



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT DAVID E. HORNELL, V.C.

1910 – 1944

Although David E. “Bud” Hornell was born on Toronto Island, he spent his later childhood and adolescence in Mimico. He attended schools in Mimico, graduating with nine first class honours and a scholarship from Mimico High School.

Hornell joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (R.C.A.F.) in 1941 and received his pilot's wings that same year. He completed sixty operational missions involving over six-hundred hours of flying during the Second World War.

In spite of successfully battling a German U-boat on June 24, 1944 in the North Atlantic, his plane was destroyed. Hornell safely brought down the damaged aircraft onto the water, but the plane's rescue dinghy was not large enough to hold all of the crew members. Although Hornell and his crew took turns in the cold ocean, Hornell died of hypothermia after being immersed in icy waters for more than twenty-one hours.

He was the first R.C.A.F. member to be awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery in battle. In citing his actions, it was noted: “By pressing home a skilful and successful attack against fierce opposition, with his aircraft in a precarious condition, and by fortifying and encouraging his comrades in the subsequent ordeal, this officer displayed valour and devotion to duty of the highest order.”

Many tributes have been paid to the brave R.C.A.F. officer. David Hornell Junior School in Mimico is named in memory of his sacrifice. A squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets in the west end of Toronto and a Toronto Island Airport ferry have both been named in Hornell's honour. The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum restored a Canso aircraft to bear the colour and markings of Hornell's squadron and dedicated it in his memory. Hornell was inducted into the Etobicoke Hall of Fame in its inaugural year.

Inducted into the Etobicoke Hall of Fame in 1974