

# William "Bill" Kennedy Ferguson



**Service Number:** J-85171

**Rank:** Pilot Officer

**Summary:** William Kennedy Ferguson was born on February 29, 1920 in Peterborough, Ontario to William Lauder Ferguson and Mary Sophia Hannah Ferguson. He had dark hair, and was called "Bill" by his family and friends. He was the oldest of six children. His younger siblings were Robert, James, Mary, Jean and Donald. His father William worked for a carpet company in Peterborough for several years, and in 1943, he purchased the Strathroy Woolen Mills from the Butler Family. The rest of the family moved to Front St. East, Strathroy the following year. William went to grade school in Peterborough and he attended Peterborough Collegiate Institute.

He enjoyed playing basketball and baseball, and was very involved in the Y.M.C.A. After

completing his education, he worked in the insurance business. William was not married. Early in 1940, William joined the R.C.A.F. He went overseas the following year. His service number was J85171 and he was a Pilot Officer in #401 Ram Squadron.

He was killed in action on January 15, 1943 when his Spitfire aircraft #EN 183 went down during a mission over Bayeux, France. He was 22 years old when he died and he is the only serviceman buried in the St. Germain Cemetery in the small village of St. Martindes-Entrees in France. When the local resistance movement filled the cemetery with mourners, the Nazis had them hand over their papers and eventually, on Valentines day arrested dozens of town folk. Some were held and beaten. 10 others were sent to concentration

camps. Five did not return. In 1994 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the people of this village renamed their main street "Rue W.K. Ferguson" in William's honour. Family members were present for the ceremony.

