't enough to fend off the firepower of the BF 109 Messerschmitt fighter that carried two 20mm cannon and two machine guns.

The BF 109 had a distinct speed advantage. It was also supplemented with the work of the BF 110 twin engine fighter. The BF110 was a formidable opponent that carried two 20mm cannon. These German assets were guided to their target by the German Freya Radar

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[43] Madigan, Gerry, 2024. *The Twisted Path -Canadian Defence Policy in an Age of Uncertainty and Growth.* madiganstories.com self published ISBN 978-0-9959203-5-4.All Rights Reserved . A-Twisted-Path-From-The-Great-War-To-The-Present-Day-Canadian-Defence-Policy.pdf, 103-104

[44] Armitage, Michael. 1998. *The Royal Air Force – An Illustrated History*. Arms and Armour Press. An imprint of the Cassell Group, Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R OBB . This edition published 1998 by Brockhampton Press, a member of Hodder Headline PLC Group, 77

system that engaged the Wellingtons. But once over the target they were met with severe flak over the heavily defended Wilhelmshaven.[45] It was a mighty hammer directed at them. After France fell, doubts increased about whether daylight bombers could defend themselves from enemy fighters.[46]

Bomber Command's focus subsequently shifted to night attacks. The efforts of Bomber Command were directed against two quite separate sets of targets. First, attacks were concentrated against selected German industrial targets, oil installations but also transport facilities. Sometimes this was also directed towards forests and standing crops, anything that would impact Germany's industrial capacity or its ability to feed its people.[47]

The second group of targets focused on objectives of immediate military importance. During this phase of the war in 1939, German barges gathering at Channel ports for Operation 'Sealion' were identified as primary threats in anticipation of a potential invasion of Britain. Additional significant targets included Luftwaffe bases and German aircraft factories, both critical to supporting the air campaign that formed the cornerstone of Germany's offensive strategy against Britain.[48]

The target list and priorities were consistently adjusted in response to Great Britain's evolving needs. By 1942, following Hitler's invasion of Russia, Stalin urged Britain to establish a second front to alleviate pressure on the Soviet Union. At that time, however, Britain was not in a position to fulfil this request.

Churchill sought alternative means to demonstrate support for Russia. This included intensifying the air bombing campaign through a 1,000-plane raid to signal to Russia his commitment for a maximum effort. Additionally, the Canadian-led Dieppe raid was intended to illustrate the complexities involved in opening a second front. Furthermore, Churchill directed the navy to transport substantial quantities of British supplies and Lend-Lease materiel to meet Russia's immediate requirements.

Jost and his aircrew played a small but significant role in the 1000 plane raid which they participated in. No big results were expected. That wasn't the point of the exercise. The point of the exercise was in the demonstration of strength and power to assemble 1000 aircraft and mount an operation against Germany in the first place. It was a clear demonstration of what was to come!

[45] Armitage 1998, 77
[46] Armitage 1998, 77
[47] Armitage 1998, 88
[48] Armitage 1998, 88

The Brush with History

419 Squadron RAF participated in the "**thousand-bomber raid**" . This term refers to three night-time bombing operations conducted by the Royal Air Force against German cities in the summer of 1942 during World War II. This designation served as a propaganda strategy, for Arthur Harris in which the figure of 1,000 bombers was achieved by including both operational aircraft from RAF Bomber Command and aircrews from Operational Training Units.[49]

The intent was to assemble a force that would demonstrate the RAF's capabilities. The majority of the bomber contingent consisted of twin-engined medium bombers such as the Vickers Wellington. As the number of heavy bombers within the RAF increased over time, it became possible to deliver greater payloads to targets using fewer aircraft.[50]

The raids are briefly outlined here:[51]

1. 30–31 May 1942: The first thousand-bomber raid, known as "Operation Millennium," against Cologne, involved the deployment of 1,047 aircraft. This operation marked the initial implementation of the bomber stream tactic, wherein bombers flew in a concentrated formation to overwhelm enemy radar and defences. Bomber Command recorded 868 bombers successfully attacking the target, delivering 1,455 tons of ordnance. The raid resulted in over 3,000 buildings being destroyed and an additional 9,000 damaged.
2. 1–2 June 1942: The second thousand-bomber raid targeted Essen, dispatching 956 aircraft. However, adverse weather conditions obscured the target, leading to limited bombing effectiveness.
3. 25–26 June 1942: The third thousand-bomber raid was conducted on Bremen. Bomber Command assembled 960 aircraft, including contributions from No. 2 Group RAF's day bombing force and 102 aircraft provided by RAF Coastal Command. The operation targeted the Focke-Wulf factory, the A.G. Weser shipyard, the Deschimag shipyard, along with a general area attack on the town and docks. The use of GEE radio navigation helped mitigate cloud cover over the target, and just under 700 aircraft bombed Bremen.

[49] Thousand-bomber raids - Wikipedia, Accessed 5 September 2025
[50] Thousand-bomber raids - Wikipedia, Accessed 5 September 2025
[51] Thousand-bomber raids - Wikipedia, Accessed 5 September 2025

Awards

A likely outcome of 419 Squadrons and Jost efforts for his leadership and his likely participation in Thousand-bomber raids - Wikipedia,

First Tour – Significant Moment

During his first Tour with 419 Squadron PO Jost was introduced to King George on a visit to 419 Squadron RAF. He was subsequently awarded the DFC on November 2nd 1942 for his actions during the time on Wellingtons with 419 Squadron . [52]

Figure 4 419 Squadron RCAF 1941 to 1945 S/L Burton Jost . Jost's first tour commencing May 17th 1942 then as a Pilot Officer (P/O). The date of the photograph suggests that Jost likely participated in the earlier two raids or perhaps both thus warranting the DFC.

[52] 419 Squadron RCAF 1941 to 1945 S/L Burton Jost

Jost's first tour commencing May 17th 1942 then as a Pilot Officer (P/O). The date of the photograph suggests that Jost likely participated in the earlier two raids or perhaps both thus warranting the DFC.

An interlude – Operational Training

From May 30 until September 1st, Jost and his crew completed what appears to be 19 ops. But Jost's operational tour was over for a time for on Sept.20 he was posted to No.22 OTU as an instructor, beginning his duties there on the 29th.[53]

F/L Jost later returned to 419 Squadron on June 12th 1943 where he took command of "A" Flight.

His crew on this occasion consisted of:
a. Navigator Sgt. B Pope
b. Bomb Aimer F/S A.W.A. Bruce
c. WAG F/O R.O.E. Goodwin
d. F/E Sgt. J.B. Johnson
e. A/G Sgt. L Barker
f. A/G Sgt. R.C. Austen

The crew were on their third operation together when Halifax serial number JD147 was lost.

Lost In Transmission – Canadianization[54]

The back story of Burton Norris Jost's life in the service of his country, concerns the bun fight between the RAF and RCAF over Canadianization. He like many other Canadian airmen, faced concern regarding the control over their situation and circumstances. This was a condition of the British Commonwealth Air Training plan in which Article XV specifically called for points of national identity and employment after graduation. Canada and the Dominions deferred initially that a method would be found that would ensure that such a process would be considered. All hoped for and trusted in the government of the United Kingdom that a process for such inter-governmental discussions would be found to that end.[55]

The proposed discussion in the resolution of Article XV did not proceed expeditiously and was often met with resistance by RAF authorities. In the meantime, RCAF and other

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[53] 419 Squadron RCAF 1941 to 1945 S/L Burton Jost

[54] Madigan, Gerry, 2024. *The Twisted Path -Canadian Defence Policy in an Age of Uncertainty and Growth.* madiganstories.com self published ISBN 978-0-9959203-5-4.All Rights Reserved . A-Twisted-Path-From-The-Great-War-To-The-Present-Day-Canadian-Defence-Policy.pdf, 105

[55] Mayne, Dr. Richard Oliver, CD. 2016. "A Test of Resolve Article XV, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and a Crusade for National Recognition." RCAF Journal - SPRING 2016 - Volume 5, Issue 2, 19

dominion BCATP graduates came to be caught up in the Royal Air Force (RAF) and its administration. The RAF came to regard the BCATP inflow as reinforcements to do with what they will. Thus, Canadians initially were subjected to their pay and administrative regulations, leave entitlements, postings, and promotion whims.

It was an unsatisfactory situation that greeted AVM Breadner who was sent overseas to sort it out in 1940. But his efforts were stonewalled by British authorities who argued that it was they who were paying the bills and therefore had a majority interest in the use of those resources.

But the lack of a Canadian policy also had a very deleterious effect on many Canadian airmen. Some said Canadian aircrew were used and abused in the process by their own government's sheer neglect and indifference. They failed in setting out the rules of engagement for their use and employment from the very beginning.

This led toward a drive within RCAF Headquarters (Overseas) for the Canadianization of units in Great Britain. This was the prized that the government of Canada sought in which their airmen came under Canadian command and the control of its own officers.

Enter Air Marshall Harold (Gus) Edwards

There were reasons behind these circumstances that predated the war in Canada. The total strength of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1938, was 2,510 personnel of all ranks. This number increased significantly in 1939 after war was declared, and as volunteers began joining and processed through recruiting centres. By the end of the war the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) graduated some 250,000 aircrew from all Dominions and beyond.

The RCAF became the fourth largest air force globally, with both men and women serving. Among those who trained with the BCATP, 93,844 were Canadian, of whom 17,100 lost their lives.[56] Canada had a difficult time finding enough officers to manage the plan in Canada let alone send a cadre of experienced overseas to manage and oversea the Canadianization of units in Great Britain. That was one problem, the other and perhaps the more important one was the total lack of administrative, maintenance, logistical personnel and infrastructure necessary to support these units. Canada simply avoided making the

[56] Edwards, Suzanne K. 2007. *Gus : From Trapper Boy To Air Marshal . Air Marshal Harold Edwards, Royal Canadian Air Force – A Life*. General Store Publishing House, 499 O'Brien Rd, BOX 415 Renfrew, Ontario, Canada K7V 4A6 www.gsph.com , 85

budgetary investments to support the necessary foundations for an independent air force pre-war.

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was regarded by Winston Churchill as Canada's most significant contribution to the war effort. Signed on 17 December 1939—which coincided with Prime Minister MacKenzie King's birthday—the agreement included Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as signatories.[57]

The total cost of the initiative was $2.2 billion, with Canada bearing the majority of the expense at $1.6 billion. The scale of manpower, resources, and deadlines required for the Plan was said to rival the magnitude of constructing the Canadian Pacific Railway.[58] Ultimately, Canada absorbed the full financial responsibility for the programme at the conclusion of the war.[59] This fact is noteworthy when evaluating Canadianization during the conflict, as Great Britain frequently overlooked Canada's substantial financial contributions across various areas throughout the war and afterward.

The BCATP, with its investment in infrastructure, set in motion an economic boom in Canada as the government procured and built the facilities.[60] We can see that effect in the evolution and build-up of the BCATP itself. The BCATP program encompassed building 56 flying establishments with 13 ground/support establishments. Two billion dollars ($2.2B) were spent on the BCATP throughout the war. Setting up the BCATP essentially absorbed all of Canada's air force leadership, talent, and personnel in running it. There was no room for pairs or spares as this enterprise grew.

Canada's initial contribution; $1,617,955,108.79, was approximately seventy-two per cent of the air training cost. The United Kingdom (UK) contributed $54,206,318.22 in cash. Additionally, the UK provided equipment valued at $162,260,787.89 making its total contribution to the program $216,467,106.11 or about ten per cent of the overall cost. Australia contributed $65,181,068, (three per cent of the cost), and finally New Zealand contributed $48,025,393 or two per cent. Materiel was also provided through Lend-Lease valued at $283,500,362, representing roughly thirteen per cent of the total. [61] Clearly Canada bore the lion's share of the burden and responsibility, but it also reaped the benefits too.

Air Marshall Edwards participated in the administration of the BCATP. He served as the Air Member for Personnel at RCAF Headquarters from 1940 to 1941. Edwards was responsible for

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[57] Hatch 1983, 1

[58] Edwards 2007, 86

[59] Bryce 2005. Canada and the Cost of Second World War301-309, and
Braham, Capt (N) (Ret'd) M. and Julia Beingessner. 2013. "The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan." Research Paper #20. The Friends of the Canadian War Museum, November 2, 2013
Source: RP20_BCATP debt forgiven absorbed by Canada.pdf

[60] Madigan, Major Gerry D. CD, MA (Retired), .2013. *The Crucible for Change: Defence Spending in Debert, Nova Scotia, during World War II*, THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE JOURNAL VOL. 2 | NO. 1 WINTER 2013

[61] Hatch,1983, 195-196 , TABLE A-3 -Summary of BCATP cost and contributions

managing staffing for the RCAF and overseeing essential personnel support services, such as discipline, pay, medical care, chaplaincy, senior appointments, promotions, retirements, postings, and reserve forces. His responsibilities also included compiling Personnel Staff Estimates and supervising Personnel Appropriations. [62]

This foundation would eventually see him to the command of RCAF personnel overseas January 1942. Air Marshall Edwards was transferred to London, England as the "Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (RCAF Overseas)". [63] That was his government's intent as well as to oversee the Canadianization of the RCAF in Great Britain. But alas that road was fraught with grave difficulties and intransigence from the RAF.

The Struggle Early-on

The road to Canadianization of the RCAF overseas was paved with good intentions. As early as October 31, 1939, negotiations began between the British and Canadian governments. Prior to these discussions, Britian previously looked to Canada as a place for its air training requirements.[64] Those discussions were the antecedent of what was later to become the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) in Canada and what was known as the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) in Britain. The BCATP was supposed to be Canada's main war effort.[65] But providing for a fully equipped and maintained air force was simply beyond Canada's means and the RCAF's capacity to do so in the early days of the war.[66]

Over the course of these discussions, it became evident that the British had entirely different perceptions and goals of what that would entail. The British assumed that Canadians and other Dominion graduates from the Air Training Plan would simply be absorbed into the R.A.F. Further they assumed that their administration, command, and promotion would now become matters solely for the R.A.F. Policies matter. But often as not, issues were kicked down the road for later consideration. [67]

This was the situation that met Air Marshall Edwards immediately upon his arrival. He tried his best to negotiate with his British colleagues who deferred him to later dates. The RAF had a firm grip on all graduates emanating from Canada and were loathe to loosen that

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[62] Harold Edwards (RCAF officer) - Wikipedia, accessed 25 September 2025

[63] Harold Edwards (RCAF officer) - Wikipedia, accessed 25 September 2025

[64] Granatstein, Jack and Desmond Morton, 2003. *Canada and the Two World Wars*. Key Porter Books, Toronto, Ontario, Canada,178

[65] Stacey, C.P. 1981. *Canada and the Age of Conflict – A History of Canadian External Policies – Volume 2: 1921 - 1948 – The MacKenzie King Era*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London

[66] Stacey 1981. *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume 2,* 292

[67] Greenhous, Brereton and Stephen J. Harris ,William C. Johnston ,Villiam G.P. Rawling.1994. *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945 - The Official History of Royal Canadian Air Force , Volume III.* University of Toronto Press in cooperation with the Department of National Defence he Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, 35-36

grip.[68] Edwards had a duty and responsibility towards his Canadian airmen that he took very seriously. Consequently, in order to circumvent British authority and establish some contact with his Canadian airmen; first he established in England a Canadian Personnel Reception Centre PRC. Second, he began the formation of a Canadian Bomber group.[69]

Edwards faced challenges both within the RAF and the RCAF. Some senior RCAF officers opposed Canadianization. These shared the view of their RAF counterparts who believed that integrating RCAF personnel into mixed crews within the RAF was preferable to forming Canadianized RCAF squadrons. This perspective differed from the Canadian government's goal to increase oversight over RCAF personnel stationed overseas.[70]

This was the situation that Sqn L Jost faced in 1942. He was initially assigned to RAF Squadron (419) at a time when his leave, administration and promotions came under its purview, only to find himself later, in the same situation, but with a rebranded Canadianized Squadron RCAF (419) – Moose Squadron within No 6 Group RCAF in Bomber Command. In fact, little changed for Jost personally. The only changes were in an upgrade of aircraft from the Wellington to Halifax MKII bomber and in the provisioning with another mixed crew.

So, Jost, the crew and fate, most often rested with and was sealed in the hands of RAF in this brewing witches cauldron of trouble and toil.

Canadianization – going nowhere fast

The end management of the BCATP and the further manning of independent Canadian Air units overseas, was left in the tender hands and mercy of the RAF to do. Young Canadian airmen would essentially become the output to fulfill the RAF's needs for enlistees.[71] In the end, the final decision on "arrangements" was deferred and left outstanding for later negotiations that would have a great impact on the eventual Canadianization and implementation of RCAF units in the field.[72]

It all blew up over command and control. On the other hand, it was also about costs and who deserved a larger share in the management of the plan. And then more importantly, it came down to who would have oversight, command, and control of Canadians in the field.

The pertinent issues to Canada around Canadianization centred on a recognition of Canada's effort and contribution and the very nature of the role. Canada had no desire to

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[68] Edwards 2007, 105
[69] Edwards 2007, 108-110
[70] Edwards 2007, 109
[71] Stacey 1981. *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume 2,* 294
[72] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 254 (278/710)

be a purveyor of manpower without recognition of its sovereignty and control over its men and women serving overseas. These were not to be provided nor used willy nilly without thought or care. There was a duty of care implied in usage in which a Canadian's employment was not to be abused.

Canadians in their own right, desired that their servicemen and women be clearly identified. In the public's view "Canada" had to be stamped on them to identify Canadian service. Further the public wished that service be marked by the establishment of Canadian formations preferably Canadian led and staffed. All this was difficult to reconcile within the need for British Command that in some parts was deemed necessary for victory.[73]

But Canada failed to provide the necessary financial support to do so from the very outset of the war. King was conflicted between his patriotism and his need for fiscal caution. This conflict set the stage for problems along the way. [74] Mackenzie King's desire for a small scale participation in the war was to be thwarted by the creation of the BCATP and the growing commitments and obligations that would stem from it. King had only envisaged a small scale effort while the British required and desired otherwise. In the end the scale of the plan led to a massive participation by Canada and an enlarged scale of forces overseas that Canada was frankly quite unprepared to undertake.[75]

King's strongest desire was that Canadians would be posted to Canadian units overseas. That desire was stifled over its cost and the largesse of the undertaking. Canadianization alone was estimated to cost $750 million annually while generating a force of 75 squadrons. This was in addition to the running costs of the BCATP. An ambitious plan if it were able to be carried out but it was a plan also stifled due to the lack of ground personnel in supporting it![76] This was another area where Jost's experience, education, and skill could have been put to good use but was not.

Like so many Canadian governments since this time, King entered the war naively assuming that Canada could get away with minimal costs and exposure of liability. His policy and desires though had financial consequences far beyond his grasp and reach of understanding in the beginning.[77] These would contrive to greater expectations, disappointment, argument, and costs in the long term because of his parsimony regarding

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[73] Nuttall, Leslie. 1990. "Canadianization And The No. 6 Bomber Group R.C.A.F." PhD Thesis University of Alberta, Department Of History Calgary, Alberta, viii

[74] Dunmore, Spencer and William Carter, Ph.D. 1991. *Reap the Whirlwind – The Untold Story of 6 Group, Canada's Bomber Force of Second World War.* McClelland & Stewart Inc. Toronto, Canada, 38

[75] Nuttall 1990, 3

[76] Nuttall 1990, 6

[77] Nuttall 1990, 8

costs and fear of liability in the beginning. The opposite occurred leading to greater costs and liability as the war progressed.[78]

A Small Step to Achieving Canadianization

The Canadian government's wish for an "Overseas Command Headquarters in the field,[79] finally bore fruit in some first steps in early 1940. It began with No. 110 Squadron that was dispatched overseas.

No. 110 Squadron was a small start, which set in motion the conditions for the establishment of an RCAF Headquarters in the United Kingdom. This Headquarters came into being New Year's Day 1940. But up until that time, an air liaison staff did exist and was already located in London since 1919. Regardless, it was all smoke and mirrors for that Headquarters had little power.

The RCAF's Air Liaison Officer in Britain at the time was Wing Commander F. V. Heakes. Heakes continued as Air Liaison Officer until 7 March when replaced by Group Captain G. V. Walsh, now appointed Officer commanding R.C.A.F. in Great Britain.[80] It was mutually understood that the RCAF would operate under R.A.F control for the time being. But it was also understood that the RCAF would eventually operate its own bomber group headquarters with three wing headquarters and each organized with six bomber squadrons under Canadian command. This headquarters would also be responsible for its own fighter group headquarters, similarly, organized with three wing headquarters and six fighter squadrons under it.[81] But that was far in the future. In the meantime, the RCAF was left to sort out an ongoing working relationship with the RAF that was ill-defined from the outset.

Legally, Group Captain Walsh's (RCAF) relationship with the Royal Air Force, was guided by precedents that already existed between the Canadian and the British Armies. These precedents existed in the Visiting Forces Acts of 1933. But trouble brewed from the very beginning. There was a distinct difference of opinion regarding the employment of the RCAF both in the United Kingdom and on the Continent in the sundry interpretations of that Act.

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[78] Morton, Desmond.1985. *A Military History of Canada*. Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 10560-105 Street, Edmonton, Alberta,225-226

[79] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 253 (277/710)

[80] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 254 (278/710)

[81] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 253 (277/710)

The RAF proposed that R.C.A.F. units arriving in the United Kingdom would immediately pass under the command and control of RAF senior officers. After much discussion between Canada House and the Dominion Office, the Air Ministry issued an Order (8 March 1940) acknowledging in principle the Canadian order in council. In these circumstances, No. 110 Squadron, when it did arrive in England on 25 February 1940 immediately passed onto RAF control where it was ostensibly place in combination with RAF forces for deployment to the continent.[82]

RAF authorities pointed out that the relevant Canadian order in council provided that Canadian ground and air forces should "serve together" with British forces in the United Kingdom. Therefore; they determined that these units should be placed "in combination'' while moving onto the Continent, as early as 3 February 1940.

There remained British reluctance to expand on the RCAF and Canadianization in the field beyond the agreed to 25 Squadrons and that of the three all-Canadian squadrons already in England then in existence.[83] They only concession made, was their willingness to identify RCAF personnel with a Canada shoulder patch on their uniforms. For all intents and purposes, RCAF personnel were essentially drafted into the RAF as replacements.[84] Lester Pearson, a future prime minister but then a diplomat at Canada House in London, feared that Canadian airmen would be used as mere Hessians. To him that fear came to pass. [85]

The long struggle resulted with very few Canadians having recent experience of air combat at a senior rank. So, few were readily available or groomed to take on the responsibilities of command as senior leaders. But the kicker and source of the problem lay in financial arrangements and Canada's fiscal parsimony throughout the 1930s, as well as its parsimony in the early days of the Second World War too. The chickens had come home to roost! [86] And perhaps this is where Jost was being groomed. He was promoted acting Squadron Leader, 16 June 1943 just days before his demise. He was tasked with additional

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[82] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 254 (278/710)

[83] Morton 1985, 201

[84] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 260 (284/710)

[85] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 140-142

[86] Madigan, Gerry, 2024. *The Twisted Path -Canadian Defence Policy in an Age of Uncertainty and Growth.* madiganstories.com self published ISBN 978-0-9959203-5-4.All Rights Reserved . A-Twisted-Path-From-The-Great-War-To-The-Present-Day-Canadian-Defence-Policy.pdf, 119

responsibility ostensibly to gain the experience demanded by the RAF necessary to lead a wing and beyond. Sadly, that never came to pass.

Getting there – A Compromise

A compromise to the BCATP was reached in 1941 that opened the doors and paved the way to Canadianization of units overseas. The parties agreed to common ground by British authorities with their Canadian counterparts. All came to a head that May, when Canadian plenipotentiary, Air Commodore G. O. Johnson, former Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, was sent to Britain. Johnson was sent overseas for a period of duty with the R.A.F. Specifically, Johnson was tasked to discuss two questions of importance with the Air Ministry. One involved control of the schools within the BCATP and secondly, the 25 Canadian squadrons and RCAF personnel posted overseas .[87] At this stage of the game the Canadian headquarters had no control over Jost and his contemporaries.

Minister Power argued for greater Canadian participation in command positions within the existing operational structure. He needed senior appointments for his coming Canadian Squadrons. The RAF refused him. The RAF insisted that any senior appointment; Group Captain and above, must be filled by an experienced wing commander, with at least one complete operational tour under the belt. The RAF made no exceptions for Canadian requirements.[88] And yet there were experienced Canadian Wing Commanders with at least one tour who were held back from these appointments.[89] Jost had one tour under his belt and was posed to be in a position to satisfy the RAF demand with further experience.

Regardless, Power saw progress with his Canadianization Plans that summer of 1941. Eleven of the 13 newly created Canadian Squadrons were commanded by RCAF Officers. He saw a considerable expansion in the RCAF presence overseas. By the end of 1941, there were 18 new Canadian squadrons; fighter squadrons , one coastal fighter squadron; one army cooperation squadron ; three coastal reconnaissance squadrons; three night fighter squadrons; one intruder squadron; and four bomber squadrons.[90]

It was quite an array, but it was all misleading. Behind it all were 1037 aircrew filling the positions, 499 of whom were actually Canadian. The holes were filled by others. It was also

[87] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 263 (287/710)

[88] Greenhous et al 1994,95

[89] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 268/(292/710)

[90] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 269/(293/710)

disheartening that of the 8595 recent Canadian BCATP graduates, the vast majority continued to be funneled to fill RAF ranks, Jost amongst them.[91]

The problem was that although BCATP graduates may have been trained to "wings" standard while in Canada, they still required additional advanced training overseas. The advanced training was conducted in the United Kingdom in preparation for duty in the front-line squadrons. The aircrew posted to advanced Operational Training Units were left to their own devices in crewing up before posting to an operational unit. It was not possible to organize advance training along the lines of a national entity. There was an insufficiency of experienced trained instructors, operational aircraft, space, and airfields to support it all.[92]

The RAF and British Air Ministry continued to stall on Canadianization for various reasons citing a lack of trained leaders. Leadership that Canadian squadrons lacked stupefied the requirements for fully manned Canadian Squadrons, was one of the roadblocks to Canadianization on one level. Political will to do so was another one on another level. This was evident in a certain reluctance, if not lack of respect by certain RAF leaders , who did not favour relinquishing any of the reins, which delayed Canadianization to a great extent.[93]

It was constantly alluded to that Canada lacked the brainpower to command its own air force.[94] And yet it was this same Canadian brain power that helped Britain secure loans with the US and culminating in lend-lease. This was essential to sustaining Britain through out the war. It was the same Canadian brainpower that developed many scientific and technical apparatus that also sustained the Allied effort in the war. It was also the same brainpower that built, delivered, and implemented the BCATP, an enterprise on the scale of building the CPR, in less than a year. [95] The lack of Canadian brain power was thus a poor excuse.

Sadly, RAF management over RCAF personnel under their control had some regrettable impacts. Temporary stoppages were placed on Canadians leaving England. Many Canadians were denied leave that ultimately may have contributed to their deaths.

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[91] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 269/(293/710)
[92] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 269/(293/710)
[93] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 273-274 (297-298/710), and
Harris , Marshal of the R.A.F. Arthur, G.C.B. O.B.E A.F.C. 1986, *BOMBER OFFENSIVE*, A Greenhill Book, 1986 Copyright © Sir Arthur Harris, 1947, 1998, 64
[94] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 273-274 (297-298/710), and
Harrs Bomber Offensive 2015, 64
[95] Bryce, 2005

Canadians and other Dominion servicemen were under command in continual service and servitude to meet the needs of the RAF. Consider this, even a temporary reprieve of leave at home in Canada may have saved some of these lives.[96] Regardless, the case of Canadianization of units overseas and administrative control were proving difficult and moving at a snail's pace to the government's consternation and frustration.[97]

Canadianization proved to be a tumultuous bun fight between Great Britain and Canada to the bitter end. AVM Breadner (RCAF); the final Canadian commanding officer before Canadianization took effect. was returned to Canada in February 1942 from his mission overseas. Although matters were largely unresolved as he left; Breadner made a lasting impression upon his British counterpart, Air Marshall Sutton. Sutton issued a confidential letter to all RAF commands stating:[98]

[BLOCK START]

Canada is a Dominion and as such is no less entitled to a separate and autonomous Air Force than is the United Kingdom. This right she has temporarily surrendered in the interests of war efficiency, accepting the fact that unity of organization and of operational command is essential in the prosecution of total war.

[BLOCK END]

Getting Started in a Cauldron within a Changing Milieu

1943 was a pivotal and significant moment in the air war for Canada. No 6 Bomber Group (RCAF) finally came into being as a formation and placed within RAF Bomber Command. The start date was 23 January 1943. This was when Canada assume its total cost as well as its maintenance and equipment requirements for all RCAF squadrons overseas.[99]

This was the culmination of winning a long fight over Canadianization and a true beginning of Canadian control of its foreign policy. It was a point constantly fought over from the very beginning of the war, starting with the establishment of the BCATP. The plan was in of itself

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[96] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 273-274 (297-298/710)
[97] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 273-276 (297-301/710)
[98] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 286 (313/710)
[99] Bashow, David L. 2005. *No Prouder Place - Canadians And The Bomber Command Experience 1939-1945*. Vanwell Publishing Limited, St. Catharines, Ontario, 116

a test of Canadian independence, nationalism, and pride.[100] The never ending struggles within that would eventually come to have consequences for the RCAF overseas during the war.

For example, the Plan was preceded by heated and intense negotiations before it was signed December 17, 1939 in which Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, British and other candidates were brought to Canada to train. The output from the plan flowed to the needs of the air war in Britain.

This laid the foundation for many Canadians and other Dominions who wished that their citizens, serving overseas, would be recognized and respected. It was necessary that they be commanded in the establishment of national squadrons and identity, under their own officers. There was much concern regarding the graduate outflow from the program as many candidates were streamed into the RAF. There came a strong resolve to define and protect the national identity and service of each participant in the plan. [101]

Herein lies an important aspect of the Plan that was constantly overlooked by RAF authorities, the Dominions wished to employ the elements of Article XV and the Visiting Forces Act specific to national identity and employment after graduation. [102]

King and his cabinet held a strong desire for the success of discussions that would eventually see Canadians serve in national units formed overseas. Canada was willing to back that, as far as the funding, maintaining of, and manning of these units allowed. [103] A laudable goal, but one difficult to implement given that Canada did little to foster a modern air force prior to the war. Defence policy to do so was parsimonious to say the least.

It was a long row to hoe, but in the end, a Canadian indigenous bombing group became operational at one minute past midnight first day of 1943, so it seemed so superficially on the surface. Canadian Squadrons remained a mixed bag of Dominion nationalities now serving within the RCAF rather than RAF. Little changed in effect for British, Australians, New Zealanders amongst many others, for now they served in the RCAF both as aircrew,

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[100]Mayne, Dr. Richard Oliver, CD. 2016. "A Test of Resolve Article XV, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and a Crusade for National Recognition." RCAF Journal - SPRING 2016 - Volume 5, Issue 2, 19
A Test of Resolve: Article XV, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, and a Crusade for National Recognition - RCAF Journal - Royal Canadian Air Force - Canada.ca

[101] Mayne, A Test of Resolve Article XV, 19

[102] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 255 (279/710)

[103] Mayne, A Test of Resolve Article XV, 22

ground crew, maintainers, and administrators. Regardless, nine Canadian Squadrons were brought into the line flying out of separate bases.[104]

The establishment of No 6 Group coincided with a significant shift in bombing policy. This change was prompted by the major Allied Conference at Casablanca in 1942, during which the "Germany First" strategy was adopted. Consequently, existing strategic bombing plans underwent comprehensive re-evaluation in preparation for the planned invasion of Europe in 1944. Although Stalin advocated for an earlier invasion, it was necessary to first address the immediate U-boat threat and facilitate the buildup of American forces in Britain. As a concession to Stalin, the Allies increased their efforts in the bombing campaign against Germany's industrial centers, aiming to provide relief for their Russian allies.[105]

The arrival of the USAAF 8th Air Force generated renewed optimism. However, they also faced a significant learning curve. They relied heavily on the effectiveness of daylight precision bombing and in the defensive capabilities of B-17 Flying Fortress formations. It was a misplaced scope of optimism. Despite advice from Churchill and others, who recommended against daylight bombing based on the RAF's experience, these cautions were ultimately disregarded. Eventually, both forces reached an agreement to conduct continuous bombing operations over Germany: the USAAF by day and the RAF by night.[106]

At this critical moment, fate intervened in Sqn L Jost's career. The shift in bombing policy determined the location and nature of his service. His transition from the RAF to the RCAF influenced the colleagues with whom he worked. Furthermore, the replacement of the Wellington Bomber with the Halifax MKII potentially resulted in significant, and possibly unfortunate, operational outcomes.

During 1943, Bomber Command carried out 43 large-scale operations against Axis targets in the Ruhr–Rhine Valley. These missions involved over 18,000 sorties starting in March 1943, targeting industrial cities in the region. During these operations, Bomber Command lost 872 aircraft.[107]

The Ruhr campaign underscored the performance and design shortcomings of the Halifax MKII, with many regarding this variant as only marginally suitable for operational use. This was the aircraft to which Jost had been reassigned. Although he may have been assigned

[104] Bashow 2005, 117
[105] Bashow 2005, 123
[106] Bashow 2005, 123
[107] Bashow 2005,128

what some considered an inadequate model, he nonetheless carried out his duties with professionalism.[108]

Many members of 6 Group were initially hesitant to transition from their Wellington Bombers, with some opting to wait for the opportunity to convert to Lancasters. Flying the Halifax was viewed unfavorably by many. However, this sentiment shifted significantly following the introduction of the Hercules III version in late 1943. The improved model gained such acceptance that numerous 6 Group pilots ultimately expressed a preference for the Halifax, even over various versions of the Lancaster.[109] Jost and his crew would not have the pleasure of that wait.

At this time Jost was training at a Heavy Conversion Unit.

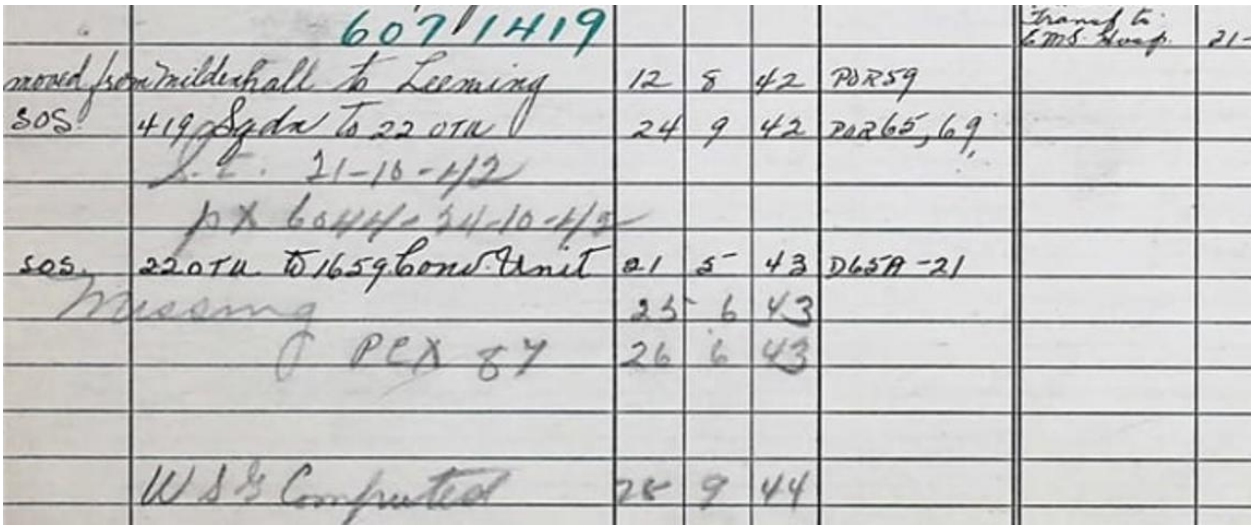

Figure 5 - Clip from Service Record BN Jost

Jost was struck off the strength of 419 Sqn RAF and posted to 22 O.T.U. 24 October 1942. He remained there until 21 May 1943 when he was again struck off strength 22 O.T.U. and sent to 1659 Heavy Conversion Unit to train on the Halifax MKII.

Just one month later, Jost and his crew aboard Halifax MKII- JD147 were shot down during the night of 24/25 June 1943. His posting to the newly renamed Canadian 419 (Moose) RCAF Squadron consequently proved brief.

[108] Bashow 2005, 131
[109] Dunmore and Carter 1991, 101

Growing Costs A Lead To Growing Accountability, Liabilities, And Responsibilities

AVM Breadner's (RCAF) Canadianization mission was a victory of sorts. There was at least one senior leader within the RAF acknowledging Canada's sovereign rights and interests. Air Marshall Sutton went on to exhort RAF leadership that they should spare no effort with Canadianization of the RCAF overseas. This effort not only encouraged its morale but also it encouraged esprit de corps. There remained considerable friction between exhortation and reality of implementation. There was an underlying spirit within the RAF to delay, rather than expedite, the issue.

Canada's case for Canadianization was bolstered by the renegotiated cost sharing arrangements with Great Britain. The BCATP was a personnel drain on the RCAF. A large portion of RCAF support personnel were held in Canada to run the BCATP. It left the way open for the few RCAF officers and men to be posted to Canadian units overseas. Then there was the problem of Canadian parsimony in paying its own way that also contributed greatly to delay and resistance for change within the RAF.

It all came to a head in the autumn of 1942. The Air Member for Finance in the Canadian Air Council, Air Commodore K. G. Nairn, returned from a visit overseas. Nairn voiced the opinion, that from the point of view of efficient administration and the welfare of Canadian personnel, it was desirable that Canada assume the whole cost of RCAF operations overseas.[110]

Canada finally took the opportunity to assume the cost of its overseas R.C.A.F. squadrons and personnel. The Cabinet War Committee, as part of a general reorganization of financial arrangements with the United Kingdom, approved in principle a change commencing 1 April 1943. Canada then assumed full responsibility for equipping and maintaining the agreed to thirty-five R.C.A.F. squadrons in the United Kingdom. [111]

The operating costs of the thirty-five R.C.A.F. squadrons overseas was estimated at $287 million for that year alone. Secondly, it was also acknowledged that certain miscellaneous establishments would also cost Canada an additional $60 million more. Further Canada now took full responsibility for the pay and allowances, clothing, and other personal necessities, of all Canadian aircrew either serving in the RCAF or the R.A.F. That alone amounted to another estimated cost of $35 million. And finally, Canada acknowledged,

[110] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 287 (314/710)
[111] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 287 (314/710)

the pain and suffering of those injured or lost while on operations. Those obligations alone amounted to potential capitation charges of about $15 million. [112] Canada's case for Canadianization was thus strengthened by its assumption of the total costs and responsibility for its forces overseas.

That was only the beginning that saw Canada take on many economic challenges on behalf of Great Britain. Some argue that Canada was Britain's biggest partner in the war. True the US juggernaut came to Britain's rescue in the end, but Canada was there as its life support from the very beginning. Working often behind the scenes, unacknowledged, and unappreciated; and not to downplay the other Dominions' contributions, Canadian efforts often laid the foundation and ground work for Britain's' economic succor and sustainment during desperate times, a fact that many Canadians are still unaware of. But Canada also did her best at avoiding costs in the very beginning that detracted from its importance.[113]

And one of those costs was the loss of JD147 and its crew in 419 Squadron (RCAF).

The Cost of Intransigence – JD 147's Demise

The fate of Jost and JD147 was influenced by factors beyond their control, notably the Canadian Government's intention to promote the Canadianization of its overseas forces by consolidating RCAF personnel under Canadian leadership and command. This objective formed the basis of Article 15 in the BACTP agreement. However, RAF authorities stationed overseas exhibited reluctance to implement these changes. Consequently, it became Air Vice-Marshal Breadner's responsibility to ensure that the Canadian Government's directives were carried out.[114]

On the night of 24-25 June 1943, the crew of JD 147 from 419 Squadron (RCAF), part of the newly reorganized Canadianization Squadrons within 6 Group RCAF, participated in an operation targeting Wuppertal;- Elberfeld. Bomber Command assembled six hundred and thirty aircraft from various airfields in England for this raid. 419 Squadron contributed sixteen planes and was supplemented by two aircraft from the 428th Squadron. The squadron's available aircraft were reduced due to the loss of two planes during an attack

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[112] Stacey 1970. ARMS, MEN AND GOVERNMENTS , THE WAR POLICIES OF CANADA, 1939 – 1945, 287 (314/710)
[113] Morton, 1985, 180-181

[114] Edwards, Suzanne K. 2007. *Gus : From Trapper Boy To Air Marshal . Air Marshal Harold Edwards, Royal Canadian Air Force – A Life*. General Store Publishing House, 499 O'Brien Rd, BOX 415 Renfrew, Ontario, Canada K7V 4A6 www.gsph.com , 105

on Krefeld on 21 June and ongoing maintenance required on several other aircraft.[115] That attack was impacted by a change of strategic direction that year.

The Influence of a Change of Strategic Direction

The year 1943 represented a pivotal moment in the air war and the Allied campaign. On January 10th, a memorandum was issued that served as a directive for subsequent operations against Germany. Until this point, Bomber Command lacked sufficient resources to conduct large-scale missions capable of significantly weakening Germany's industrial capacity or affecting civilian morale.

The main challenges encountered were:

1. Securing an adequate number of appropriate aircraft, aircrew, and airfields.
2. Creating guidance systems capable of directing the force to its target under all weather conditions.
3. Developing weapons and tactics to address the increased capabilities of enemy defences.

Recognition of RCAF Personnel Within the RAF in Meeting the Challenges

Britain acquired a sufficient number of aircraft through both procurement and domestic production to undertake sustained aerial operations involving bomber streams of 500 to 800 aircraft, or more, per mission. The development of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) and increased industrial capacity had matured, resulting in a formidable warfighting capability. The next phase was to refine this capability in combat—a process that would be tested during the Battle of the Ruhr.[116]

But 1943 also began with a recognition of the distinguished worked by RCAF Fliers. Twenty one aircrew were decorated for their service in the months leading up to 1943. Amongst the throng that King George decorated at Buckingham Palace was Flt . Sgt . J. M. Meagher, of Mulgrave, N.S .[117]

Flt Sgt Meagher was decorated with a Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM), for his work as a wireless operator and air bomber. A DFM was a singly notable achievement as this award was rarely given and was awarded only to non-commissioned officers.

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[115] Stevens, Dennis Bjorn. 1997. "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew – 419 Moose Squadron on 25 June 1943." Canadian Thanksgiving Day 13 October 1997, 4/68

[116] Cooper , Alan W. 2013. *Air Battle Of The Ruhr – The RAF Offensive March- July 1943.* Pen & Sword Aviation - An imprint of Pen & Sword Ltd., 47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS, 21-22

[117] Anon. 1943. "21 Fliers Decorated For Efficient Service." *Globe and Mail,* 9 January 1943. **21 FLIERS DECORATED FOR EFFICIENT SERVICE**, 5018_737_033-003-028.pdf

RECORD NUMBER IS DECORATED

RCAF Members Given Medals by His Majesty

London, April 14 (CP).—The largest number of R.C.A.F. members to be decorated by the King at one time attended a recent investiture at Buckingham Palace and received the personal congratulations of His Majesty, it was permitted to disclose tonight. The exigencies of the war prevented the attendance of 16 others whose names appeared on the official list.

The only Canadian ground crewman present and probably the most shy of all was LAC. R. Carter of Kelfield, Sask. He received the British Empire Medal for saving the lives of his crew when his aircraft crashed in flames. Carter enlarged a hole in the plane and, disregarding his torn and bleeding hands, dragged the crewmen to safety.

Another British Empire Medal recipient was Sgt. George Reardon of St. George, N.B., who was decorated for courage and fortitude when a bomber in which he was a crew member crashed off the British coast. He helped support a fellow crewman for 3½ hours before rescue came.

Back from the Middle East, WO. Desmond McCable of St. Catharines, Ont., and Victoria, B.C., received the Distinguished Flying Medal for services there. Others on the list for D.F.M. awards were:

Flt. Lt. Gordon Goodall of Brantford, Ont., Pilot Officers Robert Oates of Badjeros, Ont., Frank Hamilton of Mazewood, Sask., James Meagher of Mulgrave, N.S., Flight Sergeants Libere Boucher of Grand Falls, N.B., William Leavitt of Regina, and Francis Mitchell of Letterville, Que., Sergeants William Bihoray of Redwater, Alta., William Egri of Abbottsford, B.C., Leroy Stevens of Rapid City, Man., and Earle Warren of Regina.

Figure 6 - An Official Notice Detailing Scope of Service and Courage Against Insurmountable Odds

Canadian Airman flew against insurmountable odds during the war. It was always a 50/50 game whether one survived or was blown into oblivion. Yet many climbed into their charges night after night facing these uncertain odds. The situation is well captured by Gary Chisolm in his book "The One Eyed Gunner" that recounts his uncle's time, Larry Sutherland of East Mountain, Colchester, Nova Scotia, as the RCAF was about to embark on this perilous phase of the war, 1943-1944.

Larry served with 207 Squadron RAF at this time. 55,000 lives were lost in the air war over the war. To put it all in some perspective, the 207th lost 1187 men. Some 7900 Lancaster bombers were built during the war with 3400 lost.[118] Such were the odds for all concerned; roughly one in two of making it out alive.

Events Leading up to 24-25 June 1943

An air battle commenced 1 March 1943 that would last until the end of the war. It was designed specifically to relieve the pressure on Russia and complaints from Stalin for a second front at a time when the allies were unprepared for that undertaking. The bombing campaign was specifically targeted against Germany's industrial sector in the hope that those arms would never be brought to bear against our Russian Allies.[119]

This phase was known as the "Battle of the Ruhr" and aptly named by the aircrew as the RAF Graveyard. The first phase would last four months.[120] On 5/6 March 1943 the RAF mounted operation 'Bullhead'. The number of aircraft used on this raid was 442 consisting of a mix of Halifax, Lancaster, Wellington, and Stirling bombers.[121] Fourteen aircraft or 3.2 per cent of the total bomber force were lost on the night of 5-6 March. Five were estimated to have been shot down by Flak. Amongst the remaining casualties probably three or possibly five were shot down by enemy aircraft. The remainder were lost to unknown causes.[122]

On this night Sgt AK (Sandy) Horne uncle of the late Merle Taylor of Lochaber NS, was shot down and killed. Sgt Horne was a member of 49 Sqn RAF. His death and fate are recorded as 5/6 Mar probably shot down.[123] Merle, like many other Canadian families, only learned of their loved ones final fate several months later. In the meantime, they were left with the worry of the unknown.

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[118] Chislom, Gary. 2010. *The One Eyed Gunner.* Bryler Publications Inc., Suite 1035, Chester NS, B0J 1J0, 10
[119] Cooper 2013, 36
[120] Cooper 2013, 37
[121] Cooper 2013, 36
[122] Cooper 2013, 41
[123] Cooper 2013, 146, App 2

Preparations for and Results of Ruhr Campaign

The Battle of the Ruhr continued and was in the final phase in June 1943. Sqn L Jost and the crew of JD147 prepared to take off with their rendezvous with the unknown 24-25 June 1943 to Wuppertal.

This was the second raid against Wuppertal. An earlier raid was conducted 29-30 May. On this raid enormous fires sprang up in all parts of the town. Three very large explosions caused by bursting 'blockbuster' bombs were observed, and yet the raid proved inconclusive. So, another was ordered one month later 24-25 June. [124]

The second raid was met with devastating effect by the enemy. On the night of this operation losses from 419 Sqn RCAF amounted to three aircraft:

- Halifax JD 258 – all crew killed
- Halifax JD 147 – 3 Killed - 4 POW
- Halifax JD 214 – All POW

But this was only a small part of the tally. A total of 33 was lost of the 556 aircraft attacking that night.[125] This amounted to a loss of 5.9% of the attacking force for the destruction of 80% of Wuppertal.[126]

On the night of June 24th, each aircraft was inspected prior to this mission and loaded with two one-thousand pound bombs and six hundred thirty 4 pound incendiary bombs. The total weight of bombs was 6000 pounds whose load was specifically designed to allow the thousand pounders to break up infrastructure with the light incendiary bombs to ignite it. The Halifax bomber carried 12,000 litres of fuel and in this configuration, its takeoff weight was 67,000 pounds.

Crews were briefed on their mission concerning weather, enemy dispositions, flak, rendezvous points, formation and the target. The first off that night was JD-147 with Sqn Ldr Jost in Command at 2240 hrs. The last aircraft from this squadron lifted in the air at 2311 hours; or in civilian terms between 1040 pm and 1111 pm. [127]

Once air borne the groups problem was formatting. Jost guided his into a packet at the correct time and height to guide them further into a formed group of 600 attacking aircraft. All was conducted in the dark, without spatial reference, and without navigation lights. To

[124] Cooper 2013, 100
[125] Cooper 2013, 100 and App 2, 211-215
[126] Cooper 2013, 101
[127] Stevens 1997, 4/68

align aircraft within 100 feet of one another, above below and from side to side, takes nerve and guile. It was nerve wracking and a situation that was often fraught with fatal mistakes, mishaps, and near misses. Mid air collisions or destruction by falling bombs were not uncommon as well. There was as much danger from friendly fire as well as from the enemy.

Trouble also arose from maintenance issues. One of Jost's charges encountered mechanical difficulties and returned to base leaving him with 15 charges to lead in the attack.[128]

Crew

Jost's crew on this night consisted of 3 Canadians including himself, 3 British, and 1 New Zealander:

8. Navigator Sgt. B Pope (RAF)
9. Bomb/Aimer F/S A.W.A. Bruce (RNZAF)
10. WAG F/O R.O.E. Goodwin (RCAF)
11. F/E Sgt. J.B. Johnson (RCAF)
12. A/G Sgt. L Barker (RAF)
13. A/G Sgt. R.C. Austen (RAF)
14. Sqn L B.N. Jost (RCAF)

Such an eclectic mix of crew was not unusual. In the initial stages of the war there was no segregation of crews by nationality. All were immediately absorbed into the RAF and employed at their will and whim once overseas.

Prospective crew members were brought together informally to organize themselves, instead of being officially chosen and assigned. This process often resulted in strong group cohesion, with crews sometimes reluctant to separate during reassignment, end of tours, or new postings. Typically, the crewing approach fostered a shared bond among members as they faced common experiences and challenges, even death.[129]

The Night of 24-25 June 1943 the attack of Wuppertal- Elberfeld

A second attack on Wuppertal-Elberfeld was ordered for the night of 24-25 June. It was to be a second consecutive night of intense operations for this squadron for the night

[128] Stevens 1997, 4/68
[129] Stevens 1997,5/68

previous 22-23 June, Bomber Command ordered an attack on the German city of Mulheim, a city in the Ruhr Valley. [130]

The second operation proved to be intense. Six Hundred and thirty aircraft were prepared for this assault that would be conducted in five waves with several diversionary attacks as well. The Luftwaffe was to be distracted by a flight of 4 Mosquitoes bombers on the city of Duisburg, a city of recent RAF interest. A flight of 10 planes was split; some dropped mines in the mouth of the Gironde River, others went off to Paris to drop propaganda pamphlets. The actual attack was planned based on a flight deception routing and feint that would take the group south-east over Holland and Belgium, then with a sudden course adjustment south of Monchengladbach, thence directly to Wuppertal-Elberfeld. [131]

The way home was also set out for them to turn 120 degrees from Wuppertal-Elberfeld to Koblenz. From there the group was directed to the south of Aachen over Belgium and back to England. This route was designed to avoid known enemy flak batteries. The whole operation was designed as a feint towards either Cologne or Dusseldorf. This left the Germans confused as to the main target; however; they did suspect Wuppertal-Elberfeld to be amongst the throng. [132]

As the British operation was designed to thwart the German Flak batteries, this left the German defences largely to its night fighter force to fill in the void.[133]

The Battle Evolves - The German Perspective Ruhr Campaign

On the night of 5/6 March 1943, German forces observed a noticeable shift in British tactics, marked by the increased use of bomber stream formations and four-engined aircraft such as Stirling's, Halifax's, and Lancaster Bombers. The Germans recognized differences among these aircraft types, which affected the altitude of each wave. However, fighter operations over the north German plain indicated that engagements with these bombers were approached in a similar fashion, due to comparable defensive capabilities. The concentrated British bomber stream and the utilization of radar equipment influenced the development of German counter-tactics.[134]

On 5/6 March 1943, the "Battle of the Ruhr" began for Germany. The target on that day was Essen, which is the location of the Krupp Steelworks. Out of 442 aircraft that

[130] Stevens 1997,9/68
[131] Stevens 1997,9/68
[132] Stevens 1997,9/68
[133] Stevens 1997,9/68
[134] Bowman, Martin W. 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943*. Pen & Sword Aviation - An imprint of Pen & Sword Ltd., 47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS, 126-127

participated in the attack, 14 did not return; six were shot down by night fighters.[135] This represented an attrition rate of 3.1%, considered an acceptable loss.

As the Battle progressed, the RAF loss rate became of concern. An example was the attack on Duisburg 12/13 May 1943. 572 aircraft set off for Duisburg. There the RAF met with intense flak and accurate targeting by the night fighters of the opposing force. In this encounter the RAF lost 34 of 572 aircraft, with an unacceptable attrition rate of 5.9%. It was a rate that was unsustainable.[136]

On 22/23 Jun 565 bombers raided Mulheim. 578 people were killed and 1174 were injured. An RAF Bombing Survey Unit calculated that 64% of Mulheim was destroyed. It was at a high cost though. 36 bombers failed to return, a loss rate of 6.3%. On this occasion 25 kills were credited on the night to the Nachtjagd.[137]

This raid was soon followed by an attack on Wuppertal, which was targeted by 630 aircraft on June 24/25. Elberfeld, the other half of the town, was also targeted by the RAF, having remained unharmed during the previous bombing on May 29/30. Once again the loss rate was appalling. On this night 34 aircraft failed to return or 5.4% of the attacking force. The Nachtjagd shot down 28 of the attacking force attesting to their efficiency and prowess.[138]

It also attests to the proficiency of the German centrally controlled interdiction system that guided their Nachtjagd to target.

German Anti-Aircraft Defences

Germany mounted a determined defence of its territory, employing fighter aircraft, anti-aircraft artillery, and various detection and jamming technologies. Like Britain, Germany invested heavily in research to advance radar systems and develop countermeasures against the Royal Air Force. As a result, the bomber campaign evolved into a complex form of electronic warfare.[139]

The basic German organization was based on three defensive lines at night:

1. first near the coast shores of the North Sea, the Freya early-warning radar network detected them
2. the second network, was the Würzburg line that followed the course of the RAF bombers as they flew towards their targets, and finally nearer the target,

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[135] Bowman 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943, 127*
[136] Bowman, Martin W. 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943, 145-146*
[137] Bowman, Martin W. 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943, 156-157*
[138] Bowman, Martin W. 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943, 157*
[139] Canada in the Second World War. 2025. "Arms & Weapons - German Anti-Aircraft Defences." © 2025 Copyright Juno Beach Centre, Accessed: 28 Sep 2025
Source: German Anti-Aircraft Defences : Juno Beach Centre

3. the third line of defence was assumed through a coordination of ground controller and aircraft.

The third radar network operated by ground controllers directed Nachtjagdgeschwader ("Night Fighter Squadron") pilots. These pilots typically flew twin-engine aircraft such as Messerschmitt Me 110, Junkers JU-88G, or Heinkel He 219. Working in coordination with ground control, they approached bomber streams until they could detect a bomber using their onboard Lichtenstein radar systems, or, if possible, through visual contact.[140]

By day, the approach was much simpler. Fighters would locate bombers and visually attack them.[141]

Their boys had fun too

The Nachtjagdgeschwader was not invincible. Many pilots and aircrew were lost on their side as well. They were often met with great intensive and accurate fire. The RCAF had three known Ace Gunners. These gunners were a part of either the RAF or RCAF and were accredited with five downed German aircraft achieving ace standard. They were:[142]

1. Wallace MacIntosh, RAF – tail gunner – 6 kills – one damaged
2. Peter Engbrecht, RCAF – mid-upper gunner – 5 kills- one damaged
3. Clarence Bentley Sutherland -RCAF seconded to RAF -tail and mid-upper gunner 7 kills – one damaged

But the odds always seemed in the German's favour. Regardless the battle took its toll and these pilots much like their RAF counterparts sought relief once out of the air. The Brits had their pubs and messes. The Luftwaffe boys in the field made do with local fair.

When on standby duty, German crews often played cards, chess or other games; or listened to music. No civilian females were permitted on their airfields but that changed with the introduction of the German women's auxiliary air force who became an intimate part of their communication and operation system. Crews would often find some time off. If they were lucky they would head off to local towns seeking out the local pleasures and comforts. Some of these were as simple as having an ice cream on a rooftop. Another was finding their way to a local dance and female companionship there.[143]

Intimate may have been the operative word and requirement, for some met and married German airwoman as a result of their service.[144] Seeking male or female

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[140] German Anti-Aircraft Defences : Juno Beach Centre
[141] German Anti-Aircraft Defences : Juno Beach Centre
[142] Chislom 2010. *The One Eyed Gunner, 11*
[143] Bowman, Martin W. 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943,* 157
[144] Bowman, Martin W. 2016. *Nachtjagd Defenders of the 1940-1943,* 157

companionship was a common virtue shared by all in that war. Perhaps that was the strong desire for some normalcy in the times of trial that found many seeking of love.

It is difficult to quantify German night fighter losses during the war. Some put Luftwaffe night fighter losses at approximately 526 in total. Then 254 of those losses were attributed to enemy action. Those numbers may not be accurate, given the results of many varied sources; but it does give a sense of the depth and breadth of their loss in fighting the air war at night. [145] Given the number of unattributable losses for the Luftwaffe alone, indicates that the German air space was a deadly place for both the RAF and Luftwaffe.

German Anticipation

The German adversary accurately anticipated the actions of the RAF, suspecting that a large-scale bombing campaign was imminent. In preparation for this expected offensive, they reinforced their air defences accordingly. Their defensive strategy relied on dividing Germany's industrial cities into sectors, with flak and searchlight batteries systematically concentrated and centrally coordinated within these areas. Additionally, 68 percent of German fighter aircraft fleet was allocated to the defence of Germany and the Western Front, directly contributing to the relief of our Russian Ally. To address the specific challenges posed by nocturnal bombing raids, specialised night fighter units were designated as part of this comprehensive defence system.[146]

Allied aircraft were known to be concentrated in the vicinity of Wuppertal;- Elberfeld. IINJG 1, a night fighter squadron, located at St. Truiden was called to defend Wuppertal;- Elberfeld. It was equipped with twin seated Messerschmitt ME-110 armed with four MG17, 7.9 calibre machine guns and 2 MG151-20mm machine guns.[147]

The unit was alerted and the German tactics were to circle awaiting instructions from ground radar contacts for an approach to the bomber stream. Pilot Oberfeldwebel Reinhard Kollak and his navigator Unteroffizier Hans Herman were aboard ME110 G9/ER awaiting orders. At 28 years old, Kollach was an experienced night fighter having shot down 8 bombers the prior year. Kollach waited in sector MM north of St Truiden where he found JD-147 who met its fate.[148]

The radar post at Nieuwekerken 10 miles south of St Truiden, Belgium made contact with a bomber at 0035 hrs and Kollach subsequently directed to Sector 6A. Adjustments were made based on ground instructions for correct course and height. Once in position Kollach

[145] Average sorties/kill for German night fighters | Aircraft of World War II - WW2Aircraft.net Forums
[146] Cooper 2013, 22-24
[147] Stevens 1997, 7/68
[148] Stevens 1997, 7/68

was on his own to seek and destroy. Nieuwerkerken is a municipality located in the Belgian province of Limburg near Hasselt.[149]

Apart from ground assistance, Kollak's ME110 was also equipped with radar. He began is approach searching from the ground report identifying the target. Ten minutes after this report Kollach made his own contact. From this point, he used stealth to attack the unknown aircraft ahead of him that turned out to be Halifax JD-147 out of 419th Moose squadron with Jost and six crew aboard. [150]

Kollak's actions and victories on the night of 24-25 June are succinctly described by Dennis Bjorn (Barney) Stevens in his 1997 account: "The Story of Halifax JD 147 VR-"C" for Charlie and Her Crew":[151]

> The night-fighter was spotted by Lesley Barker who was observing in a separate plexidome in the tail of the aircraft. We know this was a new type of Halifax without mid-upper dome. Lesley informed the tail-gunner Austin that a night-fighter was tracking them. Now it was a matter of time and luck for the crew of the Halifax.
>
> Kollak had positioned his plane somewhat left under the Halifax and fired his 20mm Mauser machine-guns. Hundreds of 20mm armoured bullets with tracer sought the Halifax. Kollak had not aimed correctly and, with one eye on the Halifax, banked left immediately in order to get into position to launch another attack. The second time his aim was better but now he received counter fire from the Halifax whose bullets narrowly missed the ME110.
>
> This new type of Halifax with its different armoury, the mid-upper gun turret being by a separate observation dome, created a problem. The tail-gunner Austin had two blind corners, which he could not protect with his quadruple machinegun. Kollak attacked one of these blind corners, which proved fatal for the Halifax and its crew. The right wing and outer engine of the Halifax were on fire.
>
> We leave the burning Halifax now and focus on the flight of the ME110. Herman noted in his flight-log the shooting-down of a Halifax at 01.11 and went after another target. At 01.39 hrs he shot down a Short Sterling, which came down near Leeuwen, Belgium. After being airborne for 121 minutes they landed at 02.20 hrs at the St. Truiden base. After landing they gave a report of their nights action and then stood down for a rest

JD-147 was mortally wounded. The Halifax was shot by Kollak at 10,600 feet and caught fire. Jost was likely at the lower level in the bomber stream thus facing two threats; one from the enemy at his level, and the other, the threat from above from the falling bombs of the upper bomber stream. [152]

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[149] Stevens 1997,7- 8/68
[150] Stevens 1997, 8/68
[151] Stevens 1997, 8/68
[152] Stevens 1997, 10/68

With his right wing on fire and with an engine violently burning, he asked calmly across the intercom if all were all right. When this was confirmed he calmly asked Navigator Pope for his position. He was near a railway station at Maasbracht and Linne. He also order his bomb aimer Bruce to standby to ditch his load. [153]

Jost attempted to extinguish the flames by placing his Halifax in a steep dive. At the moment he intended to pull up, he order Bruce to drop the two thousand pounders to gain height. He failed to extinguish the blaze and thus ordered his crew to stand-by for bailing out. His final slide to oblivion was noted by civilians on the ground who observed some torches he released to illuminate the area at 10 minutes to one AM the morning of 25 June.[154]

One by one his crew began bailing out just as he ordered them to do so. Jost remained at the controls to give them a chance of a safe exit. F/Sgt Johnson his flight engineer chose to stay with Jost to assist. Staying with the mortally damaged aircraft resulted in both their deaths. It was a heroic sacrifice on two fronts, one a duty towards their comrades, the other a duty to the innocent civilians on the ground, for had one or both abandoned their posts, the crash was headed toward Roermond, a city in the Dutch province of Limburg. [155]

Jost was well aware of where he was. He observed that he was flying over the heavily populated town of Roermond. He banked his aircraft to avoid and get away from houses. He flew in the direction of 'Roerzicht' dropping flares along the way to illuminate his path. Hope ran against hope that matters would turn for the better. It did not. The flames intensified and the plane began to disintegrate bit by bit.[156]

Jost was searching for a place to crash land his aircraft. In the illumination as he was flying from Roerzicht to the Meuse and the Shell Depot, he saw the village of Hammerveld and a farmer's field in which he hoped to safely crash the burning Halifax. It was a perilous task at night whose progress was witnessed by a farm worker, Mr. Heitzer. [157]

He and Johnson held the aircraft steady allowing the others to safely evacuate the burning plane. Somewhere above Hammerveld Navigator Pope and second gunner Leslie Barker bailed out. But things were going irretrievably from bad to worse, his first engine fell from the aircraft near a bridge at Rode Brug over the river Hambeek. Still banking left and as he came over Herten village near the home of the Kessels family, his second and third engines

[153] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[154] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[155] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[156] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[157] Stevens 1997, 10/68

departed the aircraft; the second near the Herten road, and the third just beyond on a wooden garage of a packing company. [158]

The situation was obviously grave but all three Canadians remained on board. They were no more than 350 feet above ground and Jost refused to leave the aircraft fearing for the civilian lives on the ground. At this point young Goodwin manage to bail out but he was severely injured in the process and later died a lonely mournful death on the ground. No one came to his assistance or were willing to assist him for fear of the German wrath and retribution in the immediate aftermath of this attack. [159]

In desperate shape the aircraft finally came down in a field of crops near Hammerveld with Jost at the controls and Johnson at his side. Both were burned to death in the aftermath of the crash.[160] They were subsequently buried as noted here:[161]

> Burton Jost and Barney Johnson, who were first buried in Venlo, in 1947, were brought to the Canadian Cemetery Jonkerbos in Nijmegen, where they rest until this day. Goodwin still lies in the cemetery at the Chapel 'in het Zand'. At his widow's request he was not moved. After the war his wife remarried and is now Mrs Braine.

Escape and Evade – In the Act of Supreme Sacrifice

Realising the aircraft was lost, the crew jettisoned the bombs and got ready to bail out.[162] Recognising the imminent loss of their aircraft, the crew released the bomb payload and prepared to evacuate. Flight Lieutenant Jost and Flight Engineer Sergeant Julius Johnson worked diligently to stabilise altitude and maintain a steady flight path to facilitate the safe exit of the remaining crew members. [163]

Ground witnesses observed flares from the damaged Halifax as Jost searched for a place to crash-land. [164]

Four of the seven crew members survived the crash. They were:

- Navigator Sgt. B Pope, RAF
- B/A F/S A.W.A. Bruce, RNZAF
- A/G Sgt. L Barker, RAF

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[158] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[159] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[160] Stevens 1997, 10/68
[161] Stevens 1997, 15/68
[162] 419 Squadron Halifax II JD147 VR-C Fl/Lt. Jost DFC Accessed: 5 Sep 2025
[163] 419 Squadron Halifax II JD147 VR-C Fl/Lt. Jost DFC Accessed: 5 Sep 2025
[164] 419 Squadron Halifax II JD147 VR-C Fl/Lt. Jost DFC Accessed: 5 Sep 2025

- A/G Sgt. R.C. Austen, RAF

It was hard locating the downed crew members in the dark of night. For a time 3 of the four attempted to evade the enemy. Sgt Bruce who was first to bail out, landed near the Massbracht railway station. He quickly buried his parachute and hid in a crop field for the night. At dawn he made his way toward Massbracht. He carefully avoided any contact with civilians, regardless he was found by some in a berry field in a state of shock that afternoon.[165]

This was an account of Bruce's saga that Steven's gathered after the war. Bruce was subsequently guided by a civilian who found him near a German outpost some 1500 yards from a local lock. He was taken to one of the lock workers home. Here they attempted to disguise him with coveralls that were much too small as he was a large man. His uniform was carefully secured in a bag. Here he found safety for the moment but was later placed in the hands of Mr. Van Monfort who later conveyed him to another farm for another night. His safety was passed onto the care of a local Vicar, Vicar Engelen who had contacts with the underground. He hoped that provisions would be made for the return of Bruce into Allied hands. [166]

Bruce was then passed onto the care of Mr. Heersink, a local custom agent and active resistance member helping in the assistance with downed aircrew. Bruce was hidden in one of his outbuildings in a local field as it was too dangerous to keep him in the family home. [167]

After a couple of days with Heersink, Bruce was moved over the river Meuse by Mr. Indemans to Walberg Castle. Finally, Bruce while under the care of Gertrude Hendrikx made his way to Belgium from Maaseik with two other down pilots. It became a large and disparate group of 13 as they made their way to Bordeaux France on the 29th of July. The group was betrayed and became POWs, and after several interrogations with the Gestapo they were taken back to Germany for the remainder of the war. [168]

On the same night Bruce bailed out, Pope and Parker successfully egressed from the burning aircraft almost simultaneously. Both came down beside a Concrete Factory opposite the farm where JD147 crashed. Pope injured his ankle in the process and could not get away. He laid in the open for the night and was captured by the Germans the following morning. He was taken to Venlo in an ambulance but locals remember that he

[165] Stevens 1997, 11-12/68
[166] Stevens 1997, 11-12/68
[167] Stevens 1997, 11-12/68
[168] Stevens 1997, 11-12/68

was roughly treated by the Germans before hand. Pope met a fellow crew member, likely Austin at Venlo. They were given an opportunity to talk then taken away together to the same POW camp.[169]

Leslie Parker was found but unconscious that following morning by the Germans but in much worse shape. His parachute had burnt while entrapped in the fuselage of the burning JD147. He made his jump with a half burnt parachute and came down hard. He subsequently broke his back in two places. He was also found shot through the ankle . He arrived at the hospital more dead than alive but miraculously survived. He remained in hospital until 19 November where he received several surgical treatments, burns attended to, and ankle healed. After which he too was sent to a POW camp where he remained until the end of the war. [170]

Goodwin was the fifth man to leave the burning JD147. He bailed from the aircraft at the last possible moment and was too low and coming in fast onto the ground. He was so low that his parachute did not completely open so his body took a mighty impact on the ground. He lay there moaning on the ground and no one came to his assistance although his pleas for help were heard. No one had the courage to go into the field to help him for fear of the surrounding Germans. Goodwin was alive for the moment but eventually died a miserable death alone.[171]

His body was finally found and recovered in a decomposed state several days later the 9th of July. It had not been left unattended in the meantime. His body was stripped of his flying jacket, boots, and perhaps some personal items such as a ring or watch. Stevens cites this as "Whoever did this – he or they who must have been Dutch – could not have had any sense of honour to plunder the body of a liberator even if times were hard." [172]

WO Bruce – the road to freedom – the detailed story

WO Bruce's journey to liberation conveys much of what transpired at the time exposing the dangers, gallantry, and courage from those who helped him along the way. It is also a tale of villainy.' especially those who betrayed the escapees and collaborated with an enemy in the betrayal of their countrymen. His experience and liberation from captivity was a journey common to all who were held prisoner of war. First, came with liberation was immediate care, then removal to safety to the United Kingdom, and then, debrief and administration in which the families were finally notified of their next of kin's fate.

[169] Stevens 1997, 12/68
[170] Stevens 1997, 12/68
[171] Stevens 1997, 12/68
[172] Stevens 1997, 12/68

WO Bruce made his own statement on his aircraft's demise and his subsequent capture on 26 June 1945 that truly conveys what many endured on their road to freedom.[173]

Some anomalies are noted here:

- Bruce had been promoted in the interim from Sgt to WO, and
- The interviewer records him as part of the 419 Squadron RAF;
- whereas by this time 419 Squadron was a part of 6 Group RCAF

WO Ashley Bruce, a member of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, service number NZ 412786 had 22 operations under his belt by the time he was shot down over Wuppertal the night of 24/25 June 1943. He was just 8 missions shy of completing a first tour, and a stand down from operations. He served at the pleasure of the RAF who were responsible for his leave, training, or rest. Rather than training or rest, WO Bruce was subsequently captured on operations and remained a Prisoner of War until April 1945.[174] Bruce's position as part of the crew aboard Halifax MKII JD147, was as its bomb aimer.

Bruce was born in England whose parents emigrated to New Zealand while he was a young boy of two. His working life began with employment at the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Company. He left the company to join the RNAZF in 1941 at the age of 20. He was posted to and trained in Canada as an observer throughout 1941. His Canadian posting was followed by a trip overseas to Great Britain where he arrived 31 July 1942 where he eventually joined 419 Squadron and JD147. At 22 he was the youngest member of the crew.[175]

Bruce apprised his debriefer at the end of the war in the events leading up to JD147's demise on what had occurred on that night. This is his account.

They had crossed the enemy coast on tract just short of picking out their turning point marker. The aircraft had evidently been discovered earlier in its approach. Two members of the crew saw an approaching aircraft, perhaps Kollack's....Warnings were given to the pilot. Jost jinked the aircraft up and down and slightly to starboard to avoid the approaching enemy aircraft.

Both the blister gunner and tail gunners engaged the enemy aircraft. The tail gunner stated that he had shot it down. That is hard to verify. But it does give pause to suggest that there

[173] Statement. 1945. NZ 412786 WO Bruce, Ashley William Alfred,419 Squadron, Bomber Command RAF, Interviewed by: I.S.9 (W) 26 June 1945

[174] Statement. 1945. NZ 412786 WO Bruce, Ashley William Alfred,419 Squadron, Bomber Command RAF, Interviewed by: I.S.9 (W) 26 June 1945

[175] Stevens 1997,5/68

may have been a second aircraft in the air stalking JD147. Many rounds were heard hitting JD147 in which the port inner engine was set afire after this initial assault.

A large fire broke out in the central part of the aircraft at the rest position. Efforts were made to extinguish it. At the same time, the flight engineer (F/Sgt. J.B. Johnson) feathered the port engine in an attempt to put that fire out. The bombload was jettisoned and an attempt was made to turn the aircraft about to head back to England. Ten minutes later Jost decided that the crew should abandoned the aircraft. At this time Bruce bailed out at 16000 feet from the forward hatch and landed in a field.

At 0120 hours on 25 June, Bruce landed in a field near Roermohd, Holland. This began his tale of escape, evasion and subsequent betrayal only one month later 29 July. Immediately upon landing in the field he walked out and ran into three Dutch farmers who hid and assisted him. They hid his parachute and showed him the best way to Belgium on his escape map.

On 25 June he spent a day in a field. He was warned away from walking over a nearby bridge by some farmers as it was guarded. Next day they returned where he was brought to a home of a Catholic priest who took and hid his uniform and was given a pair of coveralls to disguise himself with.

Bruce was handed over from contact to contact and moved from safehouse to safehouse. He was placed with a local doctor who protected him until the 28th of June. On July 2nd he was moved to another farm/safehouse organized by the priest and local doctor. He thought he was well on the way to the homestretch when he was ferried across a river on the 9th of July as he left Belgium.

On the tenth he waited in a field where he was contacted by another local who promised that he would return but never did. Bruce lingered in the field until the 13th and made his way independently through the field to a local farm house. He was given coffee and bread and taken to another hand-off with a local customs official at Ophoven where he was billeted until 17 July.

Bruce was handed off to another elderly lady in the escape chain at Hadyseck where he stayed along with two other evaders; Sgt Turner (RAF) and Sgt Danvoise (RCAF) until 24 July.

All look good as on the 25th, they were gathered together with 10 others for an attempt at a mass escape at a safehouse in Brussels . So close yet so far, the group was subsequently betrayed at Brussels on the night of the 29th and taken into custody. They were then taken and escorted by two Belgians to Bordeaux Military Prison in France.

Bruce was subsequently interrogated by the Gestapo but through courage and guile he kept the secrets of those who helped him close to himself. He was taken to Frenses and placed in a cell with three Frenchmen on 7 August and there he remained until 30 September from whence he was transferred into various German Prisoner of War Camps. His final camp was at Fallingbostel, Stalag 357, Germany where he states he was liberated by American troops.

1 CAPTURE:

My aircraft was shot down on an operation over W. Europe. I baled out and landed at 0120 hours on 24 June 43, in a field near ROERMOHD, Holland. I walked out of the field and ran into three Dutch farmers who told me that they would hide my parachute and pointed out the best way to BELGIUM on my escape map. I began walking straight away and at daylight hid in a wheat field.

That evening I crossed a bridge over the HAAS, and continued walking across country roughly south-west. I spent 25 June in a field. Some peasants who were currant picking warned me not to go over the next bridge, as it was guarded. They brought a Catholic (English speaking) priest to me with overalls and I discarded my uniform. The priest took me to his church in a village, the name of which I do not know. The local doctor handed me over to a farm by the river HAAS where I stayed until 28 June. I was then taken to a village named OLEOLAK and put into a tent in a field until 2 July. I was then taken to another farmhouse on the river bank. KI believe all this was organised by the priest and the doctor. On the evening of 9 July I was ferried across the river and left in BELGIUM.

I walked westwards all night. On 10 July I hid in a field near a main road and made contact with a peasant who said he would return for me. I waited until the evening of 13 July but he never returned. By now I was very hungry and thirsty, So I decided to move on west through the fields. I knocked up a farmer who gave me coffee and bread and took me to the Customs Official at OPHOVEN. This man housed me until 17 July while he attempted to get in touch with an organization. He sent me on to an elderly lady in HADSEYCK, where I stayed until 24 July with two other evaders – P/O turner, R.A.F.
and Sgt.DANVOISE, R.C.A.F. – then two men and a woman came and took us down to LIEAGE by tram where we stayed one night.

On 25 July the 'Captain' drove us to his flat in DRUSSELS. Here there were 11 other aircrew evaders, and identity papers were provided for us. On the night of 29 July two

Belgians escorted us all by train to BORDEAUX Military Prison, but neither violence nor threats were used against us, and my interrogation was not pressed.

On 7 August I was taken to FRESNES where I remained in a cell with three French prisoners until 30 September. I received bad food not no ill treatment. During my interrogation here by the Gestapo I acted in a silly manner and was let off lightly. I had deliberately forgotten the names and addresses of my helpers.

Figure 1: Statement. 1945. NZ 412786 WO Bruce, Ashley William Alfred,419 Squadron, Bomber Command RAF, Interviewed by: I.S.9 (W) 26 June 1945

WO Bruce states he was liberated 6 April at Fallingbostel, Germany at Stalag 357. He also states that he was liberated by American troops. That may be so, but much movement was occurring in the area at the time.

WO Bruce records his liberation as of 6 April 1945. It may have been 10 days later for War Artist Edward Ardizzone travelling with the 8th Hussars (British), was with the unit that liberated a group of prisoners at Stalag 357 at Fallingbostel. The liberation of the Prisoner of War camps especially those liberated by 7th Armoured Division (UK), was noted as an especially poignant event. It was said that their "Liberation was joyously celebrated like Christmas, 4th of July and one's birthday all wrapped into one!" Ardizzone remembered the joy on the POWs faces upon their liberation and release that very day, 16 April 1945.[176]

[176] Anon., **World War II Today – Follow the War as It Happened, the first POW camp liberated – Fallingbostel**, WordPress, 2020
Source: http://ww2today.com/16-april-1945-the-first-pow-camp-liberated-fallingbostel
Accessed: 29 Oct 2020

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It should be noted that WO Bruce made a statement that he was liberated while on the march. It may well be that he wasn't present at Stalag 357 Fallingbostel at the time but was liberated by US forces while being conveyed there.

On a personal level my maternal uncle, Pte Leslie O'Keefe, Canadian Scottish Regiment was also held POW from 16 February was finally liberated 16 April 1945 at Stalag 11B Fallingbostel in Germany. British Armoured Units finally liberated he and other allied POWs. Leslie was one amongst the throng. It was an eclectic mix of Allied prisoners, some of whom were held there for a short time, others much longer. Some prisoners were gathered

there from far away and concentrated by the enemy in anticipation of Germany's imminent collapse.[177]

A Hometown Boy

Burton Norton Jost was a home town son of Guysborough County. Family circumstances caused them to move away from the town of Guysborough at a very early age. His father was Dr Arthur Jost who had come to practice medicine in Guysborough Village.

Dr Jost was of German descent who traced his ancestry back to George Jost who emigrated to Canada and settled in Halifax in 1757. Dr Jost was a veteran of the Great War, 1914-18 and served as a physician. Burton was born in 1911. His mother died during this period while his father was at war. Typical of the period Burton and siblings were raised by an unmarried Aunt.[178]

Upon his return from war Dr Jost attempted to set up a practice in the village of Guysborough. It was a busy and bustling town at the time with many physicians attempting to establish themselves and set up practice. Regrettably for all, the area was already served by a respected, although aging, but a well established physician; Dr Edward Garritt, graduate University of Edinburgh, who had been practicing in the area since 1842.[179] No one not even the younger war veteran could compete with him.

Dr Jost and his two sons subsequently moved to Dover in Delawar, USA where Burton Jost grew up and eventually went to Pennsylvania university. He graduated as an engineer but not before attending and studying at Halifax. He became a mining engineer and began his career in the gold mines of Northern Ontario. [180]

When war was declared he felt it his duty to this country to join up. Burton Norris Jost enlisted at North Bay, Ontario, 20 December 1940 and was enrolled into the Royal Canadian Air Force. He served with distinction having been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), 2 November 1942.

His citation in the London Gazette dated 6 November 1942 reads as follows:

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[177] Anon. 2020. "World War II Today – Follow the War as It Happened, the first POW camp liberated – Fallingbostel," WordPress, 2020
Source: http://ww2today.com/16-april-1945-the-first-pow-camp-liberated-fallingbostel
Accessed: 29 Oct 2020

[178] Stevens 1997,5/68

[179] Grant, Jamie and Mark Haynes. 2025. *Amazing True Stories of Guysborough County*. Guysborough Historical Society, Old Court House Museum, Guysborough NS, B0H 1N0

[180] Stevens 1997,5/68

"Flight Lieutenant Jost has displayed courage and determination in his operational sorties against the enemy and, while acting as flight commander, has set an inspiring example to those subordinate to him"

The Hunt for recognition

Several attempts were made by Barney Stevens, nephew of the late Sgt Barney Johnson of 419 Squadron -RCAF to obtain appropriate recognition for the sacrifices both of Squadron Leader Jost and his late uncle. That began in 1988 with a letter to then Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada, The Hon. George Hees. Hees himself was not only a distinguished politician but also a distinguished artillery veteran and officer of the Second World War. He had a first hand view of the sacrifices made by Canadians overseas having been wounded in the arm during the Battle of the Scheldt, as the brigade major of the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade. [181]

Stevens pointed out;[182]

[QUOTE]

There is no doubt that all the flight crew could have bailed out of the burning aircraft. Instead the pilot Squadron Leader JOST and my uncle remained with the crippled remains of the bomber. Their sole intent was to ensure that a crash did not occur in the village. They made the ultimate sacrifice and both lost their lives so innocent men, women and children would not have been killed.

[END QUOTE]

Hees did little more than acknowledge Stevens' letter and the account of the history translated from a Dutch native and witness to the events, Mr. van der Steen on 19 May 1988.[183] Nothing more was done on behalf of Dennis Bjorn Stevens, nephew of Barney Johnson in this matter.

The Dutch however appreciated their sacrifice. A letter of appreciation was received from the Burgemeester of the Town of Roermond, 22 October 1990. Mayor Daniels acknowledged in his letter that the original account drafted by Mr. van der Steen was accurate in every regard. He went on to say that the actions of this crew prevented a greater

[181] George Hees - Wikipedia
[182] Stevens 1997, 49/68
[183] Stevens 1997, 51/68

catastrophe and further tragedy. The personal sacrifice made by this crew was greatly appreciated by his citizens and remembered to this day. [184]

This file made its way through various hands from the War Amps, the Royal Canadian Air Force, 419 Squadron, and others along the way from 1988. Finally, DB Stevens made a case for the consideration of the Victoria Cross on behalf of his Uncle Barney Johnson and Burton Norris Jost for their sacrifice. A letter of appeal was sent to Sheila Copps, 16 February 1998, then Heritage Minister , in which Stevens pointed out;[185]

[QUOTE]

In December 1997, while reading the Edmonton Journal "Canada's bravest may be immortalized", I could not help but think of my Uncle Julius Bjorn (Barney) Johnson and the crew of his Halifax Bomber. My uncle who was the Flight Engineer on the bomber attached to the 419th Moose Squadron and the pilot of the plane Squadron Leader Burton Jost both made the ultimate sacrifice while on a bombing mission to Wupertal Germany on the night of 24-25 June 1943. Their aircraft still laden with bombs was attacked by a German Night Fighter over Roermond Holland. The pilot gave the crew of seven the order to bail out. Five of the crew obeyed and bailed out. That left my uncle, the pilot and Flying Officer Goodwin remaining with the bomber now engulfed in flames. The crew realized that there would be a disaster if the plane crashed into the village of Roermond. At the last moment Flying Officer Goodwin bailed out. His parachute did not fully open as he had left the plane at an altitude of approx. 300 feet. My uncle sat beside Squadron Leader Jost and between the two managed to bring the plane down in a field a short distance from the populated area of Roermond. They were both found still in the seats in the burnt out wreckage. There is no doubt that both could have saved themselves and bailed out of the burning plane. They knew however that the bomber would in all likelihood have crashed into a populated area with grave results. They made the ultimate sacrifice to save many that fateful night nearly fifty five years ago.

[END QUOTE]

And

[QUOTE]

[184] Stevens 1997, 53/68
[185] Stevens 1997, 66/68

At this time let me introduce myself. My name is Barney Stevens. I am 53 years of age and reside in Edmonton Alberta. Barney Johnson was my mothers brother. I was born in 1944 and named after my uncle. I have taken it upon myself to gather as many pictures and other memorabilia about my uncle as I can. I even managed to obtain a piece of wreckage from my uncles plane. As you will notice, back in 1988, I drafted correspondence to The Hon. George Hees. I had requested that some special recognition be given my uncle and the crew, but to no avail.

During the summer of 1997, our family received word from the Netherlands that the City of Roermond was going to unvail a special monument honoring my uncle, Squadron Leader Jost and Flying Officer Goodwin. The committee planning the event requested representation from family members of the crew of the Halifax. All the crew of the Halifax are now deceased. The Johnson family was represented by my Uncle Dr. Johann Johnson (Barney's brother) and Mr. Bill Silvester (Barney's brother in law). There were also survivors from as far a away as New Zealand. Due to a marriage in my family, I was unable to attend. The ceremony took place on our Thanksgiving Day on October 13 1997. I have also included a copy of the video taping of the ceremony. I hope you have the time to view this tape. There were representatives from the Armed forces of the Royal Air Force, Royal Netherlands Airforce, Canadian Armed Forces etc.

I realize that my uncle was not awarded the Victoria Cross. If the facts of the night of 24-25 June 1943 had of been known, perhaps my uncle and Squadron Leader Jost would have been awarded the Victoria Cross. My check with Veterans Affairs files (Ref. No.4759) in October 1997 revealed my uncle was awarded the standard War Medals. In mine and my families mind and obviously the residents of Roermond Netherlands, the Halifax Crew were true heroes. As you indicated in the newspaper article it is time for a review of how Canada can do more to honour its heroes. Perhaps my uncle, Squadron Leader Jost and Flying Officer Goodwin can be part of the review.

[END QUOTE]

A reply was received from the minister's staff later 27 April 1998. It was a bureaucratic non-committal reply in which essentially stated that the applicant's request for Johnson and Jost's service was deferred for the moment. It had to be reviewed and determined to see if it fit the national interest for inclusion on what was to be the creation of a "Path of Heroes" in Ottawa. Nothing else was heard from within the bowels of this unappreciative government on what must have been a true disappointment for Barney Stevens and many others in similar circumstances.

Canada is a nation that often ignores the actions and service of their heroes. The story of Jost and Johnson's sacrifice on the night of 24-25 June 1943 warranted further review but it was not. Their actions were worthy of the consideration for the Victoria Cross, especially that of Sgt Johnson. Perhaps this was so because there were no immediate witnesses to

their actions in the war's aftermath. But that wasn't true, there were the eye witness accounts of the crew but their individual testimonies were not gathered as one, so an opportunity was lost.

Some may say that their actions were common amongst all the crews who had been lost. That is true too. They were common, but that's no excuse for proper recognition of exceptional valour, devotion to duty, and courage in the face of the enemy. Not all were summarily ignored for their brave actions.

On September 15, 1940, 18-year-old Sergeant John Hannah, Royal Air Force, flew as wireless operator and air gunner for No. 83 Squadron in a Handley Page Hampden bomber. It came under attack and was badly crippled. The aircraft was set ablaze but the young Hannah refused to abandon his pilot. Hannah "grabbed two extinguishers, dived into the inferno, and battled the flames for ten minutes, smoke blinding his eyes, heat melting cockpit aluminum, ammunition exploding in every direction."[186]

Hannah's lungs were severely burned and he was blinded in the process, but he and the pilot managed to bring the damaged aircraft back to England. Alone with the pilot, Hannah's courage kept the crippled plane airborne long enough for a safe return to base.

Sergeant John Hannah was awarded the Victoria Cross, announced in the London Gazette on October 1, 1940, recognizing the "most conspicuous bravery"—the youngest airman ever to win the VC for aerial operations in the Second World War."[187]

The experience left Hannah debilitated and weakened. He died of tuberculosis very shortly after the war June 7, 1947, at age 25. He is buried at St James Cemetery in Leicester.

Hannah's service was the standard upon which the award of a Victoria Cross is merited. Squadron Leader Jost and Sgt Johnson's sacrifice certainly met that standard, especially Johnson's, but Canada soon forgot.

Jost, an acting-Squadron Leader on the night of 24-25 June 1943, was truly an inspirational leader who exuded "*courage and determination*." He led his men from the front, and who followed him bravely, even unto their deaths.

Burton Norris Jost, is a lost son of Guysborough County, whose service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom should never be forgotten.

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[186] War History Online. 2025. "Heroic Action Leads to VC September 15, 1940, 18-year-old Sergeant John Hannah, Royal Air Force." September 15, 2025, 7:52 AM
Source: serpnoStdou0m076am45l72cga9gc944guu3194h47450c86fg1u77tic851 ·
Accessed: 15 September 2025

[187] War History Online. 2025. "Heroic Action"