

# Utting, Victor Allan

**Age:** 20

**Nationality:** Canadian

**Rank:** Sergeant

**Unit:** No. 120 squadron

**Occupation:** Wireless Operator/  
Gunner

**Service No:** R/78894



**Birth:** 11 December 1921  
Woodstock, Ontario, Canada  
Canada

**Home Town:** Woodstock, Ontario, Canada

**Death:** 6 July 1942  
  
Crash of Lockheed Hudson 765  
Bellingham Army Airfield, WA, USA

**Burial:** Anglican Cemetery, Woodstock, Ontario, Canada

**Others:** P/O E.R. Brooks (co-pilot); Sgt. V.A. Utting (Radio operator)

# Biography

Victor Utting was not yet 21 when he was burned to death, along with the pilot and second pilot, in a blazing Lockheed Hudson aircraft on the army airfield at Bellingham, WA, USA. He was a wireless operator and air gunner and had been serving in the RCAF a little over 18 months.

When he was interviewed for the RCAF, in London, Ontario, Victor was a rather shabby, immature boy, just turned 19. He had left high school at 16 and had been working in a record store since then, a job he planned to return to after the war. The only hobby he claimed was ornithology and he had only a moderate interest in sport.

He was healthy looking, tall (over 6 ft) and slender (155 lbs), pleasant and accurate though rather slow. He had the potential to develop with training, could follow instructions but was too submissive, and neither mature nor educated enough to be suitable for a commission.

About 10 months after enlisting, Victor embarked on training first as a wireless operator and then as an air gunner. He was a very average student who garnered no comments, either negative or positive, on his performance. He was granted his Wireless Operators Badge in March 1942 and his Air Gunner's badge a month later. He was promoted steadily to AC2, LAC and to Sergeant in April 1942, about three months before his death. He was posted to No. 120 Squadron, Patricia Bay on 5 June 1942.

Victor was born 11 December 1921 to Harold Victor Utting and La Verne Maw Veale in Woodstock, Ontario, Canada. A brother, Henry Forbes, was born in 1924. Henry also joined the RCAF then transferred to the RCN after the war. He was killed in an air crash in March 1957.



### Three Killed in U.S.

Victoria, July 8—(CP) — Three men were killed and four injured when their two-motored R.C.A.F. bomber crashed and burst into flames at Bellingham, Wash., while taking off for its base at Patricia Bay.

Killed were Pilot Officer R. B. McLachlan, of Regina; Pilot Officer E. R. Brooks, Belleville, and Sgt. Victor Utting, of Woodstock.

Injured are Leading Aircraftman C. R. Merredew, Sidney, B.C.; Pilot Officer J. C. Olsen, Regina; Sgt. D. P. McLean, of Smithers, B.C.; and Leading Aircraftman L. A. Beatty, Oshawa, Ont.

## Details of Crash

On 6 July 1942, Lockheed Hudson 765 was carrying a crew of seven men:

LAC L.A. Beatty	Crewman
P/O E.R. Brooks	Second pilot
Sgt./Pilot D.P. MacLean	Passenger
P/O R.B. MacLachlan	First pilot
LAC C.R. Merredew	Crewman
P/O J.C. Olson	Passenger
Sgt. V.A. Utting	Radio operator

The plane took off at about 4:00 pm from Bellingham Army Airfield, returning to Patricia Bay. It swerved on the runway and the pilot failed to correct the drift right away. When it became obvious that he could not correct the swerve, he persisted in his attempt to take off. To avoid hitting a building he forced the aircraft into the air before a safe flying speed was attained and stalled the aircraft at a height of approximately 50 feet, from which recovery was impossible. The aircraft crashed and burst into flame. Bellingham fire fighting apparatus was rushed to the scene.

P/O MacLachlan, and Sgt Utting died in the accident; P/O Brooks died later as a result of his injuries. The other four men were seriously injured.



The court of inquiry following the crash recommended that it be impressed on all pilots that if a swerve develops during take-off that cannot be corrected, they should throttle back and come to a stop on the runway and not try to continue with the take-off. The cause of the crash was pilot error.

