

TO BATTLE
1939 - 1945



OLD BOYS OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE
SECOND WORLD WAR

A biographical record compiled by J.D. Macfarlane



von Dadelszen, Michael (4202)

Condell's and Flower's Houses, 1931 - 1933

Son of Herman Ronald von Dadelszen and Winnifred Bessie von Dadelszen, stepson of Eileen von Dadelszen of Havelock North and brother of J.H. (3766), H.J. (4445) and R.D. von Dadelszen (5255). After College von Dadelszen began work in a Hastings public accountant's office and studied by correspondence in the evening. He applied for aircrew training in November 1939 and began his initial training in Levin in September 1940. In November von Dadelszen embarked for Canada on the Awatea under the Empire Air Training Scheme, and on 1 May 1941 was awarded his Air Observers Badge, and commissioned in the rank of Pilot Officer.

After further training in Scotland, he was posted in August to No. 10 Squadron at Leeming, Yorkshire. He clocked up 248 hours as a navigator, and took part in eight raids over various targets in Germany and France, including Berlin, Mannheim, Hamburg, Nuremberg, Brest and Boulogne.

von Dadelszen wrote the following piece after watching a raid take off in November 1941: "The evening I was looking on was fine, with the sun just setting in a wintry yellow glow, and half the sky a remote blue, and the other half banked high with dense, shining cloud. One by one the motors were started up around the airfield and run until they were at working temperature. Their steady drumming was constantly punctuated by the short staccato roar of the four gun turrets being tested, earth spurting from the ground where the bullets converged. Then as the time of take off approached, all these great black machines started moving in two long lines towards the leeward end of the runway, looking rather like good natured, clumsy beetles. The first machine took off, the rest following at short, regular intervals, and all taking the full length of the runway before getting air-borne, being heavy with a full load of bombs and petrol. They cleared the boundary fence with the great, full throated roar of motors wide open and climbed over the aerodrome in wide circles before setting course for the distant target area. A heavy bomber taking off gives a tremendous impression of power just as it clears the runway, and quite often your body picks up the vibrations caused by the air screws. . . I watched until the last plane was in the air and the last wave of good luck had been given by the boys on the ground, and walked slowly away in a very thoughtful mood. I knew where they were going, and it was a long trip and rather a difficult one, and I wanted more than anything that all those blokes should get back in good time for their egg and bacon, nine hours later. I looked out to the east, and there I saw standing in relief against the cloud bank a great line of our bombers reaching away down towards the horizon, each a little smaller than the one behind it. From where I was the sun had set, but it still gleamed warmly from the rear turrets of those planes heading east."

On the night of 15/16 January 1942, Pilot Officer von Dadelszen was the observer in a Halifax bomber that took off on a raid over Hamburg. On its return, the bomber passed over the base prior to landing, but several minutes later crashed and caught fire near Northallereton. The pilot survived but was too severely injured at the time to give any account of the accident, and the six other crew, including von Dadelszen died. He is buried at Leeming (St. John the Baptist) Churchyard and was 25 years of age.



Michael and his brother Jim (4445).