

Halikowski, Joseph Walter
Warrant Officer
Wireless Operator/Air
Gunner Royal Canadian Air
Force
405 Squadron
R95419



Ducimus ("We Lead")

Joseph "Joe" Walter Halikowski was born on February 17, 1922 in Pontrilas, south of Nipawin, Saskatchewan, Canada. Son of Joseph Halikowski and Pearl Wasylkowski, both were born in the Ukraine, in the region of Galicia. He had three brothers, John Iwan "Adolph", Edward, Adolph, and four sisters. The sisters' names were Annie, Marie, Pauline and Emily. As a religion, the family was Roman Catholic. Father Joseph worked as a section foreman at the Canadian Pacific Railway. They also had a small farm at home. Later they moved to the village of Rockhaven, also in Saskatchewan. Father Joseph came to Canada from Minneapolis, USA and was naturalized as a Canadian citizen on December 15, 1914.

Joseph "Joe" Walter received his primary education at Pontrilas Public School up to Grade X. He also attended High School, but he dropped out and left school. He tried to look for work, but the depression in the country made it difficult.

He weighed 162 lbs. and was 5 ft 9 tall. His hobby was playing the banjo and he enjoyed ice hockey, softball, and hunting. He smoked five cigarettes a day and occasionally drank a good liqueur.

At the age of 10 he suffered a lot from earaches. He was described as a strong type with a clear mind of his own.



Signature of Recruit

Joseph felt it was his duty to enlist in a military unit. Two of his brothers served overseas in the Canadian Army.

On March 8, 1941 he reported to Winnipeg and was considered suitable to become a Wireless Operator in the Royal Canadian Air Force. It was stationed at the No 2 Manning Depot in Brandon, Manitoba, part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.



Source : <http://pastforward.winnipeg.ca/>

There began his military career where he learned to bathe, shave, polish boots, polish buttons, maintain his uniforms and otherwise behave in the required manner. Each day there was two hours of physical education and instruction in marching, rifle drills, saluting and other routines. At the end of their two to four weeks stay there, the prospective Aircrew members were assigned to three training classes: Pilots, Bomb Aimers and Air Gunners. On April 21, 1941 he went for further training to the No 11 Equipment Depot in Calgary. On June 23, 1941, he was assigned to the No 2 Wireless School in Calgary, Alberta for further training. It was one of four schools established by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Canada. It was located on the grounds of the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (PITA) in Calgary. On July 24, 1941 promotion to Leading Aircraftsman (LAC) followed.



No 2 Wireless School in Calgary, Alberta Source : <https://bcatp.wordpress.com/>

On November 9, 1941, Joseph Walter "Joe" attended No 5 Bombing and Gunnery School in Dafoe, Saskatchewan. The motto of the school was "We aim to teach, we teach to aim". He successfully completed this training and received the Air Gunners Badge on December 8, 1941 and was promoted to Flight Sergeant. The next day on December 9, 1941, he went to the 'Y' Depot, Halifax, to prepare to sail overseas to England. On January 7, 1942 he crossed over to England and set foot there. On January 21, he was assigned to the No 3 Personnel Reception Centre in Bournemouth. To settle in, Joseph 'Joe' Walter was assigned to No 1 Signals School in Cranwell, Lincolnshire, to undergo training. Aircraft used there for training were the Vickers Valentia and the Westland Wallace. After successful training he was assigned to the No 16 Operational Training Unit, at their Royal Air Force base Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire. An Operational Training Unit was the final stage of training for aircrew before they were assigned to an operational unit. On 11 July 1942 he was posted to the No 44 Squadron Royal Air Force, No 5 Bombing Group at Waddington. It was the first squadron to receive the Avro Lancaster bomber.



However, this was for a week and he was then posted to the No 405 Squadron on July 17, 1942.

On December 8, 1942 Joseph 'Joe' Walter Halikowski was promoted to Warrant Officer.

The 405 Squadron flew the Handley Page Halifax B Mk II, a four-engine heavy bomber.

The squadron was part of Coastal Command and conducted anti-submarine patrols over the Bay of Biscay and anti-shipping actions against German coastal shipping as well as bombing raids on Germany.

At 7:58 p.m. local time on the evening of April 3, 1943, the Halifax Mk.II (DT808, LQ-V) took off from Leeming Airfield in the County of Yorkshire. The heavy bomber of the Canadian 405 (Vancouver) Squadron was one of one hundred and thirteen Halifaxes, which, together with two hundred and twenty-five Avro Lancasters and ten Mosquitos, set out for a bombing raid on the German city of Essen.



Halifax Mk. II Source : Wikipedia

The crew members, all Royal Canadian Air Force, of the Halifax Mk.II DT808, LQ-V consisted of:

- Pilot, Warrant Officer II William James McAlpine, R/93277.
- Flight engineer, Sergeant Howard John McQueen, R/10748.
- Navigator, Warrant Officer Class II John Day White, R/91819.
- Bomb Aimer, Flight Lieutenant Floyd Edward Luxford, J/15434.
- Air Gunner, Pilot Officer Ernest Bradley, J/90044.
- Air Gunner, Flight Lieutenant Wilfried Lawrence Murphy, J/15166. -

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, Warrant Officer Joseph Walter Halikowski R/95419.



Joe Halikowski

Even before reaching the target, the Halifax was intercepted above the Peel area at an altitude of 15,000 ft. by Major Werner Streib, the commander of I./Nachtjagdgeschwader 1 (NJG 1). He flew in a Messerschmitt BF 110 G4 and had taken off from Venlo.

Streib used his 'Schräge Musik', two slanting forward and upward firing 20 mm guns in the back of his night fighter. The Halifax was hit with them in its wing tanks and crashed down burning 110 yards south of the Overloonseweg, the road between Vierlingsbeek and Overloon, not far from De Lijnbraak farm and the Vierlingsbeek railway station at 11:20 p.m.

The wreck with the bomb load still on board was close to the same farm and not far from the Vierlingsbeek railway station on a forest edge. About seventy incendiary bombs were also located next to the railway line. Only two crew members could rescue themselves by parachute. Flight Lieutenant Wilfried Lawrence Murphy ran aground near Merselo in the municipality of Venray. He left a note and his personal details with the Van Schijndel family there. From there he was transferred to a farm in Ysselsteyn. He also stayed at De Zwarte Plak farm of the Poels family near America in the province of Limburg for some time.

Two inspectors from the crisis control service, Bob Bouwman and H. Lahey, transferred him from De Zwarte Plak to Neer van de Vin farm in Neeritter. He ended up in Belgium through the regional resistance. Once in Brussels, he was caught by betrayal and made a prisoner of war after all.

The Germans then moved him to Paris, where he remained in the infamous Fresnes prison before transferring him to the POW camp Stalag Luft III near Saga. This is now Polish Żagań.

The other survivor, Sergeant Ernest Bradley, was taken prisoner shortly after landing and ended up in the POW camp Stalag 357 in Fallingb. in Lower Saxony, Germany.

The remaining crew members did not survive the crash and were killed.

They were buried in the general cemetery in Woensel:

Pilot, Warrant Officer II William James McAlpine, age 22, grave, JJ.B.42.

Flight engineer, Sergeant Howard John McQueen, age 21, grave, JJ.B.39.

Bomb Aimer, Flight Lieutenant Floyd Edward Luxford, age 29, grave, JJ.B.41.

Navigator, Warrant Officer Class II John Day White, age 21, grave, JJ.B.43.

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, Warrant Officer Joseph Walter Halikowski, age 21, grave, JJ.B.38.

On November 21, 1945 they were all reburied in section XVI row F. at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery.

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, Warrant Officer Joseph Walter Halikowski, age 21, grave reference **XVI. F. 8.**



The grave in the first days, in 1954 the replace crosses with tombstones. The family can then add a personal text.



On his tombstone is the text:
TO THE MEMORY OF OUR LOVED ONE
WHOSE LIFE WAS DEAR TO US

Source : <http://lestweforget1945.org/>

1706
2MREU/2039/AIR/X.1307. 3rd. July 1948. Army Form W 3372

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

Report NoX. ¹⁷⁰⁶1307. Schedule No. _____

Place of Burial Department Country
Groesbeek Canadian Cemetery, Holland Map Reference or E. 75.


The following are buried here:— Location Detail.

Regiment	Army No.	Name and Initials	Rank	K/A D/W or Died	Date of Death	How marked	Plot, Row and Grave
R.C.A.F.	R.93277	W.J. Mc ALPINE	WO.2		3.4.43	X)XVI:F: 9 & 10 collectively.
R.C.A.F.	R.91819	J.D. WHITE	WO.2		"	X	
R.C.A.F.	J.15434	F.E. LUXFORD	F/Lt		"	X	XVI : F : 13
R.C.A.F.	10748	H.J. Mc QUEEN	Sjt		"	X	XVI : F : 7
R.C.A.F.	R.95419	J.W. HALIKOWSKI	WO.2		"	X	XVI : F : 8

Please note new marking of graves 9, 10 and 13, which was established by exhumation. Air Ministry P.40247/43/ refers.

To: - Air Ministry S.14.Cas.
I.W.G.C. ✓
R.C.A.F. ✓
D.D.G.R.&E.

John Iwan Halikowski
Flight Lieutenant,
For Squadron Leader Commanding,
Low Countries Detachment,
H.R.E.S. ROYAL AIR FORCE.



John Iwan "Adolph" Halikowski, one of Joseph Walter's brothers, served with the Regina Rifles of Canada and was killed in a grenade explosion on June 21, 1944, in France, at the age of 26. He was buried at Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery, Reviers, grave reference **II. G. 4.**, 2,5 miles from Juno Beach, Normandy, France.

Edward Halikowski, also of Joseph Walter's brothers, also served in the Canadian army, he fought in The Netherlands, among other places. He survived the war and married on July 21, 1945. He returned to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway, where he worked for 48 years until his retirement in 1980. He died on February 26, 2005.



Life Story: Gijs Krist - Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves

Library and Archives Canada

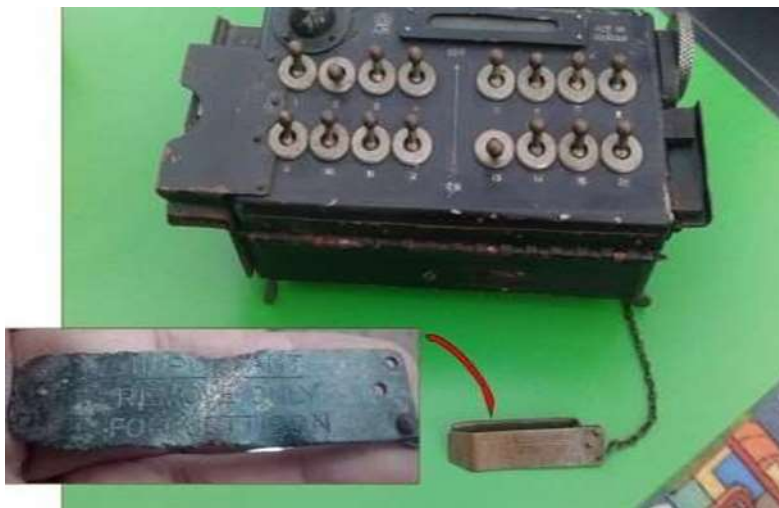
www.aircrewremembered.com

Luchtoorlogwo2boxmeer

Leo Jansen

David Halikowski.

* If you have a photo of this soldier or additional information, please contact info@facestograves.nl



Bombardier switch panel with metal key. The key was found at the crash site. (Coll. J. Hendrix)

Clip and buckle from the 'walk around' oxygen cylinder that secured it to the table. This also allowed the crew member to walk freely at a great height. (Coll. J. Hendrix)



