



### Personal info

Full name

**JOHNSTON, William J**

Date of birth

**3 April 1920**

Age

**23**

Place of birth

**Ohio**

Hometown

**Youngstown, Mahoning County, Ohio**

### Military service

Service number

**O-678417**

Rank

**First Lieutenant**

Unit

**535th Bombardment Squadron,  
381st Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Purple Heart,  
Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster**

### Death & Grave

Status

**Killed in Action**

Date of death

**5 November 1943**

Cemetery

**American War Cemetery Margraten**

| Plot | Row | Grave |
|------|-----|-------|
| 1    | 9   | 16    |

## Immediate family

### Members

**Frank M. Johnston (father)**  
**Cecelia A. (Gilroanan) Johnston (mother)**  
**F. Donald Johnston (brother)**  
**Edward J. Johnston (brother)**  
**Charles J. Johnston (brother)**  
**L. Robert Johnston (brother)**  
**Paul J. Johnston (brother)**  
**Hugh H. Johnston (brother)**

## Plane data

Serial number  
**42-30852**

### Data

**Type: B-17F**  
**Nickname: Hot Toddy aka Blowin' Bessie**  
**Destination: Gelsenkirchen, Germany**  
**Mission: Bombing of the synthetic oil refinery**  
**MACR: 1399**

## More information

William Johnston attended high school for four years and was a laboratory technician.

He joined the Air Corps of the Army of the United States in Cleveland, Ohio.

The airplane was hit by flak over the target, knocking out #2 engine. Oil vapor came out the #2 nacelle and the propeller was windmilling. also #1 engine was hit and was feathered. It kept up with the formation for about ten minutes and then dropped out and was observed to be losing altitude. Later the plane was attacked by German fighters, hitting it near the cockpit.

Some of the crew members jumped out before the plane hit the water of the Hollandsch Diep near the village named Klundert.

Lt Johnston, who was hit in the face and neck, landed with his parachute in the water and drowned. His body was found later that day. He was initially buried at the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Oosterhout.

In total seven crew members were killed from which six were never recovered. Three crew members survived and were taken prisoner.

The wreck of the plane was recovered in October 1969.

## Photos



Source of information: Peter Schouteten, Raf Dyckmans, [www.wwiiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiiimemorial.com), [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com) - MACR

Photo source: Peter Schouteten, Harry M.T. Kennis, Arie-Jan van Hees - Bomb 43-06 Midland Texas / Pilot 43-C Bruce Fd Texas