

The story of Kenneth Rowland Wainwright:

Kenneth Rowland Wainwright was born in Toronto, Canada on August 5, 1919 , the only child of Job Henry Wainwright (born Oct. 29 1882 at Princes End,Staffordshire, England, died 1966) and Beatrice May O'Connor (born London Ontario, died 1971). Job Henry, known as Harry, emigrated to Canada, along with two of his siblings, Fredrick James (born Nov 22 1874, died 1949) and Harriet Ruth Elizabeth (born July 15 1878, died 1961). Although the three families all emigrated at separate times, they settled close to each other in the west side of Toronto. Frederick was a butcher, Harry was a greengrocer. Five other siblings remained in England.

Harriet Ruth Wainwright married Joseph Hewitt in 1906 and had two children, William and Annie Gwen. William (b.1909, d. 1973) had 3 children: Georgia Mazure, (born 1942 , in 2025 living in Elliot Lake, Ontario); Harriet Ruth Mitchell , born 1948, now living in Durham Ontario), and Paul (born 1946, died in 2020) . Annie Gwen, known as Gwen (nee Hewitt, born Dec. 13 1914; married George Bater in 1937) had 3 children: Jean Finlayson (b. 1942, died Nov. 1 2024); Marilyn McKinnon (b. Sept. 22 1945, died June 6, 2004), and Elizabeth Perry (b. Aug. 21 1950, still living in Grafton Ontario). Fredrick's children were Hilda (b.1907, d.1932) and Charles (b. 1903, moved to Vancouver B.C. and lost touch). In England, remaining relatives include Gillian Wainwright (b. 1943 in Manchester, in 2025 living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne) and Ailsa Wainwright (b. 1960, living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne). There have been numerous generations which have followed.

According to his Attestation Papers and the war records from Ancestry.com, we know that **Kenneth Rowland** lived in the west end of Toronto at 25 Indian Road Crescent, and attended Humberside Collegiate and Western Technical School. (His name is engraved in the war memorial at Western Tech). He also attended High Park United Church – his family came from a very observant Methodist background. His athletic interests were listed as basketball, golf and badminton in the war records of 77 Squadron, held at Kew Archives, U.K.

From 1933 to 1935 (aged 14 to 16), Kenneth volunteered with the Royal Canadian Signaleers as a stretcher bearer, but left because it interfered with his school work. By November 1939 (age 18), he worked as a Junior Clerk at the Dominion Bank, Lawrence Park Branch (according to a reference letter found on Ancestry.com war records.) Also found in the Ancestry.com war records file, a character reference from J.Gordon Knox of Health Spot Shoes, stating that Kenneth was “an honest and capable young man, anxious at all times to

give of his best in anything requested of him, of strong character and comes from a fine Christian home”.

His Attestation papers, written in his own hand, are stamped July 17 1940. His service number was R69633, Bomber Command, RAF Squadron 777. He trained in Canada at flight schools at Malton, Uplands, and finally Rockcliffe, before qualifying as a pilot on January 28, 1941, and arrived in England in March 1941. He arrived at Squadron 77 on May 20, 1941. His final flight on June 12 was only his second active service flight.

Kenneth's Death:

According to the Aviation Safety Network file <https://asn.flightsafety.org/wikibase/53368> and British RAF records, Kenneth and his 4 fellow crew members took off from RAF Topcliffe, Yorkshire at 2312 hrs of June 12, 1941 in Whitley bomber T4279. They were part of a large bombing raid to Schwerte in the Ruhr Valley, Germany. They were shot down by a night fighter (Obt Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld of the 4./NJG 1) and crashed at 0100 hrs of June 13 on land owned by Mr Schmitt of Medemblikerweg H54, Medemblik (Noord Holland), 15 km NW of Enkhuizen, in what is now Holland Kroon.

The crew: Pilot : Sergeant Donald Keith McFarland RAFVR 748349 [Killed]

2nd Pilot : Pilot Officer Geoffrey Vivian Heslop RAFVR 85018 (NCO:965686 : Commission Gazetted Tuesday 08 October, 1940) [Killed]

2nd Pilot : Sergeant Kenneth Rowland Wainwright RCAF R/69633 [Killed]

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner : Sergeant Lawrence Stanley Dyer RAF 552130 [Killed]

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner : Sergeant Douglas Howard John Pingel RAF 552859 [Killed]

The Germans recovered the wreck parts and the remains of the crew. They were buried in Den Helder, Huisduinen-Cemetery. This cemetery was cleared in 1947 and today the men rest (side by side) in the Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery ('Huisduinen-section').

The site of their crash has been memorialized by the Hollands Kroon Memorial Poles Foundation <https://shhk.nl/> . The foundation, founded on March 29, 2019, aims to commemorate and remember the crew members of aircraft that crashed in the municipality of Hollands Kroon during the Second World War. The first of their memorial poles was erected in September 2019 at the site of the crash that killed Kenneth Wainwright, as reported at <https://www.nhnieuws.nl/nieuws/252933/eerste-herdenkingspaal-geplaatst-voor-gecrashte-oorlogsvliegers-hollands-kroon>. Full details of their crash and known information about the crew are on the Hollands Kroon website at

https://shhk.nl/crashinfo_t4279_wagenpad.html . From that website, there is a summary of a report from an eyewitness to the crash: “The report states that at 01.15 hrs during a patrol, he was also an eyewitness to the shooting down; as it later turned out by Flugzeugfuhrer Oberleutnant Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld. The plane flew on burning, before it came down in several parts. Constable Haarsma hurried to the suspected crash site at the Wagenpad plot 54 on the farm of GBM Smit. Shortly after they had arrived, approximately 12 German soldiers appeared. The various parts of the plane appeared to be spread over a large area. Later that night, two bodies of the crew were found by the occupier near a part of the fuselage. The next morning, several farmers from the area reported that bombs had been found on their land. Among others on the land of CA Heestermans (plot K79), at the widow NV van Bergen (plot M55), K. Riepma (plot 84) and at JPJ Hopmans (plot K72). In the meantime, the occupier had also found the bodies of the three other crew members.”

Sources of information:

Government of Canada virtual memorial to war dead: Kenneth Wainwright
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2034448> (includes numerous newspaper clippings, photo of Kenneth, photo of his school, and a photo of the Bomber Command Memorial Wall in Nanton, AB, on which his name is engraved.)

Holland Kroons website at https://shhk.nl/crashinfo_t4279_wagenpad.html details of the crash

77 Squadron Roll of Honour, entry for Kenneth Wainwright at page 96
<https://77squadron.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/77-Sqn-Canadian-Roll-of-Honour-Merged-Final-Reduced-v12.pdf>

Also interesting: A history of Squadron 77 at <https://77squadron.org.uk/history/77-squadron-history-1937-1945/> and 77 Squadron <https://77squadron.org.uk/roll-of-honour/>

Attached:

Photo of Kenneth Roland Wainwright

Attestation papers of K.R. Wainwright

Ancestry.com file, including letters of reference and a set of fingerprints of Kenneth Wainwright