

**Campbell, Frederick William**

**Pilot Officer**

**Royal Canadian Air Force**

**J94493**



Frederick William Campbell, known as Ted to his family and friends was born on New Year's day 1915. He was the youngest son of William True Campbell, born 1872 in Portapique, Nova Scotia and Bertha Lillian (Tomlinson) Campbell, born 1878 in Hants County, Nova Scotia; they were married in 1899. Ted was one of a large family with three brothers and four sisters. His father was a farmer and they lived in the small community of Pembroke in Hants County, which lies on the eastern coast of the province. The family belonged to the Church of England.

Ted completed the eight grades of primary school in Pembroke and went on to study for a further three years in High School, leaving at the age of 18. He did not start an apprenticeship but worked on the farm for two years. It seems that he was not keen on farmwork and reported later that he did not want to farm when the war was over. His interest lay in the field of mechanics, working with motors; his aim was to enter the mechanics trade later.

He seems to have been a lively lad, enjoying all kinds of sports: ball games, skating and swimming. In his social life, dancing featured prominently. At the age of seven, there was an adventurous episode where he and his older sister were lost and spent the night in the woods before they were found next morning. Years later, an examining officer said of him: "He does not like discipline and is inclined to be argumentative, but he has a good fighting spirit as an air gunner."

At the time of his enlistment in 1940, he had been living in Hantsport, not far from the family farm, working in a pulp mill for the previous four years. He had had various jobs there and had been a wet machine operator and a truck driver. Again he stated that he did not want return to this job later..

## **IN THE AIR FORCE**

Ted enlisted 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1940 in the Canadian Air Force. He was described as being of average height, intelligent, neat and suitable for standard general duties. He opted for ground duties as a mechanic and began his initial training in Ottawa and then Montreal. In the autumn of 1941, now a leading aircraftman, he began training as an air gunner in Rivers, Manitoba. He completed it successfully and gained his badge in February, 1942 when he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. After embarkation leave, he was sent to England and attached to the RAF, no.44 bomber squadron, which at this point operated out of Waddington, Lincolnshire, using Lancaster bombers.

By September, 1942 Ted had begun his first tour in action; he used to wear a little silver ring and carry a silver three penny piece as a good luck charm. He had become a flight sergeant and little more than two months later a Warrant Officer. He had been on a perilous flight to Genoa in Italy; despite the Lancaster bomber developing engine trouble, the Captain carried on and completed the mission (for which he was awarded the DFC).



*Photo: Heroic Endeavour by Sean Feast published by: grubstreet.co.uk*

*Top: The boys of 582 Squadron, November 1944. By the end of the year more than 50 of these men were either prisoners, missing, or killed in action.*

At the end of his first tour, which could consist of thirty sorties or more, Ted, who had previously been selected for training as an instructor, spent nearly a year working in this field from the summer of 1943 until June 1944. He was then given home leave and flew back to Canada where he spent much of it in Pembroke, Nova Scotia with his parents; he also visited his married sisters, in Rhode Island (Kath and Jen Macdonald) and Helen Ross in Economy.

On returning to England, he began his second tour as an air gunner with the recently formed 582 Squadron; this was part of the famous RAF Pathfinder group, flying Lancasters. By December Ted had taken part in some sixty raids in total, flying to targets all over Europe. At this point he was planning to get married. He had met an Irish nursing sister, Dorothy Eleanor Frances Glennon, born in 1916. The ceremony took place near her home in Acton, London W.3 at Our Lady of Lourdes church on 8 December, 1944; Ted's best man was a close friend and fellow air gunner, Allen Bourne.



Wedding Ted & Dorothy

## **THE LAST FLIGHT**

On 23rd December, 1944 Warrant Officer Campbell was the rear gunner in a Lancaster bomber (60 J for Johnnie) He had joined the crew at the last moment, substituting for his friend Allen Bourne who had been transferred. Ted's plane took off at 10.29 am from Little Staughton, Huntingdonshire. In the first formation of a total of 27 Lancasters, it was headed for Cologne in Germany with as specific target, the Gremberg railway marshalling yards. Cloudy weather had been predicted for this daylight raid but it proved otherwise. Outside the plane it was cold with a temperature of 23 degrees below zero. Meeting considerable enemy opposition, an order came through to break formation and proceed independently but not all planes received it. After releasing the bomb loads, they turned and headed home.

Ted's plane was attacked by enemy fighters and eventually caught fire. The Captain, Fl. Lt. Peter Alfred Thomas, DFC, 22 years old, remained at the controls; Ted Campbell had been wounded and the other air gunner Sgt. Fallon was asked to bring him through the plane to the cockpit. Then the Captain ordered the other five crew members to bail out. They were: the navigators, Flying Officer W.E. Vaughan and F/O A.R. Whittaker, the wireless officer, Flight Sergeant H. Fuller, the middle air gunner Sergeant G. Fallon who all became prisoners of war. The flight engineer, Sergeant V.T. Hobbs was killed when his parachute failed.

No doubt still hoping to land the plane safely, the pilot flew on with the injured Ted at his side, only to crash shortly afterwards, probably around 12.40 pm. A statement by the Australian Flying Officer R.F. Terpening, (RAAF 424312) tells more: "About 13.15 on December 23, after parachuting into the village of Oppiter, Belgium (near Bree), I was taken by American troops to a crashed aircraft about two miles from the village. I identified it as a Lancaster and the squadron letters of 582. The aircraft was badly smashed and burnt out. Americans told me of two bodies which had been found in the crash.... They also handed me an identity disc and a small medal which had been found on one of the bodies. The disc belonged to R65080 W/O F.W. Campbell. No other bodies had yet been found in the vicinity. Arrangements were made for the bodies to be buried. In the village churchyard at Oppiter."

Ted had been married for just two weeks; only 9 days later he would have celebrated his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Ted Campbell and his Skipper were buried side by side in Opitter, south of Valkenswaard, Netherlands. Around a year later, the remains of now Pilot Officer F.W. Campbell were reburied in the Netherlands at the Canadian Military Cemetery, Groesbeek. He had been promoted to Pilot Officer retrospectively on 22 December.

#### AWARDS

AJC Europe star, F/O clasp

Defense medal

General Service Medal

CVSM award and clasp

Frederick William Campbell is buried in Groesbeek: **plot XVII. B. 7.**

The inscription on the headstone reads: 'Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord'. May his soul rest in peace.

Grand niece Kathleen MacMillan and her brother John made for a school project this wonderful tribute to the man they never knew:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exEJBgngcog&feature=youtu.be>



Life story: Gwyn de Jong, Research Team Faces to Graves

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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