

Flt/Lt Edward Donald Baker DFC, J/5060, Pilot, Royal Canadian Air Force, Nationality : Canadian, KIA 1 April 1942, Aged 23

SEE CREWS AND LOSSES for Wellington Mark I C X9939 BU-E

SEE CREWS AND LOSSES for Wellington Mark I C Z8842 BU-?

Named on the following Memorial : Runnymede Memorial Panel 99

Born 23 October 1918

Born in Summerside, Prince Edward Island

Son of Albert E. And Irene Baker, (Schurman) of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada.

His home was in Charlottetown.

He enlisted in Moncton, New Brunswick on 19 July 1940.

Trained at No.1 ITS (graduated 3 November 1940), No.3 EFTS (graduated 18 January 1941) and No.8 SFTS (graduated 4 May 1941). Commissioned April 1941.

DFC Award effective 30 March 1942 as per London Gazette dated 16 March 1943 and AFRO 616/43 dated 9 April 1943. Award presented to next-of-kin, March 1944.

NOTE: Public Records Office Air 2/8755 has original recommendation dated 30 March 1942 when he had flown 21 sorties (119 hours 53 minutes):

11 September 1941 Berlin

29 September 1941 Stettin

3 October 1941 Antwerp (docks)

21 October 1941 Bremen

23 October 1941 Kiel (port)

31 October 1941 Bremen

3 November 1941 Brest (docks)

7 November 1941 Berlin

9 November 1941 Dunkirk (docks)

26 November 1941 Emden

30 November 1941 Hamburg

18 December 1941 Brest (docks)

11 January 1942 Brest (battle cruisers)

17 January 1942 Bremen

26 January 1942 Brest (docks)

28 January 1942 Munster

12 February 1942 Scharnhorst and Gneisenau (in North Sea)

17 February 1942 Essen

25 February 1942 Kiel (port)

25 March 1942 ssen

28 March 1942 Lubeck

"This officer has spent six months in this squadron. He came here on 9th September 1941 and has now taken part in 21 operations involving a total of 119.53 hours. On every occasion he has displayed a great enthusiasm in carrying out operations against the enemy and has pressed home his attacks with great determination and courage. As second in command of "A" Flight he has proved himself an able organizer."

NEWSCLIPPING

"Flight Lieut. Baker Reported Missing"

For several months he was the only Canadian in a Royal Air Force squadron but was recently transferred to a Royal Canadian Air Force Unit. It was while engaged in air operations with the latter that he failed to return to base."...

NEWSCLIPPING

London - March 15 1943- (C.P. Cable)

"The RAF today announced the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to three Canadian officers, acting Sqdn. Ldr. William Anderson, Deceased, of Winnipeg; Acting Flt-Lt. Edward Baker, deceased, of Charlottetown, PEI, and FO Herbert Lindsay Coons of Ontario. Baker, 25, completed numerous sorties, including attacks on Berlin, Stettin, Kiel, Brest, Hamburt and Libeck, and his citation said "he at all times displayed

enthusiasm for operations and pressed home his attacks with vigor."

THE LAST FLIGHT

With undoubtedly a lot of good natured practical jokes and wisecracks this 1 April 1942, April Fool's day, a year to the month after receiving his commission, F/L Edward Baker lifted off the runway at Stradishall piloting Wellington IC Z8842 on what was to be his last flight. Indeed it would be for all the crew. It was 20:19 Hrs and they were off to bomb the railway yards in Hanau (Operation Limeshoot) with 13 other aircraft. They

would never be heard from again. Of the 14 aircraft which set out that day, only 7 would return. It is believed that Z8842 was brought down by flack and crashed into the sea off the Dutch coast. Only two bodies were ever recovered, the rest of the crew has no known grave.

Due to the location of the two bodies found, and other discrepancies, there is sufficient cause to question where the plane actually crashed. The family has always believed this to be the North Sea.

The following story and personal background on Ed was written by his Niece Kathy Cook:

Ed Baker was born in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, on October 23, 1918, the youngest of three children of Albert and Irene (Schurman) Baker. When Ed was four years old the family moved to Charlottetown.

Ed was a mischievous and adventurous boy and was loved by all who knew him. In the summer of 2002, I was introduced by someone I knew, to his younger brother, now in his mid 70s. When I was introduced as Florence's daughter he asked me, "did you know Eddy?" I answered that I had been born after his death. Fifty-one years after Ed's death, it brought tears and an almost heartbroken look to this man's eyes as he tried to explain to me how special Ed was and how much he's missed to this day. This man was some eight years younger than Ed and Uncle Ed was more likely a friend of this man's two older brothers, who were his own age. When I think about my own experiences, little brothers of friends were "pests". How many teenagers would pay enough attention to a friend's little brother that he would mean so much? This adds to, and tends to confirm the impression of Uncle Ed that I grew up with, of a kind and generous boy and young man.

In his youth, Ed spent much time in the summers at the farms of his Grandmother and his Aunt. He always said he like to visit his Grandmother, "because she cuts the pie in four". His Mother was a wonderful cook, but still - the pies were cut in six at home.

Another family story often told by Ed's Mother was that when he was young he was caught jumping from ice flow to ice flow in Charlottetown Harbour in the early spring, when the harbour ice was breaking up. She told him in no uncertain terms, that it was dangerous and he was not to do it again. Ed promised, but it became just too much for him and one day he came home wet and cold. His mother admonished him for breaking the rules. His response - that he was tempted to join the other boys on the ice, but knew he'd been told not to and, "so I said, 'Get thee behind me Satan', and he did - and he pushed me".

After he completed high school, Ed, with his brother Earle ran a service station in Charlottetown. Both served in World War II, Ed in the Air Force and elder brother, Earle, in the Canadian Army.

In July of 1940 Ed enlisted in the RCAF. He received his wings in a graduation ceremony on April 21, 1941 and he went Overseas in June of that year. Once in England, he was assigned to the RAF and remained with the RAF until his death. His last posting was to the 214 Squadron, "A" Flight, at RAF Stradishall.

Ed loved the Air Force and flying, and he was proud to serve. We know that he was an excellent pilot. That is evidenced by the recommendation for his DFC. His parents received the telegram informing them that he was missing in action on Easter Sunday 1942, just as they were leaving the house to attend Easter Service at their church.

Although we, his two nephews and one niece, were all born after his death, his memory was kept alive for us through our Grandmother, who was very proud of her youngest son.

While growing up, I spent two months each summer with my Grandmother. After the initial greetings to family, there was always a trip to the attic to the green wooden box my older brother, Edward, had shown me. The box contained an Air Force Uniform. I put on Uncle Ed's cap and then carefully put it back where I had found it. I was a little afraid that I shouldn't be looking in the box. I remember many times my Grandmother opening the small boxes she kept in a cabinet in her dining room, and showing me Ed's Distinguished Flying Cross and her own Silver Cross and then she'd tell me about him. When I was nine years old, Grandma handed me Ed's Air Force issue New Testament. She told me that if I could memorize the whole of Chapter 14 of the Gospel of John, I could have it to keep in memory of Uncle Ed. That summer I worked very hard at memorizing and the treasure was mine before I returned home in September. Now on November 11th I take it to the Service at the Cenotaph, and on the Sunday prior, I carry it to our Church Service. It's always in my hand for the time of "Silence" in remembrance. My brother Ed was the only family member of our generation in the Canadian Forces. He, as it should be, was given Uncle Ed's DFC and my Grandmother's Silver Cross and while he was serving at a Canadian Air Force Base he had them mounted and framed.

In, I think the 1960's, a young boy in England wrote to Charlottetown for information on the City for a project he was doing at school. At the bottom of his letter, his teacher wrote a note, asking if he could be put in touch with any living relatives of Edward Donald Baker, DFC. Earle was given the information and took it to his Mother. She wrote to the teacher. It turned out that he was at Stradishall and had been Ed's batman. He wrote a bit about their time at Stradishall and sent her some pictures of the base. That was a very moving and emotional time for my Grandmother, who very much appreciated the contact and letter although there was sadness as well. I've always considered this man's contact a very kind and thoughtful gesture.

My Mother, Ed's sister Florence, never did get over the death of her younger brother. They were very close. She could talk about him as a child and a youth, but could not bring herself to discuss much about his time in the Air Force, except to say how proud she was of him. Until the end of her life, she couldn't face the November 11th, Remembrance Day services. She was unable to bring herself to go to the cenotaph, or to watch the service from Ottawa on television. The memories for her were just too shattering. I do remember one Cenotaph Service she did attend. I was the Colour Bearer for my Girl Guide Unit and I begged her to go. In the years after that, I went on my own because I realized how hard it was for her to attend. Her November 11th was a private time of mourning.

All we who are left can do is to honour those who served and those who died for our freedom and thank them for their service and sacrifice..... We can't ever forget them.

Kathy Cook

LOG BOOK ENTRIES

#3 EFTS (elementary flying training school) London Ont. 7 November 1940 to 6 January 1941

Training on a single engine Fleet Canuck

25:50 hrs Dual 23:55 hrs Pilot 5:00 hrs Night (Instrument)

#8 Service Flying Training School 2 February 1941 to 17 April 1941

Training on twin eng. Avro Anson

47:15 hrs Dual 44:10 hrs Solo 10:00 Night (Instr)

30.VI. 41 Night vision test B'MOUTH above average (very handy, all RAF Bombing was at night)

#23 O.T.U. (Operational Training Unit) Pershore Worc.

Training on Wellington 4 August 1941 to 28 August 1941

Grand Total hrs 199:35

No. 214 Squadron Stradishall 11 September 1941 to 1 April 1942

Qual. As 1st Pilot Day 28 August 1941 Qual. As 1st Pilot Night 9 November 1941

Ed flew aircraft X9939 most of his time with 214, but other aircraft he flew were:

DV509, H9752, R1505, R1759, T2850, X9660, X9744, X9758, X9890, X9939, Z1139, Z1158, Z8373, Z8858, Z8943, Z8953, Z8970.

His final flight was on Z8842.

Other names noted in the log are Flt/Lt Hilton, Plt/Off Watson, Plt/Off Barford, Sgt Masters, Sgt Page, Sgt Norton, Sgt Stevens & Sgt Lancaster.

Flt/Lt Edward Baker's log and other documents are in the care of Edward Saunders LAC RCN

The website administrators also have a digital copy of each page of his log book

Source : CWGC and Kathy Cook (niece) and Log Book and CWGC and Edward Saunders