

Hrysko, William (Hryszco, Basil)

Age: 27

Nationality: Canadian

Rank: Corporal

Unit: No. 4 Squadron,
Tofino

Occupation: Air Frame Mechanic

Service No: R/106466

Birth: 12 January 1918,
Pine Ridge, Manitoba,
Canada

Home Town: Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada

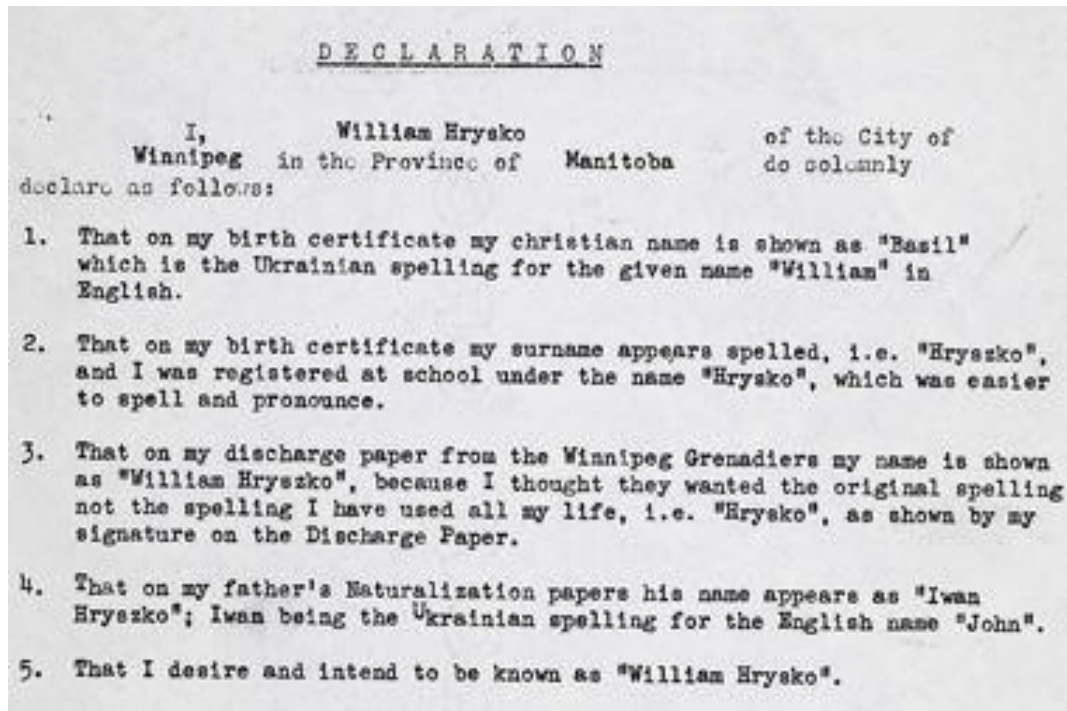
Death: 13 July 1945,
Consolidated Liberator 11121,
hit mountain seven miles from
Bamfield, BC, Canada

Burial: Commemorated Ottawa Memorial
Buried near Bamfield, BC.

Others: All RCAF: F/O W. E. Davies; F/O Robert Joseph
Martello, 2nd Pilot; F/O Nicholas Maxwell Popovitch,
Navigator; WO 1 Victor Gilbert Crosson, WAG; F/S
Donald William Hope, F/E; F/O Harry Alexander Lowe,
WO; WO 2 Joseph Bertrand Presse, WAG; Passengers
Sergeant Pamela Bennett, Corporal Nora Johnson, LAC
Margaret Mann; LAC Lloyd Tull, Corporal Norman
Johnson, LAC Raymond Kitley



Biography



William Hrysko's parents, Iwan Hryszko and Maryo Marczlyo, were Ukrainian. Their place of birth is unclear but they came to Canada via Austria, separately, in 1901 and 1902 and married in Winnipeg in 1903. In Canada they were known as John and Mary Hrysko. John was a farmer in Pine Ridge, Manitoba and later moved to Winnipeg, where, in 1941, he was working as a car repairer for CPR. He was naturalized Canadian in 1914.

William was born in Pine Ridge, Manitoba on 12 January 1918. He was one of seven children, a member of the Orthodox Church who spoke fluent Ukrainian. He left school in 1935 with grade 11 passes in Algebra, Mechanical Drawing and Practical Arts and worked as a delivery boy from 1937 to 1940 and briefly as a shoe dyer for the Hudson Bay Company. Before serving in the RCAF he was in 2nd Battalion Winnipeg Grenadiers for a year.

On 7 June 1941, aged 23, William enlisted in the RCAF for Ground Duties, hoping to be able to continue in the RCAF after the war. The Interviewing Officer found him intelligent and neat and he was selected for Air Frame Mechanic. By 1st April 1942, he had progressed to AEM "B" and been promoted to LAC. He reached AEM "A" in July 1942 and was promoted to Corporal on 1

September 1943.

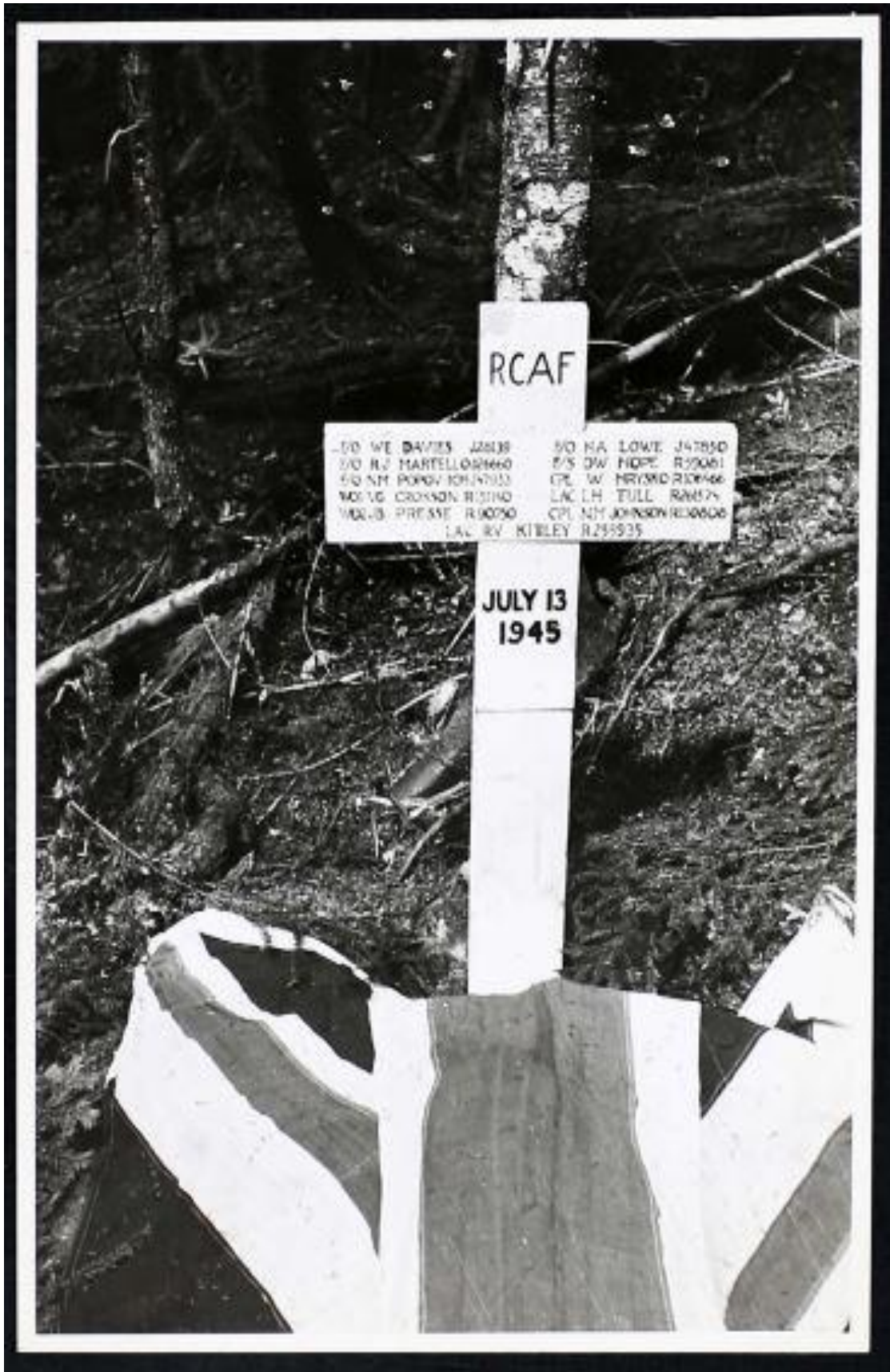
William's first 18 months of service were in Manitoba and Ontario. At the end of 1942 he was sent to the West Coast where he fluctuated between Tofino and Patricia Bay and moved from No. 8 squadron to No. 115 and by July 1945 was in No. 4 Squadron in Tofino.

On 13 July 1945, William was approved to fly to Patricia Bay from Tofino in Consolidated Liberator 11121. He was one of three airmen at Tofino to be passengers in the aircraft. Shortly after take off, the Liberator flew into the side of a mountain while trying to gain altitude in the fog. There were no survivors and all the occupants were found to have died of extensive injuries and burning. They are all buried in two mass graves at the site of the wreckage.



WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1952

MR. AND MRS. JOHN HRYSKO, Pritchard avenue, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary August 16 when a dinner and reception were held in their honor in the hall of St. John the Evangelist. Their marriage took place in 1902 in Holy Ghost church. Mr. Hrysko came from the Ukraine in 1900. He farmed at Pine Ridge where he founded the Corona school and helped in the construction of the Pine Ridge golf course. Leaving Pine Ridge in 1919, Mr. Hrysko operated a grocery business and then took employment at the Weston shops until his retirement five years ago. Of a family of seven, five are living, John of Chicago, Michael of Vancouver, Joseph of Welland, Ont., Mrs. A. E. Plexman of Winnipeg, and Mrs. E. W. Trachsel of Shakespeare, Ont. William lost his life while on active service with the R.C.A.F. There are ten grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



RCAF

...ED WE DAVIES J48138	S/O HA LOWE J47850
S/O RJ MARTELLO R20660	S/S DW HOPE R20061
S/O NM POPOV J09147113	CPL W HRYSD R20466
MAJ VG CROSSON R23190	LAC LH TULL R26574
MAJUS PRESNE R20050	CPL NM JOHNSON R230006
LAC RV KIBLEY R295535	

JULY 13
1945

Details of Crash

On Friday, 13 July 1945, F/O William Edward Davies took off from Patricia Bay station at 08:51 on a standard exercise. He was flying Consolidated Liberator 11121 with a crew of six, all members of RCAF No. 11 Squadron in Patricia Bay:

F/O Robert Joseph Martello	2 nd Pilot
F/O Nicholas Maxwell Popovitch	Navigator
WO 1 Victor Gilbert Crosson	WAG
F/S Donald William Hope	F/E
F/O Harry Alexander Lowe	WO
WO 2 Joseph Bertrand Presse	WAG

Davies had flown this exercise once as second pilot but this was his first time as first pilot. He was a qualified first pilot both day and night on Liberators. He had been trained at USAAF Field, Smyrna, Tennessee, had been with No. 11 squadron about a year, and was fully confident for instrument flight. The second pilot and remaining crew members were also fully qualified.

The exercise was an ordinary cross country flight used to familiarize pilots with the aerodromes in the immediate area, as well as giving Navigators a chance to familiarize themselves with the coast of Vancouver Island. The route was from Patricia Bay to Comox, via Abbotsford and Boundary Bay, followed by Comox to Tofino via Port Hardy, and ending with Tofino to Patricia Bay. Before leaving Patricia Bay, the pilot filed a flight plan to Comox. There were no passengers on this leg of the trip.

At Comox, three passengers were approved for the flight: Sergeant Pamela Bennett, Corporal Nora Johnson and LAC Margaret Mann. A fourth passenger, LAC Lloyd Tull, was reported to have boarded the flight just before take off. Before leaving Comox, the pilot filed the flight plan to Tofino.

At Tofino, it was arranged that three more passengers would be taken on board: Corporal Norman Johnson, LAC Raymond Kately and Corporal William Hrysko. The weather report at Tofino showed extensive fog banks to the south and west. The aircraft took off at 4:43 pm and the pilot planned to be at 10,000 feet at Ucluelet, which indicated that he planned to cross the island at high altitude rather than follow the coast where the fog lay. At 4:46 pm the aircraft made contact reporting to be at 49°05N 125°45 W, still, after 13 minutes, within the

vicinity of Tofino airfield.

This was the last contact made with 11121 and when it failed to arrive at Patricia Bay at its ETA, search procedures were instigated.

The wreckage of the aircraft was found four days later on 17 July 1945 about seven miles east south east of Bamfield, BC. It took ground searchers four days to reach the crash site where they confirmed there were no survivors.

At the inquiry into the crash, F/O W.G. Skerik, Air Search Rescue Officer at Tofino, gave the following information:

“I was on the first rescue party to reach the crash of Liberator 11121. The position of same was 48°48N, 124°58.30W. I estimated the track of Liberator 11121 prior to the crash to be 77°T.

I identified the body of Cpl. N. M Johnson by a wallet on his clothing, Cpl. Hrysko by his wallet, F/O Martello by his wallet, F/O Popovitch by his identity bracelet, F/O Davies by a belt buckle, initial ‘D’ and by a ring initialled ‘W.E.D.’, and an RCAF watch serial No. 1165702, F/S Hope by his identity discs. Seven bodies were found which could not be identified, one of which was definitely a woman and one probably a woman. The other five were definitely identified as men.

I searched the slope for about 300 yards below the point of impact for evidence of anyone jumping etc. But nothing was found.”

Due to the difficulty in locating the crash site the bodies could not be brought out for burial and two graves, one for men and one for women, were dug by the wreckage. The chaplain accompanying the search party conducted a funeral service and crosses were erected over the graves. Coinciding as closely as possible with the funeral service a memorial service was held at Patricia Bay in front of a Station Liberator, conducted by the Station Chaplain and attended by all available officers and airmen of No. 11 Squadron.

In 1982, airmen from Comox Base erected a more permanent cairn and bronze plaque, which were dedicated in an official ceremony in 1983.

The conclusion of the inquiry into the crash blames the pilot, in that, contrary to

orders, he flew into cloud instead of finding a route through the breaks in the overcast to reach his planned altitude. While in the cloud he flew into the side of a mountain ESE of Bamfield. The Tofino Base was also found at fault for allowing the pilot to take off for Patricia Bay in the weather conditions that afternoon.



