



Flight Lieutenant Clifford Hicks of Crediton, Ont, was killed in action on Aug 8th 1944 near the village of Claire, Normandy.



Flying Officer John Lippert of Kitchener, Ont, died while on a test flight on June 30th 1944.



The author beside his Hawker Typhoon, Normandy 1944.

Aftermath

Some 67 years after the battle to close the Falaise Gap, a few surviving RCAF Typhoon pilots, including Wally Ward, returned to Normandy in May 2010, for a brief visit. Their memories may be fading but they remember their chilling and terrifying air attacks on ground targets selected by Canadian army forces. Diving from 10,000 feet with a steady focus on the target, the pilots were vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire.

RCAF Typhoon squadrons 438, 439 and 440 in the 10 months between D-Day and VE Day had 104 aircraft shot down. One of the casualties was Clifford Hicks from Crediton, Ont, killed in action on Aug 8th 1944. From the book *Typhoon and Tempest*, by Hugh Halliday:

"About two weeks later as the bomb line moved ahead a few 440 pilots were able to visit the grave site where Clifford Hicks had been buried. To their surprise the grave was marked by a glass jar enclosing identification details and a piece of cloth cut from the pilot's tunic."

A few years later while visiting Clifford Hicks' grave and reflecting on that event, Wally Ward wrote the following poem, published in *Acta Victoriana*, the literary journal of Victoria University in the University of Toronto:

Aftermath

*A tattered shred of bloody serge
In a jam jar;
A note enclosed to mark
Identity.*

*Across the sea a mother mourns
Alone;
A photograph enshrines
A memory.*

*A bugle cries a solemn note
Of passing faith;
The music dies for all
Eternity.*

*The nations circle to unite
Their cunning art;
In debate of most consequential
Irony...*

We will never know who chose to memorialize the death of Clifford Hicks with a piece of his uniform but such an act may express greater reverence than our world can utter.

Regimental Sergeant Major Charles C. Martin, DCM, MM, CM of the Queen's Own Rifles, a veteran of the Normandy invasion and author of *Battle Diary* wrote: *"God bless the Typhoon pilots! They saved my life."*