

**Flight Lieutenant David L. F.
Adam**

Royal Air Force Navigator

Age 48

**One of the 3 crew members
killed following**

**the crash of a Canberra
at RAF Wyton**

on

18 March 1991

David served previously

at RAF Scampton with

617 Squadron

on Vulcans

DAVID ADAM – A RESUME

by

Margaret and Gordon Allen

David Laird Ferguson Adam was born at Redlands Hospital Glasgow to Joseph and Irene Adam on 24 July 1942 whilst his father was serving in the RAF. After leaving grammar school where he was a keen sportsman, particularly tennis and squash, and an avid reader of Shakespeare, he followed in father's footsteps by joining the RAF. He was commissioned and trained as a Navigator. His first tour was in Cyprus on 249 Squadron with Canberras. On his return to the UK he completed further flying tours on Victors at Marham, flight testing aircraft at Boscombe Down, and instructing at 3FTS Finningley before being posted to RAF Scampton on 617 Squadron with the Vulcan. He returned to his beloved Canberra at Rheindalen, RAF Germany in 1982 and finally to the Canberra Operational Conversion Unit as an instructor at RAF Wyton.

As researchers on this project we first met Dave in the late 1970's when he became our next door neighbour in Saxilby. He was posted to RAF Scampton on 617 Vulcan Squadron after his instructional tour at Finningley 3FTS.

As an ex- RAF Officer and serving, as a retired officer with MoD at HQ No.1 Group at RAF Bawtry, Gordon quickly built up a good rapport with David. He was married to Denise and they had two children, Richard and Gail. Gail attended a pre-school playgroup in Saxilby which was run by Margaret and Richard started school at Saxilby Cof E Primary School. We became good friends during their time in the village and when they were posted to RAF Wyton, on Canberras once more, we remained in touch. Particularly, as we were very much an RAF family too. Indeed, our eldest daughter's husband and Dave were both serving at Wyton and, after the tragic accident most probably caused by pilot mishandling of a practice engine failure after take off, our son-in-law was a pall bearer at David's funeral.

We are still in touch with Denise and she, her family and David's sister Carole have kindly contributed material, to this project. Another friend and neighbour, Janet Herbert, also has fond memories of Dave from their schooldays together and again after meeting up in Saxilby; her resume is included here together with a school photograph and post card, circa 1956.



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT
DAVID L.F. ADAM
ROYAL AIR FORCE
18TH MARCH 1991. AGE 48



TREASURED MEMORIES OF A
DEVOTED HUSBAND, FATHER
AND BROTHER,
RESPECTED AND LOVED
BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM.

Wellington X3448 Information

Wellington	Type
X3448	Serial Number
150	Squadron
JN-N	X1D
Cologne	Operation
30th May 1942	Date 1
31st May 1942	Date 2

Further Information

"Serial Range X3445 - X3489. 45 Wellington Mk.111. Part of a batch of 500 Wellington Mk.1C/111 L. X3160-X3179; X3192-X3221 (50) Mk.1C delivered by Vickers (Squires Gate) between Aug 40 and Jun 41. X3222-X3226; X3275-X3289; X3299-X3313; X3330-X3374; X3387-X3426; X3445-X3489; X3538-X3567; X3584-X3608; X3633-X3677; X3694-X3728; X3741-X3765; X3784-X3823; X3866-X3890; X3923-X3967; X3984-X4003 (450) Mk.111 delivered by Vickers (Squires Gate) between May 41 and Jul 42. X3193; X3935 converted to Mk.XV1. X3374 and X3595 Mk.X prototypes. Airborne 2315 30 May 42 from Snaith. Crashed 0215 31 May 42 at Mottrams Farm, Faldingworth, 4 miles SW of Market Rasen, Lincolnshire. The Wellington burst into flames on impact. Sgt S.B.Shaw KIA Sgt R.G.Peverill KIA Sgt J.C.Dean KIA Sgt G.L.Mustoe KIA Sgt L.Beck KIA Sgt K.Aird KIA "

Three of those lads were RAAF.

Peverill, Mustoe & Aird who are all buried at SCAMPTON (ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST) CHURCHYARD, Lincolnshire.

In Memory of

Sergeant KENNETH AIRD

403415, Royal Australian Air Force

who died age 33

on 30 May 1942

Son of Dr. Ivie Aird and Ella Margaret Aird; husband of Marcia Clarice Aird, of Bondi Junction, New South Wales, Australia.

Remembered with honour

SCAMPTON (ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST) CHURCHYARD

DAVE ADAM

By Janet Herbert nee Burrell

I first met Dave Adam in 1954 when we both attended Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Horncastle, Lincs.

He lived with his parents at RAF Coningsby about a mile and a half from my home at Tattershall Thorpe. We soon became good friends and enjoyed our out of school activities such as swimming and tennis. He became a Scout and I was a member of the Girl Guides. (for a while his mother was my Guide Captain).

As you will see from the postcard we kept in touch over the holidays, and yes, he did bring me some Edinburgh rock as promised!

As time passed his family moved on and we lost touch. Imagine my surprise then when MANY years later he appeared in Saxilby Library where I worked and addressed me by my school nickname! Even more surprising, he had come to live with his wife and family in the road adjacent to our family home.

I still have fond memories of Dave and was devastated to hear of his untimely death.

Good Luck from MILLPORT ISLE OF CUMBRAE



1986

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Dear Bunny,
I'm sorry I didn't see
you before I went away but as I
promised I would send you a postcard
every second day, well as there is
12 here you've had your lot.
The weather here has been terrific
and as you can see from the photo
our house overlooks the sea. Will
send you some rocks.

From Dave
(address
inside)

To Miss JANET BURRELL

THE BUNGALOW

TATERSHALL THORPE

Lincs





Sent from my iPad



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Military Aircraft Accident Summary

MILITARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT SUMMARY

PUBLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT TO ROYAL AIR FORCE

CANBERRA T MK4 WJ877

Date:	18 March 1991
Parent Airfield:	Royal Air Force Wyton
Place of Accident:	Royal Air Force Wyton
Crew:	Three
Casualties:	Three Fatal

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. In the late afternoon of 18 March 1991 three crew members were authorised to conduct a training sortie from RAF Wyton in Canberra T Mk4 WJ877, including a simulated engine failure after take off (SEFATO). The crew comprised two pilots and a navigator, all of whom had considerable experience on the Canberra. There were no natural or operating hazards present at Wyton, and, although it was raining, the weather was fair with a southerly wind at 20 knots.

2. The handling pilot transmitted a request for take off and acknowledged clearance for the take off and the subsequent SEFATO. After this, no further radio transmissions were made to or heard from the aircraft. The aircraft was cleared for take off on Runway 27 at 1625 hours (local). The take off appeared to be normal until a point abeam the Air Traffic Control tower shortly after the undercarriage had retracted. However, the aircraft was then seen by a number of eye-witnesses to bank to the left, return to approximately wings level, and then bank slightly to the right. After pausing in this attitude, the right bank began to increase and the aircraft began to turn to the right. The bank and rate of turn increased further and the aircraft descended rapidly. With about 90° of starboard bank and a nose down attitude, the aircraft struck a road sweeper and destroyed a small garage before breaking up and scattering wreckage across the A141 road adjacent to the north side of the airfield and into farmland beyond. Two nearby houses were also damaged. The Air Traffic Controller initiated

...ash action shortly before the aircraft hit the ground. The emergency services arrived at the scene very quickly and extinguished the small ensuing fire. Tragically, all three crew members were killed in the accident.

CAUSE

3. Because the Canberra is not fitted with a flight data recorder and the crew was killed, the investigation was unable to determine with certainty the cause of the accident. However, the investigation was able to eliminate a number of possible causes and concluded that the most likely cause was a loss of control following a SEFATO.

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

4. Operating procedures for practising SEFATOs in the Canberra have been reviewed. The review determined that it is necessary to continue to practise SEFATOs, as such training has enabled crews to save lives and aircraft on a number of occasions. However, the review also recommended some refinements to existing procedures, all of which have been implemented.

CLAIMS

5. Claims to the value of some £4,000 have been settled so far in respect of damage caused by this accident.

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ASN Wikibase Occurrence # 21142

Last updated: 7 February 2016

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Date: 18-MAR-1991

Time: 16:25



Type: [English Electric Canberra T.4](#)

Owner/operator: 231 OCU, RAF

Registration: WJ877

C/n / msn: EEP71355

Fatalities: Fatalities: 3 / Occupants: 3

Other fatalities: 0

Airplane damage: Written off (damaged beyond repair)

Location: Wyton, Huntingdonshire - [United Kingdom](#)

Phase: Take off

Nature: Military

Departure airport: RAF Wyton (QUY/EGUY)

Destination airport: RAF Kinloss

Narrative:

WJ877 was being flown by an experienced RAF Canberra instructor and staff navigator (both Flt Lts) and the sortie was planned to take the Station Commander (a Group Captain) of RAF Wyton to take care of admin duties at RAF Kinloss. The Station Commander asked to perform a (Simulated Engine Failure After Take-Off) SEFATO for his currency training. The instructor declined this as his recent flying hours were not sufficient enough for this simulated emergency. The remainder of the sortie was briefed and the crew walked out to the aircraft, WJ877.

WJ877 was fitted with full wing tip tanks and additional cargo inside the aircraft.

Start-up and take off were normal until at a point (just abeam the ATC tower) where the undercarriage had just retracted when the Station Commander called for a SEFATO on the starboard (number 2) engine. the aircraft was seen to roll slightly left and then right but then hold a slight right bank. The aircraft altitude was about 200 feet AGL. WJ877 then began to roll to the right and then turn to the right at an alarming rate and began to descend. WJ877 then struck a road sweeper that was parked between two buildings and then hit a small garage and burst into flames, scattering wreckage across the A141.

The Navigator ejected as the aircraft was wings vertical and was killed as it was beyond the parameters of the seat capabilities. The Station Commander had also ejected but his seat had not left the aircraft at the point of impact with the ground.

Control lost during simulated engine failure on take-off. Almost immediately the undercarriage was selected 'up' the aircraft appeared to bank left, wings level, before banking to starboard, at about 90 degrees of bank the aircraft struck a road sweeper and destroyed a small garage and broke up as it crossed a public boundary road.

Crew killed were later named as Group Captain McKendrick, the RAF Wyton Station Commander, Flt Lt David Adam and Flt Lt Stephen Wilkinson.

Sources: