

**Agnew, David Renwick**  
**Flying Officer**  
**J/21038**  
**419 (Moose) Squadron**  
**Royal Canadian Air Force**



David Renwick Agnew was born 4 November 1922 at Hanley, Saskatchewan. His father John Howard Agnew, of English stock from Manitoba, married Gertrude Lucy Brownell, a Scottish school teacher, at Nova Scotia in 1917.



*Howard, Gertrude Agnew (1917).*

John Howard, who went by his middle name, worked as a merchant and eventually as an agent for Canadian National Railway (CNR) at various locations in Saskatchewan. The Agnews identified with the United Church and had four children: Lloyd, Edna, David and Evelyn.

David was active in sports growing up, including baseball, hockey, rugby and track. He volunteered with the local South Saskatchewan Regiment Militia June 1939 while still in school and became a Signaller. David completed grade 12 at the Weyburn, Saskatchewan Collegiate age eighteen and went to work with his father for CNR at Regina, first as a towerman and then as an assistant agent. Rather than going active with the infantry, David decided to join the Royal Canadian Air Force (R.C.A.F.) at Regina, enlisting 24 October 1941 shortly before his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was then 5'10" tall and 150 lbs.



The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan had a network of 231 facilities and schools spread across Canada with each location providing specific courses for Canadian and other Allied airmen during WW2. After his medical examination at Regina, David's first stop was at the Edmonton Manning Depot November 1941 followed by the Initial Training and Service Flying Training Schools at Saskatoon January 1942. While in Saskatoon David was given an assessment by his Wing Commander stating: "This trainee is well recommended. Is young, plenty of energy and it is felt he will make quite a success of his career in the R.C.A.F. No doubt he will be a valuable part of any aircrew. Hard worker".



David was sent to the Elementary Flying Training School at Fort William, Ontario June 1942 then to Trenton, Ontario for a Navigation course in July. He was back in Saskatchewan to attend the Dafoe Bombing and Gunnery School August 1942.

*Magazine cover Dafoe Doings WW2*

David's final training module was at the Air Observer School at London, Ontario October 1942. He was awarded his Air Bomber's Badge 20 November 1942 with the rank of Pilot Officer. David was assigned to the Royal Air Force Trainee Pool in December at Halifax, disembarking in the U.K. 29 December 1942

Allied casualty rates in air operations were phenomenally high, particularly for Bomber Command during the earlier stages of World War Two when only ten percent survived. Following a few months with 22 Operational Training Unit during which he progressed rank to Flying Officer, David was taken on strength with 419 (Moose) Squadron, No. 6 Air Group R.C.A.F. 10 June 1943. He joined the newly formed seven man crew on Halifax JD215 as the Bomber Aimer.



*419 (Moose) Squadron Halifax bomber, Middleton, St. George, England WW2*

David's six other crew members on Halifax JD215 were Flight Officer Harry Fowler (Pilot), Sergeant John Dickson (Flight Engineer), Flying Officer Warren Mayes (Navigator), Flight Lieutenant Almer Raine (Wireless Operator/Gunner), Sergeant William Hood (Mid Upper Gunner) and Sergeant William Otterholm (Rear Gunner).

David was on his third mission when Halifax JD215 took off for a raid on Cologne, Germany at 23:04 hours 28 June 1943 from Middleton, St. George. They were among 608 Allied aircraft which participated that night. They successfully reached Cologne but on their return to England were shot down by a German night fighter in the early hours of 29 June, one of 25 Allied planes that never made it back to their bases. Halifax JD215 crashed at Waalre near Eindhoven, Netherlands with no survivors. *Halifax Bomber WW2*



**MISSING**  
**(On Active Service after Air Operations)**  
**Agnew, David Renwick,**  
**P.O., J21038, J. N. Agnew**  
**(father), Weyburn, Sask.**

David Agnew was first reported missing along with his flight crew when they did not return, given the possibility of their survival and capture as prisoners of war.

*Regina Leader Post, August 1943*

In December 1943, the R.C.A.F. advised David's family that he was presumed dead as of 29 June 1943, age 20.

*The grave in Groesbeek in those first days, in 1954 the crosses were replaced by headstones*

Flying Officer D.R. Agnew was temporarily buried at Eindhoven, Netherlands and later relocated to Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **XV. F. 3.**

Two other crew members from Halifax JD215 were reburied at Groesbeek: Warren Mayes and William Otterholm. Three members are buried at Eindhoven and one at Mierlo in the Netherlands.



The inscription on David's headstone:

THE LORD KNOWETH THEM  
THAT TRUST HIM



A banner for David Agnew flies at the Weyburn, Saskatchewan Legion in his remembrance.

Agnew Bay in Hanson Lake, Saskatchewan was named after him as a geo-memorial site.

David Agnew's name is listed on the memorial wall at the Bomber Command Museum at Nanton, Alberta.

David's brother Lloyd, who also served with the R.C.A.F. survived the war.



Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Saskatchewan Virtual War Memorial <https://svwm.ca/casualty-display/?ID=A000006446>

Ancestry public trees

Newspapers.com

Weyburn, Saskatchewan Collegiate picture  
<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/PC/013/PC013303?locale=en>

British Commonwealth Air Training Plan information  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_British\\_Commonwealth\\_Air\\_Training\\_Plan\\_facilities\\_in\\_Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_British_Commonwealth_Air_Training_Plan_facilities_in_Canada)

Dafoe, Saskatchewan Bombing and Gunnery School picture  
<https://www.vintagewings.ca/stories/ghosts-of-saskatchewan>

419 (Moose) Squadron crest, picture and information  
<https://www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/bomber-command/bomber-command-no-419-moose-squadron/>

419 (Moose) Squadron Halifax bomber picture, Middleton, St. George, England  
<https://www.silverhawkauthor.com/post/rcaf-no-6-group-raf-bomber-command>

Graham Chandler – Charmed Lives, September 2023 Legion Magazine  
<https://legionmagazine.com/charmed-lives/>

Crew of Halifax JD215 <http://www.419squadron.com/JD215.html>

Pieter and Daria Valkenburg <https://onthewarmemorialtrail.com/2023/09/19/on-the-war-memorial-trail-the-wwii-airman-from-bras-dor-who-was-aboard-the-last-flight-of-halifax-jd215/>

International Bomber Command Centre Losses Database  
<https://losses.internationalbcc.co.uk/loss/200142/>

David Agnew banner picture <https://www.sasktoday.ca/south/local-news/banners-to-pay-tribute-to-veterans-who-served-from-weyburn-and-area-4741801>

\* If you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)



Despite cloud over the target and only six of the seven Pathfinder Mosquitos reaching Cologne dropping sky markers, the raid was determined as a success. 25 aircraft failed to return from this mission.

*Right: Oberst Günther Radusch*

Among those lost was Halifax JD215 flown by F/O. Harry Fowler. At 02:15 hours, June 29, the Halifax was intercepted and shot down by Luftwaffe night fighter ace Oberst Günther Radusch near Eindhoven.

Obst. Radusch was a formidable opponent who claimed three other Halifaxes that night and finished the war with a total of 65 victories, 57 of them being four engined bombers.

F/O. Fowler was awarded the Air Force Medal in recognition of his services as an instructor at No.2 Bombing and Gunnery School, Mossbank, Saskatchewan.



*Regina Leader Post 1954*

## **Well-known CNR agent succumbs**

John Howard Agnew, 57, 2267 Retallack street, well-known for many years in southern Saskatchewan as CNR agent, died Friday in a Regina hospital.

Funeral service will be in Speers' chapel Tuesday at 2 p.m., with Rev. George Struthers officiating. Burial will be in Riverside Memorial Park.

Mr. Agnew was born at Holmfield, Man., and 53 years ago came to Saskatchewan. He joined the CNR and his first service in the province was at Gravelbourg. Later he was at Spring Valley, Chamberlain, Hanley, and retired in 1945 at Corning, Sask. The family then moved to Regina.

Mr. Agnew married Gertrude Brownell at Northport, N.S. in 1917. She had previously taught school in the province.

Surviving are the widow; two daughters, Mrs. D. B. Davies, Vancouver, Mrs. Robert Barn-

stable, Macoun, Sask.; a son, Rev. Lloyd Agnew, at Plenty, Sask.; three sisters, Mrs. M. Hisey, 2267 Retallack street, Mrs. M. F. Thernton, 2281 Retallack street, Mrs. A. A. Robinson, Manor, Sask.; a brother, Harper, at McTaggart, Sask., and six grandchildren.

He was predeceased by a son, FO. David, killed over Holland in 1943, while serving with the RCAF.

### **New Delhi appoints**

#### **Ottawa representative**

NEW DELHI (AP)—The Indian foreign ministry today announced the appointment of Dr. Mohamed Abdul Rauf, 53, at present ambassador to Japan, as high commissioner to Canada.

Rauf's new appointment follows the transfer of R. R. Saxena to Burma.