



Nelson Leslie Gordon
Royal Canadian Air Force
(RCAF)
Service No. J88818
World War II

Born: 10 Jul 1924

Died: 01 Feb 1945

Place of Birth: Bay Roberts, Newfoundland

Parents: Alexander and Violet (nee
Parsons) Gordon

Nelson's father, Alexander, was born in Scotland. He had spent time in the British Army, having enlisted in the Royal Engineers in 1908. At that time 17-year-old Alexnader gave his occupation as "telegraphist."

This more than likely provides the reason why he was in Bay Roberts in 1916. He was working for the Cable Company, in what is now a national historic building, locally referred to the "The Cable Building."

During his time in Bay Roberts, he met Violet Lillian Parsons, and they were married in March 1916. The couple had four children: Margaret born 1917, John born 1918, Francis born 1919 and Nelson 1924.

By 1931, the family had relocated to Canso, Nova Scotia. Work related is probably the best guess.



**Flying Officer Nelson with his Harvard
Aircraft**

Nelson enlisted in the 2nd Battalion Halifax Rifles on April 28, 1942, and was discharged on June 23rd in order to join the RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force), which he did just several weeks later in July 1942.

He was described at the time as being 5' 7 1/4" tall, weighing 140 lbs. of light complexion having brown hair and hazel eyes. He gave his occupation as a junior bank clerk with the Bank of Montreal.

Upon joining, he was posted to Lachine, Quebec as aircrew but expressed his desire for flying duties and his intention to make the Air Force his career.

Following his initial training, he was shipped overseas and served with the 440 Squadron for several months before being sent to #56 Operational Training Unit of the RAF (Royal Air Force) at Milford on January 3rd, 1945. By now he was a flying officer with hours of flying time on Typhoons, Spitfires, Tiger Moths, and Harvard's.



Hawker Typhoon

Nelson was flying this type of aircraft, specifically typhoon R.B. 343 on February 1st, 1945, at 5:05 p.m. when the unexpected happened. The engine failed immediately after take-off and crashed. Pilot officer Gordon was killed. The subsequent inquiry into the crash was unable to explain the engine failure that caused Gordon's plane to crash.

Nelson Gordon at just 20 years old had died chasing his dream of flying. He is buried at Aberdeen Springbank Cemetery, Aberdeen, Scotland.



The Harvard was a training aircraft used by the British Royal Air Force and the Allied pilots during World War II. The Harvard was designed specifically as an advanced pilot trainer that had all the attributes, and much of the equipment of an operational combat aircraft.

From Bay Roberts Guardian
24 Mar 1945

P.O. Nelson Gordon's Bluff Fools Enemy

The following is a clipping from a Canadian paper:

With The R.C.A.F. Overseas, Jan. 17 — PO. Nelson Gordon, Typhoon pilot from Canso, N.S., pulled a bluff in the face of anti-aircraft fire to help another airman back to base in Holland. The other flier was hit by flak while dive-bombing trains east of Wesel and reported he would try to fly his disabled plane back to base alone. Gordon, although he had no cannon ammunition left, decided to stay.

"As the damaged Typhoon, escorted by PO Gordon, spluttered from Wesel to the River Maas, enemy guns opened up," said the RCAF.

"It was then that PO. Gordon began making passes as though attacking the gunposts with his ammunitionless cannon. His tactics were successful and he succeeded in throwing the gunners off sufficiently for the low-flying disabled craft to get out of range."

PO. Gordon was in on the original Normandy landing operations. His Typhoon squadron helped to provide air protection for Allied troops in the bridgehead.

From Bay Roberts Guardian
24 Mar 1945

F/O NELSON GORDON INSTANTLY KILLED WHEN HIS PLANE CRASHED

Mr. and Mrs. A. Gordon of Canso, N.S., recently received a letter from relatives in Aberdeen, Scotland, giving details of the death and burial of their son, F/O Nelson Gordon, R.C.A.F., who was killed recently. Following are a few extracts from the letter:

"An R.A.F. Padre was one of the many who saw Nelson crash and he told his relatives all about it. Nelson had just taken off from Milfield, and was about 100 feet in the air when his engine stopped and he tried to make a landing. Some trees were in the way and he made a turn to try and avoid them. As he was gliding down he crashed into a stone wall and his plane toppled over. The Padre assured them that he died instantly.

. . . An R.C.A.F. Padre travelled from York, England to attend his funeral; also and R. A.F. Padre and a Pilot Officer, friends of Nelson, from Milfield. There was also an R.A.F. party from Aberdeen and some family friends. The service was conducted at his Uncl's home by their Minister, and at the graveside by the two Padres. Interment was at Springbank cemetery, Aberdeen. . . "

The late Nelson Gordon was born at Bay Roberts just over 20 years ago, the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Gordon (nee Violet Parsons, daughter of Capt. Abe and Mrs. Parsons), and left here shortly afterwards for Canso, N.S., where he resided until he went overseas. He left the Bank of Nova Scotia in Halifax on his 18th birthday and joined the R.C.A.F. Shortly after he received his "wings" and proceeded overseas. His plane was a Typhoon fighter-bomber, and from D-day until his death had made over 100 flights over enemy territory. He had been recently promoted to Flying Officer. He is survived by his parents, one brother, Capt. J. A. (Ted) Gordon, with the Canadian Army overseas, and one sister, Margaret at Canso.

A Tribute

To the memory of the late FO. Nelson Gordon, RCAF, written by a friend.

"Ness" why have you gone—so soon dear one,

Why leave us thus—

Your noon had scarcely passed
—and now the night, yea
night for us, but morn for
you.

Did you hear it? The Last Post
—faintly at first, then
nearer, ever nearer, calling
you home.

Good Airman of the King, be-
fore the Great Commander
you will stand — Proudly,
with head erect and un-
afraid—

"Comrade", He will say, "Well
done"! Peace on the Eter-
nal way for thee is won—

Good soldier of the King—and
so farewell, your memory
we recall—

Brave zealous lad—Dear friend
of all.