

White, William Thomas

Age: 23

Nationality: Canadian

Rank: Flying/Officer

Unit: No. 133 Squadron

Occupation: Pilot

Service No: J/39530

Birth: 3 January 1922,
London, Ontario,
Canada

Home Town: London, Ontario
Canada

Death: 25 June 1945

de Havilland Mosquito KB170
in mid air collision,
Debert, Nova Scotia, Canada

Burial: Woodland Cemetery,
London, Ontario, Canada



Biography

William White joined the RCAF in Sudbury in January 1940, just 18 years old. With three years training as a motor mechanic at technical school he was initially trained as an aero-engine mechanic (AEM). In April 1941, William was posted to the UK as an AEM with Canadian squadrons 401, 403 and 409. He qualified as class "B" (AEM) in October 1941 and as class "A" in October 1942.

William was selected for training as a pilot in January 1942 and a little over a year later, still in UK, he started training at No. 4 EFTS where he stayed for a month. At the end of the month William was reported as a sound airman who should develop into a useful pilot. On 21 April 1943, he was recommended for further training as a pilot and on 22 May 1943 he returned to Canada.

Back in Canada, William was sent to No. 12 EFTS in Rockcliffe where he was an average student who needed more work on his aerobatics and precautionary landings. From there he went to No. 1 SFTS where, on 10 December 1943, he earned his pilot's wings and a commission as Pilot Officer. He was recommended as being very suitable for a fighter pilot or a bomber pilot and was posted to No. 133 (F) squadron in Tofino, moving from Tofino to Sea Island and in August 1944, to Patricia Bay, all in British Columbia. He was, by this time, an above average pilot and a month or so later, while still remaining in No. 133 squadron, William was attached to No. 7 OTU in Debert Nova Scotia, in order to train on de Havilland Mosquitoes.

On 13 April 1945, William married 17 year old Gloria Goldine Blatter in New Westminster, BC. On 25 June 1945, during a standard exercise, his Mosquito collided with another aircraft mid-air and crashed. He was so badly burned it was impossible to tell whether he died of his injuries or in the fire. He was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in London, Ontario.



William was born on 3 January 1922, in London, Ontario, to Harry White and Doris Burdett. He had one brother, Franklin, a year younger.

William's wife, Gloria

4 December 1927 - 14 April 2011

Gloria remarried in 1953 and lived in the USA.



Details of Crash

On 25 June 1945 at about 8:30 am, de Havilland Mosquito KB170 took off from Debert airfield in Nova Scotia, with three other aircraft to carry out low flying formation navigation exercises. One of the aircraft contained two instructors who were observing the exercise and the other three pilots were to take turns at leading the formation.

At the time of the accident, (10:10 am) Mosquito KB170, piloted by F/O William White with navigator F/S Thomas Swift, both RCAF officers, was in the lead position. In No. 3 position was Mosquito KB303, piloted by F/O David Ross, DFC, with navigator Sergeant D. W. Pratt, both of the Royal Air Force. The observing aircraft with the instructors was about 150 yards astern.

Approaching the turning at the end of the seventh leg, without audible or visual signals and for no apparent reason, KB170, (White), turned slightly to port and down, bringing the aircraft underneath KB303 (Ross). With its fuselage in line with the KB303's propeller and its tail plane below the leading edge of the tail plane of KB303. Ross lost sight of KB170 and was unaware of its position with relation to his aircraft. As KB170 tried to climb back to its leading position a collision occurred with KB303. The port propeller of KB303 severed the fuselage of KB170 several feet forward of the leading edge of the tail plane. KB170 climbed straight up about 500 feet, fell off into a slow flat spin and finally went straight into the ground and burst into flames, four miles south of Hantsport, NS. It was totally destroyed and both crew were killed. KB303 was able to return safely to base and its crew were unharmed.

F/O David Ross was held partly responsible for the accident in that he failed both to keep visual contact with his leader and to break away from the formation. F/O White, held some responsibility in that he failed to maintain lead in the formation. No recommendations were made for avoiding this type of accident in the future.





