

Brisson, Joseph Paul Guy
Pilot Officer
425 Squadron
Royal Canadian Air Force
J/86180



Je te plumerai -I shall pluck you



Joseph Paul Guy Brisson, nicknamed Paul, was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada on Friday November 3, 1922. Son of Arthur Brisson and Emma Brisson- Beaulac, who got married on September 8, 1908 in Saint Jude in the south-west of the province of Quebec. Besides Paul, the family consisted of brother Raoul and two sisters, Hermance and Cecile. Mother Emma died of cancer in 1937 and his brother Patrice also died at a young age on November 15, 1913. They were religious and belonged to the Roman-Catholic Church. They lived at 1321 Visitation Street, Apartment 7, Montreal, Quebec.

After primary school for two and a half years Paul attended High School specializing in advertising, and after having had twelve and a half years of education, he left school to start working as an office clerk. His hobby was reading and he practised tennis, bowling and swimming. He did not master the English language very well, but he spoke excellent French. He used to smoke twenty cigarettes a day and did not drink alcohol. Paul had grey eyes and black hair, was 5 feet 7.5 inches tall and weighed 135 pounds. His left leg had varicose veins. When he was eight years old, he had to have his tonsils cut and he had a scar on his forehead.

During his childhood Paul suffered from various children's diseases, such as measles, chicken pox and whooping cough.



Signature de la recrue

On December 16, 1941 Joseph Paul Guy Brisson had a medical examination for the Canadian army in Montreal and the following day he went into active service at the age of 19.

He was deemed fit to become a Pilot, Observer, Wireless Operator or Airgunner and got the rank of Aircraftman Second Class. He was placed with the Number 4 Manning Depot in Quebec. Recruits started their military careers with a Manning Depot where they learned how to bathe, shave, polish boots, polish buttons, maintain their uniforms and behave in the otherwise required manner. Every day there was two hours of physical education and they had marching instruction, gun practise, did walking exercises, practised saluting and other routines. Intermediate education was offered to take 17 and 18-year-old recruits to RCAF academic level. There was also a standard skills test – the RCAF classification test.

After four or five weeks a selection committee decided whether the recruit was going to be trained to join the air crew or the ground crew. Aircrew 'Wireless Air Gunner' candidates went straight to a Wireless School whereas 'Air Observer' and 'Pilot' candidates went to an Initial Training School. Joseph Paul Guy was deemed a suitable candidate to be trained as a Pilot. On March 29, 1942 he started a training programme at No 3 Initial Training School (ITS) in Victoriaville, Quebec, situated on the Nicolet River.



Source : Hippostcard.com



Theoretical subjects were taught there and they were subjected to various tests. Theoretical subjects comprised navigation, flight theory, meteorology, officer's duties, air force administration, algebra and trigonometry. On June 21, 1942 he continued his training at No 11 Elementary Flying Training School, which was part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Cap-de-la-Madelaine. An Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) gave a recruit fifty hours of basic flight instruction on the Havilland Tiger Moth, Fleet Finch or Fairchild Cornell for a period of eight weeks. On August 30, 1942 Joseph Paul Guy continued his training at No 13 Service Flying Training School in Saint Hubert, Quebec. Graduates of the Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) 'learn-to-fly' programme went for training at a Service Flying Training School (SFTS) for sixteen weeks. During the first eight weeks the student was part of an intermediate level training squadron, during the next six weeks he had advanced training and during the last two weeks the training was completed at a Bombing & Gunnery School. There were two different types of Service Flying Training Schools. Recruits in the fighter planes trained in North-American Harvard or North-American Yale.

Recruits selected to become pilots in a bomber, coastal or transport plane went to a Service Flying Training School where they did a training in an Airspeed Oxford, Avro Anson or Cessna Crane. Joseph Paul Guy Brisson successfully completed his training and on December 18, 1942 he obtained his Pilot's Flying Badge.



AVRO Anson - Source Wikipedia

On January 7, 1943 he went to Halifax to prepare for his crossing to England and on January 25 he made the crossing and arrived in the United Kingdom on February 4, 1943. He was assigned to the 3 Progress Review Committee and on April 20, 1943 he received additional training with the 14 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit at Royal Air Force Station Ossington, Nottinghamshire. During the summer, on July 20, 1943 he continued his training with the 23 Operational Training Unit, which was set up in April 1941 at Royal Air Force base Pershore, as part of No 6 Group Royal Air Force Bomber Command in order to train bomber crews with the

Vickers Wellington. Joseph Paul Guy Brisson stayed here until November 30, 1943. Via the 61 Base he was assigned to the 425 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force on February 4, 1944.

The 425 Squadron, the first French-Canadian squadron, was set up at Royal Air Force base Dishforth in Yorkshire, England on June 22, 1942. The emblem was derived from the squadron's nickname 'Alouette', and the motto derived from the refrain of the French-Canadian anthem. The lark was represented in a gliding position which pointed to a bomber hanging above its target on the point of attacking the enemy. The squadron was also called the Flying Forteresse.

At 22.30 hours on Saturday April 22, 1944 a number of bombers left from Royal Air Force base Tholthorpe, near Easingwold, North Yorkshire, for an operation in Germany, to target a synthetic oil factory, Scholven-Buer, close to Gelsenkirchen. One of the planes was the Handley Page Halifax BIII (LW633) of the 425 Squadron, Royal Canadian Airforce, flown by Pilot Officer Joseph Paul Guy Brisson on this four-engine bomber carrying seven crew.



A total of 596 planes took part in this mission, 2,150 tons of bombs were dropped by the bombers, which caused considerable damage, especially in the northern districts. Fifty-six large factories were hit, seven of which were destroyed. More than two thousand houses were destroyed, 883 people killed and 593 wounded. On the Allied side twenty-nine soldiers lost their lives (4.9%).

On its way home the plane was hit by a FLAK (Flugabwehrkanone or Fliegerabwehrkanone) and later shot down by Hauptmann Ernest Modrow and Unteroffizier Erich Schneider of the 2nd Nachtjagdgeschwader 1, who took off in a Heinkel He 219 A-0 G9+GK, a nightfighter, from Venlo airport.

The Allied Handley Page Halifax III (LW633) of the 425 Squadron crashed in Sint-Oedenrode. This happened round 02.15 am on Sunday April 23, 1944.

Its pilot, Joseph Paul Guy Brisson, 21 years old, died during this crash, as did its navigator Flying/Officer Benoit Charles Eugene Fortin and the gunners Pilot/Officer Joseph Henri



Charles Legault (23) and Flight/Sergeant Joseph Fernand Rolland Hurteau (28), all four of Canadian origin. Flight engineer Sergeant Ian Welch (19), the only non-Canadian, did not survive the crash either. He came from Spennymoor, county Durham, England. Initially two crew managed to stay out of the Germans' hands. They were Flying/Officer Joseph Yvan Desrosiers and Pilot/Officer Joseph Emile Léon Davidson.

Flying/Officer Joseph Yvan Desrosiers was arrested by the Gestapo in Antwerp in May 1944 and was made a prisoner of war in the prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft 3 near Sagan, in Poland, 160 km south-east of Berlin. Pilot/Officer Joseph Emile Léon Davidson was also captured in Antwerp on June 17, 1944. As a prisoner of war he was sent to prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft 7 in Bakow, Poland. Both survived the war and returned to their native country.

The crew members who had died were buried in the General Cemetery in Eindhoven (Woensel) on April 26. Flying/Officer Benoit Charles Eugene Fortin and Flight/Sergeant Joseph Fernand Rolland Hurteau, graves KK 38 and KK 39. Sergeant Ian Welch was also buried in Woensel, grave KK 45.

Joseph Paul Guy Brisson was initially buried in the General Cemetery in Eindhoven (Woensel), grave KK 46.

On November 15, 1945 he was reburied in the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave **XVI. B. 6.**

Grave in Groesbeek, the way it looked at first; in 1954 the crosses were replaced by headstones. The family was allowed to supply a text, which was put at the bottom of the headstone.



On his headstone the following words are inscribed:

NE A MONTREAL, CANADA LE 3
NOVEMBRE 1922

MORT ICI AU SERVICE DE SA
PATRIE.

Photo : Gijs Krist



Memorial Nanton

“Three thousand miles across a hunted ocean they came, wearing on the shoulder of their tunics the treasured name, ‘Canada’, telling the world their origin. Young men and women they were, some still in their teens, fashioned by their Maker to love, not to kill, but proud and earnest in their mission to stand, and if it had to be, to die, for their country and for freedom.

One day, when the history of the 20th century is finally written, it will be recorded that when human society stood at the crossroads and civilization itself was under siege, the Royal Canadian Air Force was there to fill the breach and help give humanity the victory. And all those who had a part in it will have left to posterity a legacy of honour, of courage, and of valour that time can never despoil.”

- Father J.P. Lardie (Chaplain 419, 428 Squadron RCAF)

Brice, Vincent Leslie
 Brichta, Philip Sibbald
 Bridgeman, Robert Vale
 Bridger, Roger Thomas
 Briegel, James Stewart
 Brifett, George William
 Briggs, William Edmund
 Briggs-Jude, Robert W.
 Brillinger, Donald S.
 Bringloe, James Henry
 Brisco, Frederick Lionel
 Brislan, John Glen
 Brissenden, Joseph
 Brisson, Joe Paul G.
 Bristow, Frederick David
 Britland, George D.
 Brittain, Paul Herman
 Britten, Aubrey Ginders
 Britton, Clarence W. A.
 Britts, Alfred Joseph



Life story: Gijs Krist, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves

Library and Archives Canada

Wouter van Dijken

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl