

# Service Record J11317 Flight Lieutenant Robert Milne McKenzie

## Personal History

Robert Milne McKenzie was born in Aberdeen, Scotland on October 13, 1921, to Robert McKenzie Sr and Bridget Kelly Duff. Robert Sr was in the Gordon Highlanders in World War 1. In 1922, Robert Sr left Scotland to come to Canada. He sailed on the SS Victorian arriving in Quebec in September 1922. He worked in Detroit at the Ford Motor Plant and commuted between Windsor and Detroit to work there. Bridget and the children remained in Scotland until 1928 when they came to Canada to join Robert Sr. Bridget, Robert and his sisters Betty and Amy sailed on the SS Regina landing in Quebec in May 1928. Both sisters were listed as having been born in Canada, so there must have been some visiting back and forth before emigrating. Not long after coming to Canada, Bridget contracted Pulmonary Tuberculosis. She was in the Essex County Sanitorium from July 7, 1930, to February 20, 1931, when she died. The family was living at 207 Church Street in Windsor at the time of Bridget's death and Robert Sr was still working for Ford Motor Company. In 1943, when his daughter Amy got married, Robert Sr was still living around Windsor. At his death in 1957 he was living in Vancouver.

Robert married Frances Hetherington Grandfather Bill's Niece, hence the family connection.



Robert McKenzie After Receiving Pilot's Wings

## How we Discovered Robert

After my parents, Muriel Johnston and Doug Allen passed, my nephew Patrick Ryan purchased their house. Since the house stayed in the family, it had been cleaned up, but not entirely cleaned out. While looking something else, Pat came across a set of Pilot's wings, an ID Bracelet for Robert McKenzie, and a newspaper clipping. Robert had briefly been married to a relative of ours, Frances Hetherington, but otherwise we didn't know anything about him.



**Robert McKenzie's Pilot's Wings and ID Bracelet**



**FLT. LT. R. M. MCKENZIE**

Of the R.C.A.F., previously reported missing, is now presumed dead from word received by his father, Mr. Robert McKenzie of Belle River. Flt. Lt. McKenzie attended Essex High School and played on the basketball team. He was married to the former Francis Heathington and made his home in Essex. He went overseas in October, 1943. Before going overseas, he was a flying instructor in Vancouver. Surviving are his widow, father and three sisters, Betty, who

is serving in the R.C.A.F. at

*Robert McKenzie Presumed Dead*

## Service Record

Robert had a typical series of postings in the British Commonwealth Aircrew Training Program. His postings included:

- **05 Jun 41 - 1 Manning Depot (1 MD), Toronto, Ont.** Basic training, and selection for aircrew or groundcrew streams. 1 MD was located at the Coliseum Building on the Canadian National Exhibition ground.
- **16 Jul 41 - 4 Bomber and Gunnery School (4BGS), Fingal, Ont** (near St Thomas). This organization trained bomb aimers and air gunners. Robert was there for a short period, probably awaiting his pilot training.
- **09 Aug 41 – 1 Initial Training School (1 IFS), Toronto.** Studies included navigation, theory of flight, meteorology, duties of an officer, air force administration, algebra, and trigonometry. Robert finished 71<sup>st</sup> of 125 students and was designated as a pilot.
- **14 Sep 41 – 10 Elementary Flying Training School (10 EFTS), Mt Hope, Ont.** Students had 69.5 hours basic flying training, and 10 hours of Link Simulator training, generally provided by civilian instructors. Robert flew the Tiger Moth and Fleet Finch. Robert finished 18<sup>th</sup> of 33 students and was designated for single engine (fighter training).
- **01 Jan 42 – 6 Service Flying Training School (6 SFTS), Dunnville, Ont** (South-West of Niagara Falls). Robert trained on the Harvard and Yale aircraft as part of fighter aircraft training accumulating 136.3 flight Hours.
- **24 Apr 42 —Central Flying School (CFS), Trenton, Ont** for course 46. Robert received his wings, this date. Flying instructors received advanced training at the CFS on Cessna Aircraft. Trenton was the largest training centre of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP).
- **15 Jul 42 – 5 Service Flying Training School (5 SFTS), Brantford, Ont.** Robert received multi-engine training on Anson Aircraft on the flight instructor's course, then stayed on as an instructor.
- **25 Apr 43 – 1 Operational Training Unit (1 OTU), Bagotville, Que.** This was the final training destination. The pilots were trained on operational aircraft, in Robert's case, the Hawker Hurricane. Training was provided by instructors with operational experience and would have covered tactics and weapons delivery.
- **14 Jul 43 – 118 Squadron, Annette Island (Aleutian Islands), Alaska.** The squadron flew Kittyhawks in support of the US.
- **17 Aug 43 – 118 Squadron, Sea Island (Vancouver), BC.** The squadron returned to Canada in advance of their deployment overseas.
- **27 Oct 43 – 118 Squadron was transferred overseas.** The squadron took the train to Halifax and sailed to England.
- **18 Nov 43 – 438 (Fighter Bomber) Squadron, RAF Station Digby, Lincolnshire.** The Canadian squadrons were renumbered 400 through 449 to avoid confusion with RAF units.
- **10 Jan 44 – 438 Squadron transferred to RAF Station Ayr, Scotland** to train on the Hawker Hurricane, and transition to the Hawker Typhoon. 438 Squadron became part of 143 Wing RCAF, a component of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Air Force.
- **15 Jan 44 – Medal.** Robert received his Canadian Volunteer Service Medal for 18 months volunteer service and the Maple Leaf bar for 60 days service outside Canada.
- **15 Mar 44 – 438 Sqn** began cross channel attacks from RAF Hurn, Hants (50.7826164, 1.8489403W) and RAF Funtington (50.8787459N, 0.8906173W), Sussex in the UK.
- **24 Apr 44 – 438 Sqn** promoted to Flight Lieutenant

- **06 Jun 44 – 438 Squadron** took part in the D-Day Invasion. 438 Squadron was assigned the task of dive bombing two concrete block houses overlooking the beach on which the 50th British Division was to land tanks. Despite low cloud and the difficulties of a heavy smoke cloud above the beach direct hits were scored on both targets with 1,000 lb. Bombs and it is believed they were totally destroyed. All pilots came back safely with their aircraft though one aircraft had a piece of flak bounce off the prop. and bash in the leading edge of the wing.
- **27 Jun 44 – 438 Squadron** deployed to Base 9, Lantheuil, France (just north of Caen).
- **18 Jul 44 – Robert McKenzie** was killed in action during a dive-bombing attack on a bridge over the River Orne, France. His aircraft, Typhoon MN 707, was hit with flak (anti-aircraft fire), went into a spiral and crashed.

### [1 Manning Depot, Toronto](#)

On May 30, 1941, Robert Jr filled in his Royal Canadian Air Force attestation papers. He was living at Talbot Street in Essex, Ontario. In these papers, he indicated that he had attended primary school in Kingsville from 1929 to 1935 and High School in Essex from 1935 to 1941. While in school played on their basketball team and had worked in Essex at a variety of jobs. Prior to enlistment, he was a hardware clerk. At the time of his enlistment, he was 5'10" and weighed 152 pounds.

Robert was enlisted as an Aircraftman (AC2) when he entered 1 Manning Depot, located at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds in Toronto Ontario where he completed basic training and initial selection for aircrew.

### [No 1 Initial Training School, Toronto](#)

On 13 Sep 1941 he was promoted to Leading Aircraftman (LAC) upon entering 1 Initial Training School (ITS). No 1 ITS was located at the Eglinton Hunt Club in Toronto, ON. After the war, it was the site of the Canadian Forces Staff School and is now the location of luxury condos and townhouses. It provided 4 weeks academic based training and testing for Pilot, Air Observer/Navigator candidates. At the end of the training the men were moved on to train as Pilots or Navigators. Those who did not meet the requirements were rerouted to train as Wireless Operators/Air Gunners. At the time of his selection, it was mandatory that Pilots have a Junior Matriculation. Robert did have the qualification, finished the course 71<sup>st</sup> of 125 candidates, and was classified as an Airman Pilot.

### [No 10 Elementary Flying Training School, Mount Hope](#)

Following ITS, Robert attended 10 Elementary Flying Training School (10 EFTS) in Mount Hope, ON for almost 4 months. The EFTS were civilian flying schools and Robert completed approximately 69.3 hours in the Tiger Moth and Fleet Finch. Robert finished 18<sup>th</sup> of 33 students and was selected for fighter training.

### [No 6 Service Flying Training School](#)

In Jan 1942 Robert was assigned to No 6 Service Flying Training School (6 SFTS) in Dunnville, ON. He completed 136.3 flying hours and was promoted to temporary Sergeant and assigned the classification Aircrew Pilot and assigned to No 1 Central Flying School (1 CFS) at Trenton, ON to become a flight instructor. The vast majority of early graduates became flight instructors as the aircrew training program ramped up.

### [Central Flying School Trenton](#)

Robert received His Pilot's Wings on 24 Apr 1942. When he entered CFS he was discharged under KR(Air) 392(18) on his appointment to a commission. Upon enrollment his service number was R98457 but was subsequently changed to J11317 when he commissioned. He was promoted to Pilot Officer effective his start at the Central Flying School, and promoted to Flying Officer on 24 Oct 1942, 4 months after receiving his wings. He was promoted to Flight Lieutenant on 24 Apr 1944, less than 3 months before his

death. Robert logged 90 flight hours at CFS, on the Avro Anson and Cessna Crane, both dual engine aircraft.



**Graduates of Basic Flying Training (Robert 3<sup>rd</sup> row, 3<sup>rd</sup> column)**

## Flight Training

Based on the personnel files, the table shows the flying hours for Robert McKenzie. He was a flight instructor at 5 SFTS in Brantford for 9 months so acquired almost double the number of flying hours than would the average pilot who went directly through training to an operational unit. He entered the Manning Depot in Jun 1941 and was posted to an Operational Squadron in Aug 1943. The bulk of the pilot graduates were selected to be instructors, universally against their will. Robert was relatively fortunate, he only spent 9 months as a Flight Instructor before being posted to Hurricane training at 1 OTU in Bagotville.

**Flight Training for Robert McKenzie845**

Training Unit	Purpose	Aircraft	Flying Hours
1 Initial Training School (1 IFS), Toronto	Aircrew selection	Ground School only	N/A
10 Elementary Flying Training School (10 EFTS), Mt Hope, Ont	Basic Flight Training	Tiger Moth Fleet Finch	69
6 Service Flying Training School (6 SFTS), Dunnville, Ont	Follow-On Training, selected as Fighter or Bomber Pilots	Yale Harvard	138
Central Flying School (CFS), Trenton, Ont	Dual Engine Training, received wings	Cessna Crane	87
5 Service Flying Training School (5 SFTS), Brantford, Ont	Flight Instructor	Avro Anson	473
1 Operational Training Unit (1 OTU), Bagotville, Que	Fighter Training	Hawker Hurricane	78
<b>Total Flying Hours</b>			<b>845</b>



### Planes Robert McKenzie Flew

#### 118 Squadron

##### Alaska

118 Squadron was re-established at Rockcliffe in Jan 1941. They transferred to Dartmouth in Jul 1941, converted to Kittyhawks due to the shortage of other fighter aircraft, then were sent to Annette Island, Alaska in Jun 42.

In July 1943 Robert was posted to 118 Squadron, and was deployed to Annette Island, Alaska in the Aleutians. The unit was sent to Annette Island to support the US Forces who had recently entered the war and did not have enough aircraft and pilots to defend Alaska from a possible attack from the Japanese. The squadron flew Kittyhawks (P-40) .



**118 Squadron Kittyhawks in Formation LAC -PL-8350**

Sea Island

After a short time in Alaska, the squadron was sent to Sea Island, Vancouver BC in preparation for their deployment overseas.



**118 Squadron Sea Island BC. McKenzie is Standing on the Far Right**

### Marriage to Frances Hetherington

Frances May Hetherington was born on September 21, 1925, in Essex Ontario. She was the daughter of Edna May Johnston and Francis Hetherington. Edna May was the sister of our Grandfather Bill. Francis Hetherington was born in England in 1901 and arrived in Canada and Essex in 1910. Francis and May were married in 1924 in Essex. By 1930, the family, including her brother Robert had moved to Michigan and Francis was a Foreman in a Cabinet Shop. By 1940, the family moved to Los Angeles, California. Francis was a Cabinet Maker, and they owned their own home. The family had become Naturalized US Citizens.

On September 23, 1943, Frances May Hetherington and Robert McKenzie were married in Los Angeles. Their marriage would be very brief. After they got married on 23 Sep 1943, Robert returned to Vancouver, then was posted overseas with his squadron on 27 October 1943.

Gramma Johnston wrote a note about a picture of Robert just before he left for overseas. It says:

*Taken half hour before he left on his trip overseas. Married Sept 23, 1943, to Frances Hetherington in Los Angeles at her home and then left for Vancouver. Came home for a few days and left. Frances staying with me for just about a year then she left for home with her "Mother".*



#### Robert McKenzie Just Before He Deployed Overseas

Robert McKenzie of 438 Squadron was flying a Typhoon mission on July 18, 1944, when his aircraft was hit by flak, and he was reported Missing in Action. In a newspaper clipping, he is listed as the foster son of Gramma Johnston. I don't know if he lived with her while in High School or why he was considered a foster son. Perhaps when his mother died, his Father had someone look after the children. I also don't know how he and Frances connected. Perhaps when she visited her grandmother.

Frances married Kenneth Stonebreaker on 13 November 1946. They had 4 children and lived in California for the rest of their lives.

#### Overseas Posting

The squadron left BC and headed to Halifax on the train. Robert took Embarkation Leave 14-20 Oct 43 at his home in Essex. December 1943. On 01 Nov the squadron boarded the SS Mauretania in Halifax to sail to Liverpool, England. The squadron disembarked on 09 Nov, and they were sent to RAF Digby to begin operational training. The squadron was renamed 438 Squadron, to avoid confusion with RAF squadron numbers.

438 Squadron was located in Wellingore, Lincoln at RAF Digby (53.0911292N, 0.4226819W), just east of Nottingham. Basic flying training consisting of aerobatics, reconnaissance and formation flying conducted. On bad weather days, Link flight simulator training and Intelligence briefings conducted. On 19 Dec, the squadron moved to Wittering (52.3018596N, 0.7982561E), East of Birmingham. Low level, cross-country and formation flying training was conducted. The squadron was scheduled to go to Acklington (55.3806502N, 0.6574555W) on the Western Coast of Northern England, but the move was cancelled, and the next location of the squadron uncertain.



438 Squadron While Still Flying Hurricanes – Benson Col

This picture was taken while the squadron was still flying Hurricanes, before their transition to Typhoons and the start of Operational Sorties. Robert McKenzie is standing, second from the right. Bill Whitmore, kneeling at the right, was the only Sergeant Pilot on 438 Squadron at the time. Of the 21 pilots shown, 9 were killed in action, 2 more died on the ground, 2 were taken as Prisoners of War, and 1 was shot down but evaded capture.



438 Squadron Dec 1943 RAF Digby F/O McKenzie 4<sup>th</sup> from the Right PL41727

#### Conversion to Typhoons

The squadron deployed to RAF Station Ayr, in Ayrshire, Scotland (55.4545502N, 4.6585409W) on the Firth of Clyde to train on the Hurricane and transition to the Typhoon. On 14 Jan 1944 Pilot Officer Hepe crashed in a Hurricane, spinning in from 2,000 ft. Cause was unknown, but all Hurricanes temporarily grounded for inspections. The weather overall was not favourable, and limited flying occurred. 438 Sqn had 17 Hurricane IVs and 3 Typhoon IB on strength at the end of the Month.



438 Squadron Photo with Hawker Hurricane– Robert McKenzie on the Right – LAC PL 22802

## Typhoon Training

The first solos on Typhoons were carried out, formation training conducted in the Hurricanes. On 14 Feb, 12 aircraft deployed to Hutton Cranswick (54.265397N, 0.5645553W) on the Eastern Coast of England, just above Hull to conduct joint training with the Army. The squadron completed dive bombing and strafing attacks against enemy positions and convoys. 142 flying hours were generated in support of the training as part of Exercise Eagle.

The squadron returned to Ayr on 23 Feb and were happy to see 19 Typhoons at the Airfield. Conversion training continued as well as Wing level operations with the Hurricanes.

## Further Conversion Training

Further conversion training on Typhoons, as well as cine gun and formation flying conducted with the Hurricanes. F/O Hewsome pranged (crashed) a Typhoon on landing because of a faulty oleo leg, no casualties suffered. Training on bombing and gunnery, wing level formation and night flying are conducted with the Typhoons.

On 18 Mar, the squadron left for Hurn, Hanks, stopping in Woodvale for re-fuelling. 2 Pilots from 439 Sqn were killed on the trip down. On 20 Mar, the squadron has its first operational flight, 4 Typhoons made a sweep in the Channel Islands area, strafed some Huns, one horse kill confirmed. The squadron continued training, practicing formation flying. F/L Pollock 439 Sqn was killed in an air-to-air collision. On 30 Mar 10 Typhoons did a sweep over the Cherbourg area, it went well but was generally uneventful. On 31 Mar another sweep was conducted over the Channel Islands.

## Operational Missions

### F/O Robert M McKenzie Combat Missions

Robert flew 28 combat missions for a total of 35 Operational Flight Hours.

Date/Time	Activity
30 Mar 1944/ 1420-1535	Fighter sweep to Channel Islands (49.5797993N,2.8157138W), nothing sighted
25 Apr 1944/ 1730-1850	24 Bombhoons with 48 x 500 lb MC Instantaneous. Repeated attack against bridge near Coutances, France (49.192276N, 1.2383399W) Near the coast opposite the Island of Jersey. Direct hits seen on south end, and he rest along both sides of the foundation. Meagre, inaccurate, light flak was encountered.
27 Apr 1944/ 0920-1000	Operational scramble to the Cherbourg area (49.6683243, 1.693036W), Uneventful.
27 Apr 1944/ 1155-1505	18 Bombhoons from 438 and 44 Sq with 36 x500lb MG Instantaneous bombed the railroad bridge near Baute (49.2997238N, 1.3218456W) with some direct hits – others in the near vicinity. Ground strafing was carried out after the bombing run. Light flak was encountered
07 May 1944/ 1015-1145	24 Typhoons from 438, 439 and 440 Sqns, with two returning due to low oil pressure, dropped 22x500 MC .025 on a bridge at Oissel between Rouen and Caen (49.3456666N,1.0575819E). Bridge was bombed through hole in cloud from 10,000 to 5,000 ft. 6 hits seen on the bridge. The flak was nil and all aircraft returned safely.
10 May 1944/ 1400-1515	438 Squadron with 10 Bombhoons and 2 fighters bombed bridge at Long, France (50.0560153N ,1.9538772E). 16 x1,000 lb MC instantaneous bombs, 4x500 lb bombs MC instantaneous were dropped. No direct hits on the bridge, all near misses either overshooting or undershooting. Bombing was carried out from 7,000 to 3,000 ft. Meager light accurate flake was encountered. No cloud, hazy over water, visibility 3 miles.
11 May 1944/ 1820-1950	Seven Typhoon Bombers carrying 14X1000 lb MC bombs attacked the bridge at Long France (50.0161715N,1.9568342E). No direct hits were scored on the bridge. Two Typhoon aircraft acted as fighter escort. Aircraft took off and landed at Ford Airfield at Yapton (50.8321466N, 0.7241334W), located East of Portsmouth in West Sussex, Southern England, 60 miles East of their main operating base in RAF Hurn, Hants.
12 May 1944/ 1515-1615	438 and 440 squadrons with 15 Bombhoons attacked map location Z.5817 Chateau de Bosmelet (49.7200953N, 1.5258587E)south of Dieppe. The bombing was excellent – 16 x 500 MC .025 concentrated in the centre of target area. The bombing was carried out from 7,500 ft down to 2,500 ft. Meager, light, accurate flak was encountered. Very misty up to 6,000 ft. with ground haze. Visibility 3 miles. Operation uneventful.
19 May 1944/ 2010-2145	438 and 440 sqn – with 18 Bombhoons attacked a tank concentration at Evergem, Belgium (51.1429821N, 3.6808185E). Target was attacked from S.E. to NW 9,000 ft to 3,000 ft with 35 x 500 lb MC .025. All bombs in village. 6 direct hits were made on the factory in the village. No tanks were seen but area in which target was suspected was effectually bombed. Thick ground haze to 6,000 ft. Visibility poor. Very thick haze was encountered over Channel – Visibility 1 to 2 miles – no flak was seen.

02 Jun 1944/ 1510-1635	12 Bombhoons attacked target – A21/24 Radar Site at Le Havre/Cap de La Havre (49.4958157N,0.096175E) from 10,000 ft to 5,000 ft from S.E. to N.W. 12 bombs located in target area, 12 bombs just outside target area to west. Light, intense, fairly accurate flak over target. Aircraft followed by flak from 3 or 4 miles on the way out. Weather: clear, visibility unlimited.
03 Jun 1944/ 1530-1645	12 Bombhoons attacked Target A21/35 Radar Site near Le Havre (49.4957988N,0.0594374E). Target was attacked from 10,000 – 5,000 ft with 24 x 500 lb bombs, two of which hit the base of the N. Tower, remainder burst in the target area, some made results difficult to observer. Intense box of light flak followed Squadron to sea.
05 Jun 1944/ 0800-0910	11 Bombhoons attacked Target: Radar near Cap de Le Havre/Le Havre 49.4958157N,0.096175E), 22 x 500 lb MC .025 dropped from 10,000 to 5,000 ft from S. to N. No bombs on target. Bombs undershot and overshot and fell to east of target. 4 bombs burst on large, red-roofed building near Le Havre.
06 Jun 1944/ 0655-0810	12 Bombhoons attacked. See details below.
07 Jun 1944/ 2155-2255	2 Standby aircraft scrambled to patrol a convoy approximately 10 miles south of St Alban's Head (50.5670518N,2.0348655W). The patrol was uneventful.
08 Jun 1944/ 0515-0700	8 Bombers and 2 Fighters were detailed to patrol south of Caen. 4 ME109 German fighters seen at 5,500 ft at U.2381 (49.30343N, 0.09714W) and were engaged by Spitfires. Nothing further seen, bombs brought back. 1 Typhoon fighter returned due to R/T trouble and was accompanied by his No 2. F/O McKenzie was flying Fighter cover and was likely in the aircraft that problems.
14 Jun 1944/ 1820-1940	8 Bombers and 2 Fighters detailed to attack a Target of Armed Recce in the Caen-Villiers-Bocage area (guess based on following map reference) 8x500 lb MC bombs were dropped on 6 armoured vehicles at T.7548 (48.99109N, 0.73814W) one being damaged. 4 Bombhoons attacked near Crauville at T755639 (49.13414N, 0.74018W) with 8 x 5000 lb M.C. from 5- 1,500 ft. Results were unobserved.
14 Jun 1944/ 2145-2310	8 Bombhoons from 438 Sqn plus 16 Bombhoons and 4 Fighters from 439 and 440 Sqn and 8 Bombhoons and 2 fighters from 247 Sqn were airborne at 2145 to attack a Bridge at U.200727 (49.22795N, 0.13463W) on the Dives River east of Bavent and Main Battle Tanks (MBT) moving on roads in the vicinity. No MBT were seen in the open so bridge U.221575 (49.09195N 0.09907W) on the La Laizon River near Ouezy was bombed from 5,000 to 1,000 ft. 3 near misses were observed.
15 Jun 1944/ 0815-0955	8 Bombhoons and 2 fighters were again ordered to attach the double bridge over the River Orne (49.08637N, 0.42483W), 16x500 lb M.C. ,025 bombs were all delivered very close to the target which was believed damaged but not destroyed. Considerable light and heavy flak were experienced over the target area.
17 Jun 1944/ 1840-2000	9 Bombhoons and 1 fighter were detailed to attack bridges at U.217761 (49.25901N, 0.11282W) on the Dives River south of Dives-sur-Mere, U.220761 (49.2591N, 0.1087W ) on the Grand Canal south of Dives-sur-Mere, U.219792. 500 lb MC .025 bombs were used in this mission, bombing at U.219792 (49.28693N, 0.11146W) on the Dives River at Cabourg, resulted in near misses as the bombs over shot, there were 2 near misses at the Grand Canal, but the rest overshot. All aircraft returned to base safely undamaged.

18 Jun 1944/ 1800-1920	8 Bombhoons and 1 fighter were detailed to attack target bridges at U.063703 (49.20219N, 0.32145W), over the Caen Canal, east of Caen. The attack was made from 7,000 to 2,000 ft with the following results: 2x1,000 lbs MC .025 on East end of bridge, 2x1000 lb MC .025 on West end of bridge, and 1 x 1,000 lb MC .025 believed hit on the centre of bridge and exploded underneath. East pier missed. Medium, accurate, heavy flak was experienced from Caen. All aircraft returned safely.
20 Jun 1944/ 2110-2230	6 Bombhoons and 2 fighters attacked a target embankment 4900/7/31. Target attacked with 12 x 500 MC .11 sec bombs. 4 direct hits were scored on the target with the results obscured by smoke and dust. 2 bombs overshot. Blue section dropped bombs on another target, bursts seen on railway embankment at U.251616 (49.12967N, 0.05979W) near Belle Vie en Auge. F/O McKenzie flew fighter cover.
22 Jun 1944/ 1500-1650	8 Bombhoons and 2 fighters bombed marshalling yards at Gorron Q.8901 (48.39808N, 0.82241E), successfully strafing 4 staff cars at Q.8229 (48.64311N, 0.69291E) near La Coineterie. Also strafed 12 large lorries moving West at Q.5371, ( 48.99414N, 0.24443E) east of Livarot-Pays d'Auge1 destroyed, 3 damaged. 2 aircraft returned early due to mechanical failures. All aircraft were equipped with an extra 45-gallon fuel tank, reducing the bomb load, but enabling much greater range.
27 Jun 1944/ 1020-1120	8 Bombhoons and 1 fighter were detailed to attack 2 bridges over the River Orne V.0367(49.17148N, 0.36509W) in Caen with 16 x 1,000 lb MC bombs. The target was attacked from 10,000 to 5,000 ft from West to East. 2 direct hits were seen on the East end of the most easterly bridge, many near misses observed on the other bridge. No flak was experienced as clever use was make of cloud cover at 9,000 fit. All aircraft landed safely at the strip H.6 in France. Once the runways dried out the squadron was to deploy to Lantheuil (H.9). F/O Park was shot down by flak, the second casualty for the squadron.
27 Jun 1944/ 1510-1550	4 Bombhoons were detailed to attack the bridge over the River Orne V.038678 (49.17892N, 0.35451W) in Caen, (but the sortie was aborted due to 10/10 cloud from 5/11,000 ft. No Bombs were dropped.
28 Jun 1944/ 1800-1855	17 Bombhoons were detailed to attack a concentration of enemy troops in Verson, just Southwest of Caen(49.1624975N,0.5024302W). They attacked the target with 500 lb, MC .025 bombs, however, four aircraft were late in starting and did not attack the target but landed at the airstrip H.9 in Lantheuil, the Squadron Base in France. One aircraft did not release its bombs. 24 x500 lb bombs were dropped on the target and were 75% successful. The Village was left in flames. All Aircraft landed safely at H.9.
05 Jul 1944/ 0820-0900	8 Bombhoon Aircraft detailed to attack target at T.951520 (49.03408N, 0.4657W), Southwest of Caen, however, the entire flight was aborted due to the 500 lb bombs being improperly fused. Bombs were fused with Instantaneous nose and .025 tail, whereas the bombs should have been fused with .14 nose and .025 tail. One aircraft detailed for the flight was unable to start and did not take off.
09 Jul 1944/ 2135-2210	8 Bombhoons Aircraft detailed to attack target at T.781626 (49.1234 N, 0.70386W) southwest of Caen. Aircraft armed with 500 lb bombs, instantaneous

	nose, .025 tail. Aircraft unable to locate target, only one aircraft dropping bombs in woods/ 10/10 cloud, very thin bae, 4,500 ft. Intense light flak encountered.
18 Jul 1944/ 0705-0800	8 Bomphoone Aircraft detailed to attack bridge across the River Orne at T.983577 (49.08637N, 0.42483W). Bridge was attacked dive bombing from 8,000 to 2,000 ft West to East. 4 bombs on the north approach of the bridge, 2 probable hits. Results not seen due to smoke and debris. 1,000 lb bombs used. Intense, accurate flak experienced over target. One Pilot F/L R.M McKenzie hit by flak on the start of bombing run and was seen to crash into the ground when his aircraft went into a spin from which he was unable to recover.

### 438 Squadron Flying Hours

The flying hours for 438 Squadron as they transition to the Typhoon. The push around D-Day is apparent in the flying hours. The squadron moved to Lantheuil Airfield in France (B-9) at the end of June, significantly reducing their transit times. Since they were so close to the front line, the Squadron was able to take off, deliver their weapons, and land to refuel and rearm in 20 minutes.

#### 438 Squadron Flying Hours

Month	Aircraft	Pilots	Ground Crew	Flying Hours
December 1943	18 Hurricanes	21	93 attached	518 Training
January 1944	17 Hurricanes, 3 Typhoons	24	94 attached	366 Training
February 1944	11 Hurricanes, 7 Typhoons	22	25	Hurricanes 352 Training Typhoons 71 Training
March 1944	11 Hurricanes, 5 Typhoons	25	26	Hurricanes 271 Training Typhoons 30 Operational 190 Non-Operational
April 1944	17 Typhoons	23	28	105 Operational 217 Non-Operational
May 1944	18 Typhoons	24	28	177 Operational 327 Non-Operational
Jun 1944	17 Typhoons	24	28	562 Operational 54 Non-Operational
Jul 1944	18 Typhoons	25	31	210 Operational 21 Non-Operational

### Initial Missions

Typhoons bombed various targets including Bridges, Railway lines and Marshalling yards, V1 Rocket sites (called NOBALL), Chateaus housing German command sites, and tank concentrations. The Wing attacked targets in formations from a 4-plane section up to a 24 plane wing level attacks depending on the priority of the targets.

### D-Day Preparations

143 Wing continued to bomb targets in preparation for D-Day, hitting Bridges, Railway lines, and V1 rocket sites.

In the D-Day preparation (11 May – 5 Jun) there were a total of 41 Typhoons lost, with 22 Pilots killed and 3 taken as Prisoners of War. The Typhoons led from the front 6 Squadron Leaders and 2 Wing Commanders were shot down during this period.

While 143 Wing was bombing targets, the RAF Typhoon squadrons were disabling the German Radar sites along the coast to limit the ability to track the invasion. The Rocket firing Typhoons flew 694 sorties, firing 4,517 rockets, and the Typhoon and Spitfire bombers flew 759 sorties dropping 1,258 bombs against radar sites.

All 6 long range radar sites were destroyed. On D-Day on 18% of all German Radars in North-West France were serviceable and in the assault area, less than 5% of Radar sites remained operational. The air force had planned elaborate decoy attacks to mask the true landing area, so left some Radar sites operational so they would be able to track the decoy flight. (Stats from Matt Bone)



Radar Site Damage in pre D-Day Attacks (Group Captain JR Baldwin)

### 438 Squadron War Diary Entry- D Day 06 Jun 1944

The day opened cool and slightly cloudy. Everybody was up bright and early this morning to see our 11 aircraft off, led by the Wing Commander, Flying. No. 438 Squadron was assigned the task of dive bombing two concrete block houses overlooking the beach on which the 50th British Division was to land tanks. This operation had to be performed just as the tanks landing craft lowered their ramps. Cloud conditions were 5/10 from 2,000 ft. up with the result that the dive bombing had to be done from a much lower level. Despite this and the difficulties of a heavy smoke cloud above the beach direct hits were scored on both targets with 1,000 lb. Bombs and it is believed they were totally destroyed. All pilots came back safely with their aircraft though one aircraft had a piece of flak bounce off the prop. and bash in the leading edge of the wing. We had no more action until 1715 hours when 10 aircraft made a sweep south of Caen. Attacks were made on 4 recco. cars but results are not known. One aircraft had a flak shell pass right through the wing puncturing the gas tank. Despite this he was able to get home on his nose tanks. Another "ops" sweep was made by 10 aircraft which left at 2050 hours. On this sortie attacks were made on two convoys which were unfortunately well strung out. It is believed that in the bombing or the one, two vehicles were destroyed. Strafing of the other resulted in four vehicles left burning and ten damaged. This is the first large scale strafing the Squadron has done and they came out exceptionally lucky. One aircraft came back with a large hole in the tail, another hit some object and was scraped from front to back. Others had various rifle holes. Following briefing, the O.C. spoke to the assembled boys of 438 and 6438 Echelon illustrating the day's doings with the aid of a map. This gesture was much appreciated by the ground airmen, and it is the intention of the O.C. to give them a nightly talk. Total flying for the day: operational – 45:40 hrs., non-op Typhoon 1B – 4:20 hrs., Auster III 3:40 hrs.

### 438 Squadron Operational Log – 06 Jun 1944

From the operational log of 06 Jun 1944, 438 Squadron had two primary targets on the morning run on D-Day, supporting the 50<sup>th</sup> British Division invasion at Gold Beach. 12 Aircraft took off at 0705 to hit the targets described as Strong Points at map reference vT878867 (49.34341N, 0.58386W) Asnelles-sur-mer, and vT925868 (49.34593N, 0.51928W) Mont Fleury. The bombs used were either 500 or 1,000 lb Medium Charge bombs with a 0.025 sec fuze delay (MC .025). Medium Charge (MC) bombs had a Charge to Weight Ration of 40-50%, meaning approximately half the bomb weight consisted of explosive material.



#### D-Day Targets for 438 Sqn (from Squadron Logs)

For the target at vT979967 Asnelles-sur-mer, Target attacked with 12 x 1,000 lb .025 N.C from 5,000 to 8,000 ft, direction N.W. All bombs on target, 4 direct hits, rest near misses. For the target at vT925868 Mont Fleury, Target attacked with 12x1,000 lb bombs Medium Charge bombs with 0.025 sec delay fuzes (M.C. .025) from 6,000 ft to 1,500 ft, direction North to South. Target covered in smoke, 2 direct hits, 2 near misses. Others grouped around target. This was the only mission F/L McKenzie flew that day, but the squadron conducted two additional sorties.

At 1715 9 aircraft took off. The target was Armed Recce, south of Caen. 9 Typhoons swept the area. 3 armoured cars, 222s attacked with 18x500 lb M.C. .025 from 5-2,000 ft north to south on road ref

U.1452 (49.04011N, 0.20737W) feed H and stationery. 2 near misses, 1 aircraft hit by flak, returned to base safely, category A.O.

At 2050 10 aircraft took off, 8 configured as bombers and 2 as fighters. The target was Armed Recce in the Caen Argentan Area. 8 Typhoon Bombers attacked 4 trucks at U.5749 (49.0222N, 0.24498E) from 5,000 to 1,500 ft with 16x500 lb M.C. .025. Results unobserved due to dust and smoke. At 2130 hours a column of troop carriers moving north U.1342 (48.94993N, 0.2164W) strafed, 4 flamers and at least 10 damage. One aircraft hit an object but returned to base safely, category A.C.

#### From Crucible of War Chapter 9 The Normandy Campaign, p 295.

On D-Day the three Canadian Typhoon squadrons (438, 439 and 440) - bomb-carrying Typhoons were colloquially known as Bombphoons - had been among the busiest units in the AEAFC, each flying three ground attack missions. First, with twelve aircraft each, they had attacked beach defences in conjunction with the initial assault. From left to right, as one looked across the Channel towards the French coast, landing areas had been divided into five beaches: Sword (British), Juno (Canadian), Gold (British), Omaha (American), and Utah (also American). No 438's task was to hammer two concrete blockhouses overlooking Gold beach, near Le Hamel, where the British 50th Division led the assault.

Just after the landing ramps were lowered, No 439 attacked two strong points on Juno beach, moments ahead of 3rd Canadian Division's assault brigades, while No 440 bombed Sword beach and swept inland to strafe a suspected 88-millimetre gun position. A second operation that afternoon found the Typhoons bombing targets of opportunity around Caen, but the few they found were of little significance. Eight aircraft from No 440 directed their attention and their bombs on one of the roads, wrecking one truck and damaging another; eight from No 439 simply jettisoned their bombs; and nine from No 438 attacked three armoured cars, registering near misses while suffering damage to one aircraft from Flak.<sup>7</sup>

So far, they had operated without serious casualties, but their luck would run out on the final flight of the day, an early evening armed reconnaissance of the Caen area. No 440 dispatched eight Typhoons which located some enemy transport and destroyed two trucks with bombs and strafed two others, but one aircraft was badly hit by Flak and had to crash-land back at base while another was holed in its fuel tanks and was forced to land at an alternate field; a third pilot failed to return - his grave would be found on 29 June. No 439 had the good fortune to find an armoured column, either of the 12th SS or 21st Panzer Division, which it attacked with bombs, while eight aircraft from No 438 attacked four trucks and strafed a column of troop carriers. Several machines were slightly damaged, but all returned safely. No 440 Squadron was the hardest hit of the RCAF units on D-Day, losing three aircraft and one pilot (No 430 was the only other Canadian squadron to lose a pilot, also in the early evening).<sup>8</sup>

Reference: AFHQ, Day-Fighter narrative, June 1944, 12-13, DHist 73/829

## Deployment to France

The Typhoon squadrons of 143 wing had been designated as support to the Army efforts. The Squadrons were used to operating out of Tents and were deployed as close as possible to the front lines.

### Lantheuil Airfield (49.27156N, 0.54247W) Map Reference vT906786 – Lambert Zone 1)

Lantheuil Airfield was marked out on 11 Jun 1944 and construction was started the next day. The runway was complete on 22 Jun, and 143 Wing arrived on 27 June. Due to the muddy airfield, it was decided to track the Runway on 05 Jul, and the work completed by 8 Jul.



**Aerial Photograph of Lantheuil Airfield – Invasion Airfields**

The 3,600x120 foot runway was covered in Square Mesh Track (SMT) that was delivered in rolls, stretched out and pinned to provide a solid landing strip to support the 3 Squadrons. The runway was 18 SMT Rolls wide and required a total of 1,034 rolls for the runway and assembly areas. 4 parties of Engineers, each with 66 men, laid out the runway in 4 sections.



#### Installation of SMT Runway – Invasion Airfields

The SMT rolls were staked and crimped together to ensure there were no ripples. The airfield was constructed just 5 miles behind the front line. This subjected the airfield to shelling but allowed the aircraft to be on station in only a few minutes, crucial when the flying time of the Hurricane was just over 1 hour.

The runway area was extremely dusty, so the engineers tried spraying water and then oil on the runway before finally installing an irrigation system to try to control the dust. 2 Wing members were killed during shelling, encouraging the troops to dig trenches under their tents that the squadron member slept in. The 439 squadron diarist noted on 30 June:

*"At night the fellows tossed in their sleep with the extremely consistent heavy exchange of gunfire. Around midnight there were several exceptionally heavy bursts accompanied by whistling of the shells in harmony that promptly initiated our fellows to the shelters. As the Doc would say, there will be less need for administrating laxatives"*

143 Wing operated out of 9 separate runways on the continent from 27 June to the end of the war.

Runway Number	Name	Location	Dates
B9	Lantheuil, FR	49.27156N, 0.54247W	27 Jun 44
B24	St Andre-de-l'Eure, FR	48.882832N, 1.6824644E	30 Aug 44
B48	Amiens/Glisy, FR	49.8031544N, 1.6433844E	03 Sep 44
B58	Melsbroek, BE	50.9153492N, 4.4743401E	09 Sep 44
B78	Eindhoven, NL	51.4108556N, 5.5119233E	21 Sep 44
B100	Goch, GE	51.6809356N, 6.0576739E	29 Mar 45
B108	Rheine, GE	52.2667721N, 7.4058831E	09 Apr 45
B110	Achmer/Mattingen, GE	52.3285684N, 7.7010755E	12 Apr 45
B150	Hustedt/Celle	52.6944724N, 10.0416513E	19 Apr 45

#### **438 Squadron Forward Operating Bases in France**

#### [Crash – 18 Jul 1944](#)

At 0705 on 18 Jul 1944, 4 Typhoon aircraft of 438 Squadron were detailed to attack a bridge at map reference vT983577 (49.08637N, 0.42483W), dive bombing from 8,000 to 2,000 ft, attacking West to North. 4 bombs were dropped on the north approach of the bridge, 2 probable hits. Results were not seen due to smoke and debris. 1,000 lb bombs were used. Intense, accurate flak experienced over target. One pilot, F/L R.M. McKenzie, flying Typhoon MN707, was hit by flak on the start of the bombing run and seen to crash into the ground when his aircraft went into a spin from which he was unable to recover. Nothing was seen of the pilot. The Typhoon was found in the immediate vicinity where McKenzie went missing. His body was buried near the River Orne, Map Reference vT967584 49.09213N, 0.44707W) just outside Amayé-sur-Orne, 8.5 miles south of Caen.

On 16 Mar 1945, a letter from the Directorate of Personnel Services confirmed the site of Robert's Grave.

It was possible to identify him by personal effects found. "Lone grave in field near wreckage of aircraft. In same area a few hundred yards distant a lone grave -- spot called 'Champ du Puit' 'Un Soldat Anglais.'" In another report, "Whilst sweeping in the canton of Evrely, I found on a spot called 'La Butte Maison Des Champs' Amayé Sur Orne, a very small remnant of the wreckage of a Typhoon. No aircraft or engine number was to be found. I managed to obtain the following cannon numbers: F23579, D10449, D19125. Alongside the wreckage was the grave of the pilot, marked with a cross bearing the following inscription: RCAF F/L R.M. McKenzie, J11317, 17-7-44. The grave did not bear any trace of having been registered. Arrangements are being made for the human remains to be transferred to a Military Cemetery and you will be informed as soon as this is done." Signed F/L H. P. Masse. An epaulet showing rank of F/L, part of the Canadian Flying Badge, ronson lighter, similar to the one carried by F/L McKenzie, ammunition pouch with his name on it was discovered in the grave.

McKenzie's remains were reinterred at the Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

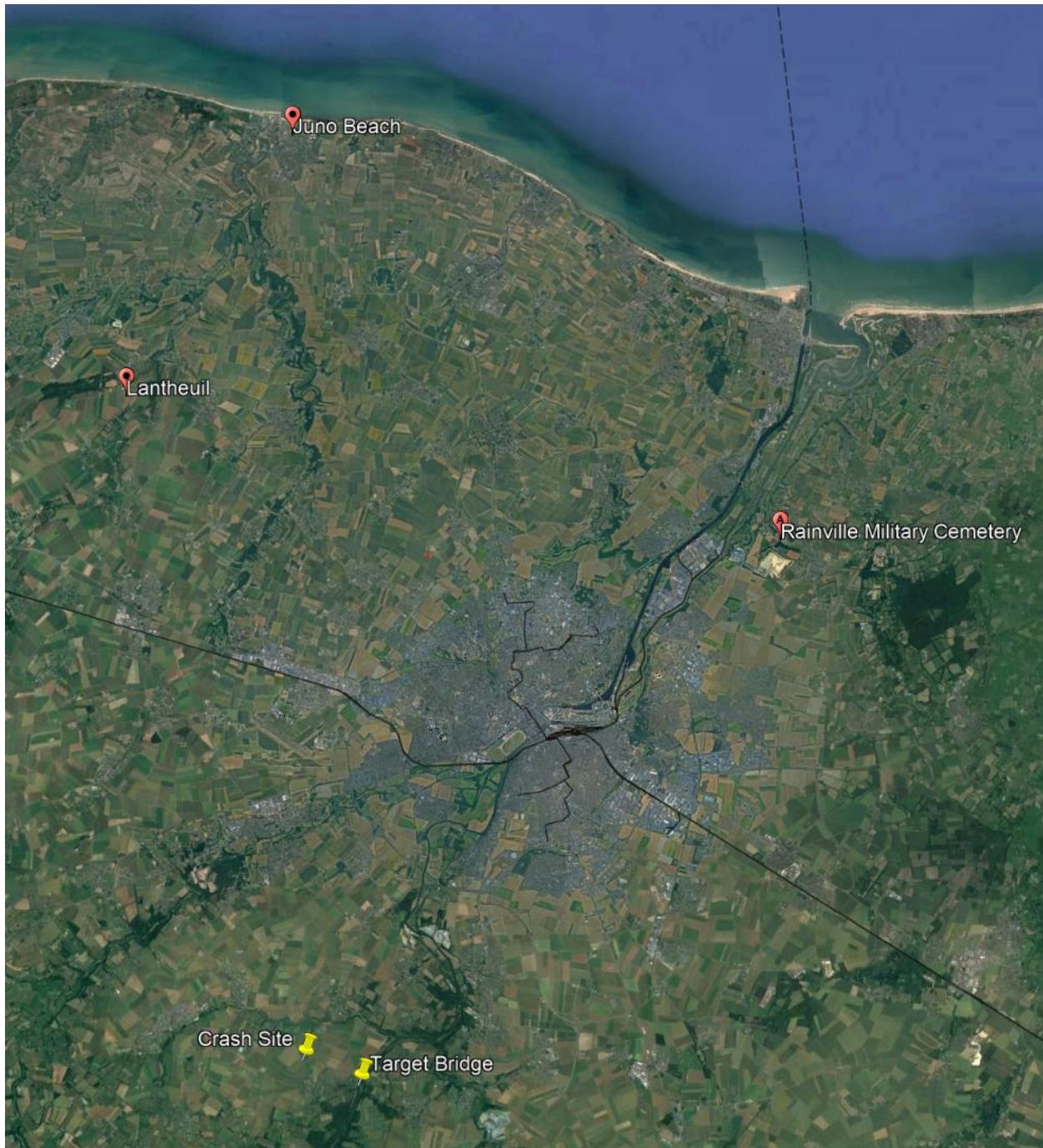
A copy of the relevant war Diary and Operational Log entries for the incident are given below.

F/L McKenzie was reported missing as of 18 Jul 44, and a note from 14 Mar 1945 confirmed that his aircraft and personal effects had been found confirming his death. His body was buried near the crash site. The Casualty report of 18 May 1946 confirmed the crash site, and his burial to be at map reference vT967584 (49.09213N, 0.44707W) just outside Amayé-sur-Orne, 8.5 miles south of Caen. His grave site was not registered, and his remains were moved to Rainville Military Cemetery, North-West of Caen.

The map shows the targeted bridge and the crash and subsequent burial site.



Target and Crash Site – 18 Jul 1944



Map of Area Around Crash Site

## Memorials

### Grave Marker



Robert McKenzie Grave Marker

Robert McKenzie was initially buried where he crashed, just outside Amayé-sur-Orne at Map Reference vT967584. He was originally reported as missing, but on 27 September 1944, his status was updated to missing believed killed. The letter from the Casualty Officer stated:

*Advice from the Royal Canadian Air Force Casualties Officer, Overseas, which states that the wreckage of an aircraft bearing the engine number from the one flown by your son was found in the vicinity where he was reported*

*missing. The pilot had been buried, but the following articles were found: An epaulette showing the rank of Flight Lieutenant, part of a Canadian Flying Badge, a Ronson lighter, similar to the one carried by your son, an ammunition pouch marked "R.M. McKenzie" in ink on the under side.*

*In accordance with the procedure established by Air Ministry Overseas, action to presume his death for official purposes will be taken after a lapse of six months from the date he was reported missing.*

In a post-war Casualty report dated 18 May 1946, the following was noted:

*"Whilst sweeping in the canton of Evrely, I found on a spot called 'La Butte Maison Des Champs' Amayé Sur Orne, a very small remnant of the wreckage of a Typhoon. No aircraft or engine number was to be found. I managed to obtain the following cannon numbers: F23579, D10449, D19125. Alongside the wreckage was the grave of the pilot, marked with a cross bearing the following inscription: RCAF F/L R.M. McKenzie, J11317, 17-7-44. The grave did not bear any trace of having been registered. Arrangements are being made for the human remains to be transferred to a Military Cemetery and you will be informed as soon as this is done." Signed F/L H. P. Masse. An epaulet showing rank of F/L, part of the Canadian Flying Badge, ronson lighter, similar to the one carried by F/L McKenzie, ammunition pouch with his name on it was discovered in the grave.*

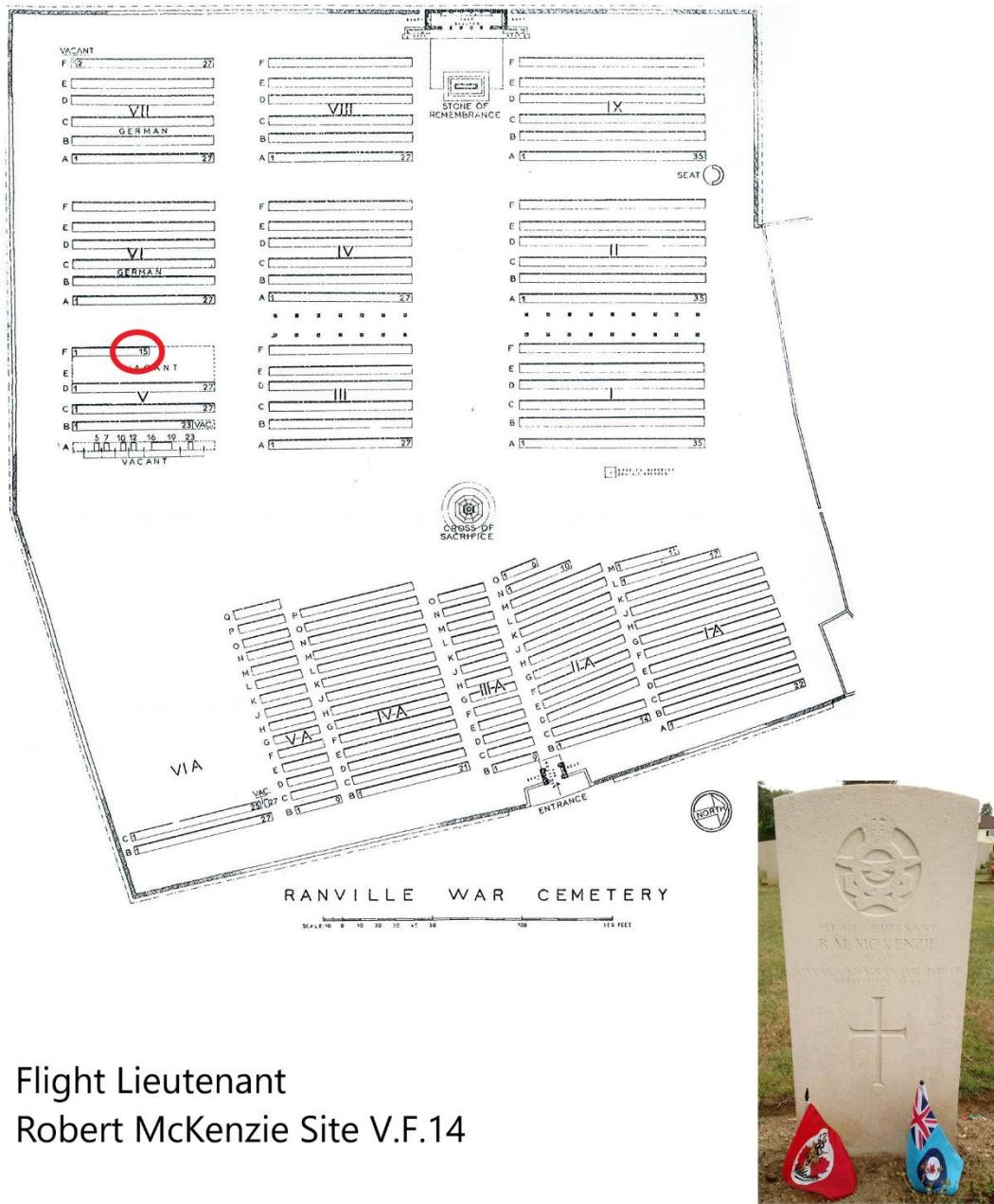
it was possible to identify him by personal effects found. "Lone grave in field near wreckage of aircraft. In same area a few hundred yards distant a lone grave -- spot called 'Champ du Puit' 'Un Soldat Anglais.'"

McKenzie's remains were reinterred at the Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

Grave Marker Ranville Military Cemetery



**Flight Lieutenant Robert McKenzie's Grave Marker Ranville Military Cemetery**



Flight Lieutenant  
Robert McKenzie Site V.F.14

### Ranville Military Cemetery Site Plan

In Memory Of  
Flight Lieutenant

## ROBERT MELNE MCKENZIE

Service Number: J/11317

438 Sqdn., Royal Canadian Air Force who died on 17 July 1944

Remembered with Honour  
**RANVILLE WAR CEMETERY**  
V.F. 14.



|||||  
**COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES**  
|||||

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

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Commonwealth War Graves Certificate



L/Cpl	McKeechnie, Hamilton Arthur	QOR of C	McKeown, Kenneth James	RHC
Tpr	McKee, Ferris Ross	SALT R	McKeown, Victor Herbert	RCAF
Pte	McKee, Frank Hunter	Carl & York R	McKernan, John	1 Cdn Para Bn
Spr	McKee, Ronald Tracy	RCE	McKerry, David Anthony Gregory	RCAF
Pte	McKeen, Kenneth Sidney	Nth NS Highrs	McKessock, William Donald Nelson	RCAF
Rfn	McKeen, Leonard Isaac	Regina Rif	L/Cpl	McKibbin, Ross
Pte	McKeil, Hollis Leslie	Nth NS Highrs	Sgt	McKie, Alexander
P/O	McKeil, Hiram Archibald McCormick	RCAF	F/O	McKie, Donald Galloway Watt
Pte	McKellar, Donald Archibald	RH LI	Pte	McKiel, Walter Alfred
Pte	McKellar, Donald Arthur	AloR	F/O	McKiggan, Angus Alexander
Gdsn	McKen, Lorne J.	SG	Pte	McKillip, Donald Neil Camerons of C
Sgt	McKendry, John Alan	RCAF	Sgt	McKillip, Earl Gordon
FL	McKenna, Gerald Patrick	RCAF	F/O	McKillip, Norman Colin
lt	McKenna, James Lloyd	Para Regt	F/O	McKim, Joseph Arthur
Sgt	McKenna, John Andrew	RCAF	Cpl	McKin, William Robert
P/O	McKenna, John Leo	RCAF	Tpr	McKinlay, George Nugent Fort Garry's
P/O	McKenna, Leslie William Joseph	RCAF	F/O	McKinley, Curtis David
Cpl	McKenna, Robert John	S Sask R	Rfn	McKinley, Sterling
Sgt	McKenna, Robert Patrick	QOR of C	Gnr	McKinney, Bernard Eric
F/O	McKenzie, Alexander Caird	RCAF	P/O	McKinney, Robert Francis
Pte	McKenzie, Angus Martin	Westm R	Lt	McKinnon, George Edward
Pte	McKenzie, Claude Scott	Nth NS Highrs	Sgt	McKinnon, Hugh
F/O	McKenzie, Daniel Neilson	RCAF	F/S	McKinnon, Ian
Sgt	McKenzie, David	4 PLDG	Pte	McKinnon, John
Pte	McKenzie, Donald Frederick Hast & PER		F/O	McKinnon, John Lockwood
Tpr	McKenzie, Douglas George	1 H	Sgt	McKinnon, John Ronald
L/Cpl	McKenzie, George	Nth NS Highrs	Pte	McKinnon, Joseph
Tpr	McKenzie, George Allan	14 H	P/O	McKinnon, Lloyd George
Pte	McKenzie, George William	RH LI	Cpl	McKinnon, Lloyd James
F/O	McKenzie, Gordon James	RCAF	Lt	McKinnon, Merchison Campbell
Pte	McKenzie, Harry Eugene	1 r RC	Pte	McKinnon, Michael James
Pte	McKenzie, Jack William	Hast & PER	Cpl	McKinnon, William Lewis
P/O	McKenzie, James Patrick	RCAF		Nth NS Highrs
L/Cpl	McKenzie, James Williamson	R Regt C	Tpr	McKnight, Arthur
Cpl	McKenzie, John Alexander	S Sask R	Pte	McLachlan, Cecil Robert Calg Highrs
Gnr	McKenzie, Lewis Clark	RCA	Lt	McLachlan, Donald Hugh
Tpr	McKenzie, Lorne Kenneth	LD SH RO	S/Sgt	McLachlan, Donald James
P/O	McKenzie, Morris Allan	RCAF	Cpl	McLachlan, Jack
Pte	McKenzie, Rhoda Elizabeth	CWAC	F/O	McLachlan, Percy Alan
FL	McKenzie, Robert Milne	RCAF	Pte	McLachlin, William John
Pte	McKenzie, Roderick Rand	C Scot R	Maj	McLaren, Frederick George
Gnr	McKenzie, William J.	RCA		48 Highrs
Pte	McKeon, Hughie Michael	SD & G Highrs		
Lt	McKeon, William Allen	AloR		

## Typhoon Memorial

Situated on the road to Falaise, Noyers Bocage is the site of a monument to Typhoon aircraft pilots who were killed in the battle of Normandy from May to August 1944. The memorial lists the 151 Typhoon pilots killed during this period, including F/L Robert McKenzie. There are 23 Canadian pilots listed in the 3 RCAF Typhoon squadrons (438, 439 and 440) as well as 16 additional Canadians serving in the RAF Typhoon squadrons.



Typhoon Memorial Noyers-Bocage France

<https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/4541/Typhoon-Memorial.htm>

He also received posthumously, his operational wings for service in action against the enemy.



## Royal Canadian Air Force



*This is to Certify that.*

*Flight Lieutenant R. M. McKenzie  
has been posthumously awarded the Operational Wings  
of the Royal Canadian Air Force in recognition of  
gallant service in action against the enemy.*

*Dated this Thirtieth day of December, 1946*

*Robert McKenzie*

AIR MARSHAL  
CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF.

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS, OTTAWA.

Robert McKenzie Operational Wings

## Medals

Robert was awarded the following Medals for his service:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Air Crew Europe Star with Clasp indicating service in France and Germany
- France and Germany Star
- General Service Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp and Maple Leaf Emblem indicating Overseas Service



39-45 Star

Aircrew Europe  
Star

France&Germany  
Star

General Service  
Medal

Canadian Volunteer  
Service Medal

### **British Commonwealth Aircrew Training Program**

The British Commonwealth Aircrew Training Program was a massive effort to train aircrews from Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. All of the participants provided funding, but Canada provided the lion's share of the funding required to support this huge operation.

A total of 231 facilities and alternate landing sites were used in support of the BCATP. At the peak of training in late 1943 the facilities were operating with 10,000 aircraft and 100,000 military personnel. The facilities brought an economic boom to the cities where the facilities were located for the construction, employment, housing, food and support services. While in Canada 3,750 personnel from the RAF, RAAF, RNZAF met and married Canadian Women.

#### **Number of Training Facilities**

Training Facility	Purpose	Number of Locations
Manning Depots	Basic Training, aptitude testing to sort troops into Air Crew or Ground Crew	8
Initial Training School	Basic Aircrew Ground School Training	7
Elementary Flying Training Schools	Basic flying training, conducted at civilian flying schools	36
Service Flying Training Schools	Sorted into Fighter and Bomber Pilots	41
Air Observer Schools	Basic Navigator Training	10
Bombing and Gunnery Schools	Bombardier and Gunner training	11
Air Navigator Schools	Advanced Navigator Training	6
Wireless Schools	Communications Training for Wireless Operator/Air Gunners (WOAG)	4
Flight Engineer School	FE Training	1
Operational Training Unit	Pilot training on Operational Aircraft	7
Central Flying School	Pilot Training (Trenton)	1
Central Navigation School	Nav Training (Rivers, Manitoba)	1
Instrument Navigation School	Advanced Nav Training (Deseronto, ON)	1
Flying Instructor Schools	Train Instructors for all other flying schools	3

**SUMMARY OF AIRCREW GRADUATES OF THE PLAN**  
**October 1940-March 1945**

	Pilot	Nav B	Nav W	Nav	Air Bomb	WOAG	AG	Naval AG	Flt Eng	Total
RCAF	25,747	5,154	421	7,280	6,659	12,744	12,917	—	1,913	72,835
RAF	17,796	3,113	3,847	6,922	7,581	755	1,392	704	—	42,110
RAAF	4,045	699	—	944	799	2,875	244	—	—	9,606
RNZAF	2,220	829	30	724	634	2,122	443	—	—	7,002
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,808</b>	<b>9,795</b>	<b>4,298</b>	<b>15,870</b>	<b>15,673</b>	<b>18,496</b>	<b>14,996</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>131,553</b>

**Notes:**

- Figures include 407 BCATP Pilots who received SFTS training in RAF Transferred Schools prior to July 1, 1942, as follows:—332 RCAF, 9 RAF and 66 RNZAF.
- Figures do not include 5,296 RAF and Fleet Air Arm personnel who received training in RAF Transferred Schools and were graduated prior to July 1, 1942, when these schools became part of the BCATP, as follows:—4,058 Pilots, 1,006 Navigators "B" (Observers), 151 Navigators "W", graduated from RAF Schools, and 81 RAF Pilots who received their "Wings" at RCAF Schools.
- Included in Wireless Operator (Air Gunner) totals are 641 who were graduated in March, 1945, without Bombing and Gunnery School training, as follows:—478 RCAF, 21 RAF, 94 RAAF, and 48 RNZAF. The RAF, RAAF and RNZAF personnel were graduated as Wireless Operators (Air).
- Included in Flight Engineer totals are 207 who were graduated in Canada without type training, and proceeded to England for that phase of training.

### BCATP Pilot Training Times

The sequence of pilot training increased as the war progressed, to meet the demands of newer and more complex aircraft.

<b>Pilot Training BCATP</b>			
		<b>Training Time (weeks)</b>	
Training Centre		Dec-1940	Sep-1942
Manning Depot		4 to 5	4 to 5
Academic Upgrading (if required)			4 to 8
Initial Training School		4	10
Elementary Flight Training School		7	8
Service Flight Training School		10	12
Aircrew Graduate School			4
Operational Training Unit			8 to 14
Overseas Pool			
<b>Total Flight Training Time</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>38</b>
			<b>52</b>

# 438 Squadron

438 Squadron along with her two sister squadrons 439 and 440 Squadrons flew Typhoon 1B Aircraft. The squadron was part of 143 Wing, belonging to 83 Group of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Air Force.

There was a total of 10 Typhoon Squadrons in 83 Group, including the 3 Canadian Squadrons. The claimed kills in the Normandy Campaign from June to August 1944 as listed by Christopher Evans, "Fighter-Bomber in Normandy Campaign: The Role of 83 Group"

Month	Sorties	Bombs	Rockets	Tanks Destroyed	Tanks Damaged	MET Destroyed	MET Damaged	Losses Aircraft	Losses Pilots
June	3458	2029	11830	17	8	141	52	31	23
July	3094	2290	15351	39	61	60	70	28	22
August	4703	3415	19264	215	179	1227	1386	55	48
Totals	11255	7734	46445	271	248	1428	1508	114	93

MET=Mechanized Enemy Transport

Evans makes the case that the claims are greatly exaggerated:

*The culmination of the Normandy campaign was the "Battle of the Falaise Pocket." When the "Pocket" was finally liquidated a rough tally was made of the destroyed and abandoned vehicles left in and around Falaise. There was so much wreckage that the area was divided into three portions, the Pocket, the Shambles and the Chase. A total of 885 vehicles was counted in the Pocket area, 3,043 in the Shambles and another 3,648 in the Chase for a total of 7,576 vehicles, not including the innumerable horse-drawn carts, in this one section of Normandy alone. When the vehicles were categorized by type and their condition assessed it became clear that strafing, not bombs and rockets, had been the main cause of destruction of vehicles attacked from the air. Of the 150 tanks and self-propelled guns located in the Chase, not a single one showed signs of having been destroyed from the air. Even so, it is equally clear that at least some of the German armour found was there because of air attack on fuel trucks, blocked roads and bridges and even the demoralization of the crew.*

Matt Bone makes the case that although the number of kills was likely overestimated, the Typhoons were essential in the victories in Normandy and onwards. Taking out the Tank support vehicles and fuel trucks disabled the tanks as effectively as blowing them up. The Typhoons were feared opponents, causing many tank crews to abandon their tanks when the Typhoons showed up.

Chris Evans summarizes the effectiveness of the Typhoon attacks:

*Yet the attacks had obviously been decisive. The accuracy and effectiveness of the 20 mm cannons had proved a very significant factor in destroying the 'soft-skinned' vehicles bringing forward fuel and ammunition, but perhaps the most significant factor was a phenomenon observed at Mortain and subsequently employed to advantage during the rest of the campaign in northwest Europe. Both the attacking pilots and the defending US soldiers reported being greatly impressed by the apparent impact of their attacks on the morale of the German troops,*

*who were seen to abandon their vehicles and scramble for cover in the surrounding woods and hedgerows. Interrogation of PoWs showed them to be extremely nervous of RP attack, despite the fact that the chances of them being directly hit by a rocket were relatively small.*

*There can be little doubt that an attack by a fighter-bomber (particularly one firing RPs) appeared to the soldier on the ground to have a very personal element to it – much more so than is attributable to the more impersonal impact of artillery or mortar fire. Again and again, it was the evidence provided by the Germans themselves that indicated how devastatingly effective the presence of the fighter-bomber was in paralysing their activities, regardless of the actual damage that they proved capable of inflicting. In many ways this was the Typhoon's greatest contribution to the battles in which it took part.*

*As far as the situation at Mortain is concerned, the Typhoons had been the weapon that halted the panzers and destroyed German hopes of a successful counterattack. At 1940 hrs on 7 August a signal from the Chief of Staff of the 7th German Army was intercepted. The latter had been forced to admit that the attack had been at a standstill since 1300 hrs due to the 'employment of fighter-bombers by the enemy and the absence of our own air support'. The Mortain action – the 'Day of the Typhoon' – was probably the most decisive tactical air operation of the invasion, and possibly the campaign in northwest Europe, as it showed the flexibility and economy of the fighter-bomber, its ease of control and the weight of fire that it could quickly bring to bear on any threatened point.*

# Appendix Story of the Hawker Typhoon



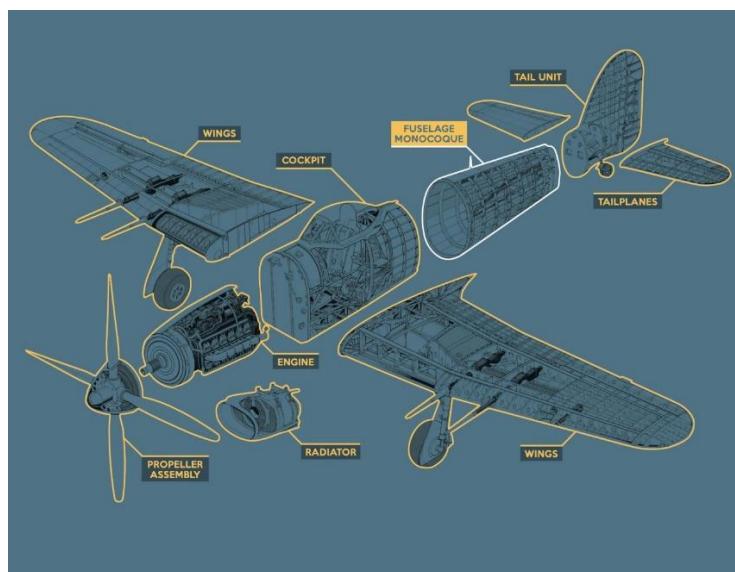
24

Typhoon IB MN716/F3-A of No 438 Sqn RCAF, No 143 Wing RCAF, B78 Eindhoven, October 1944

## Building of the Hawker Typhoon

In 1938, the RAF sought a replacement for the Hawker Hurricane fighter. The new aircraft was required to fly at 400 mph at 15,000 ft, have 12 machine guns, and a 2000 HP engine. The Typhoon was built in a modular design with a very robust structure that would be essential to its survival in its future ground attack role. The cockpit area was made from traditional tubular structure that made it robust and easy to repair. All of the panels in the cockpit and fuselage area were large and easy to remove, providing easy access to the aircraft systems. The fuselage was a monocoque design with ribs and a stressed skin, similar to designs used in current aircraft.

The aircraft was built with a three-blade 14-foot diameter propeller, the largest of the time, so the aircraft had a high nose up angle when taxiing. The modular design was key to the design improvements of the Typhoon, as early design issues resulted in several modifications.



**Typhoon Components (<http://HawkerTyphoon.com>)**

**Design Deficiencies**

This section was taken from Matt Bone's article on Typhoon Myths.

The original Typhoon was fitted with a car door structure, and a hinged top panel which all had to be removed before the pilot could exit the aircraft. Imagine having to open the car door at 200 mph, before you could get out of damaged aircraft. At the time, the pilots wore parachutes, but did not have ejection seats, so had to climb out and jump. The cockpit design also had very limited visibility to the rear. The designer, Sydney Camm stated "this plane will be so fast, you won't have to look behind you", but the canopy was among the first components to be modified.



**Typhoon Car Door Canopy – Hawker Company Picture**

The aircraft was powered by a 24-cylinder, 2000 HP Napier Saber Engine. The engine was actually two 12-cylinder engines mounted together. The engine had a number of teething problems including reliability, as it had a bad tendency to stop in flight. The engine was started by firing a cartridge that turned over the motor, and an intricate start-up procedure that often resulted in the engine catching on fire. The design was continually updated and by 1944 had become quite reliable. Additionally, the engine was mounted to the main spar of the aircraft, causing severe vibration to be transmitted throughout the aircraft, causing structural issues and a very uncomfortable flight for the pilot. The

vibration was reduced by using shock mounts for the engine and the pilot seat, and later the propeller was replaced with a 4-blade design, further reducing vibration. The engine exhaust leaked into the cockpit, forcing the pilot to use oxygen at all times.

The most damning defect of the original Typhoon was that the tail had a tendency to fall off (shed its tail feathers in pilot lingo). 27 Typhoons were lost due to structural failures in the tail section and 25 pilots were killed. At the time, high speed aerodynamics were not well understood, and cracking of the fuselage and rear spar were attempted to be fixed by beefing up the structure with “fish plates”, additional small plates attached to the tail connection joint and stringers. This did not fix the issue, and rockets and bombs were being attached to the aircraft and delivered at high dive angles, exacerbated the issue. At high speed, the large wing caused flutter due to airflow compressibility, causing resonant frequencies to be experienced in the tail. The RAF put the aircraft on a shaker and determined that there was a major resonance between 9.3 and 13.2 Hz that caused the aircraft to shake apart. Increasing the mass balance weight and adding an inertia weight under the control column addressed the issues.

The first Typhoon flew on 27 February 1940, but the Typhoon was given a low priority due to the desperate need to support in-service aircraft during the Battle of Britain. Flight tests showed the Typhoon could fly more than 400 mph at 20,000 ft but lacked the manoeuvrability at high altitude to meet its intended role as a high-altitude interceptor. There were few Typhoons available in 1942, and in early 1942 the Mark 1B Typhoon was converted to use 4 20 mm cannons.

Due to the initial design issues with the Typhoon, and its poor performance at altitude, despite it being the fastest fighter in the RAF, the program was in danger of being cancelled. Fortunately, the Germans introduced the FW190 fighter-bomber, and used it for hit and run bombing raids at the South of England. The Typhoon was the only aircraft fast enough to intercept the FW190s, so the Typhoon squadrons were soon moved to the south of England to handle the threat. Around the same time, support to the Army was becoming increasing important, and the Typhoon found a new lease on life as a Ground Attack aircraft. Its high speed, ability to carry rockets and bombs, rugged design and ability to remain flying despite heavy damage transformed the Typhoon to the premier Ground Attack aircraft of the RAF and Commonwealth forces.

### Aircraft Modifications

The Typhoon went through a series of modifications to increase its effectiveness. First 20 mm cannons were installed, then the aircraft outfitted to carry first 250, then 500 and finally 2 x 1000 lb bombs. In 1943 the capability to carry 8 rockets also improved the Ground Attack capabilities. The Typhoon also received a bubble canopy, a 4-blade propeller and a larger tail so that by the build up to D-Day the Typhoon was a formidable weapons platform.



Typhoon with 500 Lb Bomb IWM CH 009945



Typhoon With Bubble Canopy Loaded with Rockets IWM CH 13344

## Typhoon Clearance 1,000 lb Bombs

An excellent example of practicality over bureaucracy. On D-Day, 06 Jun 1944, a representative from Whitehall (Defence Headquarters) called to state that clearance had not yet been granted for the Typhoon to carry 1,000 lb bombs, despite having been used for several months. The response from Wing Commander Healy is priceless:

*It is suggested to the Air Ministry official concerned that he might like to take the following action:*

- i. Try to stop A.E.A.F from putting 1,000 lb bombs onto Typhoons.*
- ii. Recover any 1,000 lb bombs that may have already been dropped by Typhoons and explain to the recipients that the bombs were dropped in error.*

CONFIDENTIAL.

LOOSE MINUTE.

To:- W/Cdr. Ops. 7

You may consider the following to be of historical interest:-

At 10.30 hrs. to-day, an officer of the Air Ministry, Whitehall, telephoned to state that it was not yet possible for the Air Ministry to "clear" Typhoon aircraft for the carriage of 1,000 lb. bombs, and that the M.A.P. was being asked to carry out an investigation into the question.

As you are, no doubt, aware, we have for the past two months been fitting 1,000 lb. bomb racks to Typhoon aircraft; and the Typhoon carrying 2 x 1000 lb. bombs is our primary weapon against certain tactical targets.

It was suggested to the Air Ministry official concerned that he might like to take the following action:-

- (i) Try to stop A.E.A.F. from putting 1,000 lb. bombs onto Typhoons.
- (ii) Recover any 1,000 lb. bombs which may already have been dropped by Typhoons, and explain to the recipients that the bombs were dropped in error.

L.E.H.

L.E. HEALY,  
Wing Commander,  
Arm.1

June 6, 1944.

Clearance 1000 lb Bombs Typhoon Bomber file of AIR37/978 Photo Matt Bone

## Typhoon Robustness

Despite the problems with the Typhoon design, it evolved into an excellent air to ground platform, and was used extensively to support the Army. The Typhoon provided a stable weapons delivery platform and was able to make it home after sustaining remarkable damage.



IWM

**Anti-Aircraft Fire Sets Off 20mm Rounds Blowing a Hole in the Typhoon Wing IWM CE\_108**

## Weapons Delivery

(from Typhoon and Tempest, the Canadian Story Hugh Halliday p.189)

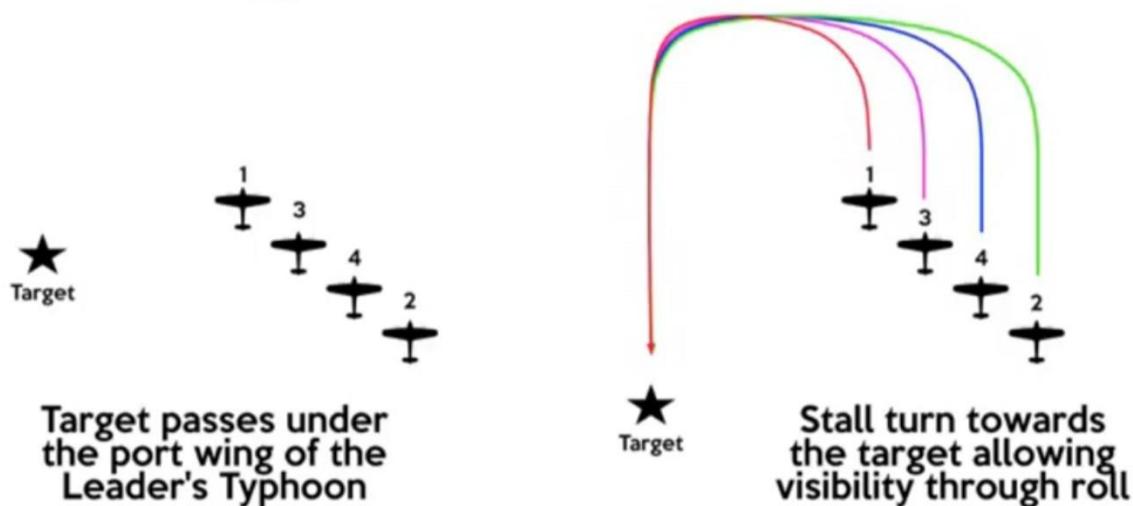
### Approach

While operating from bases in England, after take off, the aircraft would descend to low level ~50 ft to cross the channel to avoid German Radar. As the aircraft approached the target, the aircraft would climb to 8,000 -10,000ft. About three miles out the leader would put his formation into “bombing formation” and level off at 8,000 ft.

### High Dive Bombing

Bombing formation used is a deep stepped-up starboard echelon if the dive is to port. The leader approaches the target almost directly over it, so it entirely disappears under his mainplane and waits until the target is slightly behind him and to port.

## Typhoon Attack Formations



**Target passes under the port wing of the Leader's Typhoon**

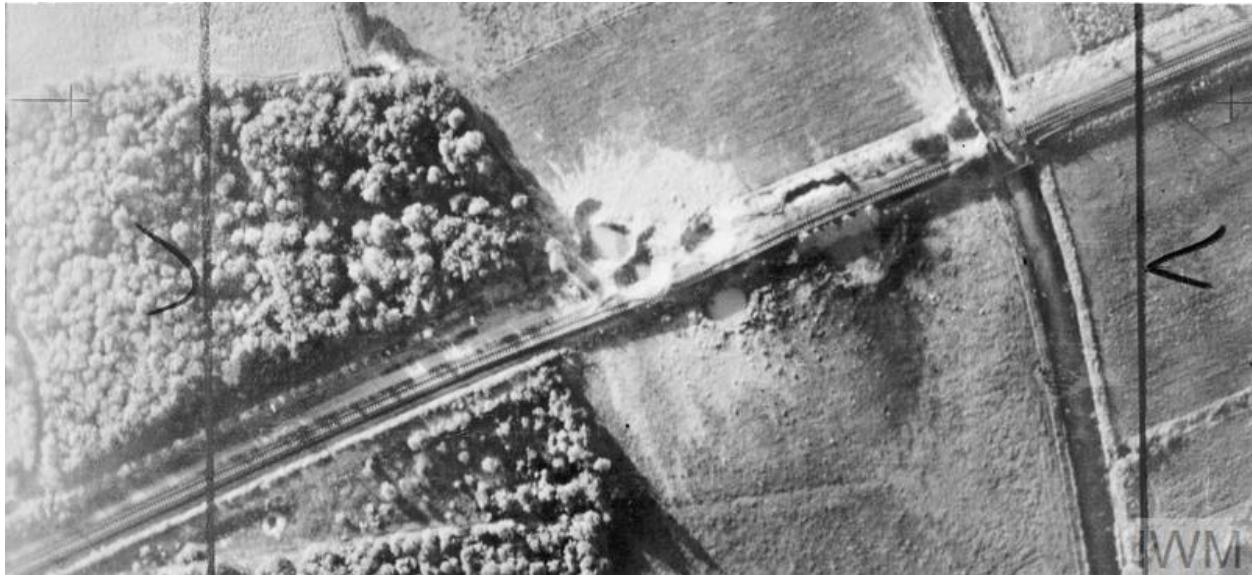
**Stall turn towards the target allowing visibility through roll**

### Typhoon Attack Formation

When this situation is reached the leader dives steeply onto the target, so he maintains sight of the target, and the rest of the formation follows. It has been found that the most accurate attack is made from 8,000 ft down to a release point of 2,000 ft in a dive between 60 and 70 degrees. When the pilot has released his bombs, he pulls up to the starboard or port as mentioned in the briefing, and the other pilots do likewise reforming at speed above the range of light anti-aircraft fire.

The two chief methods of sighting in the high dive bombing deserve mention here. The first and most common method is to set the centre bead of the gunsight on the aiming point of the target. Just before release apply the proper amount of deflection by pulling up the nose slightly, for instance 1 ¼ rings at 2,000 ft for 480-500 mph at a 60-degree dive.

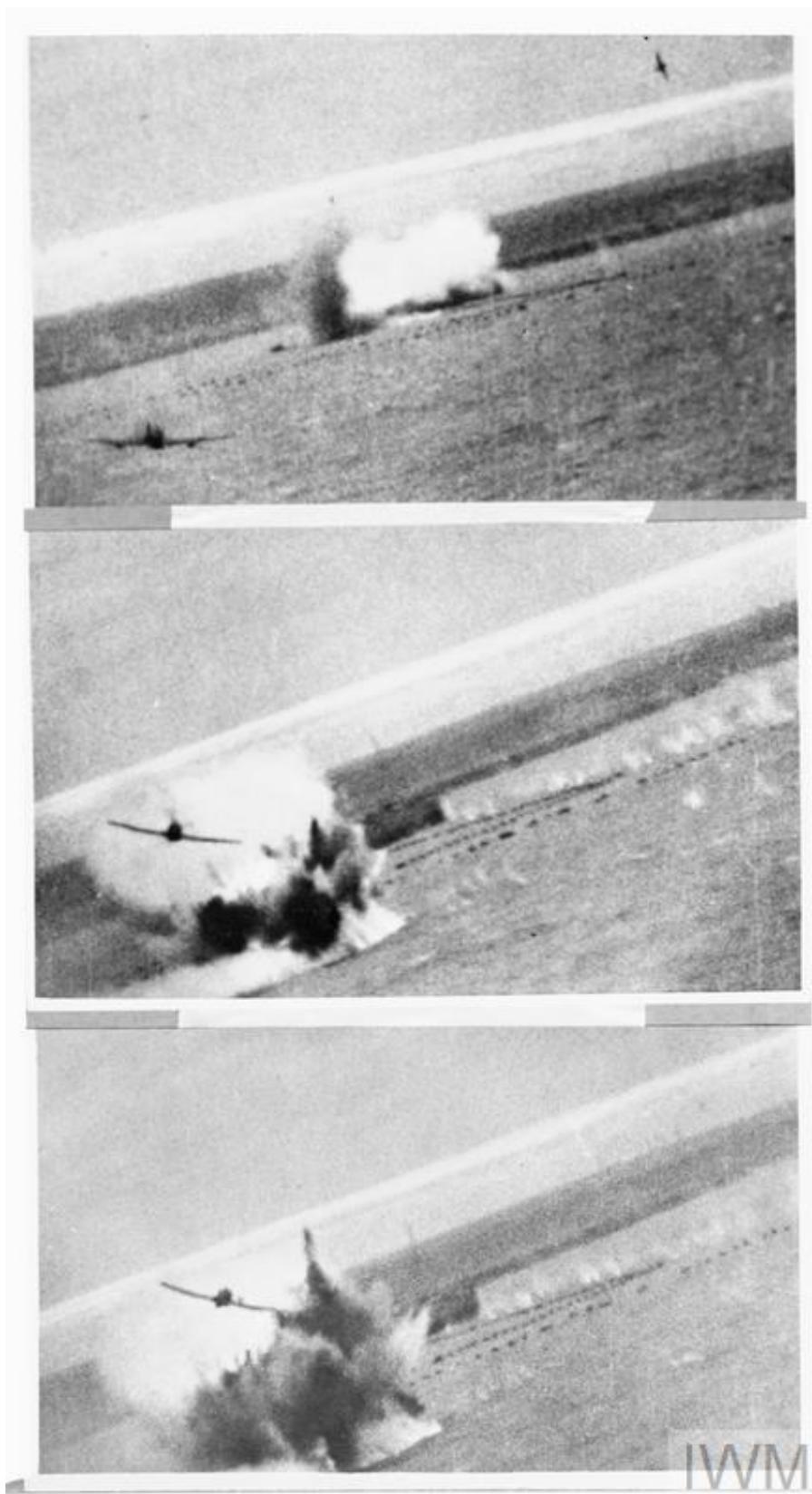
The second method used is to place the centre bead on the target as soon as possible in the dive and gradually throughout the dive slowly apply deflection and when the release height is reached the proper amount of deflection would already have been applied, and then the bombs are released in the dive without a pull-out. This method is probably the most accurate since most pilots pulling out at high speed tend to violently overshoot with their bombs.



Typhoon Bomb Runs Against a Rail Line IWM C\_004725

#### Low Level Bombing

When used against lock gates, lightly defended Headquarters, or railway tunnels, low level bombing gives the greatest accuracy and incidentally, the greatest thrills. The height of approach is normally 8,000 ft to avoid light anti-aircraft fire enroute. When about 15 miles from the target the leader begins to drop off his height and this gives speed. When within sight of the target the leader and his No 2 make straight for it, attacking at an angle of 25-30 degrees and release their bombs at roof top height where the bombs will plunge directly into the wall without skipping along the ground. After the delay bombs have exploded, the best method found to prevent confusion is to have the leader pull up then control the attack by R/T, in other words he details each pair in succession to attack, making sure the former pair's bombs have exploded. Sections waiting their turn orbit at 3,000 ft and when detailed, attacking, breaking away and rejoining the main formation at approximately 4,500 ft.

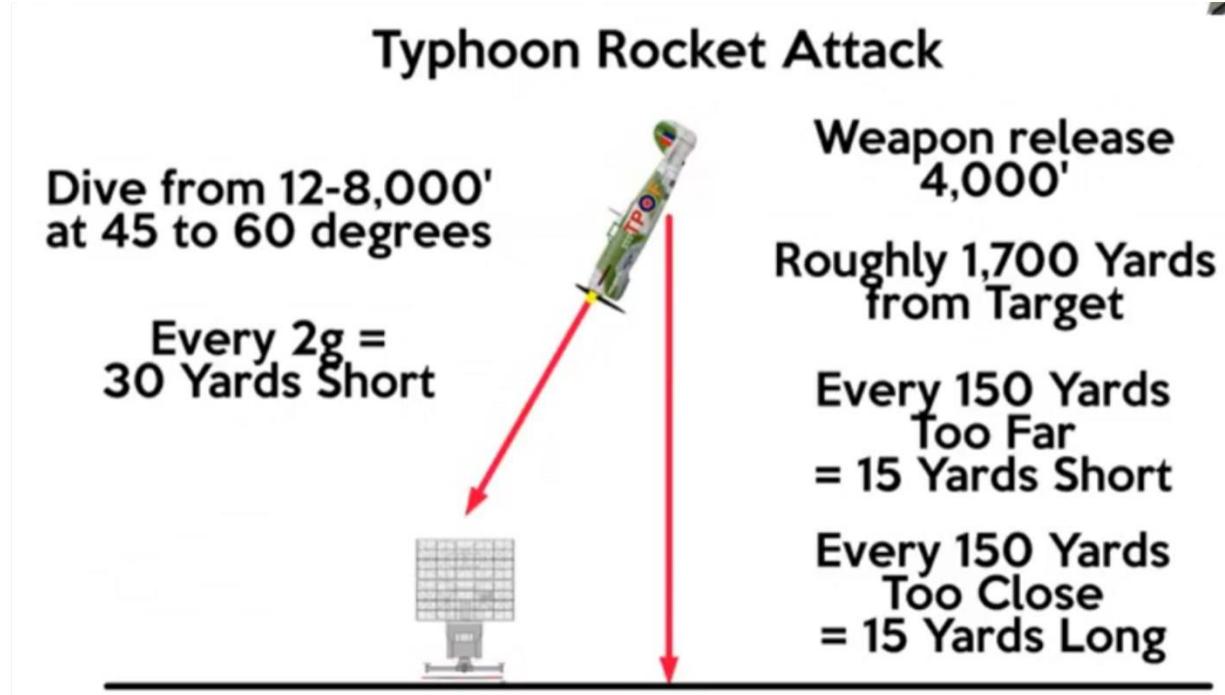


IWM

Typhoon Low Level Bomb Run Against Shipping IWM C\_4102A

## High Level Rocket Attack

The high-level Rocket attack follows a similar approach to the high-level bombing. The attack is initiated from 8,000 to 12,000 ft at a 45-to-60-degree dive. The rockets are fired around 4,000 ft and the pilot then breaks off. The error margins are shown in the following figure.



Typhoon High Level Rocket Attack – Matt Bone



Painting of Typhoon Rocket Delivery Aviation History Vol 41



Typhoon Salvo Against a Ship IWM C\_4641



Typhoon Rocket Salvo Against a Building IWM CL\_2031

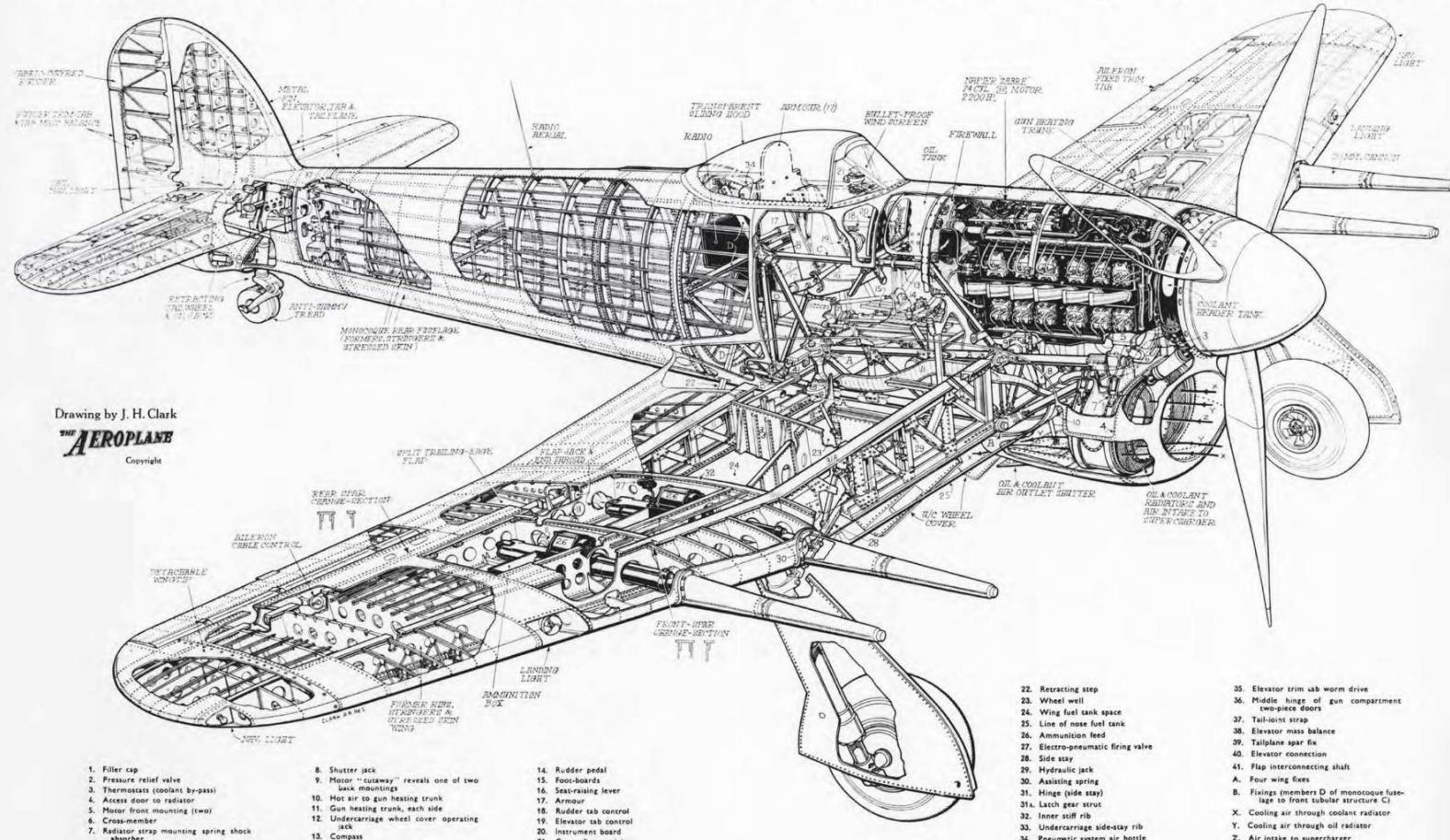
## Last Typhoon

3317 Typhoons were manufactured throughout the war. At the end of May 1945, there were 1149 left in RAF inventory. Any Typhoon that required a major inspection or overhaul was scrapped so by December 1945 there were 748 aircraft remaining. The Typhoon had been replaced by the Tempest and was seen as too specialized, so the Air Ministry decided to dispose of all remaining Typhoons. Most were broken up immediately and the remainder given to technical schools. The last one was scrapped in 1955. The only remaining Typhoon was MN235 which had been sent to the US in 1944 for technical evaluation. It was passed to the Smithsonian Institute, then eventually traded to the RAF Museum in Hendon.

There are currently two programs dedicated to building a flyable Typhoon. The rebuild of JP843 is being conducted near Comox BC, by an organization called Typhoon Legacy, spear-headed by Ian Slater who has been on a lifelong quest to build an airworthy Typhoon. He has dedicated his life to the work, first as a structures technician in the RCAF, then becoming a certified aircraft maintenance engineer permitted to provide airworthiness certification for the aircraft. His team is making extensive use of CAD drawings and CNC machines and laser cutters to produce or redesign the components. Since the original design was shaped by hand, a great deal of manual labour is also involved. <http://www.typhoonlegacy.com>. Typhoon Legacy has a very strong You Tube presence and regularly features details of the rebuild design and manufacture.

The second project is the Hawker Typhoon Preservation Group (HTPG) who are restoring RB396 at Duxford Airfield near Cambridge in the UK. HTPG are attempting to reuse as many components as possible and appear to be using more traditional techniques (and older aircraft technicians). HTPG appears to have a number of patrons and industries involved. <http://www.hawkertyphoon.com>. Both projects are proceeding, but funding is always an issue. It is fascinating to watch, and will be interesting to see if one or both groups succeed in flying a Typhoon, it is the classic battle between passion and a full fundraising program.

# THE HAWKER TYPHOON IB FIGHTER (One 2,200 h.p. Napier Sabre Motor)



**AEROPLANE**

## APPENDIX Entries from War Diary and Personnel File

The day opened cool and slightly cloudy, everybody was up bright and early this morning to see our 11 aircraft off, led by the wing Commander, Flying. No. 438 Squadron was assigned the task of dive bombing two concrete block houses overlooking the beach on which the 50th British Division was to land tanks. This operation had to be performed

Just as the tanks landing craft lowered their ramps. Cloud conditions were 5/10 from 2,000 ft. up with the result that the dive bombing had to be done from a much lower level. Navigation and the difficulties of a heavy load above the beach direct hits were scored on both targets with 1,000 lb. bombs - it is believed they were totally destroyed. All pilots came back safe with their aircraft though one aircraft had a piece of flesh torn off the nose, and had to be jettisoned out of the plane. He had no engine action until 1715 hours when 11 aircraft came home, 10 of them at return were made on a recovery course but resulted very poor. One aircraft is lost - the pilot still has right through the wing puncturing the gas tank. On its return was able to get home on his main tanks. In the "one" sweep was made by 11 aircraft at 1400 ft. at 0.50 hours. On this particular mission were made on two objectives which were without acting well. Amongst others, it is believed that in the bombing of the two, the vehicles were destroyed, starting off the other vehicles in four vehicles and breaking out the drivers. This is the first large scale strafing the German troops had done and they were not exceptionally lucky. No aircraft came back with a large hole in the tail, another hit some object and ran some of the hydraulic lines. Others had various engine trouble, following difficulties, the last sweep on the assembled boys of 438 and 6438 Squadron illustrating the boys' cargo onto the side of a road. This gesture was much appreciated by the ground personnel and it is the intention of the C.O. to give them a night air battle. Final flying for the day's operations - 1500 hours today - a Typhoon 1B - 4000 hrs., Hunter 1000-5000 hrs.

June 6/4	Typhoon 1B F3 H	S/Ldr. P.G. Grant	Bomber	0655	0010	Target: Strong Point 373007. Target attacked with 12 x 1,000 lbs. N.C. .025 from 5,000 to 2,000 ft. direction hits.
	F3 J	S/Ldr. A.R. Newcome	"	0655	0010	
	F3 K	P/Ldr. J.E. Dolman	"	0655	0010	All bombs on target, 4 direct hits, rest over misses.
	F3 L	P/Ldr. D.G. Hartung	"	0655	0010	
	F3 M	P/O R.M. McNamee	"	0655	0010	
	F3 N	P/O P.G. Upton	"	0655	0010	
	F3 O	S/Ldr. Judd	"	0655	0010	Target: Strong Point 395003. Target attacked with 12 x 1,000 lbs. N.C. .025 from 5,000 ft. to 1,500 ft. direction hits to be scored as misses. 2 direct hits. 2 near misses. Others grouped around targets.
	F3 P	P/Ldr. McNamee	"	0655	0010	
	F3 Q	P/O R.H. Burden	"	0655	0010	
	F3 R	P/O E.A. Dugay	"	0655	0010	
	F3 S	P/O R.E. Park	"	0655	0010	
June 6/4 Typhoon	F3 T	P/Ldr. J.E. Dolman	Bomber	1715	1850	Target: Arbol Roads, south of town. 2 Typhoon 1B except arms. 3 unarmored cars 222's attacked with 10 x 500 lbs. N.C. .025 from 5,000 ft. to 2,000 ft. north to south on road ref. H-1452. Feeding to and stationary. 2 near misses. 1 aircraft hit by flak, returned to base safely, category A.C.
	F3 U	P/Ldr. D.W. Hartung	"	1715	1850	
	F3 V	S/Ldr. G. Brooker	"	1715	1850	Feeding to and stationary. 2 near misses. 1 aircraft hit
	F3 W	P/O A.R. Newcome	"	1715	1850	
	F3 X	P/O R.H. Burden	"	1715	1850	
	F3 Y	P/O E.A. Dugay	"	1715	1850	
	F3 Z	P/O R.E. Park	"	1715	1850	
June 6/4 Typhoon 1B F3 H	S/Ldr. P.G. Grant	Bomber	2050	2220	Target: Armed Roads, Open Argentine Area.	
Typhoon 1B F3 F	P/O A.H. Vickers	"	2050	2220	3 Typhoon 1B (Bombers) attacked 4 trucks at U.5749 from 5,000 - 1,500 ft. with 16 x 500 lbs. N.C. .025.	
	F3 K	P/Lt. R.E. Coffey	"	2050	2220	
	F3 L	P/O J.E. Cornelison	"	2050	2220	Results unobserved due to dust and smoke. At 2130 hours
	F3 M	P/O A.R. Newcome	Fighter	2050	2220	column of troop carriers moving north U.1342 strafed,
	F3 N	P/O R.H. Burden	Bomber	2050	2220	4 flamer and at least 10 damaged. One aircraft hit.
	F3 O	P/O J.H. Hilton	"	2050	2220	
	F3 P	P/O J.C. Unthoff	"	2050	2220	an object but returned to base safely, category A.C.
	F3 Q	P/O R.H. Johnson	"	2050	2220	
	F3 R	P/O R.E. Damer	Fighter	2050	2220	

#### 438 Squadron Operational Log – 06 Jun 1944

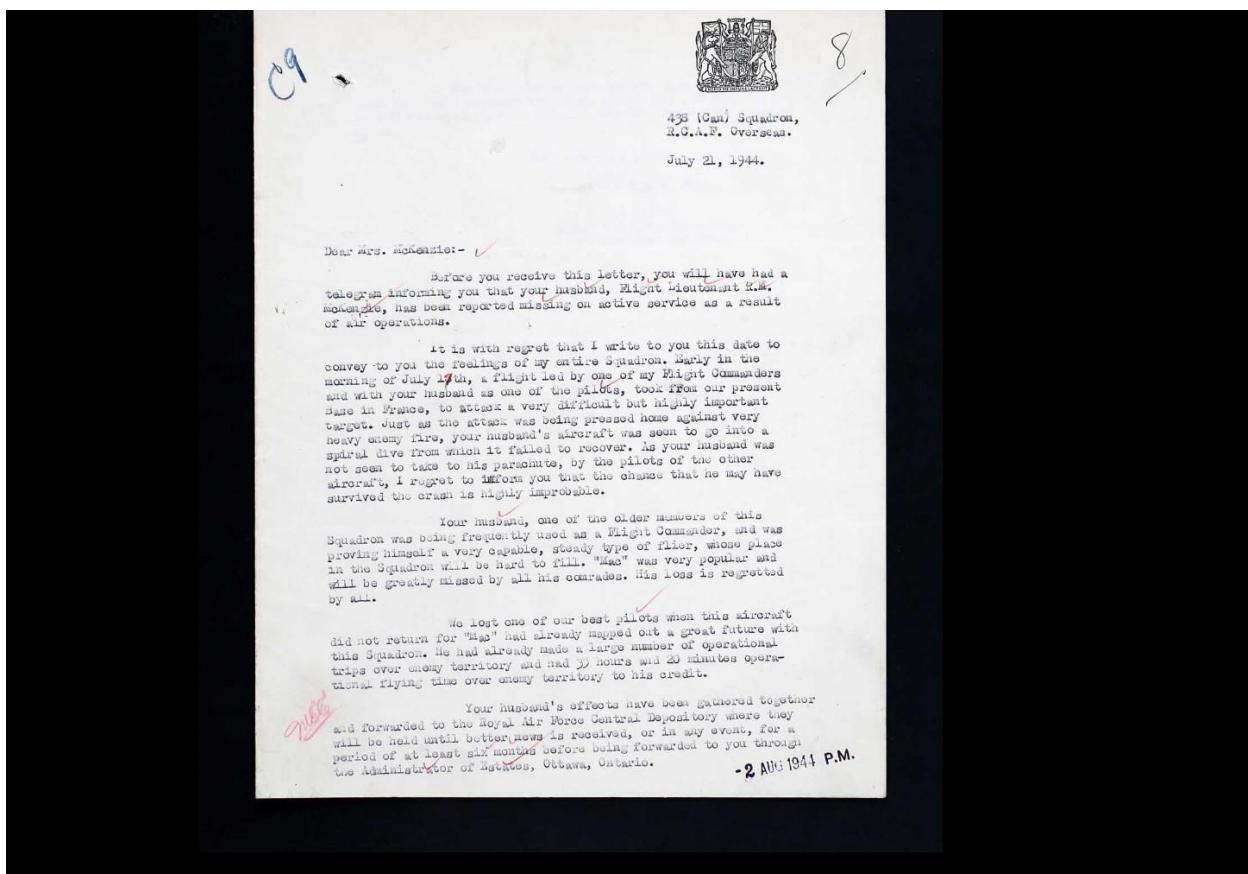
July 18/44	The day broke fairly clear though there is quite a heavy ground haze. Everybody was up early to participate in the heavy push scheduled. Today's push is in the way of an experiment with the Army "supporting the air force". Heavy area bombing is being done by all kinds of aircraft with our particular Squadron making two strikes before 0900 hours against a bridge over the River Yacu. Unfortunately each Squadron of the Wing lost a pilot on the early morning mission due to the intense and accurate flak. P/Lt. R.W. McNamee (QAH J11317) failed to pull out of his dive on the target and was seen to crash by one of the other pilots. We had an interesting occurrence today when ten survivors of a Liberator bailed out in this district when it caught fire, and two of them landed nearby. Our boys were delighted to take care of them at Dispersion here until such time as they went up to Intelligence. Total flying for the day: operational - 30:35 hours, non-op (Typhoon) 1B - 40 mins.
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**438 Squadron War Diary Entry – 18 Jul 1944**

July 18/44 Typhoon 1B	P/O R.H. Burden	Bomber	0705	0800	Aircraft detailed to attack bridge on G.O.4 at 903577
P3 Y P/O W.L. Beatty	"		0705	0800	X.L.S.H. Bridge attacked, dive bombing from 8,000 to 2,000'
P3 Z P/O T.A. Bragg	"		0705	0800	" to " 4 bombs on north approach of bridge, 2 probable hits. Results not seen due to smoke and debris, 1,000 lb.
P3 W P/O H.S. Battalinson	"		0705	0800	bombs used. Intense, accurate flak experienced over target.
P3 J P/Lt. G.P. Edington	"		0705	0800	One pilot, P/Lt. E.M. McKenzie hit by flak on start of
P3 E P/Lt. R.M. McKenzie	"		0705	0800	One pilot, P/Lt. E.M. McKenzie hit by flak on start of
P3 B P/O H.G. Upham	"		0705	0800	One pilot, P/Lt. E.M. McKenzie hit by flak on start of
P3 G P/O A. Lambros	"		0705	0800	One pilot, P/Lt. E.M. McKenzie hit by flak on start of
P3 F P/O A.H. Vickers	"		0705	0800	One pilot, P/Lt. E.M. McKenzie hit by flak on start of

**438 Squadron Operational Log Entry – 18 Jul 1944**

**Appendix – Missing in Action Letters**



**Missing in Action Letter from 438 Sqn CO -21 Jul 1944**

May I express my most earnest wish to be of as much assistance as I possibly can, and request that you feel quite free to write to myself or the Squadron Adjutant should the occasion arise.

Very sincerely yours,

*G. H. Grant*

I.P.A. Pilot  
Squadron Leader Commanding,  
No. 438 (Cape) Squadron.

Missing in Action Letter page 2 from 438 Sqn CO -21 Jul 1944

J11317 (R.O.4)

OTTAWA, Canada, 27th September, 1944.

Mr. R.M. McKenzie,  
542 Pierre Avenue,  
Windsor, Ontario.

Dear Mr. McKenzie:

It is with deep regret that I must confirm my telegram of recent date, concerning your son, Flight Lieutenant Robert Milne McKenzie, previously reported missing on Active Services and now reported "missing believed killed".

Advice has been received from the Royal Canadian Air Force Casualties Officer, Overseas, which states that the wreckage of an aircraft bearing the engine number of the one flown by your son was found in the vicinity where he was reported missing. The pilot had been buried, but the following articles were found: An epaulette showing the rank of Flight Lieutenant, part of a Canadian Flying Badge, a Ronson lighter, similar to the one carried by your son, and an ammunition pouch marked "R.M. McKenzie" in ink on the under side.

In accordance with the procedure established by Air Ministry Overseas, action to presume his death for official purposes will be taken after a lapse of six months from the date he was reported missing.

I sincerely hope that you can find consolation in the fact that your son risked his life willingly in the defence of freedom.

Yours sincerely,

R.C.A.F. Casualty Officer,  
for Chief of the Air Staff.  


Presumed Dead

21

MINUTE 1.

D.P.S.

1. B.P.S.O., A.E.A.F. reported that Typhoon aircraft, MN.707, piloted by F/Lt. R.M. McKenzie of No.438 R.C.A.F. Squadron, left base at 07.05 hours on the 18th. July, 1944, to carry out a dive bombing attack on a bridge over the River Orne, France. While approaching the target after starting its dive bombing run, the aircraft was hit by flak and went into a spiral spin and crashed into the ground. Nothing further was seen of the pilot or aircraft. (enc. 3 and 19).

2. Later information received from the Squadron concerned, states that the wreck of an aircraft bearing the engine number of that flown by F/Lt. McKenzie, was found in the immediate vicinity where he went missing. Although the body had been buried near the River Orne, Map Reference J975585, it was possible to identify it as that of F/Lt. McKenzie by personal effects found. (enc. 9).

3. It is accordingly submitted that the death of CAN/J11317 F/LT. R.M. MCKENZIE, be presumed, for official purposes, to have occurred on the 18th. July, 1944.

16/3/45.

*M.M. Goldberg Col*

*Gwendle A/F*  
for R.C.A.F. Casualties Officer.

**Minute Confirming F/L McKenzie's Death 15 Mar 1945**

R E P O R T

FROM: No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit, Royal Air Force,  
British Forces in France.

TO: Air Ministry, (P4 Cas), 73-77 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

COPIES TO: Air Ministry, ~~(P4 CAS-CAN)~~, 73-77 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

DATE: 18th May 1946.

YOUR FILE OR FOLDER REFERENCE:

YOUR CASUALTY ENQUIRY NUMBER:

OUR REFERENCE: 1MREU/S.8/XF875/Air

NAME OF SEARCH OFFICER AND NUMBER OF SECTION: F/Lt H.P. Massé, No. 2 Section.

TARGET: UNKNOWN

AIRCRAFT TYPE AND SERIAL NUMBER: TYPHOON

DATE REPORTED MISSING: 18-7-44 ?

PLACE OF CRASH: Amaye sur Orne, Calvados MAP REFERENCE: 3A and 8 T/967584

PLACE OF BURIAL: Amaye sur Orne, Calvados MAP REFERENCE: 3A and 8 T/967584

CREW: RCAF J.11317 F/Lt R.M. McKenzie.

RESULT OF INVESTIGATION AND FINDINGS:

Whilst sweeping in the canton of Evrely, I found, on a spot called "La Butte Maison Des Champs" Amaye Sur Orne, a very small remnant of the wreckage of a Typhoon. No aircraft or engine number was to be found. I managed to obtain the following cannon numbers: F23579, D10449 D19125.

Alongside the wreckage was the grave of the pilot this was marked with a cross bearing the following inscription: RCAF F/L R.M. McKenzie, J11317. 18-7-44. The grave did not bear any trace of having been registered so F.3372 is enclosed.

May the personal particulars of the pilot be confirmed.

Arrangements are being made for the human remains to be transferred to a Military Cemetery and you will be informed as soon as this is done.

(Signed) F/Lt H.P. Massé

*H.P.M.* *E.P.G.*

Casualty Report

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