

**Brown, Douglas Stewart**  
**Pilot Officer**  
**Royal Canadian Air Force**  
**106 Squadron**  
**Royal Air Force**  
**J/17621**



Pro Liberate-For Freedom



Douglas Stewart Brown was born on Wednesday, September 12, 1923, in Barrie, Ontario, Canada. The city is located on Kempenfelt Bay, Lake Simcoe, 90 kilometers (56 miles) north of Toronto. He was the youngest of four sons of Samuel Herman Brown and Effie May Belfrey (Brown). They were married on January 17, 1912, in Vasey, Simcoe County, Ontario. The family also consisted of three sons, Kenneth Clifford, Frank Garfield, and Harold Belfrey Brown, and two sisters, Dorothy Irene and Stella Elizabeth Brown. The Protestant family resided at 10 Rumsey Road, Toronto, in the District of Leaside, Ontario. Father Samuel earned a living as a sales manager.



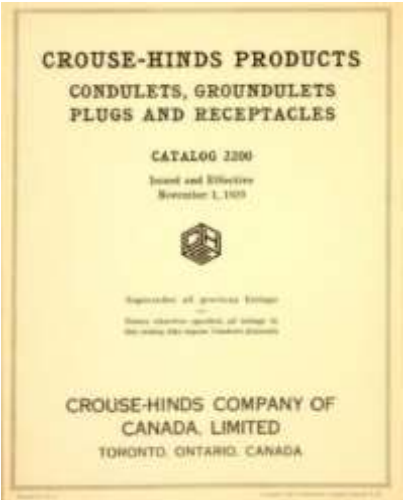
In 1929, Douglas Stewart started his primary school education and attended Rawlinson Public School until 1935. He then continued his education at Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute in Toronto.

*Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute, Toronto.*

Source : <https://digitalarchiveontario.ca/>

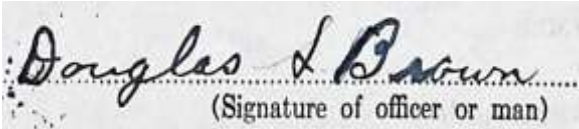
In 1939, he entered the Northern Vocational School in Toronto to pursue technical training. After obtaining his diploma, he went to work for three months at Service Station Equipment Company.

The company produced training grenades for the Royal Canadian Air Force's aerial training program. In November 1940, he started a new job at Crouse-Hinds Company in Toronto, making a patented headlamp for trolley cars. The company expanded into the production of switches, panel plates, and electrical cables, including explosion-proof installations, traffic lights, airport lighting, and even the lighting for the Panama Canal. Douglas Stewart changed jobs on May 9, 1941, starting at Dominion Bridge Company Limited in Toronto. He worked as a hydraulic press assistant and ammunition worker, producing copper casings at the factory. The factory made ammunition, steel bridge components, storage tanks for pulp mills, and skyscraper frames.



He had dark brown hair and blue eyes, weighed 72.1 kg, and was 1.85 m tall. At the age of 13, he had measles, and he had a scar on his left knee and left hand. His hobbies were swimming, ice hockey, football, basketball, and athletics. Otherwise, he was a healthy young man who did not smoke or drink alcohol.

On June 10, 1941, he was medically examined for the Canadian army, approved, and found suitable for the Royal Canadian Air Force. On July 2, 1941, he reported to the recruiting office in Toronto. He was posted to the No 4 Manning Depot in Saint Hubert, a Longueuil municipality in the Montérégie region of Quebec, Canada. There, he learned to bathe, shave, shine boots, polish buttons, maintain his uniforms, and otherwise behave in the required manner. Each day, there were two hours of physical education and instruction in marching, rifle drills, saluting, and other routines. He was given the rank of Aircraftsman 2nd Class.



On August 10, 1941, he went to the No 5 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) in Brantford, Ontario, for further training. The airbase was equipped with Avro Anson aircraft. Pilots in training learned to fly multi-engine aircraft during the eight-week training course. Two months later, on October 28, 1941, he continued training at the No 5 Initial Training School (ITS) in Belleville, Ontario. The candidates received lessons for two months in theoretical subjects and were subjected to various tests.

Academic studies included navigation, flight theory, meteorology, officer duties, Air Force administration, algebra, and trigonometry.

Just before Christmas, on December 21, Douglas Stewart was posted for further training at the No 13 Elementary Flying Training School in Saint Eugene, Ontario. A day earlier, he had been promoted to Leading Aircraftman. The aircraft used for training were the North American Harvard and the Avro Anson. They were part of the No 3 Training Command, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). On March 15, 1942, he was posted to No 5 Manning Depot near Lachine and Dorval, Quebec, Canada, west of Montreal. RCAF Station Lachine was a transit point for moving aircraft and supplies to Europe and was also part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). On March 29, 1942, Douglas Stewart was posted for further training at the No 16 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) in Hagersville, Ontario.

On June 30, 1942, at 11:15 a.m., about eight miles north of Guelph, Ontario, Douglas Stewart Brown and 2nd pilot J.M. Wedstock made an emergency landing with an Avro Anson MK II during a practice flight.



Source : [www.silverhawkauthor.com](http://www.silverhawkauthor.com)

Douglas Stewart Brown stated:

*'We were forced to go down due to engine failure, and we hit the top of a fence while making an emergency landing. As a result, the undercarriage on the port side was struck and collapsed.'*

Both crew members were not injured and escaped unscathed.

He received his Wings on July 17, 1942, and was promoted to Sergeant. Douglas Stuart went to Halifax on August 16, 1942, to prepare for the crossing to England. He embarked on September 2, 1942, and set foot in Bournemouth - the arrival point for thousands of aircrew. On September 11, 1942. There, he was posted to the No 3 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit at Royal Air Force Base South Cerney near Cirencester in Gloucestershire, England. On 27 October 1942, Douglas Stewart was posted to No 16

Operational Training Unit at Royal Air Force base Upper Heyford, 10 kilometers north-west of Bicester in Oxfordshire, England. He was part of the No 6 Group RAF Bomber Command to train night bomber crews with the help of the Handley Page Hampden and Hereford. In 1942, the aircraft were replaced by the Vickers Wellington. An Operational Training Unit was the final stage of training for aircrew before being assigned to an operational unit. On 16 March 1943, Douglas Stewart Brown was posted to No 1654 Conversion Unit at Royal Air Force Base Wigsley, east of Tuxford, Nottinghamshire, and approximately 12 kilometers west of



Lincoln, Lincolnshire, England. He learned to fly the Avro Lancaster and the Short Stirling III there. On March 23, 1943, he was promoted to Pilot Officer. On April 22, 1943, he was posted to 106 Squadron, Royal Air Force Base in Syerston, Nottinghamshire, England. The 106 Squadron had been using the base since October 1, 1942.

Source : Wikipedia

On the night of April 20/21, 1943, Douglas Stewart, as second pilot with F/L W D Browne, flew aircraft ED 801 to Stettin, a city in northwest Poland on both sides of the Oder River. The aircraft departed at 9:35 PM and returned safely at 6:16 AM. On this night, the Royal Air Force launched 339 aircraft, namely 194 Lancasters, 134 Handley Page Halifax aircraft, and 11 Short Stirlings. The attack was successful, but twenty-one aircraft were lost. Thirteen of these fell in Danish territory.

Further missions of Douglas Stewart Brown in 1943 :		
April 27	DUISBURG	Aircraft - ED819
Departure 00:01 a.m. – Return at 04:25 a.m. The 1 <sup>st</sup> operation for pilot and crew. Sgt LD Cromb flies along as Bomber/Airgunner. Mission aborted due to lack of oxygen.		
April 28/29	GARDENING – SILVERTHORN	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 8:35 p.m. – Return at 03:45 a.m.		
May 1	ESSEN	Aircraft - ED593
Departure 00.10 a.m. – Return at 05.25 a.m.		
May 4/5	DORTMUND	Aircraft- R5614
Departure 10:10 p.m. – Return at 03:50 a.m.		
May 12/13	DUISBURG	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 11.55 p.m. – Return at 04.45 a.m.		
May 13/14	SKODA WORKS, PILSEN	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 9:30 p.m. – Return at 05:30 a.m. Sgt R.S. Pegg flies along as Bomber/Airgunner as replacement for Sgt L.D. Cromb.		
May 23/24	DORTMUND	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 10.15 p.m. – Return at 04.00 a.m.		
June 11/12	DUSSELDORF	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 11:25 p.m. – Return at 04:40 a.m.		
June 12/13	BOCHUM	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 10.45 p.m. – Return at 04.20 a.m.		
June 14	OBERHAUSEN	Aircraft - R5551
Departure 10:25 p.m. – .....		



On Monday, June 14, 1943, the Avro Lancaster MK I R5551 ZN-V took off from the Royal Air Force base Syerston at 10:25 PM for a bombing mission to Oberhausen in Germany with 203 other aircraft. This was the tenth mission for the crew. Earlier in the evening, they learned the details of the upcoming flight in the Briefing Room, such as the size of the attack, the target, the type of bombs that would be dropped, route, start time, assembly point, flight altitude, signals, frequencies, etc. As expected, the flight's destination was in the Ruhr area: Oberhausen.

The weather officer updated the expected weather conditions during the flight. It would be partly cloudy, with a light to moderate wind from the southwest. This data was critical to 'Bob' Beaton, who had to consider it when plotting the course and later when checking it. The type of weather forecast for that night could have been more favorable for British bombers, as there would also be an almost full moon in the sky; it would not only be a short but also a light night.

In the short nights at this time of year, the Royal Air Force bombers, who relied heavily on the cover provided by darkness for their safety, could not venture too far over Germany.

With this in mind, Bomber Command launched an offensive 'closer to home' in the spring of 1943, aimed against the Ruhr area. During the afternoon, the ground crew gave R5551 a final inspection and adjusted and tested the radio equipment. In the bomb bay, they hung one bomb of 8,000 pounds, 36 incendiary bombs of 41 and 32 of 30 pounds each, ready to be released over Oberhausen. After everyone had taken their place in the dark hull, the four Rolls-Royce Merlin engines were started one by one. Every time the 1,640 horsepower of an engine was activated and came to life amid much noise, a shudder ran through the more than 21-meter-long device. After warming up the engines, the heavy bomber was permitted to taxi out. Slightly rocking, it made its way to the head of the runway. It was not the only Syerston bomber preparing to head for Oberhausen. Fourteen more took their place in the bomber stream, which contained 203 bombers. The start at 10.25 pm. ran without any problems.

The four Merlins delivered their full power to the complete satisfaction of 'Mac' McMillan and brought the heavily loaded Lancaster up to altitude. With the many bombers from different fields, the R5551 arrived in the assembly area near the English east coast, where the famous bomber stream -feared by the Germans- was formed.

The Lancaster R5551 had the following crew on this flight:

Douglas Stewart ('Doug') Brown, Pilot Officer, originally from Barrie, Canada.

Robert Allen ('Bob') Beaton, Sergeant, originally from Tottenham, England, Navigator

Ernest George Seall, Flying Officer, from Brockley, England, Bombardier. Flew as a 2nd Bomb Aimer/ gunner; was in training to become a bomb aimer and followed the flight, sitting on a step of the stairs that led to the cockpit from behind Rob Pegg's position, as a practical exercise. It was Seall's first flight over enemy territory.

Ewen Cameron ('Mac') McMillan, Sergeant, originally from Glasgow, Scotland, Flight Engineer.

Kenneth ('Ken') Wilcock, Sergeant, from Scarborough (Yorkshire), England, gunner.

Angus Granger ('Jock') Ballantyne, Sergeant, originally from Edinburgh, Scotland, gunner.

Frederick James ('Smoky') Stoker, Sergeant, originally from Shirley, England, Wireless Operator/gunner. Husband of Phyllis Aimee Stoker, father of daughter Margaret.

Robert Staples ('Bob') Pegg, Warrant Officer, from Oxbow, Canada, Bomb Aimer.



Douglas Stewart Brown reported the arrival of his plane and then set it on a prescribed course, which took it across the North Sea towards Cologne. Approximately at Haamstede, the R5551 crossed the Dutch coastline. About twenty kilometers before Cologne, the bomber stream turned north towards Oberhausen. The route to the goal was first indicated with red flares, followed by green ones.

Brown's Avro Lancaster had to be over the target at 1.15 am, unload its cargo, and continue on the same course until a point near Münster. From that point, the course would be followed in a northwesterly direction. Following this route, which ran across the IJsselmeer, the bombers would reach the North Sea again. A route across the IJsselmeer had the advantage of avoiding the much-feared anti-aircraft artillery.

The German anti-aircraft artillery (FLAK) was mainly located on land. Such a route led them straight into the trap set up from the large night fighter bases of Leeuwarden/Bergen (N.H.), Twente, and Deelen, but that worried only a few.

At around half past midnight, the R5551 passed the coast of Schouwen-Duiveland. They were still well on track. As they entered enemy airspace, Smoky Stoker, Ken Wilcock, and Jock Ballantyne, the gunners, increased their vigilance and double-checked that their machine guns were ready to fire.

They could already see the green flares from where they turned towards Oberhausen. The sky before them showed a red glow from the fires already broken out in the target area. More seriously, the long, pale fingers of the countless searchlights began to scan the sky around them. Soon, they were caught by a fierce beam; several beams joined the first. They knew their device, although painted black, was now clearly visible from the ground. Full of zeal, the FLAK (Fliegerabwehrkanone) started shooting at them. To increase the Lancaster's maneuverability and thus increase its chances of escaping the blinding light and murderous fire, Doug Brown ordered Bob Pegg to drop the bombs.

The plane, thousands of pounds lighter, rebounded. Flying Officer Seall, who was still sitting on the steps behind Bob Pegg, was not able to see what work a bomb aimer carried out during a 'normal' bomb run. Doug Brown managed to maneuver his plane out of the beams of the searchlights; perhaps the clouds helped him. Bob Beaton tried as best he could to calculate a new rate and passed it on to Doug Brown moments later. Back home.

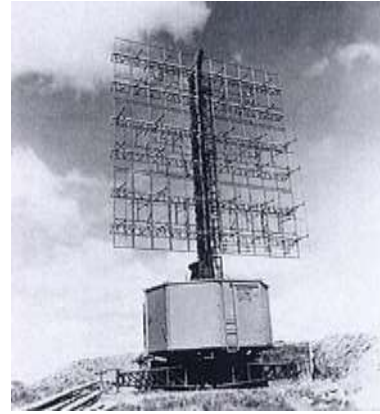
Around a quarter past twelve, Oberleutnant August Geiger received the order to take off. He would likely be directed to the Kröte radar station near Goor. Once above the radio beacon of the radar station, he had to continue to circle at the prescribed altitude, waiting for further instructions 'from below.'

Meanwhile, the station's 'Freya' radar device operator noticed a bomber following a course that deviated from the other bombers. An easily recognizable target, towards which the much more accurate tracking radar

of the Würzburg-Riese type would soon be aimed. A second device of the same kind was aimed at the friendly night fighter.

The position of both aircraft was continuously measured and transmitted from the radar equipment's control cabins to the radar station's central post.

*Freya Radarstation*  
Source : Wikipedia



There, both positions were projected on a horizontal, frosted glass map; the position of Doug Brown's aircraft was shown with a red dot, that of August Geiger's Me 110 and its two companions with a blue one. In addition, the radar equipment accurately determined the flight altitude of both aircraft. The combat control officer (Jägerleitoffizier), standing next to the glass map, gave Geiger instructions by radio regarding the course and flight altitude in such a way that on the ground glass in front of him, the blue dot was close behind the red one as quickly as possible and the flight heights were almost the same.



The men in the Avro Lancaster ZN-V knew that, although the darkness now surrounded them again, the danger had not passed. Still, they breathed a sigh of relief. Suddenly, a light on the instrument panel lit up, and the warning signal from Boozer, a radio receiver, tuned to the frequency of the German onboard radar transmitters. Doug Brown announced over the intercom that a night fighter was in the area and made the Lancaster make a zigzag movement to shake off the fighter. The gunners searched for the night fighter, ready to attack it as soon as they saw it. The warning light for Brown continued to illuminate; the crew waited in unbearable tension.

Geiger now saw the dark silhouette of the mighty machine overhead, and he looked straight into the red glow of the exhaust flames of the Merlin engines. Flying along with the Lancaster, Geiger calmly slid his fighter under the bomber's belly and closed the distance to approximately 75 meters. He managed to position himself safely, out of reach of the alert and trigger-happy gunners close above him. He then slowed down, jerked the nose of his plane upwards, and released a burst of fire. Brown's plane didn't stand a chance; the shells hit the Lancaster 'amidships' and did their destructive work.



After the deadly volley, August Geiger swerved away from his prey. The tense tranquility in the R5551 was cruelly disturbed by the loud impact and explosion of the 20 mm grenades. Doug Brown used the intercom to inquire if there was a fire. Mac McMillan responded that an inner engine was on fire and that he would attempt to extinguish the fire. There was no further discussion. After a few moments, Brown gave the order to put on the parachutes, which were always ready for use and within reach.

Bob Pegg, who had the impression that the shells had hit right behind him, put on his parachute, took off his flight helmet with intercom and oxygen mask, opened the escape hatch in his compartment, and jumped out of the plane. What happened in the Lancaster afterward will always remain a mystery. "They all could have bailed out," said Bob Pegg, "because the plane continued to fly straight after the attack."

If Geiger continued to fly, did he fire upon the Lancaster a second time? Were there seriously injured people on board for whom jumping was impossible? Were there any deaths? Brown must have realized that he would no longer reach England, yet he continued to fly. How the bomber ultimately landed, namely in a controlled flight and on the edge of an extensive heathland area, gives reason to assume that he preferred the risks of an emergency landing to leaving his plane by parachute.

At 1:44 am on June 15, 1943, the aircraft with the remaining seven men crashed into the last trees before the open heathland east of Terlet. The remains of the aircraft and the deceased crew members were located on both sides next to the Eerbeekseweg, about a kilometer from the Apeldoornseweg. The plane swept away a piece of forest and uprooted several beech trees along the Eerbeekseweg in its path.

The AVRO Lancaster MK I R5551 ZN-V crew members who died were Douglas Stewart Brown, Pilot Officer (J/17621), 19 years old, from Canada,

Frederick James Stoker, Wireless Operator (1209732), 30 years old, originally from England,

Robert Allen Beaton, Navigator (1385801), 22 years old, from England,

Ewen Cameron McMillan, Flight Engineer (1345984), 21 years old, from England,

Angus Granger Ballantyne, Air Gunner (639777), 22 years old, from England,

Kenneth Wilcock, Air Gunner (985040), 22 years old, from England, and Ernest George Seall, Air Bomber (131979), 29 years old, from England.

After identification on June 17, 1943, the deceased crew was buried at the Moscowa municipal cemetery in Arnhem.

Robert Staples ('Bob') Pegg, Bomb Aimer (R/85414), from Canada, was the only survivor of the crash. He was taken prisoner and deported as a Prisoner Of War (POW) to a POW camp in Poland, Stalag Luft IV, in the town of Gross Tychow.

After the war, he settled as a farmer in Oxbow and married his wife Betty; they had four children together. On April 22, 1989, Bob died of a heart attack.

Douglas Stewart Brown, Pilot Officer (J/17621), was killed in action on June 15, 1943, at the age of 19, and was buried at the Moscowa municipal cemetery in Arnhem on June 17, 1943. On October 11, 1945, he was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave **XV. C.12**.



*The grave in those first days*



*photo: <http://lestweforget1945.org/>*

## Douglas Stewart Brown Awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Defense Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp
- War Medal 1939-1945



Life story: Gijs Krist - Research Team Faces To Graves

## Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves

Library and Archives Canada

[www.aircrewremembered.com](http://www.aircrewremembered.com)

Roger Brindley-Metheringham Airfield Visitor Centre, 106 Squadron Royal Air Force.

[AirborneArnhem.nl](http://AirborneArnhem.nl)

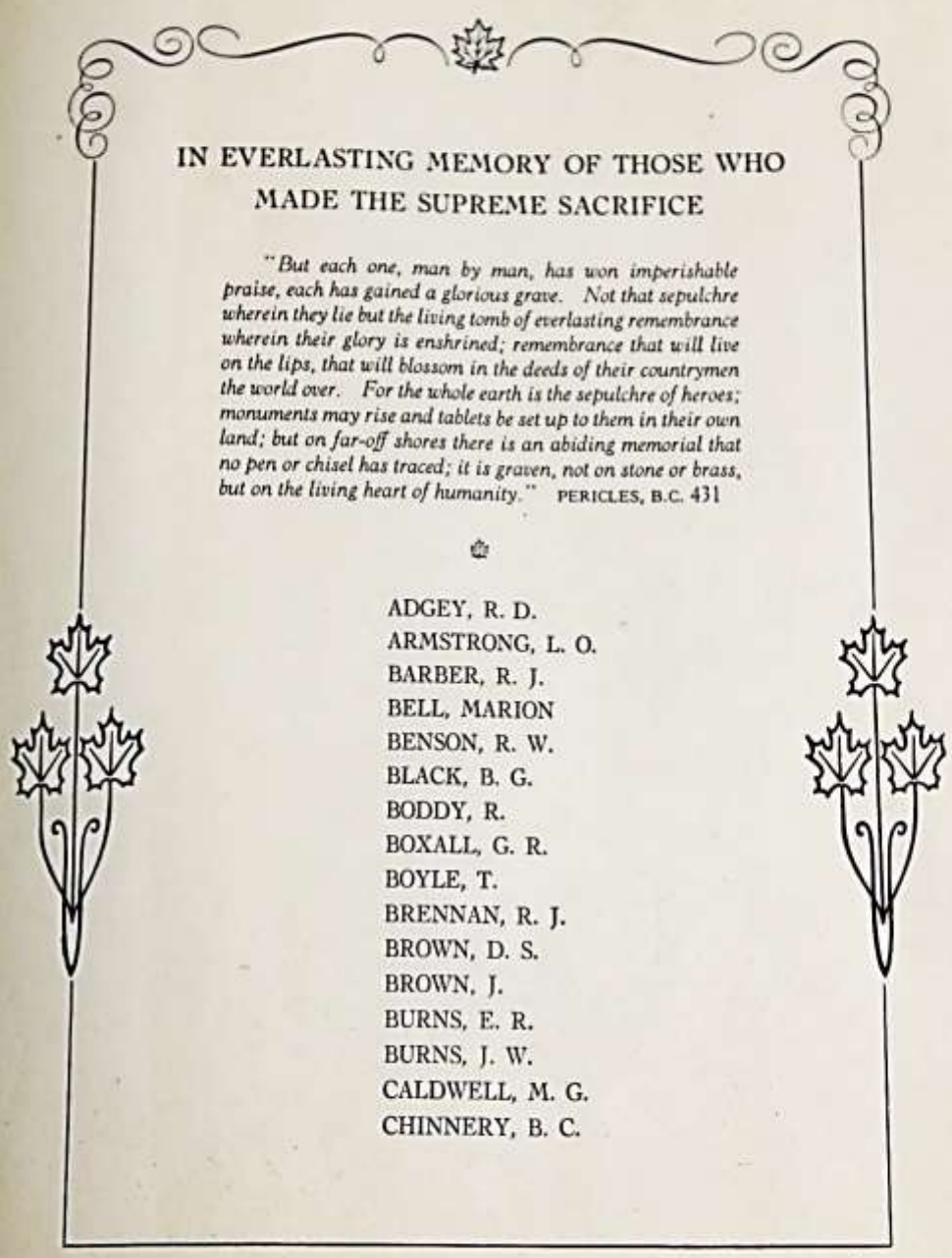
\* If you have a photo of this soldier or additional information, please contact [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)

On Tuesday, June 15, 1993, a monument was unveiled at the location where the Avro Lancaster R5551 ZN-V crashed and the seven crew members died.



The text on the monument reads:

'Pause for a moment  
At this place where  
on the night of 14 to 15 June 1943,  
a Lancaster bomber crashed. In the process  
seven young pilots lost their lives –  
in two other accidents with bombers  
in the municipality of Rozendaal  
eight more Allied fliers  
lost their lives.'



IN EVERLASTING MEMORY OF THOSE WHO  
MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

*"But each one, man by man, has won imperishable praise, each has gained a glorious grave. Not that sepulchre wherein they lie but the living tomb of everlasting remembrance wherein their glory is enshrined; remembrance that will live on the lips, that will blossom in the deeds of their countrymen the world over. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of heroes; monuments may rise and tablets be set up to them in their own land; but on far-off shores there is an abiding memorial that no pen or chisel has traced; it is graven, not on stone or brass, but on the living heart of humanity."* PERICLES, B.C. 431



ADGEY, R. D.  
ARMSTRONG, L. O.  
BARBER, R. J.  
BELL, MARION  
BENSON, R. W.  
BLACK, B. G.  
BODDY, R.  
BOXALL, G. R.  
BOYLE, T.  
BRENNAN, R. J.  
BROWN, D. S.  
BROWN, J.  
BURNS, E. R.  
BURNS, J. W.  
CALDWELL, M. G.  
CHINNERY, B. C.

Roll of Honor – In tribute to the students of Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute (Toronto) who fight in World War two and did not come home.