

In Memory of Sergeant Frank William Noel Trowbridge and "J" crew

Downed over Holland, 25th June 1943

'Life passes but fragrant memory lives on. God bless, darling.'



They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

We will remember them.

—For the Fallen; Laurence Binyon

No. 432 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron

432 Squadron was a Canadian focused unit that had members from a mixture of Commonwealth countries, including many from England where Frank Trowbridge was from, hailing from Eastbourne in Sussex.

432 Squadron formed part of 6 (RCAF) Group of Bomber Command and flew from north England (Yorkshire), firstly from Skipton-on-Swale and then after September 1943 from East Moor. The first operational flight was on 23rd of May 1943.



Wellington Bomber

The aircraft initially flown by 432 Squadron was a Vickers Wellington X, it was the first of three bombers used by 432 squadron. The model X Wellington was the final production Wellington and fitted with Hercules XVIII and last flown in 1943. The Wellington was the primary bomber of the RAF at the outbreak of WW2.

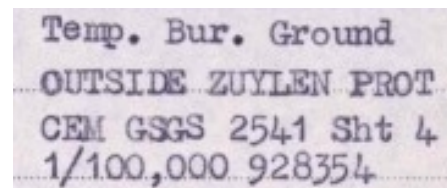
Despite the defensive-minded network of machine guns, this array was soon found to be inadequate as Wellingtons suffered from large defenceless angles about her design. As such, early daylight bombing raids proved disastrous for the type.ⁱ

The Wellingtons of 432 squadron were superseded by the Avro Lancaster II, which was then replaced by two variants of the Halifax.

Killed in Action

Frank Trowbridge was killed in action with his fellow crew members on 25th of June 1943, after the unit had been operational for only a month. The average age of the crew was 27. The pilot Goldie was the second youngest only 23 and the crew member with the least operational experience.

After the crash of their airplane the bodies of the crew members were interred at Zuylen in Holland.



This temporary burial could be at Zuylen Begraafplaatsen, near Breda, in the Netherlands. There are other war graves at the site. See images at <http://www.zuylen.nl/blog/locaties/begraafplaats-vogelenzang/>

After the war, the graves of the five crew were relocated to Bergen-Op-Zoom, British Cemetery in Holland.

Regt. or Corps	Army No.	Name & Initials	Rank
R. C. A. F. ✓	R 80605	SPARROW, W.A.	P/Sjt
R. A. F. (V.R.) ✓	1216316	GOLDIE, N.	(Pilot) Sjt A
" " ✓	658650	TROWBRIDGE, F.W.N.	Sgt.
" " ✓	1390957	LIDDLE, G.	Sgt.
R. A. F. (V.R.) ✓	1331007	KILLICK, C.K.	"

Crash Factors

1. **Hastily formed Squadron**

432 Squadron had been operational for only a month at the time of the crash.

2. **Pushing for a record**

From the Operations Record Book, first day: *"It was the wish of the A.O.C. that a record would be achieved from formation to Operations for No. 432 (RCAF) Squadron..."* On the fifth day of the squadron being formed the Leeming Station Commander ?G/Capt. C.R. Dunlap visited and *"expressed the view that the A.O.C. 6 Group wished the Squadron to be operational in ten days."* That would be just over two weeks from it's formation. In a similar spirit a Vickers Wellington was assembled in a record time of 24 hours in 1943. [Video](#).ⁱⁱ

3. **Outdated aircraft**

The Vickers Wellington was designed in the early 1930's and by 1943 aircraft design had moved on under the pressure of war. The Wellington was found to be wanting, having large defenceless angles about her design.

4. **Turning up the heat**

The week Sgt. Trowbridge crew was downed was the busiest week of operations for 432 Squadron. Since becoming operational the squadron had averaged 1-2 sorties per week into enemy territory. The week of the 21-27th of June there were six consecutive nights of operations. It was the busiest of weeks operationally and the largest in losses to date for 432 Squadron with 15 crew lost.

5. **Inexperienced Crew**

Thanks to the detailed records kept by RAF and scanned by National Archives (of the UK) we know exactly how many operational trips and hours each crew member had. Despite the intention, stated on the first of May, that *'experienced crews would be posted from other RCAF'* this does not seem to be the case for this aircrew.

The aircrew had one months operational experience, including six completed missions, with 432 (RCAF) Squadron, and had flown between two and seven operational trips with other squadrons.

The Pilot, Neil Goldie, had the least operational experience of the crew with eight trips and 47 hours.

One of those trips was as a sixth crew member and observer.

The balance of the crew had flown between 10 and 12 operational trips each and most of their experience was that first month with 432 Squadron.

This operational record is in direct contradiction of the intention at formation of the Squadron that experienced crews be used.

6. **Young Pilot**

The pilot Neil Goldie was the second youngest airman on the craft at 23 years of age. A local man of Rotherham, Yorkshire. How much experience can a pilot of 23 years have?

7. **Death and more Death**

During four and a half weeks of operations the crew had already witnessed more death than most civilians will in a lifetime. In that time 18 crew members had lost their lives, including two by crash landing and one by walking into a propeller. Two widows had visited the base and funerals had been held and attended. Many aircraft had returned with flack damage and one airman had been wounded by flack while in the air. These airmen would have been well aware of their own mortality while flying and it would have impacted their performance.

8. **Crew Fatigue**

The same crew had flown the night before, between 21.53 and 04.05, a six hour mining mission. They were back in the air at 23.05 the next evening (later on the same day they had already flown). Given substantial time would need to be given towards preparations and post-flight de-brief there was not a lot of recovery time. While with 432 Squadron the crew had always had a rest day between missions, and when weather or other factors intervened, up to a maximum of two weeks between missions.

It was the wish of A.O.C. that “...*experienced crews would be posted from other RCAF...*”

This is not borne out by the records of the aircraft that failed to return during the first month of operations.

One of the crew from 432 Squadron, downed on the night of 11/12 June 1943 had a pilot with only two operational trips experience, and he was the most experienced of all the crew with the rest only recording one mission before being lost. Another crew was downed on the night of 24/25 June 1943 which had, apart from the pilot, no operational experience whatsoever. That was also true for a crew lost on the night of 26/27 June 1943. On the third of July 1943 a crew crashed on landing, killing the pilot who had completed two operational flights, twice the number of other two crew members killed.

Bomber command was sending crews into combat that had two, four or six operational missions between the entire crew of five.

Contrast this level of experience with that of other Squadrons where individual airmen had experience of operational missions well into double digits. Some airmen that had been flying from early in the war had completed over a hundred operational missions.

Further contrast this level of experience with that of the German Luftwaffe aircrews. The Luftwaffe had been training since the early 1930's and had operational experience in Spain, supporting Fascist General Franco from 1936 to 1939. In March of 1939 the German forces began operations in Czechoslovakia then Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939. All of these military operations gave the Luftwaffe crews and command valuable experience in warfare and the opportunity to refine their aircraft and production for the modern battles they would engage in.

When the Battle of Britain began the Luftwaffe was a well-oiled fighting machine with highly experienced aircrews and command equipped with modern and highly effective aircraft.

Bombing Dusseldorf on the night of 11/12 June 1943.

NIGHT	WELLINGTON X	F/Lt. BOURGEOIS, E.A.	do	23.19	-----	This aircraft failed to returned from this operation. No further news have been heard from same. Below are the Operational hours and trips of the crew:-	A.73
11/12.6.43	HE.792 "U"	Sgt. PHILPOTT, J.A.					<u>OPERATIONAL</u>
		P/O. MCCLINTOCK, G.A.					<u>TRIPS, HOURS.</u>
		Sgt. WARNER, H.D.				G.5577 P/O. (A/P/Lt.) Laurie, Alban, BOURGEOIS, (Pilot)	2 14.37
		Sgt. MORAN, D.C.				E.88411 Sgt. PHILPOTT, James, Albert, Mason, (Nav.)	1 10.37
						P/O. George, Austin, MCCLINTOCK, (A/S.)	1 10.37
						E.103773 Sgt. WARNER, Henry, Dale, (WCP/AG)	1 10.37
						E.133528 Sgt. MORAN, Sinclair, Daniel, (A/G.)	1 10.37

Bombing Wuppertal on the same night as Sgt Trowbridge and crew were lost on 24/25 June 1943.

NIGHT	WELLINGTON X	SGT. MEROIER, J.J.	do	23.05	---	This aircraft failed to return from this operation and no further news has been heard from same. Below are the operational hours and trips of the crew:-	A.122
24/05:6:43	HW 518 "A"	P/O GINGRAS, J.R.G.					
		SGT. DEVERELL, M.P.					
		SGT. TORRE, P.P.					
		SGT. LAGACE, E.					
							OPERATIONAL Trips/Hours
		R.135156	SGT. MEROIER, Joseph, Jacques, Charles. (pilot)	4	21.51		
		J.22212	P/O Joseph, Rene, Guy, GINGRAS. (Nav.)	NIL	NIL		
		R.150745	SGT. DEVERELL, Mervel, Mervay. (A/B)	NIL	NIL		
		1312182	SGT. TORRE, Martin, Patrick. (Wop/AG)	NIL	NIL		
		R.55634	SGT. LAGACE, Mervise. (A/B)	NIL	NIL		

Gardening Jellyfish on the night of 26/27 June 1943.

NIGHT	WELLINGTON X	P/S: HORN, W.W.	do	22.23	---	This aircraft failed to return from this operation, and no further news has been heard from same. Below are the operational hours and trips of the crew:-	A.128
26/27.8.43	HP 568 "I"	Sgt. SCHILL, F.H. Sgt. TATE, G.W. Sgt. DAVIDSON, D.J. Sgt. McKEEZE, D.E.					OPERATIONAL Trips Hours 2 11.34
		E.95442 P/S. HORN, Walter, Wilfred (Pilot)					
		E.120845 Sgt. SCHILL, Frederick, Harold. (nav.)					NIL NIL
		E.146302 Sgt. TATE, George, Douglas, Watson. (A/G.)					NIL NIL
		R.104824 Sgt. DAVIDSON, Iyall, James. (WOP/AG)					NIL NIL
		E.92054 Sgt. McKEEZE, Lloyd, George. (A/G.)					NIL NIL

Returning from a bombing mission this aircraft crashed while attempting to land on the fourth of July 1943.

Aircraft "C" piloted by Sgt. Baker crashed while attempting to land at Gravesend. The pilot Bomb Aimer and Wireless Operator were killed. The Navigator P/O. Howard was seriously injured and the Rear Gunner was uninjured. Below are the Operational time and hours of the Pilot, Bomb Aimer and Wireless Operator:-

		Operational Time, hours
R.125250	Sgt. BAKER, John, William, (Pilot)	2 10:36
R.133341	Sgt. HOWES, Glen, Edwin, (W/O)	1 4:50
R.091687	Sgt. HOWES, Jack, (W/O)	1 4:56

Aircraft "C" piloted by

432 Squadron's first two months

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
May-1943						1 Squadron Formed	2 Crews reported in
	3 21 Wellington III/X flown in	4 Short lecture on fighter tactics, and evasive actions	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14 First Flying	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21 Bombing up practice held successfully	22	23 First Operational Flights to Dortmund
June-1943	24 Stood down	25 Dusseldorf bombed	26 Cancelled Weather	27 Essen bombed. One crew failed to return	28 Stood down	29 Wuppertal One crew and two of another crew died.	30 Cancelled
	31 Cancelled. Total strength of 16 Wellington X and 547 men.	1 Mining operations with no loss	2 Stood down. Funeral of 2 crew members	3 Stood down	4 Cancelled	5 Stood down	6 Stood down
	7 Cancelled	8 Cancelled Weather	9 Cancelled Weather	10 Stood down. Weather	11 Crew missing. Propellor incident	12 Gunner died of injuries	13 Stood down
	14 Operations Gardening Jellyfish	15 Stood down	16 Stood down	17 Stood down	18 Stood down	19 Stood down	20 Cancelled
July-1943	21 Bombing Kerfeld	22 Bombing Mulhiem	23 Gardening Jellyfish. 3 aircraft damaged	24 Bombing Wuppertal 2 aircraft did not return	25 Bombing Gersenkirchen	26 Gardening Jellyfish 1 aircraft did not return	27 Stood down
	28 Bombing Cologne	29 Stood down	30 Stood down	1	2	3 Bombing Two aircraft + 1 crew missing. 3 airmen died.	

Key: Bold Orange text = Trowbridge crew flew (just pilot on 23 May). Pink background = Aircrew losses

Operations Record Book for the night of the 24/25th June 1943

DATE	AIRCRAFT TYPE & NUMBER	CREW	DUTY	TIME	
				UP	DOWN
NIGHT 24/25.6.43	WELLINGTON X HF 572 "J"	Sgt. GOLDIE, N. Sgt. LIDDLE, G. Sgt. TROWBRIDGE, F.W.N. Sgt. KILLICK, C.K. Sgt. SPARROW, W.A.	BOMBING WUPPERTAL.	23.05	-----

DETAILS OF SORTIE OR FLIGHT				REFERENCES
This aircraft failed to return from this operation and no further news was heard from same. Below are the Operational hours and trips of the crew:-				A.123
				OPERATIONAL Trips. Hours
1216316	Sgt. GOLDIE, Neil.	(Pilot)	8	47:08
1390957	Sgt. LIDDLE, George.	(Nav.)	10	59:06
658650	Sgt. TROWBRIDGE, Frank, William, Noel.	(A/B)	11	65:21
1331007	Sgt. KILLICK, CHARLES, KINGSTON.	(WOP/AG)	10	57:16
R:80605	Sgt. SPARROW, William, Albert.	(A/G)	12	70:01

Commonwealth War Graves Commission entries

GOLDIE, Sgt. (Pilot) NEIL, 1216316. R.A.F. (V.R.). 432 (R.C.A.F.) Sqdn. 25th June, 1943. Age 23. Son of Neil and Kathleen Goldie, of Rotherham, Yorkshire. 25. C. 5.

The influence of a good life Lives for ever.
Even though the life be so short.

LIDDLE, Sgt. (Nav.) GEORGE, 1390957. R.A.F. (V.R.). 432 (R.C.A.F.) Sqdn. 25th June, 1943. Age 33. Son of Ralph and Dorothy Liddle, of Roker, Sunderland, Co. Durham. 25. C. 3.

Hearts that loved you never forget.
In memory you are with us yet.

TROWBRIDGE, Sgt. (Air Bomber) FRANK WILLIAM NOEL, 658650. R.A.F. (V.R.). 432 (R.C.A.F.) Sqdn. 25th June, 1943. Age 30. Son of Harry and Emmaline Trowbridge; husband of Madeline Ivy Trowbridge, of Eastbourne, Sussex. 25. C. 4.

Life passes but fragrant memory lives on.
God bless, darling.



KILLICK, Sgt. (W. Op./Air Gnr.) CHARLES KINGSTON, 1331007. R.A.F. (V.R.). 432 (R.C.A.F.) Sqdn. 25th June, 1943. Age 22. Son of Ernest Walter and Alice Killick, of The Hyde, Middlesex. 25. C. 6.

"Thy will be done"

SPARROW, Flt. Sgt. (Air Gnr.) WILLIAM ALBERT, R/80605. R.C.A.F. 432 Sqdn. 25th June, 1943. Age 27. Son of William George and Sadie Louise Sparrow, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 25. C. 9.

Loyal a' mort

Bergen-Op-Zoom Cemetery



Surname	Forename	Age	Role	Rank	Regiment	Service No.	Grave Ref
SPARROW	WILLIAM ALBERT	27	Air Gunner	Flight Sergeant	Royal Canadian Air Force	'R/80605'	25. C. 9.
GOLDIE	NEIL	23	Pilot	Sergeant	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve	'1216316'	25. C. 5.
TROWBRIDGE	FRANK WILLIAM NOEL	30	Air Bomber	Sergeant	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve	'658650'	25. C. 4.
LIDDLE	GEORGE	33	Navigator	Sergeant	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve	'1390957'	25. C. 3.
KILLICK	CHARLES KINGSTON	22	Wireless/ Air Gunner	Sergeant	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve	'1331007'	25. C. 6.

Surname	Additional Information	Headstone Schedule
SPARROW	Son of William George and Sadie Louise Sparrow, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.	Loyal a' mort
GOLDIE	Son of Neil and Kathleen Goldie, of Rotherham, Yorkshire.	The influence of a good life Lives for ever. Even though the life be so short.
TROWBRIDGE	Son of Harry and Emmaline Trowbridge; husband of Madeline Ivy Trowbridge, of Eastbourne, Sussex.	Life passes But fragrant memory lives on. God bless, darling.
LIDDLE	Son of Ralph and Dorothy Liddle, of Roker, Sunderland, Co. Durham.	Hearts that loved you Never forget. In memory You are with us yet.
KILLICK	Son of Ernest Walter and Alice Killick, of The Hyde, Middlesex.	"Thy will be done"

Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission [Link](#)

RAF history of Bomber Command



Bomber Command No.432 (Leaside) Squadron

No. 432 (Leaside) Squadron

Motto: "Saeviter ad lucem" ("Ferociously towards the light").

Badge: In front of a full moon, a cougar leaping down.

Authority: King George VI, March 1945.

The twelfth RCAF bomber squadron formed overseas during the Second World War, No. 432 originated at Skipton-on-Swale, Yorkshire, on 1st May 1943, as a unit in No. 6 (RCAF) Group of Bomber Command. Equipped originally with Wellingtons, it later converted to Lancaster IIs and then to Halifaxes. No. 432 undertook its first operation on 23rd/24th May 1943, just over three weeks after having formed, and by the end of the war in Europe, almost two years later, it had flown 3,100 sorties on 238 bombing and mining operations (including 44 attacks on the Ruhr and 11 on Berlin) and lost 71 aircraft. The squadron won 144 decorations comprising 2 DSOs, 1 CGM, 119 DFCs, 1 bar to the DFC, 20 DFMs and 1 Croix de Guerre.

Bomber Command WWII Bases:

Formed 1.5.43 as No. 432 (Bomber) Squadron at:

- Skipton-on-Swale, Yorks : May 1943-Sep 1943
- East Moor, Yorks : Sep 1943 onwards

Bomber Command WWII Aircraft:

- Vickers Wellington X : May 1943-Nov 1943
- Avro Lancaster II : Oct 1943-Feb 1944
- Handley Page Halifax B.III, B.VII : Feb 1944 onwards

Code Letters:

- "QO"

First Operational Mission in WWII:

- 23rd/24th May 1943 : 11 Wellingtons bombed Dortmund.

Last Operational Mission in WWII:

- 25th April 1945 : 19 Halifaxes bombed gun batteries on island of Wangerooze.

Source: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/bombercommandno432squadron.cfm>

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Image of Frank W. N. Trowbridge in civilian clothing from Robina Sutherland Williamson (nee Trowbridge)

Further Reading

Glen Carruthers excellent 432 Tribute website <http://www.angelfire.com/ca/gcarruth/Ops.html>

References:

RAF: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/bombercommandno432squadron.cfm>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission [Link](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Skipton-on-Swale

http://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft/detail.asp?aircraft_id=295

ⁱ Military Factory http://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft/detail.asp?aircraft_id=295 accessed 27/02/2017

ⁱⁱ UK Ministry of Information 'Worker's Week-End' YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsm9YT_EZWI