

Alan William Campbell



Service Number: J-36786

Rank: Flying Officer

Summary: Allan William Campbell was born on July 12, 1918 in Strathroy, Ontario to William A. Campbell and Christina McNeill Campbell. The family, including his younger brother Kenneth, and sister Margaret, lived at 19 Caradoc Street. Allan had dark brown hair, hazel eyes, and sometimes sported a thin moustache.

Allan's father, William, was an Air Force veteran from the Great War. He belonged to the Strathroy Lions Club, and the Masonic Fraternity. As a member of the Royal Canadian Legion he worked for Veteran's rights. He was the postmaster in Strathroy.

Allan, who was affectionately known as "Al", attended Colborne Street School, and Strathroy Collegiate Institute. During his school days he was nicknamed "Soup Campbell". Allan had a wonderful sense of humour and a talent for

drawing. He was an avid collector of Big Band music and some of his favourite musicians were Sammy Kaye and Tommy Dorsey. Allan had a good ear for music and could play the saxophone and piano. He also enjoyed dancing and he often held dance parties at his home or went to his friends to listen to popular bands when they played in the area.

After graduating from school, Allan got a job at the Royal Bank in Strathroy. He was later transferred to the Royal Bank in Stratford, Ontario as the acting accountant. Allan had always loved flying; he took lessons and acquired his pilot's license before the war began.

In 1940, he enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force and earned a reputation as a dare-devil in the war. While he was training he often flew his plane over Strathroy. During these trips, he sometimes dropped packages of cigarettes from his plane for his fiancé, Viola Garside, who was training to be a nurse at the Strathroy Hospital. On other occasions, he flew over his own backyard and dipped his wing to say hello or flew over the post office to get his father's attention. His brother Ken also joined the R.C.A.F.

On May 20, 1942, Allan and Viola were married in her home town of Sarnia, Ontario. The young couple moved to Vancouver for a year where Allan was posted. His service number was J-36786. He went overseas in England in October, 1943. He wrote home regularly and liked to draw cartoons in his letters. He was a Flying Officer Pilot in Squadron #263. His Hawker Typhoon aircraft #MN 833 was nicknamed "Vi", after his wife.

He was killed in action on August 25, 1944 when his plane was hit by flak during a dangerous volunteer sortie against German barges and bridges across the Seine River in France. He was

originally buried in the small village of Theillement, France. Allan was 26 years old when he died and he now lies in Bretteville-Sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery in France.

