



FLYING OFFICER
HAROLD SPENCER GARTRELL



Naam	: HAROLD SPENCER GARTRELL
Leeftijd	: 29
Overlijdensdatum	: 14 Oktober 1944
Overlijdensplaats	: Holten (Oberhausen)
Geboortedatum	: 26 Mei 1915
Wonende	: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Ouder(s)	: Edward and Alice Gartrell
Rang	: FLYING OFFICER
Servicenummer	: J39011
Eenheid	: Royal Canadian Air Force 12 (R.A.F.) Sqdn
Doodsoorzaak	: Vlieghuig is geëxplodeerd tussen Hamborn en Oberhausen
Graflocatie	: NEDERWEERT WAR CEMETERY IV. B. 13.

Operation Hurricane (1944) Avro Lancaster I (LL909 PH-Y)

Operatie Hurricane was een 24-uurs terreurbombardement om de vijand de overweldigende superioriteit van de geallieerde luchtmacht te demonstreren (volgens de richtlijnen van Harris ACO RAF Bomber Command). Massaal paniek te veroorzaken desorganisatie in het Ruhrgebied, de communicatie in de frontlinie verstoren en de zinloosheid van verzet aan te tonen (Volgens de notities van de officiële RAF-geschiedenis).



Op de dag van 14 oktober 1944 lieten 957 RAF Bomber Command-vliegtuigen 3.574 lange projectielen (3.631 t) hoog explosieve stoffen en 820 lange projectielen (830 t) brandbommen afwerpen op Duisburg. Gedurende de dag voerde USAAF VIII Bomber Command Mission 677 PFF-aanvallen uit op de rangeerterreinen van Keulen bij Gereon, Gremberg en Eifelter, evenals Euskirchen.

Een tweede RAF-aanval op Duisburg in de nacht van 14 op 15 oktober in twee golven met een tussenpoos van ongeveer twee uur liet nog eens 4.040 ton springstof en 500 ton brandbommen vallen. In sommige gevallen vlogen RAF-bemanningen zowel bij daglicht als bij nachtelijke aanvallen een totaal van bijna elf uur vliegtijd in 24 uur. In dezelfde nacht bombardeerde de RAF ook Brunswijk (Duits: Braunschweig), waarbij het stadscentrum werd verwoest. Bijna vijftig Mosquitos voerden hinderlijke aanvallen uit en 132 vliegtuigen van No.100 Group richtten zich op Duitse nachtjagers.

In 24 uur had RAF Bomber Command 2589 sorties gevlogen, waarbij 24 vliegtuigen verloren waren gegaan, ongeveer 10.050 lange ton (10.210 t) bommen waren gevallen en alleen al in Duisburg meer dan 2.500 burgers waren gedood.

Avro Lancaster (LL909 PH-Y) was een van de toestellen die die dag neergehaald werd door Duis afweergeschut. Het toestel was op 14 okt 1944 vertrokken om 06:45 vanuit Wickenby Engeland en keerde nooit terug.

Drie bemanningsleden werden na de oorlog verplaatst vanuit Holten (Oberhausen) naar Nederweert een naar Venray drie man werden gevangen genomen en naar een krijgsgevangen kamp gestuurd.



OTTAWA, Canada, 27th June, 1945.

Mrs. Edward Gartrell,
1860 Robson Street,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mrs. Gartrell:

Our Overseas Headquarters have forwarded to these Headquarters a statement made by Flying Officer R.W. Randall, a member of the crew with your son, Flying Officer Harold Spencer Gartrell. Flying Officer Randall was a Prisoner of War but has now been liberated.

He states that the aircraft exploded in mid-air between Hamborn and Oberhausen-Sterkrade, Germany. When the order to abandon the aircraft was given he experienced some difficulty in opening the escape hatch and before he could accomplish this he was blown out of the plane by the force of the explosion. The following is what he says "I was unconscious most of the way down and when I came to I was hanging upside down. The harness had been cut through at the shoulders and it was only the leg straps that held me. My Mae West had been cut through as well and was down around my knees. My flying boots were off and I felt myself slipping from the harness so I crossed my feet to prevent this. My chute was a tangled mess and I was falling very fast. On the last part of the descent I can remember seeing two other chutes, fully opened, coming down. I hit the telephone wires which broke my fall, was knocked unconscious again and woke up on a street. I was picked up by civilians, who told me that 5 other "coorades" were captured two streets away. I do not know if they were living or dead. I was taken to a Catholic hospital where some days later I was told by a Doctor there, that three other lads had been found, one was dead when found and the other two died from injuries in another hospital in Sterkrade. Both these reports are rumour and I cannot be sure whether the boys mentioned are from my aircraft."

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
There are several Services set up in an endeavour to find all particulars possible of crashed aircraft. Some information is available concerning a great many aircraft which crashed or were shot down by the enemy and every possible effort on an organized basis is being put forth to secure all information available. It is the duty of the Graves Registration Units, which are under the control of the Military Authorities to enquire for and locate the graves of all personnel known or believed to have crashed and to have been buried in occupied areas.

A Royal Air Force and Dominion Air Force Missing Research and Enquiry Service has been organized for the purpose of research and enquiry in liberated territories into the circumstances of aircrews reported as casualties. This Service endeavours to obtain additional information to supplement that already received. The civilian population of these areas is being contacted by Radio, Press and Proclamations through the various civic authorities to centralize through this Service any information or concrete evidence they may have about Air Force personnel or crashed aircraft. Similar instructions have been issued to all Service personnel in these areas.

I wish to again assure you that when additional information is received concerning your son, it will be forwarded to you. However, I am sure you will realize that owing to the chaotic conditions existing in Europe at the present time and the great number of enquiries confronting these enquiry services, some time may pass before more information is received.

May I express my sincere sympathy in this period of continued anxiety.

Yours sincerely,


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

ES


R.C.A.F. G. 64
E.C. 28028

Royal Canadian Air Force .

CERTIFICATE OF PRESUMPTION OF DEATH NO. 13962

This is to Certify that


J39011 FLYING OFFICER HAROLD SPENCER GARTRELL R.C.A.F.
(Number) (Rank) (Name in Full) (Title)

has been officially reported as missing since the  14TH day
of OCTOBER, 1944, and that, full inquiries having been
made, no information has been received which would indicate that he may be still alive.
For official purposes, therefore, he is presumed to have died on or since the above
mentioned date.

Dated at Ottawa, Canada, this 17TH day of SEPTEMBER, 1945

Authorized to sign for
(T.K. McDougall)
Group Captain,
R.C.A.F. Records Officer.

SPECIAL RESERVE

Air Force No.  R57874 POSTED TO No 1 Manning Depot Toronto TRADE CLERK ACCOUNTING

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

(ATTESTATION PAPER)

(Pages one and two, only, are to be completed in Applicant's own Handwriting)

1. Surname GARTRELL Full Christian Names HAROLD SPENCER

2. Present Address 1860 Robson St., Vancouver, B.C. Telephone No. 0228

3. Permanent Address 1860 Robson St.

4. Place of Birth Edmonton, Alta. Citizenship British

5. Date of Birth May 26, 1915 Married, Single, Widower, Separated, Divorced Single

6. Particulars of Children

Name	Date of birth	Name	Date of birth
N/A			

7. Occupation Stenographer, Bookkeeper & Religion Prot., Anglican


9. Languages English

10. Next of Kin (Full Name) Edward Gartrell Relationship Father
Address 1860 Robson St., Vancouver, B.C.

11. Father (Full Name) Edward Gartrell Birthplace England
Address 1860 Robson St. Vancouver, B.C. Citizenship British
Occupation Contractor

12. Mother (Full Maiden Name) Alice Mary Sewell Birthplace England
Address 1860 Robson St. Vancouver, B.C. Citizenship British

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MAY 27 1945
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Bron: aviation-safety.net /Wikipedia
Foto: www.veterans.gc.ca