

## Logan's Heroes

*-Those Others Who Dared to Escape.....<sup>1</sup>*

This is the second of a two part series detailing the fate of the crew of the ill-fated bomber during WWII piloted by Medicine Hat's own P/O Borden Carrick Dennison

**By William J Anhorn K.C. ICD.D**

*The Mad Hatter Historian*



---

<sup>1</sup> In his book, "Those Who Dared" G.A Brown references the archives of the British Intelligence Service and offers a comprehensive compilation of those men who dared to escape and the circumstances under which they avoided capture and were able to return to England.

See the link below:

<https://airforceescape.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Those-Who-Dared-GA-Brown.pdf>

## **About the Author:**

*William J. Anhorn was born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree (Political Science) from the University of Calgary and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Alberta. He returned to his hometown of Medicine Hat in 1976 and practiced law for over 35 years as a senior partner with the law firm of Pritchard and Company. He retired in 2012 and he and his wife Joan Elaine Anhorn (Medlicott), a retired teacher, continue to reside there.*

*Always having had a keen interest in writing and more recently genealogy, he has researched and written a series of articles on his own family and his extended family (Medlicott/Mclvor) and their family history.*

*He is also passionate about history including the history of Medicine Hat and has researched and written several articles in relation to the history of his "hometown". He currently is a member of the Medicine Hat Genealogical Society and the Medicine Hat and District Historical Society. He is Past Chairman of the Historical and Heritage Resource Management Committee of the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Company.*

*He is a frequent contributor to the Alberta Genealogical Society newsletter, Relatively Speaking.*

*His articles can be found on his website at <http://wjanhorn.ca>*

## **Preface:**

***Hogan's Heroes*** is an American television sitcom created by Bernard Fein and Albert S. Ruddy which is set in a prisoner-of-war (POW) camp in Nazi Germany during World War II, and centers around a group of Allied prisoners who use the POW camp as an operations base for sabotage and espionage purposes directed against Nazi Germany. It ran for 168 episodes (six seasons) from September 17, 1965, to April 4, 1971, on the CBS network, and has been broadcast in reruns ever since. Although a comedy sitcom, it nonetheless highlighted an unfortunate aspect of the Second World War that many today are unaware.

In an earlier article, I detailed the heroics of Pilot Officer Borden Dennison from Medicine Hat, who bailed out of his crippled of his Halifax II bomber during WWII and his incredible journey and escape to freedom.

The story was entitled [\*\*“They Evaded Capture”- The World War II Story of Medicine Hat’s Own Pilot Officer Borden Carrick Dennison of the Royal Canadian Air Force \(“RCAF”\) and the Halifax II Bomber that he Piloted that Was Shot Down Over France on March 12,1943\*\*](#)

Among the others on board of the ill-fated Halifax bomber was co-pilot **Emerson Lloyd Logan** and his story and that of the remaining crew members of the Halifax II bomber and their own heroic efforts to evade capture and for some, to escape back to England, are stories that must be told. And not unlike the TV series, their stories of valor, resistance and survival, accurately identifies them ALL as true “heroes” and it becomes a fitting “title” to this story, with an obvious slight variation.

Their story is entitled-**Logan’s Heroes**.

## Sq/Ldr. Emerson Lloyd Logan DFC C/1359 RCAF

Lloyd Emerson Logan was born June 5th, 1919 and enlisted for service with the RCAF on November 2nd, 1943. His service number was #C1359.

On March 12, 1943, he managed to parachute out of the stricken aircraft piloted by P/O Dennison and survive the crash of the Halifax bomber. He exited the burning aircraft followed immediately by Flt/Sgt Harold Jennings and both landed safely on the ground in close proximity to one another. They teamed up together and miraculously were able to avoid capture and eventually, with the assistance of the French Resistance, they managed to escape German occupied France and cross over into Spain.



Acting Squadron Leader  
Logan, Lloyd Emerson (RCAF)  
Pilot

Both were repatriated back to England. His account and that of Flt/Sgt Jennings and their harrowing escape to freedom is detailed later in this article.

But his service to his country did not end there.

Amazingly, Logan rejoined the RCAF 405 Squadron and became an Acting Squadron Leader, only to be **shot down again** on Sept. 27-28, 1943, while flying a Lancaster III bomber identified as serial #JB 120 and call or code sign LQ-L.

His aircraft was part of a mission involving 650 bombers that were intended to attack the German cities of Hanover and Brunswick.

His mission, however, one an unenviable one.

Logan's target was Brunswick, Germany. His aircraft was among a small sortie of 40 bombers, which were sent out earlier towards this German city, in hopes of attracting Luftwaffe night fighters away from the main force heading towards Hanover. After crossing over the Dutch coastline towards Germany, he flew at 18,000 feet towards the intended target.

At approximately 15 minutes before the estimated time of arrival, a German Junkers 88 nightfighter crossed their path and circled back and attacked the aircraft from below or underneath the bomber.

Two of the four engines on the starboard side of the aircraft were hit and put out of service and the plane quickly lost altitude. They jettisoned their bombs and turned back towards England, but it became obvious that the crippled aircraft would be unable to reach home. A third engine overheated and it was determined that it would soon catch fire.

As they crossed the German/Holland border, Logan gave the order to his crew to bail out, while he tried to maintain control of the aircraft in order to give them the best chance of exiting the aircraft safely. He made a wide circle at 1000 ft over the NE part of the City of Groningen and once his crew had bailed out, he then parachuted out of the stricken bomber himself. The aircraft soon crashed near the hamlet of Essen, south east of Groningen, exploding in a fireball upon hitting the ground.

Of his six crew members that bailed out of the aircraft, one was killed, and one was captured immediately by German authorities. The four remaining airmen managed to evade capture for a period of time with the help of the Dutch underground resistance.

Logan, having parachuted out of the aircraft, landed in a farmer's field near Euvelgunne, Holland. He buried his parachute but had badly injured his leg on landing. A young boy found the badly injured pilot and left returning with his older brother and the two carried Logan to their farmhouse.

## Lloyd Logan Again On Missing List After Air Action

For the second time this year, Squadron Leader Lloyd E. Logan, D.F.C., a member of the R.C.A.F. Maple Leaf squadron, is reported missing after air operations overseas. His name appeared in a casualty list issued last night which also reports L.A.C. Guy Ridgewood Patterson, husband of Mrs. G. R. Patterson of 11 Augustus street, Cornwall, as missing after flying operations from Newfoundland.

Sqdr. Ldr. Logan, 24, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Logan of 47 Lees avenue. Last April his bomber was shot down during a raid on Stuttgart and he escaped to England and shortly afterwards returned to Ottawa on leave. While here he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He went overseas first in August, 1942, after being an instructor at Trenton airport for nearly two years, and as a member of a Canadian bomber squadron, his first sortie took him over Genoa.

He enlisted in the air force in November, 1939, after being employed for a time in the Government Patent Office. Popular in sports circles in the Capital, Sqdn. Ldr. Logan was a member of the Ottawa Rowing Club and while attending Glebe and Lisgar Collegiates, starred on hockey and football teams.

He received his training at Vancouver, Camp Borden and Trenton and was promoted to the rank of squadron leader shortly before last Christmas. He returned overseas last August.



Sqdn. Ldr. Lloyd Logan, D.F.C.

NOV 4 - 1943

Here, he was met by the boys' father. (Brouwer).

At great risk to himself and his family, the farmer promised to help the wounded aviator. He assisted Logan to a hay loft in a nearby barn where Logan hid, and later after dark, the farmer returned and helped him to his farmhouse.

He was given civilian clothes and remained there for several weeks while recovering from his injuries. He was given food and medical assistance and gradually recovered from his injuries.

Later, having recovered well enough and now able to travel, he was picked up by a member of the underground resistance and taken to a safe-house in Drachtstercompagnie<sup>2</sup> which was occupied or owned by a local school teacher. There was also another RAF airmen (Sgt Lloyd) being kept in the house, which was on the edge of the village. The two stayed hidden in the safe house for 6 weeks, being provided with both food and clothing.

With the assistance of the underground resistance in Holland, the two were taken by train to Leeuwarden where they stayed in another safe house for another week. Amazingly, he was surprised to find on his arrival at this location. his own navigator P/O Lovestay from the ill-fated Lancaster III bomber #JB 120- LQ-L. As one might imagine, there was a joyful reunion.

Sgt Lloyd and another American fighter pilot were then housed at a different location nearby.

Later, the four evaders went by train to Utrecht and stayed overnight at another safehouse. The next day all four boarded a train to the Hague, where they met a "handler" who escorted them in pairs, each to a separate house in the Hague. After several days, the two men along with 3 others were taken by train to Amsterdam. While in Amsterdam, Logan and Lovestay were separated from the others and taken to an apartment for a meal and then escorted to a park, where they were joined by two other 'supposed' evaders. All four were taken to a different upstairs apartment. The date was December 1st, 1943. They all went upstairs. The two airmen were told to take off their coats and to sit down.

---

<sup>2</sup> **Drachtstercompagnie** (West Frisian: *Drachtster kompanije* ['draχtstɾ kompə'nei.ə]) is a small village in Smallingerland in the province of Friesland, the Netherlands.

It was a trap.

The two men pulled out hand guns and immediately several German soldiers with weapons drawn entered from several adjacent or adjoining rooms. The two men were handcuffed and taken to the main Gestapo headquarters, which was only a block away, where they were interrogated. One of the chief interrogators was one of the men who had befriended them and had taken them from the park to the apartment. Logan was interrogated for a considerable time period and was accused of being a French spy. He maintained that he was not a spy but a RCAF airman.

He was then placed in the Gestapo prison in the basement of the building, where he was held for two days. He was then taken by train to a further German prison-Dulog Luft, where he was further interrogated for another 5 or 6 days. Finally, convinced that he was a legitimate airman, he was transported to Stalag Luft I and became a POW. The date was December 21 st 1943. Stalag Luft I was at Barth, 30 miles north-east of Rostock, Germany. While at Stalag Luft I, Logan joined the POW escape committee and he along with another POW was put in charge of maps, compasses and other escape apparatus.

In March 1944, Logan made an attempt to escape by being put in a large sack containing empty tin cans and placed in a refuse container by other inmates. The refuse container was taken outside of the camp to a dump and he planned to wait until dark to continue his escape. An off duty German soldier was scrounging the dump for articles of value and came upon the sack. He quickly realized that someone was inside and called for help from nearby guards. He was placed in solitary confinement for 14 days but was able to give the maps he had to some Russian prisoners. He was later advised that the maps were used later by the Russians to escape. He made no other escape attempts but continued as a member of the escape committee, which not unlike the TV series was a constant preoccupation of the POW's in the camp.

Emerson Lloyd Logan remained a POW at Stalag Luft I until the camp was liberated on May 1st, 1945.

He was awarded the DFC, Croix de Guerre Silver Star (France)

Emerson Lloyd Logan passed away on January 6th, 1983 in Florida.

## Nav: Fl/Sgt. Elmer Leigh Bulman R/72937 RCAF

Elmer Leigh Bulman was born on August 24, 1917, Rustico, Prince Edward Island. He enlisted on May 15, 1941 at Charlottetown, P.E.I and took the following training:

No.1 ITS (graduated and promoted LAC, September 13, 1941)

No.4 AOS (graduated January 5, 1942)

No.4 BGS (graduated February 14, 1942)

No.2 ANS (graduated March 16, 1942)

No. 22 OTU, Wellesbourne

His overseas deployment and service during WWII Service was as follows:

- Repatriated to Canada after his evasion and escape
- Posted to "Y" Depot, October 8, 1943
- Taken on strength overseas, November 15, 1943
- Repatriated again, April 19, 1944
- No.1 Training Command, June 22, 1944
- No.1 ITS, June 24, 1944
- Eastern Air Command, October 10, 1944
- No.10 (BR) Squadron, October 19, 1944
- Halifax, August 8, 1945
- Moncton, September 13, 1945
- Retired October 10, 1945



Flight Sergeant Bulman was the navigator of the Dennison aircraft that was shot down on March 11, 1943, during the attack on Stuttgart.

He showed resourcefulness in evading enemy patrols and successfully made his way through France with the help of the French Resistance arriving in Gibraltar in July 1943. On July 17th along with P/O Borden Carrick Dennison, he left Gibraltar by boat and arrived in Liverpool, England on July 24th, 1943.

He passed away on February 24, 2010, Riverview, New Brunswick

Obituary Excerpt:

*"Following service, he pursued a career as a commercial pilot, flying with Maritime Central Airways and Eastern Provincial Airways for twenty-three years. After retiring from flying in 1978, Elmer continued to work as an accountant and bookkeeper, remaining active in his son's business until 2007, at age 90. Elmer was a lifetime member of the R.A.F Escaping Society, the 201 R.C.A.F Wing Charlottetown, PEI, and the Riverview Veterans and Armed Forces Association. He also served as a volunteer for the Meals-on-Wheels program."*

The M1-9 report( Air 2/5025) offered details of his evasion and escape back to England as follows:

*"I bailed out first. I landed, uninjured, in a pasture field near Mondrepuis, northwest of Hirson. I removed a tab bearing my name and number from the parachute and hid it and my Mae West beneath a small tree. I then walked away from the aircraft in a westerly direction. I walked across the country, avoiding all buildings, until about 0630 hours on 12 March. I then hid in a corner of a field between a clump of trees and a pond. Here I opened my aid box and ate some Horlick's tablets and chocolate.*

*I removed some of my badges, but though I loosened the stitches of one of my "CANADA" titles and of one set of my chevrons, so that they could be quickly torn off, I did not remove them entirely as I wished to use them to prove my identity.*

*In the evening I set out again and about 2030 hours came to a small farm. I can speak a little French. A girl came to the door. I pointed to my badges, showed her my RAF identity discs, and said, "RAF." She took me into the house, where I was given a meal and also some civilian clothes. I had not been wearing flying boots in the aircraft but an ordinary pair of shoes, and these I retained. I remained with my helpers until 14 March.*

*They gave me a razor, soap, a small French-English dictionary, a map of the district, and a parcel of food. On the evening of 14 March one of my helpers, accompanied by a number of children, took me about five miles along a road to Gergay, about seven miles west of Hirson. They advised me to avoid all large houses. My only plan at this time was somehow to reach the Spanish frontier.*

*I walked at night and lay up in the daytime. About daybreak on March 15th, I was near the village of Montigny, about 20 miles southwest of Hirson. The roads here were well sign-posted, but I also made use of my escape compasses and the map my helpers had given me. About 0300 hours on 16 March, I wandered onto a German aerodrome, just west of Monceau-le-Waast, about eight miles northwest of Laon. The flare path was illuminated. I immediately went away from it and hid in some woods until daybreak. Then, as it was a foggy morning, I thought it safe to continue walking until 1130 hours. I remember crossing the Laon-Reims railway line.*

*About 1630 hours, I set out again and by 06:30 hours on 17 March had reached Courcelles, about six miles northwest of Fismes. Here I lay up all day. In the evening, as I was getting very hungry, I spoke to some people. An 18-year-old youth took me to a shed and gave me two raw eggs and some bread. I lay down on the floor and tried to sleep, but it was so cold that I decided to continue walking. I walked all that night and most of the next day (18 March), but I took the precaution of shaving in the morning. About 0530 hours on 19 March, I reached Epieds, about 18 miles southwest of Fismes.*

*Shortly afterward, I approached a farm not far from this place. I showed the farmer my identity discs and badges.*

*He was most friendly, gave me food, a new pair of trousers, and repaired my shoes. I retained my RAF shirt and wore it with another tie throughout the rest of my journey.*

*I told the farmer that I was determined to reach Spain somehow. On the evening of 21 March, he took me by bicycle to Chateau-Thierry and then by train to Paris. From this point, my subsequent journey was arranged for me.*

*The latter part of my journey was made in conjunction with P/O Dennison and some others.”*

**Air/Bmr: Fl/Sgt. Gordon L. Spencer R/91858 RCAF**

Rank: Pilot Officer

Regtl. No. J.16834

Unit: No. 405 Squadron, RCAF Awards: Military Cross

## PO. G. Spencer, Of St. Vital, Missing

PO. Gordon Lewis Spencer, 20, son of Mrs. R. C. Dunphy, of 201 Pilgrim ave., St. Vital, is reported missing after air operations according to the R.C.A.F. casualty list from Ottawa Saturday.

Born in Winnipeg, PO. Spencer attended St. Vital schools and Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, and joined the R.C.A.F. in February, 1941.

Following training at Toronto, Trenton, Jarvis and Windsor he received his wings at Jarvis as an observer. He went overseas in March, 1942, and received his commission there last January.

Until the flight in which he was reported missing, Spencer had been with a Canadian crew.

A sister, Myrtle Spencer, is at home.

PO. Spencer was a member of St. Mark's Anglican church in St. Vital.



A former St. Vital boy, PO. GORDON LEWIS SPENCER, son of Mrs. R. C. Dunphy, of 201 Pilgrim ave., is reported missing overseas in the latest R.C.A.F. casualty list.



Gordon Lewis Spencer was born August 1st, 1922 at St Vital Manitoba, the son of Mrs R.C Dunphy.

He enlisted in the RCAF in February 1941 and served overseas beginning in March 1942 with the 405 Squadron of the RCAF. He passed away on December 11th, 1952.

The M1.9 report( Air 2/5025) offered details of his evasion and escape back to England following the downing of his aircraft:

*"I was a bomb aimer of the crew of the Halifax aircraft of which S/Ldr. Logan, F/Sgt. Jennings, P/O Dennison, and F/Sgt. Bulman were members.*

*We left Topcliffe at approx. 1930 hrs. on the 11th of March 1943, to bomb Stuttgart. On our return journey, about 2345 hrs., we were attacked by a night fighter in the neighborhood of Hirson. Our aircraft was set on fire, and the captain ordered us to bail out.*

*My helpers in France told me that F/Sgt. Kennett, RCAF, our rear gunner, had been injured in the leg either during or after his landing, and had been betrayed to the Germans by the occupants of a house at which he had sought help. My helpers assured me that the traitors concerned would be suitably dealt with.*

*I landed in a wood, uninjured, a few miles northeast of Mondrepuis, northwest of Hirson. I remembered that one of the Intelligence lectures which I had received had warned me that it was dangerous to seek shelter in the woods, because of the likelihood of encountering German dumps or headquarters. I was therefore afraid to penetrate farther into that in which I found myself. I cut up my parachute and hid it and my mae west in a thicket. At the time I had no idea where I was. In a little while I noticed some dirty pieces of paper in a clearing and examined them.*

*They bore writing in French, which I can understand, though I am not a fluent French speaker. From this fact I surmised that I must be in France.*

*I now took off my badges which I carried loose in my pocket. I then crawled into the thicket near my parachute. I could see a glow in the sky from my burning aircraft and could also hear the ammunition exploding. I remained in the thicket until daybreak on the 12th of March. I then removed my parachute and mae west, and buried them. Before leaving England I had provided myself with a money belt containing a compass, needle and thread, anti-burn ointment, bandaids, razor, soap and toothbrush. With the aid of this compass I started walking south, and in a little while came to the edge of the woods.*

*Here I opened my purse and removed the maps therefrom. I could see an isolated farmhouse. While watching it, a man in uniform came up behind me. He was armed with a pistol. I was just about to make a dash into the wood when he came to attention and saluted me. He said "parachutiste"? I said "yes". He then said, "Anglais"? I replied that I was Canadian. He then shook me by the hand and explained that he was a Frenchman.*

*With the aid of my map he indicated to me roughly where I was. He told me to wait until dark and said that then I could ask for help with safety, from the people in the farmhouse which I had been watching. He then left me.*

*I went back into the woods at about noon, opened my escape box, and ate some Horlick's tablets and some condensed milk from the tube. I was wearing a pair of issue boots inside my flying boots. I now took off the flying boots and buried them.*

*After dark, I approached the farm. When the farmer heard that I was Canadian and saw my identity discs, he took me into his house and gave me a meal. He told me that it would not be safe for me to sleep in the house that night, but he allowed me to sleep in a hayloft. While here, I was visited by another man who told me that two members of my crew were dead. He asked me how many there were in the crew, and their names, as he wished to look for possible survivors. At first I refused to give him their names, which disconcerted him somewhat.*

*I remained in the hayloft until the night of the 13th of March, when my helpers gave me a complete outfit of civilian clothes, and a pair of shoes. One of them said that Sgt. Lacina and Sgt McDonald of my crew, had been killed and had been given a decent funeral at Mondrepuis. Here also I heard of Kennett's capture.*

*On the night of the 15th of March, I was taken into the farmer's house and allowed to sleep in a bed. The next day, another helper took me by car to a nearby village where I met P/O Dennison.*

*From this point my subsequent journey was arranged for me."*

## W/Op/Air/Gnr: Fl/Sgt. Harold Jackman Jennings DFC R/85952 RCAF

Harold Jackman Jennings was born on July 28th, 1914 in Bowmanville, Durham, Ontario, the son of Hubert Gladstone Jennings, and Greta Victoria Jennings (nee Jackman). In 1941, he married Norma Eleanor Blanchard (1923–2006).

He passed away at age 82, on October 6, 1996 at Glen Sutton, Monteregie Region Quebec.



### Missing Pilot Turns Up Safe and Well

"I am shouting for joy. I am so happy I don't know what to do!" exclaimed Mrs. Jennings, who, after arriving at work at the Bank of Nova Scotia, Toronto, Monday morning, received a cable from her husband, Pilot Officer Harold Jack Jennings, that he was "safe and well." He was reported missing following a raid five weeks ago. His name was included in the latest R.C.A.F. casualty list.

Pilot Officer Jennings, who only recently received his commission, was a wireless air-gunner in a Halifax bomber. Since the bomber was missing one of his crew has since been reported killed and another a prisoner of war.

Born in Bowmanville 28 years ago, he had resided in Bowmanville most of his life, attending public and high schools here. Before enlisting in December, 1940, he was associated with Jackman florists. Six months before going overseas in December, 1941, he married the former Norma Blanchard, Clendennan avenue, Toronto.

He received his wireless air-gunner's wing at Mountainview, and, upon arriving overseas, was posted to the bomber command. Last January his crew was cited for efficiency. Later he was on coastal patrol and only recently re-joined the bomber command.

Harold Jennings was interviewed by his granddaughter Jessica Jennings about his WWII experience as part of a school project in February 1993. The recording was preserved.<sup>3</sup>

The following is a summary of this rare personal account of his unique war experience during the Second World War.

*"I signed up for service in September 1940 but due to the unavailability of training facilities I was not sworn into the RCAF until the day after Christmas in 1942. I began my training in Nova Scotia, where I became an air gunner. I continued my training as a wireless operator in Montreal. The air gunner and wireless operator sits in the nose of the Halifax, immediately below the pilot.*

*There are two other gunners in the aircraft—a mid upper gunner and a rear gunner, who has a position underneath and in the very rear of the plane.*



*Flight/Sgt Harold Jackman Jennings circa 1942<sup>4</sup>*

*Having completed my training, I left for England on the 26th day of December 1942.*

*The training continued in England at Brighton in Bournemouth, where we would fly over Scotland (Stratford on Avon) and the North Sea, where practice bombing took place. This operational training continued for 2-3 months, firstly in a two engine Wellington bomber and then later in a Halifax Aircraft.*

---

<sup>3</sup> The recording was graciously provided by his granddaughter Anne-Marie Jennings,

<sup>4</sup> Photos courtesy of Michael Jennings of Sutton, Quebec, son of Harold Jackman Jennings

*I was then posted to the RCAF 405 squadron, and our 7 member flight crew was established with P/O Borden Dennison as our pilot. Dennison was sent out on other missions alone with other Halifax crews to gain practical experience in flying in battle conditions.*

*Our crew conducted 12 missions over Germany before being posted to Coastal command in the south coast of England, where we were responsible for looking for German submarine activity. We were later reassigned back to continue air operations over Germany.*

*On the evening of March 11/12 we went on a mission to bomb Stuttgart Germany. We followed a pathfinder group of aircraft into the bombing area, who had set off or deployed coloured flares to identify the precise target. All of our bombs were dropped and we proceeded to return back to England.*

*Suddenly, I heard and felt the cannon fire of a German night fighter, who attacked our plane. The engines of our aircraft were hit and they immediately caught fire. An effort was made to extinguish the flames, but to no avail. Shortly thereafter, the pilot Dennison gave the order over the intercom to bail out. There is a "hatch" in the area near the nose of the aircraft and the co-pilot Lloyd Logan opened the hatch albeit with some difficulty and exited the aircraft and I immediately followed him and dove out. I had trouble with my parachute and for a few anxious moments I struggled to find the handle to deploy the chute. The parachute finally opened and I began to float towards the ground. I recall looking at my watch and it was precisely 12:40 am. I could see our aircraft burning on the ground below me.*

*I landed on the ground without incident but in complete darkness. A short time later, I heard a voice and the co-pilot Logan emerged from the darkness. He had lost his flying boots and walked towards me in stocking feet. I had developed the habit of wearing ordinary oxford shoes in my flying boots and I took my boots off and gave them to him.*

*I had assumed everyone had bailed out of the aircraft with Dennison being the last one to exit the plane as he endeavored to maintain control until the last second. I later learned from Dennison (1944) that he had struck the outside of the aircraft on exiting the plane and had broken some ribs.*

*I had also learned that Rear Air Gunner MacDonald failed to exit the aircraft and had been found in the wreckage. He had been observed in the body of the aircraft by another crew member following the order to bail out, which was strange as the rear gunner is in the easiest position to bail out of the aircraft from his gun turret position below and at the rear of the plane.*

*Fearful that the German garrison would arrive, we quickly took off our insignia and buried our parachutes and took off into the woods nearby. In the morning, we could see several German aircraft circling in the area apparently looking for us and any other crew members from the downed aircraft.*

*We continued walking away from the wreckage in a southerly direction not certain exactly where we were. We came upon some wood cutters in the forest who were cutting firewood and approached them. They appeared sympathetic and we showed them our "silk" map and one of them pointed out that we were in the north part of France. The gentleman told us to stay in the woods and that he would come back to get us after dark. He came back later in the evening and under the cover of darkness he took us to a (Irsone) house, where we hid in the attic. We stayed in the attic of the house for a week, cared for by the family, at great risk to themselves.*

*We were given some clothes and we walked through the town to the train station which was nearby disguised as French citizens, trying our best not to raise any suspicion. We took a train to a Paris train station (gare du nord) and upon arrival we went to a cafe across the street, where we met some French underground members. They were not sure what to do with us as they revealed that the Toulouse underground network had recently been infiltrated and some of their members arrested.*

*While they developed a plan for us, we felt comfortable enough to walk around Paris, visiting some parks and other public areas, despite the fact that many German soldiers were ever present.*

*Later in the evening we went to a train station in the south part of Paris (Gare san les heure) and boarded an overnight express train to Dax, France which was 50 miles from the Spanish border. We were accompanied by a French underground member.*

*Upon arrival in Dax, we decided to go to a small restaurant where we had something to eat. When we went outside, two special German police officers were walking towards us and we were certain that they would stop and ask for identification and papers. I was never so scared in my life. But the two officers walked past us, giving us only a casual glance. Not certain what to do, our guide suggested we walk south towards the Spanish border to a place called Bayonne, which was 40 miles away. As we walked along the roadway, many German army vehicles full of soldiers and motorcycles with sidecars passed by us. We felt certain that sooner or later someone would stop us and ask us who we were and where we were going. We called our guide who was walking ahead of us and we went into the woods near the road and we suggested that it was too dangerous for him to continue, as if we were caught we would likely become POW's but if he got caught he would be at risk of being shot for aiding Allied airmen to escape. He agreed and started to walk back to Dax, leaving us some food in a small suitcase. We carried on down the road, passing army camps with guards sentry duty. We walked through a small town and there were numerous German soldiers lounging about resting after a march into the town. We continued to walk by them as if we belonged there.*

*Nobody questioned us but we decided that we had to be more cautious due to the presence of so many German patrols in the area.*

*We were walking merrily along and we came upon a guard posted outside a military camp along the edge of the road but managed to walk by him without incident. We decided to get off the road and began walking through the forest. We came upon a small river with a bridge which was guarded by a German soldier.*

*Suddenly a peasant came by in a rowboat and without saying a word, we got into his boat and he took us across to the other side of the river. We continued to travel south towards the Spanish border across the countryside as it seemed there were no troops around to cause us trouble. We gradually got into the foothills of the Pyrennes. We then came across a country tavern and decided to go in and have a drink. Soon after we sat down and ordered drinks, a man got up and left the bar and the barmaid suddenly became very agitated and "flustered", and told us to get "out of here" in French. We felt certain that the man was likely an informant and we quickly left the tavern. As we walked away we could then hear footsteps of "army boots" marching towards the tavern.*

*We had ducked into some bushes off the road and began running through bushes to get away as quickly as we could. I lost my beret and we left the suitcase behind. We spent all night walking and running as far as we could to get away from the area. We were certain the man in the tavern was an informant and we decided that we could not go into any towns or villages because we did not know who we could trust. We came across a brook or small stream and saw a man fishing.*

*We walked across the stream and the fisherman then pulled three fish from his basket and threw them at us. We picked them up and carried them further into the hills and cooked them that evening over a small fire.*

*In the morning we came upon a large herd of sheep and we could see the Spanish border guard off in the distance. He watched us and we pretended we were looking after sheep and he left the area.*

*We then crossed into Spain. We then came upon a small village and not knowing what to do and being cold after having had a swim in a stream, we buried ourselves in a haystack to keep warm. We then came upon a Spanish military camp and we were stopped. At first we tried to pass ourselves off as Frenchman but that didn't work. They then brought in a young man who spoke English and through him as an interpreter, we explained who we were and where we had come from. Fortunately, the officer in charge was sympathetic.*

*They took us to a cafe or inn and we were told to stay there overnight. The Spanish police arrived the next day and put us on a bus to Pampona. We were taken to a jail and held for a few hours. They then put us in a hotel and we stayed there for several days. We were then put on a train to Madrid. When we arrived in Madrid, we met the British ambassador and he took us to his residence. We stayed in Madrid and I walked around as they gave me some identity papers.*

*Several days later we were put on a bus to Gibraltar, starting in the morning and arriving the next morning after going through Malaga. We stayed in Gibraltar for a few days and then we were put on a plane back to England. I sent a telegram from Gibraltar to my wife advising that I was safe and would shortly be returning to England. Coincidentally, news of our crew being missing in action was finally reported and a local newspaper reporter went to my wife's place of employment to get her reaction.*

*She had received my telegram from Gibraltar the same day and was quite happy to report that I had evaded capture and was on my way back to England.” ( see the earlier newspaper report)*

Harold Jackman Jennings returned to Canada following his escape and became a gunnery instructor, with the rank of Pilot Officer. Later, as the war was nearing an end, he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant and went back to England as an intelligence officer in London with an RCAF Spitfire Squadron.

Following the end of the war as an intelligence officer, he was tasked with interviewing POWs that were returning from Germany. He then became part of the Canadian military contingent that participated in the war crimes hearings in Nuremberg, Germany from 1945-1947. He left the RCAF with the rank of Squadron Leader<sup>5</sup> in 1947.

His was a distinguished military career.



*Squadron Leader Harold Jackman Jennings circa 1947*

---

<sup>5</sup> The rank structure laid down for the RCAF during WWII included: air vice-marshal, air commodore, group captain, wing commander, squadron leader, flight lieutenant, flying officer, pilot officer, warrant officer, flight sergeant, sergeant, corporal, air mechanic (1st class) and air mechanic (2nd class).

## **A Tribute to these True Unsung Heroes of WWII**

In the darkened skies of World War II, amidst the roar of engines and the flashes of tracer fire, a generation of men—brave, young, and resolute—answered the call to stand between freedom and tyranny. They were the airmen of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), the brave souls who flew in the bombers of Bomber Command, taking to the skies in the face of unimaginable danger. Their story is one of courage, sacrifice, and unwavering resolve in the fight against oppression.

Theirs was a mission that demanded not only skill but a profound sense of duty and valor. Each sortie was a journey into peril, each flight an uncertain gamble with life and death. Day and night, the skies above Europe became a battleground, where these men, many still in their youth, took to the air, knowing that the path ahead could lead to glory or possibly, to the ultimate sacrifice.

In the early days of the war, when the threat of Nazi Germany loomed large, it was Bomber Command that answered the call to strike at the heart of the enemy's war machine. The men who flew the mighty Avro Lancaster, the Handley Page Halifax, and the Wellington—alongside the Canadian aircrews who served as part of the British Commonwealth's contribution—embarked on raids that were not just strategic but deeply symbolic of the Allied resolve.

They flew in the dead of night, guided by nothing but the flickering lights of enemy cities, the glowing embers of burning factories, and the stars above. Their bombs rained down on enemy infrastructure, military targets, and eventually on the industries that powered the Nazi war effort. But each mission came at a steep price. The threat of flak, the hunt of enemy fighters, and the constant perils of mechanical failure or human error meant that, most often, fewer would return than had set out on the mission.

The night raids were brutal, with the loss of young lives ever present. The men of Bomber Command endured harrowing experiences—rising above the terror of their own fear, pressing forward with resolute courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

They were the sons, brothers, and fathers who left behind families and homes, driven by a singular belief in the cause of liberty and peace. Many never returned, their names etched into the annals of history as heroes who gave everything for a world free from tyranny.

Among them were the Canadians of the Royal Canadian Air Force, whose contributions were vital to the success of Bomber Command. Canada's dedication to the war effort was unparalleled, with thousands of RCAF airmen flying with RAF squadrons. Over 10,000 Canadians served with Bomber Command, and more than 3,000 lost their lives in the pursuit of victory. Their bravery, alongside their British comrades, was a testament to the strength of the Commonwealth bond, a shared purpose that crossed oceans and borders.

Today, we honor their sacrifice. We remember their courage in the face of uncertainty, their commitment to the mission, and the camaraderie they found in one another as they soared through the skies together. We also honor those who returned, forever marked by the experience of war, but who carried the memories of their fallen comrades in their hearts.

Let us never forget the tremendous loss suffered by the families of these airmen, nor the incredible sacrifices made by those who flew into the night. Their bravery was not merely in their acts of flying bombers into hostile skies, but in their unwavering dedication to a cause that would ultimately lead to the downfall of the Axis powers and the restoration of peace.

To the men of RAF and RCAF Bomber Command, we owe an eternal debt of gratitude. Their legacy lives on in the freedom we cherish, and their memory remains as a beacon of valor, selflessness, and resilience. We remember them today, as we will every day, for their courage was the difference between tyranny and freedom, darkness and light.



For those who made the ultimate sacrifice, may their souls rest in peace,  
and may we never forget their service.

**Lest We Forget!**

**William J Anhorn K.C. ICD.**

