

Nevil William Armstrong¹, LAC, RAF no. 1861982. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died October 26, 1943 as a result of a crash. Information from official records card: `This airman was killed instantaneously as a result of a flying accident at this Unit on 26th October, 1943.` Next of kin: Mr. W.R. Armstrong, Oaklands, 40 Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood, Essex. Date of birth: 15th October, 1925. Religion - Church of England. Buried in Innisfail Cemetery.

From Find a Grave.com -Son of William Rueben and Lily Gertrude Armstrong of Brentwood, Essex, England. Royal Airforce Volunteer Reserve

He was flying Cornell #14395 with his instructor Sgt. (Pilot) B.H. Thompson who also died. (Clarence Simonsen). He was 18 years old.

¹ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Gordon Richard Bennett², Sergeant (Pilot), RAF no. 1802123. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died August 26, 1944 as a result of a crash.

From No. 32 E.F.T.S. Diary: '26 Aug 44 There was an accident today at 08.45 hours 1 ½ miles south and approximately 9 miles east of the town of Bowden to Cornell Mk.II 14498 piloted by 1802123 Sgt. Bennett, G.R. with his pupil 1899831 L.A.C. de Wever, C.E., in which both occupants lost their lives. As far as can be at present ascertained from civilian witnesses a report sounded from the aircraft which appeared to be flying straight and level, which was followed by the falling off of one wing and then the aircraft diving vertically into the ground with the engine full on."

Information from official records card: 'Aircraft accident. Next of kin: Mr. R.C. Bennett (Father) 15 Branley Road, Ealey, London, Eng. Mother – Mrs. Eleanor B. Bennett, 35 Branley Road, London, England. Widow – Nil. Date of birth 31st July, 1922. Burial in Innisfail Cemetery

From Find a Grave.com - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Richard Charles and Eleanor B Bennett of South Ealing, Middlesex, England

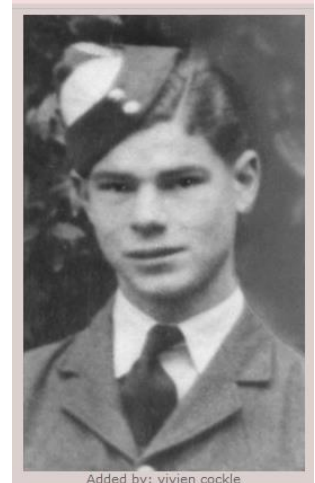
He was flying Cornell #14396 (Clarence Simonsen) or Cornell II #14498 (T. Broadhurst, www.rafcommands.com) . He was flying with LAC Charles De Wever who also died. He was 22 years old.

² Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Ivon George James Davies³, LAC, RAF no. 1652832.
Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died July 26, 1943 as a
result of a plane crash. He was 20 years old.

Information from official records card: 'Aircraft spun in to the
ground during a flight on 26.7.43' Next of kin – Mrs. Florence
Heming, (Mother) 59 Mill Street, Abergavenny,
Monmouthshire, England. Father – Deceased. Widow – Nil.
Date of birth – 31st May, 1923. Religion - Church of England.
Burial in Innisfail Cemetery.

He died when his Cornell II #14409 crashed (Clarence
Simonsen).



From Find a Grave.com – Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Ivon Geoffery
and Florence Amelia Davies, of Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. Stepson of Richard
Hemming of Abergavenny

³ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Charles Erasme DeWever⁴ LAC, RAF no. 1899831. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died August 26, 1944 as a result of a plane crash. He was 22 years old.



From No. 32 E.F.T.S. Diary: '26 Aug 44 There was an accident today at 08.45 hours 1 ½ miles south and approximately 9 miles east of the town of Bowden to Cornell Mk.II 14498 piloted by 1802123 Sgt. Bennett, G.R. with his pupil 1899831 L.A.C. de Wever, C.E., in which both occupants lost their lives. As far as can be at present ascertained from civilian witnesses a report sounded from the aircraft which appeared to be flying straight and level, which was followed by the falling off of one wing and then the aircraft diving vertically into the ground with the engine full on."

He was a Belgian national. His funeral took place on August 26th in Innisfail and was attended by the Belgian Attaché, R/Lt Goethals. Charles was buried in Innisfail Cemetery but in November 1956 his remains were transferred to Tirlemont Cemetery in Belgium.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Leopold and Blondel De Wever, of Tirlemont, Belgium.

He died when his Cornell II #14498 crashed. His instructor Sgt/Pilot Gordon Bennett also died in the crash. (Clarence Simonsen)

Charles De Wever's story. From: "*Remember Leading Aircraftman Charles Erasme De WEVER and Sgt. Gordon Richard BENNETT. No. 32 Service Flying Training School. RAF. Killed in a Flying Accident on the 26th August 1944.*"⁵

Charles De Wever was born on the 2nd August 1922 in Wilsele, near Louvain, Belgium. He left Belgium on the 5th August 1942, making his way through France and on to Spain. He was arrested in Spain on the 20th October 1942 and sent to Miranda Camp at Miranda de Ebro, a city in Northern Spain. This was the central prison camp in Spain for foreign prisoners, some of whom had been captured in Spain's civil war, whilst others had crossed the border illegally. Charles remained at Miranda Camp until the 22nd May 1943 when he was allowed to enter Gibraltar, arriving in Great Britain on the 4th June 1943. After going through a strict process for foreign aliens he eventually arrived at an RAF Reception Depot on the 20th September 1943 to begin his training. He attended the No.17 Initial Training Wing at Scarborough, Yorkshire, on the 8th October 1943 and moved on to No.6

⁴ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

⁵ <https://scarletboy44.tumblr.com/post/95826746503/remember-leading-aircraftman-charles-erasme-de/amp>

Elementary Flying Training School on the 3rd February 1944⁶. After the completion of this initial training and a further assessment for aircrew suitability, he was posted to No.32 Service⁷ Flying Training School in Bowden, Canada, in the Summer of 1944.

On the 26th August 1944 Charles climbed aboard a Fairchild Cornell Mk.II trainer (14498), piloted by Sergeant Gordon Richard Bennett, to carry out flying practice. At 08.45 hours when the aircraft was about 1½ miles south and approximately 9 miles east of the town of Bowden, it was seen by civilian witnesses to be flying straight and level. Suddenly, its Port wing fell off and the aircraft dived vertically into the ground with the engine full on. Both men were instantly killed.

Accident Investigation Board Report - Crew of Cornell Mk.II (14498)

Sgt. Gordon Richard BENNETT aged 22 - Instructor Pilot – Killed

LAC Charles Erasme De Wever aged 22 - Student Pilot - Killed

The Accident Investigation Board concluded that there was structural failure of the port wing, commencing at the leading edge, which resulted in the complete breakup. It is thought that perhaps the aircraft was overstressed after completing aerobatics.

A second account of Charles De Wever's death⁸

Charles De Wever was born on the 2nd August 1922 in Wilsele, near Louvain, Belgium. He escaped from his native Belgium to join in the RAF and was undergoing his Pilot training in Canada at the time of his death.

At 08.45 hours on the 26th August 1944 Charles was flying in a Cornell Mk.II (14498) piloted by Sgt. Gordon Richard Bennett. When the aircraft was about 1½ miles south and approximately 9 miles east of the town of Bowden, Alberta, a civilian witnesses saw it flying straight and level, when suddenly one wing fell off and the aircraft dived vertically into the ground with the engine full on. Both men were instantly killed.

The funeral of LAC de Wever was attended by the Belgian Attaché, F/Lt Goethals. Although the CWGC records show that he is buried in the Innisfail Cemetery, Alberta, it is believed that his body was transferred to Belgium in November 1956 and that his grave is now at the Tirlemont Cemetery, Belgium.

Crew of Cornell Mk.II (14498)

Sgt. Gordon Richard BENNETT aged 22 - Instructor Pilot – Killed

LAC Charles Erasme De Wever aged 22 - Student Pilot - Killed

⁶ This seems unlikely since he was sent to No. 32 ETFS at Bowden, no Secondary Flight Training School as indicated by the author.

⁷ Bowden was an Elementary Flying Training School, not a Secondary Flying Training School.

⁸ <https://scarletboy44.tumblr.com/post/30233246970/remember-leading-aircraftman-charles-erasme-de>

The Accident Investigation Board concluded that there was structural failure of the port wing, commencing at the leading edge, which resulted in the complete breakup. It is thought that perhaps the aircraft was overstressed after completing aerobatics.

Cuthbert William Cyril Ellis⁹, LAC , RAF no.1608111. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died August 27, 1943 as a result of a plane crash. He was 19 years old.

Information from official records card: "This airman was killed in a flying accident approximately 6 miles west of Bowden." Religion: Church of England. Next of kin: Mr. C.J. Ellis (Father) Elmleigh, Hucclecote, Nr. Gloucester, Eng. Mother – Mrs. Gladys M.S. Ellis, same address. Date of Birth – 18th June, 1924. Buried in Innisfail Cemetery.

He died when his Cornell #10740 crashed. His instructor F/L Ralph Mount also died in the crash. (Clarence Simonsen).

From records for Cornell Mk IIs at Bowden – 'Plane # 10740 Man. # FCC241. Delivered to stored reserve, issued from storage on 4 August 1943, for use by No. 32 Elementary Flying Training School at Bowden, Alberta. Category A crash on 27 August 1943, 4 miles west and 2 miles south of Bowden. Hit the ground while turning, instructor F/L R. Mount and student LAC C.W.C. Elis killed.'

From Find a Grave.com: Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of John and Gladys May Belle Ellis, of Hucclecote, Gloucestershire, England.

⁹ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Francis Charles Frigerio¹⁰ Sgt. Pilot, RCAF no. R/105161. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died on June 24, 1942 as a result of the crash of Tiger Moth 5070 while flying with his student, LAC R. Raffles, who was severely injured but survived the crash. Sgt. Frigerio was buried in Our Lady of Victory Cemetery in Toronto. Age 21 years.

Crash occurred four miles south and five miles west of the aerodrome at Bowden.

<https://aviation-safety.net/wikibase/220197>

"The tiger moth crashed north of the low flying area. The instructor and pupil were apparently practicing force landings. The student pilot 1387502 L.A.C. R. Raffles made a left gliding turn followed by a right gliding turn. He straightened out to approach at approximately 100 feet. Raffles was severely injured in the ensuing crash.

The conclusion of the A.I.B. was that Raffles had carried out a forced landing approach and crashed from a gliding turn when the inexperienced instructor allowed the aircraft to get too low before taking corrective action.

The aircraft had been built by De Havilland Canada and was taken on strength by No. 4 Training Command RCAF on 17 July 1941. It was then delivered to No. 10 Repair Depot, and then to No. 32 Elementary Flying Training School at Bowden, Alberta."

Son of Francis George 1876 - 1958 and Ellen Frances Frigerio, of Toronto.

Article in Toronto newspaper at the time

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/157036362/francis-charles-frigerio>

Toronto Pilot Crash Victim

Sgt. Francis Frigerio Is Killed in Alberta

Word has been received by Mr. and Mrs. Francis Frigerio of the death of their son, Sergeant Pilot Francis C Frigerio, 21, in a plane crash last Wednesday near Innisfail, Alta. The body is being brought to Toronto for funeral services Tuesday morning. Sergeant Pilot Frigerio was born in Toronto and received his education at St. John's Separate School and Danforth Technical School. He was employed as a laboratory chemist at the time of his enlistment in May, 1941. He received his training at No. 1 Manning Depot, Belleville and Malton, and his wings at Brantford last March. He had been in



¹⁰ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Alberta for three months. He was a member of St. John's Catholic Church, Kingston Road. Surviving, besides his parents, are three sisters Ethel, Constance and Alma.

James Cecil Fowler¹¹, F/SGT, RAF no. 1119622. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died May 14, 1944 as a result of a plane crash. He was 33 years old.

Information from official records card: "Killed in flying accident". Religion Church of England. Wife; Mrs. J.C. Fowler, 135 Bycot Road, Liverpool, 19, England. Mother – Mrs. Frank B. Fowler, 52 Elmhall Drive, Liverpool, England. Father - Mr. Frank B. Fowler, 52 Elmhall Drive, Liverpool, England. Date of birth – 26th January, 1911. Buried in Innisfail Cemetery.

He died when his Cornell #14488 crashed (Clarence Simonsen).

From Find a Grave.com: Flight Sergeant (Pilot). Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Frank Benson Fowler and Elizabeth Fowler of Liverpool England. Husband of Florence Lilian Mons Fowler of Liverpool.

¹¹ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Stanley Harris¹², LAC, RAF no. 1603021. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died June 25, 1943 as a result of a plane crash. He was 20 years old.

He was a member of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Percy Michael and Fanny Harris of Clapton, London, England. He is buried at the Banks Street Cemetery of the Jewish Memorial Gardens in Ottawa.

He and his instructor, Fl/Lt Terence Procter died when their Cornell Mk II aircraft, No. 14412 crashed.

From Lethbridge Herald – 5 July, 1943 Killed on Active Service (in Canada) LAC Stanley Harris London England Fl Lt Terence Flexman Procter RAF 84661, Mrs. T.F. Procter, (wife) Innisfail, Alberta.



¹² Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Charles George Tone Mann¹³ LAC RAF no. 1392715. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died August 3, 1942 as a result of a plane crash. He was 25 years old.

He was flying a D.H. 82C Tiger Moth. The air strip at Netook had two runways at right angles to one another. This configuration seems to have lead to more than one collision between two aircraft. The Netook field was used for 'touch and go' landing practice

From Find a Grave.com: Leading Aircraftman, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Charles and Lillian Mann, of Palmers Green, Middlesex, England. Husband of Alice Eileen Man of Wembley, Middlesex, England.

¹³ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Ralph Mount¹⁴ F/Lt, RAF no 85931. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died August 27, 1943 as a result of a plane crash. He was 44 years old.

Information from official records card: "This officer was killed in a flying accident approximately 6 miles west of Bowden. Religion - C. of E. Widow - Mrs. Ralph Mount, Littlegates, Hellingly, Sussex, Eng. Mother - Deceased. Father - Deceased. Date of birth - 25th April, 1899. Buried in Innisfail Cemetery.

From records for Cornell Mk IIs at Bowden - 'Plane # 10740 Man. # FCC241. Delivered to stored reserve, issued from storage on 4 August 1943, for use by No. 32 Elementary Flying Training School at Bowden, Alberta. Category A crash on 27 August 1943, 4 miles west and 2 miles south of Bowden. Hit the ground while turning, instructor F/L R. Mount and student LAC C.W.C. Elis killed.'

From Find a Grave.com: Flight Lieutenant, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Husband of Olive M Mount of Hellingly, Sussex, England.

¹⁴ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Norman William Alfred Presland¹⁵ LAC, RAF no. 1187996. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died September 10, 1942 as a result of a plane crash at Netook. He was 22 years old.

Information from official records card: "Killed in flying accident". Religion – Church of England. Father – W. Presland, Esq., 32, Bardon Road, Coalville, Leicestershire, England. Mother – Mrs. Evelyn F.M. Presland, Same address. Widow – Nil. Date of birth – 16th May, 1921.



He was flying a D.H. 82C Tiger Moth. The air strip at Netook had two runways at right angles to one another. This configuration seems to have lead to more than one collision between two aircraft. The Netook field was used for 'touch and go' landing practice

From Commonwealth War Graves Commission – Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of William Alfred and Evelyn F.M. Presland, of Coalville, Leicestershire, England.

From Innisfail Province, Sept 15-20 1942

Planes Collide in Mid-Air

Airman Killed in Plane Accident Thursday Evening

Near the emergency field at Netook on Thursday evening about 7:30 o'clock two Bowden airplanes crashed into one another in the air with disastrous results. One of the fliers LAC McLaughlin was able to bring his plane down for a crash landing and go off with just a severe shaking up, while the other flier, LAC Pressland [sic - spelling used in article] baled out but the plane was not sufficiently high to make it possible for the parachute to open in time and the unfortunate airman was killed.

Funeral service for LAC Norman W. Pressland was held with full Air Force honors from St. Mark's Anglican Church on Monday, September 14th. Rev. T.J. Williams, rector, conducted the service. Internment was in the Innisfail cemetery. Anderson's Funeral Home was in charge of the funeral arrangements.

The late Norman Pressland was a native of Coleville, Leicestershire, England.

¹⁵ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Terence Flexman Procter¹⁶ Fl/Lt, RAF no. 84661. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died June 25, 1943 as a result of a plane crash. He was 37 years old.

A member of the Royal Air Force Reserve. Son of Alfred and Alice Maude Procter of Eastbourne, East Sussex, England; husband of Dorothy Maude Procter of Sanderstead Surrey.

He is buried in the Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne Borough, East Sussex, England.

Inscription at bottom of headstone: " Also his father, Alfred died in 1940 and his mother, Alice Maude died in 1947".



¹⁶ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Barry Howard Thompson¹⁷ Sgt/Pilot, RAF no. 1232209. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died on October 25, 1943 as a result of a plane crash.

He died along with his student, LAC Nevil Armstrong, when his Cornell Mk II aircraft #14395 crashed. He was 20 years old.

From Find a Grave.com: Date of birth – July 29, 1923. Date of death – October 25, 1943. Burial – Innisfail Cemetery. Parents – Howard John Thompson (1891-1958) and Hilda Sandbrook (1891-1971).

From rafcommands.com – Sergeant Barry Howard Thompson (1232209) of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Howard John and Hilda Thompson of Moseley, Birmingham, England. Date of Death – 1943-10-26. Age 20 years.

¹⁷ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Reginald James Whyte¹⁸ LAC, RAF no.658004. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died February 19, 1942 as a result of the crash of his Tiger Moth # 5155 at Netook relief landing field. Burial – Innisfail Cemetery. He was 25 years old

Information from official records card: “killed in a flying accident”. Religion – Church of England. Widow – Nil. Mrs. M.A. Whyte (Mother), 18 Regina Court, More Lane, Chessington, Surrey, England. Father – Deceased. Date of birth – 2nd Nov., 1916

¹⁸ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Gordon Howell Williams¹⁹ Pilot Officer, RAF no. 115996. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died September 19, 1942 as a result of the crash of Stearman FJ923 near Bowden. Burial – Innisfail Cemetery. He was 21 years old.

He was flying with his student, LAC Owen W. Wynne who also died in the crash.

From Find a Grave.com – Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Howell Garth Llewelyn Williams and Ellen A. Williams of Vancouver BC. Grandson of the Rev. T. Roberts Williams of Portishead, Bristol, England.

From Clarence Simonsen (<https://bcatp.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/raf-alberta.pdf>) "It was on September 19, 1942 that the one and only fatal crash of a Stearman occurred (at Bowden). On a warm Canadian harvest day, Flying Instructor Pilot Officer Gordon Williams and his pupil LAC Owen Wynne took off in (Stearman) FJ923 but they never returned to base. The crash site was found in a farmer's field, where the aircraft had forcefully impacted the ground, killing both pilots. Cause unknown."

¹⁹ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

Owen William Wynne²⁰ LAC, RAF no.1800503. Stationed at No. 32 E.F.T.S. Bowden. Died September 19, 1942²¹ as a result of a crash of Stearman FJ923 near Bowden. Burial – Innisfail Cemetery. He was 20 years old.

From Clarence Simonsen (<https://bcatp.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/raf-alberta.pdf>) "It was on September 19, 1942 that the one and only fatal crash of a Stearman occurred (at Bowden). On a warm Canadian harvest day, Flying Instructor Pilot Officer Gordon Williams and his pupil LAC Owen Wynne took off in (Stearman) FJ923 but they never returned to base. The crash site was found in a farmer's field, where the aircraft had forcefully impacted the ground, killing both pilots. Cause unknown."

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Son of William and A.H. Wynne of Tabora, Tanzania.

²⁰ Bill Mackay, Harvard Historical Aviation Society, March 2020

²¹ His headstone says he died on 19th of September 1943 but the headstone of his instructor, Gordon Williams says he died in 1942 and 1942 seems to be the common date for this crash in other sources as well .