

# Cornell, John Luther (Jack)

**Age:** 21

**Nationality:** Canadian

**Rank:** Sergeant

**Unit:** No. 135 Squadron

**Occupation:** Pilot

**Service No:** R/122994

**Birth:** 25 February 1921  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

**Home Town:** Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada

**Death:** 28 December 1942

Crash of Hawker Hurricane 5402  
Near Active Pass, BC, Canada

**Burial:** Commemorated on Ottawa War Memorial

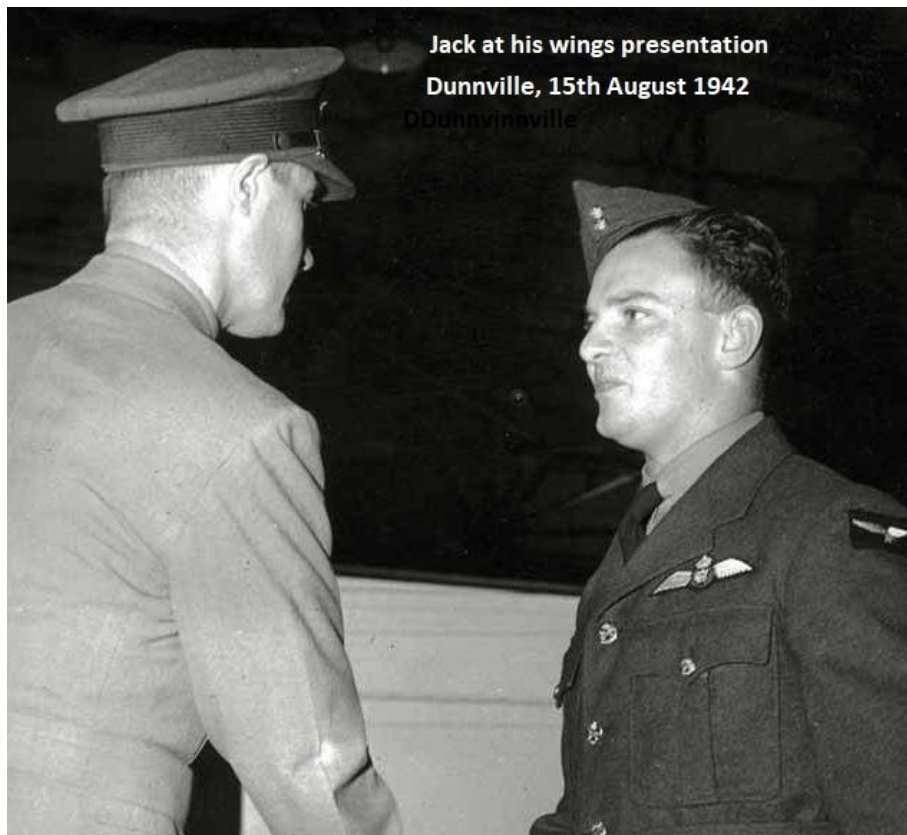


## **Biography**

Jack Cornell was a welder at Sawyer Massey in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, when he enlisted in the RCAF on 3 September 1941. He had spent two years at Technical School, training as a welder after completing Grade 12 graduation at High school.

Jack was an average applicant, anxious for immediate enlistment and expected to do well in training. He was considered best fitted as a pilot, and of an education level and personality to be suitable for a commission sometime in the future.

In Elementary Flying School, Jack was initially nervous and slow to make progress. His general ability was average, although he could be careless, and his aerobatics were good. He passed comfortably and continued through intermediate and senior flying school, though there is no record of his performance there. In August 1942 Jack was in SFTS No. 6, Dunnville, Ontario, and was promoted to Sergeant on the 14<sup>th</sup> and received his 'wings' the next day. From Dunnville he was posted to No. 135 fighter squadron, first at Mossbank, Saskatchewan and then, on 3 October 1942, to Patricia Bay, BC.



Dunnville, 15 Aug. 1942 — "Wherever you go, remember one never finishes learning to fly. The more you know about flying, the more you will find you don't know," Wing-Comdr. V. H. Patriarche, officer commanding No. 6 Service Flying Training school, R.C.A.F., told a class of graduating fighter pilots at a "wings" parade yesterday afternoon. Telling them that members of the class were being posted to many places, both in Canada and overseas, he urged that, no matter what their job might be, they do it to the best of their ability always. "It is absolutely essential," he said, "that when a man becomes a pilot he be able to assume any of the jobs that may be required of him. Some of the jobs will be boring, some intensely interesting and some hard." He reminded them that a tremendous group of people are required to keep the aircraft up and that to every one of them "a great deal of credit must be given."

At Patricia Bay on 26 November 1942, Jack was severely reprimanded for causing damage to Hawker Hurricane 5422 when he taxied too fast for safety.

On December 27<sup>th</sup> he was absent without leave for 19 hours. He returned to base at 1:30 am on the day of his death.

Jack was born on 25 February 1921, in Hamilton, Ontario, to Herbert Stanley Cornell and Elsie Mae Bennett. His mother died in 1925; his father remarried and a half brother, Kenneth Stanley, was born around 1927.



Jack died on 28 December 1942 when Hurricane 5402 that he was piloting spun into the sea three miles north of Active Passage, BC.

## Details of Crash

On December 28<sup>th</sup> Jack Cornell was practising “dogfights” at low level in Hawker Hurricane 5402. At 3:50 pm, the aircraft crashed into the sea from 3,000 ft. about one mile off the east side of Mayne Island, witnessed by the pilot of an accompanying Hurricane, and by the RCAF Motorboat M448. Jack had made a violent evasive manoeuvre, did not have sufficient height to recover and went into a spin. He was not seen to have bailed out and was presumed to have died in the crash. The motorboat was at the scene within a few minutes and picked up pieces of wreckage. Supermarine Stranraer 918 was sent to the site and searched the area, as did the motorboat, but no trace of the pilot was found. The wreckage was not recovered. The cause of the accident was recorded as loss of control.

