

# 77 SQUADRON RAF



## RAAF AIRMEN KILLED WHILST ON ACTIVE SERVICE WITH 77 SQUADRON RAF WORLD WAR II

ARCHIBALD T.  
ARMSTRONG G.A.  
BIRD H.W.  
BLAIR R.A.W.  
BRAID A.A.  
BURNS A.J.  
CRAIN A.I.  
DATE J.M.  
DE VIS S.G.  
ELLIS H.A.L.  
FLETCHER D.  
GALVIN K.F.  
GROB N.C.  
HOLLINGWORTH R.M.  
HYDE G.L.  
IRVING D.A.  
JOHNSON A.W.  
JORDAN A.  
KRONE J.D.

MACKAY S.W.  
MANTELL J.M.  
MATHERS F.E.  
MORRISON K.W.  
MORRISON R. De B.  
NEWELL N.L.  
NOTT J.S.  
O'GRADY F.J.  
O'MEARA J.P.  
PEGGS R.J.  
PRATT L.G.  
PYE J.D.  
SAMSON L.F.  
SIMS E.A.  
STEVENS B.H.  
TIERNAN P.E.T.  
WARREN R.J.  
WILSON J.L.  
WRIGHT N.W.



*The history of Australians attached to RAF Bomber Command is much more than aircraft and operations. It is why June 1 is called Bomber Command Commemoration Day and we in Australia take time to consider how we have treated the young men ordered to undertake one of the most controversial and dangerous campaigns of WWII; how their legacy continues and should be given the same reverence that has awarded those who served and sacrificed in land warfare.*

It is not within the scope of this story to go into the full history of 77 or Bomber Command it is instead a memorial to some of the Australians who served. The men listed on the following pages are not all the Australians who perished whilst with 77 Squadron only those attached as RAAF members. There were a number who were living in or came to the United Kingdom and joined the RAF.

The RAAF flying training course which graduated from Point Cook on 24 June 1938 became the last to send a proportion of its members to the RAF on short service commissions. Of the 30 who finished the course, 22 became Pilot Officers in the RAAF while eight embarked the next month for Britain. This group was the last under a scheme which had operated at Point Cook since 1926, which saw up to 10 members of each intake serve with the RAF for four years before returning to join the RAAF Reserve. Within a few years, the practice had begun of the RAF inviting these officers to transfer permanently — an arrangement which saw a total of 149 RAAF-trained officers passed across to the RAF up until the scheme ended. The RAF continued to seek applicants in Australia until mid-1939, and the RAAF assisted with selection but did not train them prior to departure. The Empire Air Training started in 1939.

All the information in this project was gathered from the following sources plus some family stories.

When writing each man's biography I have not noted every course they passed as in some cases it would take up pages and pages. In saying that if anyone wishes to know more the National Archives of Australia [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au) has a record search link which holds most personnel's records digitized that include both Australian and United Kingdom service.

**AWM** – Australian War Memorial has an excellent photographic collection – [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)

**TWGP** – The War Graves Photographic Project. <http://www.twgpp.org>

**CWGC** – Commonwealth War Graves Commission – [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) .

**1WAGS** - Wireless Air Gunners, Ballarat Victoria. [www.1wags.org.au](http://www.1wags.org.au) . I confidently recommend this site as it covers all training courses as well as the history of WAGS, BAGS and EATS and a wonderful Memorial Page.

**BAGS** – Bombing Air Gunners School. 1BAGS was at Evans Head, New South Wales. 2 BAGS at Port Pirie, South Australia and 3 BAGS at Sale, Victoria.

It should be noted that realistic gunnery training didn't occur until arrival at an Operational Training Unit (OTU) in England. The RAF equipped its heavy bombers with power-operated turrets armed with .303 Browning machine guns which were not used in training at Sale, Victoria.

**EFTS** - Elementary Flying Training School of which there were several scattered across Australia.

**EATS** - Empire Air Training Scheme. At the outbreak of the Second World War the British government realised it did not have adequate resources to maintain the Royal Air Force [RAF] in the impending air war in Europe. While British factories could rapidly increase their aircraft production, there was no guaranteed supply of trained aircrew. Pre-war plans had identified a need for 50,000 aircrew annually, but Britain could only supply 22,000. To overcome this problem, the British government put forward a plan to its dominions to jointly establish a pool of trained aircrew who could then serve with the RAF. In Australia the proposal was accepted by the War Cabinet and a contingent was sent to a conference in Ottawa, Canada, to discuss the proposal. After several weeks of

negotiations, an agreement was signed on 17 December 1939 which would last for three years. The scheme was known in Australia as The Empire Air Training Scheme [EATS].

Under the scheme 50,000 aircrew would be trained annually, each dominion would conduct its own elementary training; advanced training would be conducted in Canada because of its closeness to the British aircraft factories and the war zone. From November 1940, some training was also conducted in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Much more information available on [www.lwags.org.au](http://www.lwags.org.au)

### Commemorative Crosses Project



You will notice at the foot of some of the headstones a small wooden cross. This was the initiative of the Australian War Memorial and many RAAF men are honoured this way.

The concept for this project originated in late 2010, when a group of individuals based in Australia and Britain sought to pay their respects to those who had died while on active service, by placing a small wooden cross on war graves across former Western Front battlefields. In early 2013, the Australian War Memorial assisted in the distribution of some 2,000 crosses on which Australian schoolchildren had written messages of hope and thanks. These crosses have since been placed on the graves of First World War Australian soldiers overseas.

The Australian War Memorial broadened this project over the Centenary years, 2014 – 2018. It drew on the commemorative experiences of schoolchildren visiting the Memorial by capturing, in the students' own words, their individual reflections of those Australians who sacrificed their lives in war and other conflicts. These thoughts took the form of short messages on small wooden crosses, which the Memorial arranged to be laid throughout the Centenary period on war graves and memorials where Australian servicemen and women are buried. The aim was to have 100,000 crosses placed on Australian war graves and memorials overseas with the assistance of embassies, high commissions, consulates, and government centenary programs as well as school children visiting the various cemeteries. Currently, embassies from 39 countries are involved, representing nearly all locations in which Australians have served.

Photographs of the headstones are available on [www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial](http://www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial)

### SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

*Bravery Awards for Aerial Combat: Stories behind the award of the CGM* - Allan W Cooper

*Bomber Boys: Fighting Back 1940-1945* - Patrick Bishop

*Airwar over Denmark* - Søren C Flensted

*Wingless* - Tom Roberts

RAF History – Bomber Command 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary-

Alan Storr - RAF Fatalities Series

*RAF Bomber Command – Losses of the 2 WW* - W R Chorley.

The Wartime Memories Project – RAF Elvington –

<http://www.wartimememories.co.uk>

77 Squadron RAF Association – [www.77squadronrafassociation](http://www.77squadronrafassociation)

Australians at Rest in the UK (Beth Page) [www.ww2austburialsuk.weebly.com](http://www.ww2austburialsuk.weebly.com)

Commemorative Cross Project - [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)



BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL  
GREEN PARK, LONDON  
DEDICATED JUNE 2012



BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL  
CANBERRA AUSTRALIA  
DEDICATED IN 2005

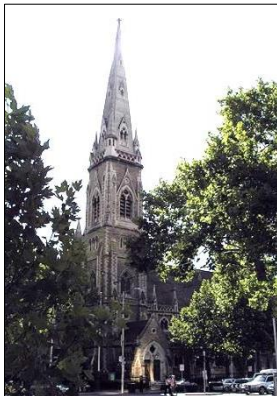


# THOMAS ARCHIBALD DFC 412606



*photo John Bado*

Thomas Archibald was born at Hamilton in Scotland on 11 September 1910 the son, and second eldest child, of John and Janet (née Sands) Archibald. His sister, Mary, had come to Australia in 1927 and the rest of the family followed in 1928.



*Scots Church, Melbourne*

He is listed as a salesman on his enlistment papers and his religion declared as Presbyterian. Thomas married Perla Doris Durward (née Campbell) on 27 December 1941 at Scots Church, Russell Street, Melbourne by Rev James Burns. Witnesses at the wedding were Franklin Cooper and D. Mitchell

Thomas enlisted at No 2 Recruiting Centre, Sydney, 20 July 1941 and was immediately sent to 2 ITS and then a few days later moved to 10 EFTS at Temora in NSW. He was then posted to 1 SFTS at Point Cook, Victoria on 13 December, 1941 having re-mustered to air crew (P5) on 8 September. He received his Flying Badge 27 February 1942 having flown DH82 and Oxford aircraft.

Thomas was then discharged from the RAAF, under AFR 115, on 29 April 1942 on being granted a commission and became a Pilot Officer the following day.

He embarked at Sydney 16 June 1942 on attachment to the RAF arriving United Kingdom 24 August 1942. On arrival in the UK he proceeded to Australia House for temporary duty. Thomas then trained with various units including 6AFU, 20 OTU before moving to Driffield on 3 March 1943.

He had been appointed Flying Officer 30 October 1942.

Posted to 77 Squadron RAF 7 April 1943 to commence flying duties on 28 April and appointed an Acting Flight Lieutenant the same day. The missing days are accounted for as Thomas was granted leave until 28 April. The same month he was awarded a DFC, see citation following.

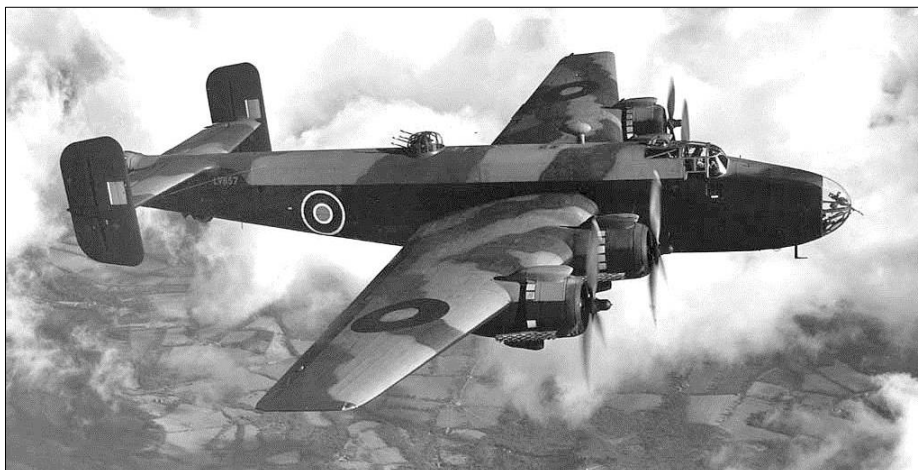
On 13 May 1943 Halifax JB 865 returning from Duisburg after dropping bombs was unable to close the bomb doors thus reducing their speed, after a series of unfortunate events the plane crashed just out of Bishop Wilton, near Pocklington RAF Base, at 4.20 am English time. Thomas was killed in the crash along with Sergeant Gerard Scully, Bomb Aimer. The remaining crew were all injured - Sergeant C Hewitson, Sergeant J Gerry, Sergeant George Marlow, Sergeant Frederick K Smith and Sergeant J Currie.

Thomas was laid to rest in St Catherine's Churchyard in the pretty village of Barmby Moor, Yorkshire, the ceremony being presided over by the RAF Chaplain and the Rev A E Sturdy, Vicar of Barmby. (Row C – Grave 8). There are 54 airmen from WWII and one from WWI buried at St Catherine's. Sgt Scully is buried in the Olton Franciscan Cemetery, Solihull, his home town.

Thomas is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour in Sydney.

The towns of Pocklington and Barmby have remembered lost air-crew in a very significant way. As new roads are designated they are named after men who are buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Barmby Moor.

In York Minster there is a memorial to lost World War II airmen based in the Yorkshire area. Thomas' name is recorded in the Memorial Book.



*Halifax Bomber similar to the one flown by Thomas Archibald (Wikipedia)*



*Archibald Close, Pocklington (Google Earth)*





*Flying Officer  
Thomas Archibald  
Deeply Mourned (John Bado)*

*St Catherine's, Barmby-on-the-Moor, Yorkshire (CWGC)*

There are two other Australians buried in the Barmby Church yard –  
Sgt James David Garrow (404529) 405 Squadron and  
Sgt Clive Gordon Lord (402127) 58 Squadron



Scottish United Services Museum within Edinburgh Castle.

The Scottish National War Memorial was opened by the Duke of Windsor on July 14<sup>th</sup> 1927

*“the embodiment of the spirit which animated Scotland during the days of stress and danger, commemoration of her sacrifice in the Great War 1914-1918 a Memorial to her Hundred Thousand dead”* It is now a memorial to all who made the ultimate sacrifice in all conflicts.

## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS



Flying Officer Thomas ARCHIBALD (Aus 412606)  
Royal Australian Air Force  
No 77 Squadron RAF

One night in April 1943, this officer captained an aircraft which attacked Essen. Whilst over the target area the aircraft was repeatedly attacked by fire from the ground defences, and one engine was put out of action. It was then discovered that one bomb had failed to release. Displaying great determination, Flying Officer Archibald made a second run over the target and released the bomb successfully. His aircraft sustained much damage but he flew it back to base with one engine unserviceable. This officer displayed great courage and outstanding devotion to duty.

Promulgated in The London Gazette – Third Supplement - Tuesday 25 May, 1943, page 2320

Flying Officer Archibald's wife, Perla, received his DFC from the Governor General of Australia, Lord Gowrie, at Admiralty House, Sydney on 16 June, 1944. Perla passed away at the Concord (NSW) Repatriation Hospital in Sydney in November 1955.

Thomas Archibald - 412606

DFC  
1939-45 STAR  
Aircrew Europe Star  
Defence Medal  
War Medal 1939-45  
Australian Service Medal 1939-45



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HONOURS AND AWARDS  
"IMMEDIATE AWARD"

Particulars of meritorious service

This officer and crew were detailed to attack ESSEN on the night of 30 April/1<sup>st</sup> May 1943, in Halifax II. JB865 "J". Target area was reached at 02.46 hours, and bombing run was executed according to Flight Plan at 02.56 hours, Blind Bombing Technique being successfully employed. Bombs were released from 19,000 feet, during the process of which the aircraft was repeatedly hit by heavy flak, one burst rendering the starboard inner engine unserviceable, which was immediately feathered. The aircraft was off target with bomb doors closed, but upon inspection of the bomb bays it was discovered that a 1,000 lb GP bomb had "hung up". The aircraft was immediately turned to port, and the target again attacked on the correct heading, in accordance with Operation Order, sky markers again being bombed from 17,000 feet, and the bomb successfully released. F/O Archibald reached base, and made an excellent landing without further incident, but an inspection of the aircraft revealed extensive damage by flak to the tail wheel, fuselage, starboard mainplane, port elevator, and port outer mainplane, which together with the unserviceable engine gives added prominence to the courage and tenacity of this officer in pressing his attack in the face of very considerably difficulty. Having lost one engine at a critical stage of the operation, it would have been permissible to have released the suspended bomb on a reciprocal course, but this Officer's devotion to duty was of such an high standard, that maintenance of aim on the primary target was pressed home with the utmost vigour and determination. I strongly recommend that this gallantry in action be recognised by an immediate award of the D.F.C.

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1943.

A G Lowe

Wing Commander, Commanding  
No 77 Squadron R.A.F.

REMARKS BY STATION COMMANDER This Australian Officer's devotion to duty was in the best traditions of the Service, when with a disabled a/c he pressed home a second attack on his primary target, despite suffering considerable damage from enemy fire during the first bombing run. The fact that his flight back to Base was without incident speaks highly of his excellent airmanship in view of extensive damage to his a/c. I strongly recommend that his determination and devotion to duty be recognised by the immediate award of the D.F.C.

Date 4<sup>th</sup> May 43

Group Captain Commanding R.A.F. Elvington

REMARKS BY BASE COMMANDER

This Officer displayed courage and devotion to duty of the highest order. He is an Officer who will lead and inspire others.

Recommended for the immediate award of the D.F.C.

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1943

G.A. WALKER

Commodore, Commanding R.A.F. Base, Pocklington

REMARKS BY AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

This Australian Officer, just starting his first tour of Operations, has shown the courage and determination so necessary in a successful Bomber Captain. He has set a fine example and I strongly recommend the immediate award of the D.F.C.

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1943

..... Carr

Air Vice Marshal  
Air Officer Commanding  
No 4 Group R.A.F.



# THIRD SUPPLEMENT TO The London Gazette

Of FRIDAY, the 21st of MAY, 1943

Published by Authority

Registered as a newspaper

TUESDAY, 25 MAY, 1943

Air Ministry, 25th May, 1943.

## ROYAL AIR FORCE.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards in recognition of gallantry displayed in flying operations against the enemy:—

### *Distinguished Service Order.*

Acting Wing Commander Herbert Ashton CLARK, D.F.C. (43414), No. 37 Squadron.

This officer has rendered valuable service owing to his exceptional ability, great drive and unflinching devotion to duty. During a period of intense air fighting in April, 1943, his tireless efforts were reflected in the fine work accomplished by the squadron. In addition to his work on the ground, Wing Commander Clark took part in numerous sorties in Tripolitania and Tunisia, all of which were brilliantly executed. He has displayed outstanding leadership, skill and courage which have won the admiration of all.

Acting Wing Commander Jack Fendick ROULSTON, D.F.C. (37640), No. 55 Squadron.

This officer is a brilliant leader, whose courage and tenacity in pressing home his attacks in the face of fierce opposition, have been a splendid example. In April, 1943, he flew the leading aircraft of a formation detailed to attack the airfield at Soliman. When nearing the target, the windscreen of his aircraft was shattered by splinters from a bursting shell. Pieces of the broken screen, smoke and dust filled the cockpit. Unperturbed, Wing Commander Roulston led his formation to the objective which was heavily bombed. By his skill and determination, this officer contributed materially to the success of the operation.

Major John Edward PARSONSON (P.102656), South African Air Force, No. 5 Squadron.

This officer is a fearless, determined and skilful fighter, whose example has proved most inspiring. On two occasions his aircraft has been shot down but, displaying great fortitude, Major Parsonson succeeded in rejoining his squadron. In recent air operations in the Tunisian theatre, this officer flew with distinction. In April, he participated in an engagement during which a convoy of transport aircraft was destroyed off the Tunisian coast. A few days later, he led a formation in an attack on a large number of similar aircraft over the Gulf of Tunis. During the action 20 of them were shot down, 2 being destroyed by Major Parsonson. His fine fighting qualities have been worthy of high praise.

Acting Squadron Leader Roland Prosper BEAMONT, D.F.C. (41819), No. 609 Squadron.

This officer is an outstanding leader, whose great skill, drive and determination have contributed in a large measure to the high standard of operational efficiency of the squadron which has achieved great success. Since January, 1943, Squadron Leader Beamont has put out of action 13 locomotives and many lorries in determined attacks at night. This officer has set a most inspiring example.

### *Bar to Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Squadron Leader Robert Henry GIBBES, D.S.O., D.F.C. (Aus.714), Royal Australian Air Force, No. 3 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

This officer has displayed exceptional leadership, skill and courage, contributing in a large measure to the success of the squadron he commands. On one occasion, during an attack on an airfield at Bir Dufan, his aircraft was shot down. After walking for about 50 miles he was picked up by friendly forces and enabled to rejoin his squadron. Since then, Squadron Leader Gibbes has taken part in many sorties, attacking the enemy with vigour. He has destroyed at least 10 and damaged several other enemy aircraft.

Acting Squadron Leader Raymond Hiley HARRIES, D.F.C. (87447), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 91 Squadron.

This officer is a highly efficient squadron commander whose great keenness and energetic leadership have set a worthy example. In recent operations he has destroyed 3 enemy aircraft, shared in the destruction of another and damaged 3 more.

Acting Squadron Leader Lewis Macdonald HODGES, D.F.C. (33408), No. 161 Squadron.

This officer has completed many sorties, achieving much success. He is an extremely efficient and gallant flight commander, whose leadership and unflinching devotion to duty have proved inspiring.

### *Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Squadron Leader Hugh Beresford VERITY (72507), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 161 Squadron.

Squadron Leader Verity has participated in 118 sorties. He is a skilful pilot whose example of determination and devotion to duty have proved inspiring. He has rendered excellent service, contributing materially to the high standard of operational efficiency of the squadron.

Acting Squadron Leader Francis MURPHY (N.Z.411928), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 486 (N.Z.) Squadron.

This officer is a skilful pilot. He has taken part in many determined attacks on shipping while, in air combat, he has destroyed 4 enemy aircraft. His successes have been worthily earned.

Acting Flight Lieutenant Moire Alphonse Jean PIERRE (133525), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 158 Squadron.

In air operations, this officer displayed courage and fortitude in keeping with the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force.

Flying Officer Thomas ARCHIBALD (Aus.412606), Royal Australian Air Force, No. 77 Squadron.

One night in April, 1943, this officer captained an aircraft which attacked Essen. Whilst over the target area the aircraft was repeatedly hit by fire from the ground defences, and one engine was put out of action. It was then discovered that one bomb had failed to release. Displaying great determination, Flying Officer Archibald made a second run over the target and released the bomb successfully. His aircraft sustained much damage but he flew it back to base with one engine unserviceable. This officer displayed great courage and outstanding devotion to duty.

Flying Officer Frank Ernest RYMILLS, D.F.M. (115338), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 161 Squadron.

This officer has completed a large number of operations, some of them of a very hazardous nature. He is a courageous and skilful pilot whose example has won the confidence of all with whom he has flown. He has displayed great determination and his successes have been worthily earned.

Flying Officer John Garn WRIGHT (Can/J.7233), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 112 Squadron.

This officer has taken part in a large number of sorties, including numerous fighter bomber attacks against enemy airfields and mechanised transport. In air combat he has destroyed at least 3 enemy aircraft. Flying Officer Wright has displayed great keenness, skill and determination.

Pilot Officer Peter John Oswald BUCK (N.Z.413377), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 75 (N.Z.) Squadron.

Pilot Officer John Henry SYMONS (Can/J.16507), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 75 (N.Z.) Squadron.

One night in April, 1943, Pilot Officers Buck and Symons were pilot and navigator respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack Duisburg. Whilst over the target area, the aircraft was attacked by an enemy fighter and sustained much damage. The rear gunner was mortally wounded, while Pilot Officer Symons was wounded in the hand. Pilot Officer Buck succeeded in evading the attacker and set course for base. On the return flight, the damaged bomber became difficult to control and, when 1 of the engines failed, the aircraft began to lose height. All moveable equipment was jettisoned and, height being maintained, Pilot Officer Buck flew the aircraft to base where he effected a perfect crash-landing. During the return flight, Pilot Officer Symons, in spite of his painful injury, did all within his power to help his pilot, obtaining a number of fixes which proved of great assistance. In a most difficult situation, these officers displayed courage, skill and determination of a high order.

Pilot Officer Frank Norman PLUM (143236), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 115 Squadron.

This officer has completed 24 sorties and has invariably displayed great determination to complete his tasks successfully. In April, 1943, he piloted an aircraft detailed to attack Duisburg. Shortly after the take-off, engine trouble developed. Despite this, Pilot Officer Plum continued his flight to the target which he bombed successfully, afterwards flying the aircraft safely to base. He displayed great skill and resolution throughout.

#### *Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Flight Lieutenant Arthur Victor DUFFILL (86398), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 487 (N.Z.) Squadron.

Flying Officer Frederick John STARKIE (118630), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 487 (N.Z.) Squadron.

#### *Distinguished Flying Medal.*

1290249 Sergeant Alan William TURNBULL, No. 487 (N.Z.) Squadron.

1461821 Sergeant Lawrence Henry NEILL, No. 487 (N.Z.) Squadron.

Early in May, 1943, Flight Lieutenant Duffill, Flying Officer Starkie and Sergeants Turnbull and Neill, were pilot, navigator, wireless operator/air gunner and air gunner respectively of one of a formation of aircraft detailed to attack a target in Holland. Whilst crossing the enemy coast the formation was intercepted by a large force of enemy fighters. In the combats which followed, Sergeant Turnbull coolly gave a commentary on the attacker's movements and later manned a position until he was seriously wounded. Sergeant Neill used his guns effectively but was wounded in the legs by the enemy's fire, which also caused a fire to break out in the rear of the fuselage. Flying Officer Starkie, acting with great promptitude, quickly extinguished the flames. This accomplished, he tended his wounded comrade, Sergeant Turnbull, and rendered efficient first aid after carrying him across a gaping hole, which had been torn in the fuselage. Meanwhile, Flight Lieutenant Duffill was taking skilful evading action, while Sergeant Neill despite his injuries continued to engage the enemy until all attacks ceased. Flight Lieutenant Duffill, displaying superb airmanship, eventually flew the badly damaged bomber to base. In extremely harassing circumstances, these members of aircraft crew displayed courage, fortitude and determination of a high order.

#### *Distinguished Flying Cross.*

Flying Officer Charles Beatty ANDERSON (Aus.416735), Royal Australian Air Force, No. 460 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

#### *Distinguished Flying Medal.*

Aus. 415079 Sergeant Herbert Leonard FUHRMAN, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 460 (R.A.A.F.) Squadron.

One night in April, 1943, Flying Officer Anderson and Sergeant Fuhrman were navigator and pilot respectively of an aircraft detailed to attack Stettin. Whilst over the Baltic Sea, the aircraft was repeatedly hit by fire from an armed ship. One engine was put out of action, the tail unit was damaged, restricting practically all rudder movements, while a shell penetrated the bomb bay, exploding amongst the incendiaries. Flying Officer Anderson was wounded in the thigh and buttock by splinters of shrapnel which entered his cabin. The situation was perilous but Sergeant Fuhrman decided to attempt to fly the damaged bomber home. Displaying superb airmanship and great endurance he eventually accomplished his purpose, flying the damaged bomber to an airfield in this country where he effected a masterly landing before collapsing at the controls. During the return flight, Flying Officer Anderson, despite his injuries, refused to leave his post and continued his navigational duties, rendering great assistance to his pilot. Both these members of the crew displayed exceptional courage, skill and fortitude in the face of a trying ordeal.

#### *Distinguished Flying Medal.*

Can/R.98709 Flight Sergeant Francis Joseph HIGGINS, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 427 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

Flight Sergeant Higgins piloted an aircraft detailed to attack a target in S.W. Germany one night in April, 1943. Shortly after bombing the target the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Much damage was sustained. In difficult circumstances, Flight Sergeant Higgins flew the aircraft to an air field in this country, where he effected a successful crash-landing. He displayed great courage and determination.

Can/R.56057 Sergeant Joseph Pierre Gaston BLANCHET, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 35 Squadron.

633143 Sergeant Ronald Horace David WILSON, No. 35 Squadron.

These airmen have displayed high qualities of courage and fortitude in air operations. Their exemplary conduct has been worthy of the highest praise.

# GORDON ARTHUR ARMSTRONG

## 423597



*AWM P07267.001*

Gordon Arthur Armstrong was born 23 July 1922 at Warrawee, NSW the son of Wentworth and Gladys Armstrong of Gordon (Sydney). Gordon attended Gordon Public School and then Barker College in Sydney for his high school education. He was a day boy at Barker from 1935 to 1937 in which year he passed the Intermediate with two As and five Bs. At school he was interested in many sides of school life, and in class was a keen student on the mathematical side. After the Intermediate he studied for an accountancy degree. He was working as an Audit Clerk for Harris and Harne at the time of his enlistment.

Gordon initially enlisted in the Army and was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Army Battalion from 1940 to 1942 before deciding to try the RAAF. He was successful with his application and enlisted in Sydney on 18 July 1942. After a short course at Bradfield where he trained as a Bomb Aimer he was accepted for the Empire Air Training Scheme in Canada. He left Sydney by train for Melbourne for embarkation October 1942. ( Ref Barker College)

He embarked at Melbourne 2 November 1942 arriving in Canada on 27 November. He did more training as a Bomb Aimer and also completed a course as a navigator. Gordon had an appendectomy operation at Dartmouth Station Hospital in Canada on 20 May 1943. Once fully recovered he finished his training and left for England on 27 June 1943 arriving there a week later on 7 July 1943.

Then it was on to 27 OTU for further training, he was promoted to Flight Sergeant on 2 October whilst at OTU. 41 Base HQ followed in December finally arriving at 77 Squadron at RAF Full Sutton on 23 March 1944. He was stationed near York and here as in Canada, he made many friends. A member of the Masonic Lodge he was honoured while in York by being made an honorary member of Lodge York, one of the oldest lodges in England.

Gordon was killed on his 18<sup>th</sup> mission alongside his six other crew members on the night of 17 June 1944 when his Halifax III, serial number NA508, was hit with flack during a raid on the synthetic oil works at Sterkrade, Germany and crashed in the marshy land at Amstelveen (Noord-Brabant), near Amsterdam, Holland.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer R A W Blair - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H L Moore - Flight Engineer
RAAF	Pilot Officer L G Pratt - Observer
RAAF	Flight Sergeant G A Armstrong - Air Bomber
RAAF	Warrant Officer J P O'Meara - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flying Officer J M Date - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant D G Tastin - Tail Gunner



A 1947 report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated *“the Communal Police at Neuwer-Amstel reported that the aircraft crashed in flames at Neuwer-Amstel on the night of 16/17 June, 1944. German documents confirmed that only one body was recovered that of WO O’Meara”*. He is buried at the Bergen-Op-Zoom War Cemetery, Netherlands.

Until 1990 the other six crew members had no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey. It was in June of that year that the wreckage of NA508 was uncovered by the Recovery Team of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, including the remains of five of the crew, who were buried at the Bergen op Zoom Canadian War Cemetery on 8 October 1991.

Gordon was aged just 21 at the time of his death and is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour at Gordon, NSW, Gordon Public School Roll of Honour and the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey. His name is also listed in the Memorial Book at All Saints Air Force Church, Lindfield, Sydney.



*Back Row – Left to Right  
L Pratt, J Date, D Tustin, H Moore  
Front Row left to Right  
J O’Meara, R Blair, G Armstrong (donor of photograph unknown)*



*Members of the crew of  
Halifax NA508*



*Photograph Sue Crook  
Photograph taken, by Gordon Armstrong’s niece, on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the loss of Gordon’s plane  
All Saints Air Force Memorial Church, Lindfield, Sydney.*



*AWM P01902.001*

Saskatoon or MacLeod, Canada. Group portrait of Empire Air Training Scheme trainees in front of Royal Canadian Air Force aircraft Avro Anson Mk1 6236. Gordon is fourth from the left back row. Course 70 Bombers



*Gordon in Army uniform*



*Gordon Public School - Board Number One*

## HAROLD WILLIAM BIRD

### 417330



Harold Bird was born 3 August 1915 the son of David and Hilda Bird, at Ethelton in South Australia and was employed as a clerk for Goldsbrough Mort & Co, a wool and stockbroking firm. He married Joyce Emily on 18 November 1939.

Harold enlisted in the Reserve on 23 September 1941 and then the Citizens Air Force on 25 April 1942. He received his flying badge on 5 February 1943. Listed among the planes he flew in Australia were Tiger Moths, Ansons, Oxfords and Whitleys. He embarked for the United Kingdom on 6 March 1943 arriving there 17 April after various postings around England. Harold arrived at 77 Squadron on 8 May 1944 after having completed time at 17 OTU and 41 Base. He had been commissioned to Pilot Officer 20 February 1944.

On 17 June 1944, whilst on a mission to Sterkrade in Germany to bomb a synthetic oil works, Halifax Mk 545 was hit by flak and ditched in the North Sea.

Pilot Officer Bird's body was recovered from the sea and interred in the General Cemetery at West Tereschelling, an island off the coast of Holland. Following exhumation after the war his body was formally identified and re-interred in Grave 119. The grave was adopted by a local girl, Jannie Buren, who maintained the site until the Commonwealth War Graves Commission took over the task. A temporary cross was erected at that time.

Three Australians were members of the crew of Halifax III Mk 545 - Pilot Officer Harold Bird; Flying Officer Stuart Mackay, Air Bomber and Flight Sergeant Robert Warren the Wireless Operator. The other members of the crew were - Sergeant R A Castle-Hall, Flight Engineer; Sergeant A Freemantle, Navigator; Flight Sergeant F A Meegan, Air Gunner and Sergeant J A Lauder, Rear Gunner. All crew members perished.

Halifax 545 was one of seven aircraft from the Squadron that failed to return from the mission.

It was later established that the aircraft crashed in the sea off the coast of Holland, and all the crew were killed. Pilot Officer Bird and Sergeant Castle-Hall are buried in the Terschelling General Cemetery. Sergeant Freemantle is buried in the Sage War Cemetery, Oldenburg, Niedersachsen, Germany. Flight Sergeant Warren is buried in the Texel Cemetery Noord-Holland. Sergeant Lauder is buried in the Vlieland General Cemetery, Friesland. Flying Officer Mackay and Flt Sergeant Meeghan have no known graves.

Pilot Officer Bird is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial



## Private Casualty Advices

Mrs. H. W. Bird, of Washington street, Hilton, has been notified that her husband, PO Harold Bird, previously reported missing on June 17, 1944, is reported to have lost his life on that date. He was captain of a Halifax bomber which failed to return to base from operations over Germany. He was the elder son of Capt. and Mrs. D. Bird, of Ethelton. Before enlisting he was on the staff of Goldsbrough, Mort and Co., and left for overseas in February, 1943.

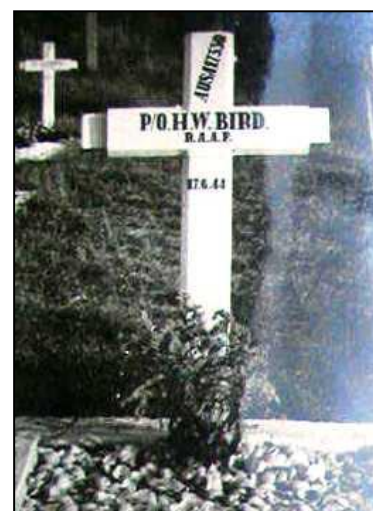


PO Bird

Pte. Watters

Mrs. L. L. Watters, of Kenton Valley has been notified that her husband, Pte. Laurence Lovelock Watters, died of illness in a Borneo POW camp on December 22, 1944. Pte. Watters, who was the second son of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Watters, of Brentwood, enlisted in June, 1940, and after spending several months in Central Australia, was sent to Malaya in 1941. He had been a prisoner in Japanese hands since the fall of Singapore.

*The Advertiser (S.A.)  
Wednesday 27 June 1945*



*Pilot Officer Harold William Bird*





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01405.030

No 4 Service Flying Training School (4SFTS) Course No 27, B Squadron, Flight 9  
Harold Bird front row extreme left.



6 of the 7 crew of the crashed Halifax NA545 bomber.

Back: Frederick Meeghan, John Lauder & Alfred Freemantle

Front: Robert Warren (wrongly identified as Reginald Castle-Hall), Harold Bird and Stuart McKay  
(Photo - Peter Hakze)

# ROBERT ALEXANDER WALTON BLAIR

## 415498



Robert Blair was born on 18 January 1922 the son of Robert and Vera (née Crease) Blair at Perth, Western Australia, he had a younger sister, Beth. Robert was educated at Perth Modern School and the University of Western Australia. He worked for the Bank of New South Wales as a clerk before enlistment to the 25 Light Horse Regiment and discharged on 11 September 1940 to join the RAAF. He enlisted at No 4 Recruiting Centre, Perth, Western Australia on 7 June 1941. A keen outdoors man he enjoyed hockey, football, athletics and swimming.

He acquired his Flying Badge on 20 November 1942, was promoted to Flight Sergeant 3 June 1943 and Pilot Officer 11 May 1944.

Robert embarked at Melbourne on 6 March 1943 stopping at Halifax, Canada on 8 April and finally arriving in England on 17 April. After the usually refresher courses he arrived at 77 Squadron on 23 March 1944.

Halifax NA 508 took off from RAF Full Sutton, Yorkshire at 2315 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944, detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer R A W Blair - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H L Moore - Flight Engineer
RAAF	Pilot Officer L G Pratt - Observer
RAAF	Flight Sergeant G A Armstrong - Air Bomber
RAAF	Warrant Officer J P O'Meara - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flying Officer J M Date - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant D G Tastin - Tail Gunner

A 1947 report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated "*the Communal Police at Neuwer-Amstel reported that the aircraft crashed in flames at Neuwer-Amstel on the night of 16/17 June, 1944. German documents confirmed that only one body was recovered that of WO O'Meara*" He is buried at the Bergen-Op-Zoom War Cemetery, Netherlands.

The other six crew members had no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey. In June 1990, the wreckage of NA508 was uncovered by the Recovery Team of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, including the unidentified remains of five of the crew, who were later buried at Bergen op Zoom Canadian War Cemetery on 8 October 1991.

Pilot Officer Blair is also remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Cenotaph Undercroft, State War Memorial, Perth, Western Australia.



*Back Row – Left to Right*

*L Pratt, J Date, D Tustin, H Moore*

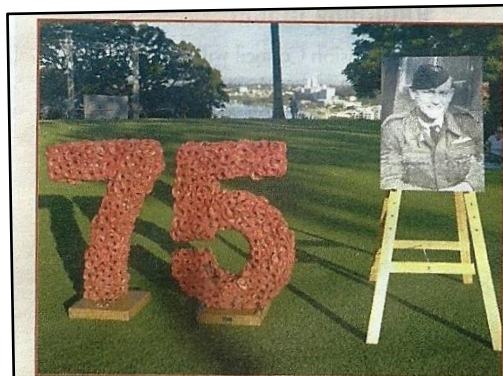
*Front Row left to Right*

*J O'Meara, R Blair, G Armstrong*

*(donor of photograph unknown)*



*Members of the Crew  
of Halifax NA508*



## Bomber Command – 75 years old

A SUNSET Service celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the formation of Bomber Command in 1942 was held at the State Flame of Remembrance on Thursday, 20 April as part of the ANZAC series.

The ceremony featured memories of RAAF Pilot Officer Robert Blair of West Leederville who flew Halifax aircraft with No

77 Squadron (RAF) out of Full Sutton, England. His memory represented the 55,000 plus Bomber Command personnel killed during WWII of which 3,486 were Australians.

P/Off Blair and his crew were shot down over Germany on his 4th mission on 16 June 1944.

*Lest we forget.*

This is one of many commemorations held to remember Bomber Command. I rather like this one with the 75 done in red poppies and Robert Blair's photograph shown on the easel. A short history of him was read to those gathered at the War Memorial at Perth, WA. Robert Blair came from Leederville which is a suburb of Perth. He was killed on one of those awful raids on Sterkrade in June 1944. The press cutting was sent to me by Charles Page who did a history of air cadets from Western Australia who lost their lives in war.



*State War Memorial,  
Kings Park, Perth Western Australia.*

# ALEXANDER ALBERT BRAID

## 408562



*AWM P04286.001*

Alexander Albert Braid was born 21 April 1918 the son of Alexander and Albertha Braid at North Melbourne, Victoria. Alexander was educated at Ripponlea State School and Melbourne Technical College and was a practising architect. He had joined the reserve in September 1940 before enlisting on 27 April 1941 at 1 Recruitment Centre, Melbourne. He married June Beverly Thomas in 1942. Alexander was a man who enjoyed most outdoor sports including tennis, golf swimming and horse riding.

He embarked at Brisbane on 5 May 1943 arriving in the United Kingdom 7 July. Promoted to Warrant Officer on 25 December 1943. After completing the usual conversion courses he arrived at 41 Base in February 1944 and posted into 77 Squadron on 25 April. He had also completed a Navigators Course.

On transfer to the United Kingdom he was an observer with 77 Squadron RAF. Warrant Officer Braid was killed whilst on operations when Halifax MZ715 was lost returning from a raid over Sterkrade in Germany to bomb a synthetic oil plant on the night of 16/17 June 1944. Despite a poor local weather forecast the target was indeed covered in thick cloud and the PFF markers were not easily visible, bombing was scattered as a result and there was little impact on production. The bomber stream passed within 30 miles of the Tame Boar night-fighter beacon that was being used that night, resulting in large bomber losses on the approach. Total losses for the night were 31 aircraft (13.6%) although losses among certain squadrons were higher still notably 77 Squadron which Lost 7 of its 23 aircraft (30.3%).

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer A I Crain - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant V Gledhill - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer T R Davies - Navigator
RAAF	Warrant Officer A A Braid - Air Bomber
RAF	Warrant Officer A J Owen - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant P E T Tiernan - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A J Burns - Rear Gunner

The aircraft exploded in the air throwing Warrant Officer Owen clear, injured he was hospitalized and spent the remainder of the war as a POW. Debris was scattered over a wide area North West of Nijmegen, Holland. All other members of the crew were killed. Alexander is buried in The Soldiers Cemetery, Uden, Noord Brabant, Holland Grave 86



Warrant Officer Braid is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Melbourne Cenotaph at Kew, Melbourne, Victoria.



*Uden War Cemetery, Noord Brabant, Holland*



*Warrant Officer  
Alexander Albert Braid  
Always Treasured Memories  
Of my Darling Husband*



A letter written 12 December 1944 from the Department of Air states:

*Aus 415308 Pilot Officer A I Crain  
Aus 408562 Warrant Officer A A Braid  
Reported Missing on the 16/17 June 1944*

*'In confirmation of the cable forwarded by the Royal Australian Air Force Overseas Headquarters, I am directed to inform you that the German Totenliste No 228 states that the above named personnel (Crain & Baird) were killed on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1944, and buried in the Soldiers Cemetery, Uden, Noord Brabant, Holldan, Grave Nos 84 & 86 respectively on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1944.*

*Action has accordingly been taken to presume, for official purposes, that they lost their lives on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1944.*

*Signed D. Bent.*

# ALFRED JOHN BURNS

## 424711



The son of Arthur and Emily Burns, Alfred was born 18 June 1922 at Mascot, NSW and worked as a clerk before enlistment. Firstly attached to the Australian Army Pay Corps from November 1941 until September 1942, when he elected to join the RAAF. Alfred enlisted at No 2 Recruiting Centre in Sydney on 7 October 1942. He qualified as an air gunner on 22 July 1943 and having completed seven courses was almost immediately sent to England leaving Sydney on 11 August reaching England 9 October.

He went straight to 11 PDRC at Brighton, then 21OTU, did a stint at 41 Base before joining 77 Squadron on 25 April 1944 after having been promoted to Flight Sergeant while at OTU on 22 January 1944.

Flight Sergeant Burns was killed 17 June 1944 and is buried in a joint grave in the Parish Cemetery Dodewaard, Netherlands, Grave 316. He shares a grave with Flight Sergeant Patrick Edward Thomas Tiernan who was also on the ill-fated Halifax MZ 715 which was returning from a raid over Sterkrade in Germany. The Commonwealth War Graves at Dodewaard Cemetery contains two Australian airmen and two unidentified British soldiers.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer A I Crain - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant V Gledhill - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer T R Davies - Navigator
RAAF	Warrant Officer A A Braid - Air Bomber
RAF	Warrant Officer A J Owen - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant P E T Tiernan - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A J Burns - Rear Gunner

Flight Sergeant Burns is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour, Lidcombe, NSW.

A poor local weather forecast did not stop the bombers and the target was indeed covered in thick cloud and the PFF markers were not easily visible. Bombing was scattered as a result and there was little impact on production. The bomber stream passed within 30 miles of the Tame Boar night-fighter beacon that was being used that night, resulting in large bomber losses on the approach. Total losses for the night were 31 aircraft (13.6%) although losses among certain squadrons were higher still - notably 77 Sqn which Lost 7 of its 23 aircraft (30.3%).



*Lidcombe War Memorial  
Sydney, NSW*



*Flight Sergeant A J Burns  
Ever Remembered by his  
Loving Mother and Friend Del*



The citizens of Dodewaard in the Netherlands have been tending the graves of Australian airmen Patrick Tiernan, from Murgon, and Alfred Burns, from Sydney since they were shot down over their town during World War II. In 2014 they conducted a Memorial Day in honour of the two airmen. Those who travelled to the Netherlands for the occasion included the Murgon school principal, Greg Smith and school captains, Geoffrey Kinsella and Kirsten Upton photographed with the memorial display mounted opposite the graves of Alfred Burns and Patrick Tiernan. [southburnett.com.au](http://southburnett.com.au)



*Comrade grave with Patrick Tiernan*



*N210818*

# ALAN IRVINE CRAIN

## 415308



Alan Irvine Crain was born 27 March 1923 to Wallace and Eileen (née Walters) Crain in Perth, Western Australia. At the time of enlistment at 4 Recruitment Centre, Perth on 14 September 1941 he was working as a Cost Clerk at Commonwealth Oil Refineries.

Alan sailed from Melbourne on 1 December 1943 per *Rimutaka* stopping at Auckland then New York before sailing on to the United Kingdom. On board were also RNZAF and RAF personnel.



*The Rimutaka*

Alan gained his commission as a Pilot Officer on 19 January 1944. He was flying Wellingtons before being posted to 77 Squadron on 25 April 1944 and had his first flight with the Squadron the following day.

He was flying Halifax MZ 715 on the night of 16/17 June 1944 and when returning from a raid over Sterkrade in Germany the plane exploded in the air. Warrant Officer Owen was thrown clear and captured to remain a POW until wars end. All other members of the crew were killed.

#### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer A I Crain - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant V Gledhill - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer T R Davies - Navigator
RAAF	Warrant Officer A A Braid - Air Bomber
RAF	Warrant Officer A J Owen - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant P E T Tiernan - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A J Burns. - Rear Gunner

Pilot Officer Crain is buried in the Uden War Cemetery, Netherlands - 84



Alan is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial, the Nedlands War Memorial, Western Australia and the Cenotaph Undercroft State War Memorial, Kings Park Western Australia.

Alan's father fought in WW1 and was with the 10<sup>th</sup> Australian Light Horse Regiment. Alan's younger brother Robert, 436314, was also a pilot attached to the RAF.

A letter written 12 December 1944 from the Department of Air states:

*Aus 415308 Pilot Officer A I Crain  
Aus 408562 Warrant Officer A A Baird  
Reported Missing on the 16/17 June 1944*

*'In confirmation of the cable forwarded by the Royal Australian Air Force Overseas Headquarters, I am directed to inform you that the German Totenliste No 228 states that the above named personnel (Crain & Baird) were killed on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1944, and buried in the Soldiers Cemetery, Uden, Noord Brabant, Holland, Grave Nos 84 & 86 respectively on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1944.*

*Action has accordingly been taken to presume, for official purposes, that they lost their lives on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1944.*

*Signed D. Bent.*

## Perth Pilot Loses Life In Ruhr Raid

**Survival of an air-gunner in a Halifax bomber, shot down over Germany, led W.A. parents of the plane's missing pilot to hope that he was also safe. But the hopes have not been realised.**

Word has been received that he lost his life and has been buried in Uden, North Brabant, Holland. Air-gunner was the only one saved.

He is late Pilot-Officer Alan Irvine Crain, member of a well-known Hollywood (WA) family.


Plane was brought down when returning from a raid over Sterkrade in the Ruhr.

P/O Crain was due for extensive leave following a heavy programme of operational flights over Germany.

"He thought D Day was the greatest thrill of his life," said sorrowing father Lieutenant Wally Crain yesterday. "He wrote and told us that it was most inspiring to fly a plane over the huge Europe-bound Armada."

P/O Crain was captain of a Halifax bomber. He was trained in W.A., went to England in 1942. Before enlisting he was an employee of C.O.R. Ltd in Perth.

The late flyer was approaching his 22nd birthday. He has a younger



brother who is serving in England as a pilot.

News was a heavy blow to Lieut. and Mrs. Crain, who are particularly well known in Nedlands and Hollywood.

Lieut. Wally Crain has been a popular figure in sporting circles in Perth for many years. He played first grade cricket with Subiaco, North Perth and West Perth and was a keen hockey player.

Wally served in the Great War with the 10th Light Horse. When the second world war broke out on September 3, 1939, Wally was back in khaki again by September 4!

**Late P.-O. Crain**

*The Mirror, Saturday December 16, 1944*

## SAW WA PILOT'S DUTCH GRAVE

Some weeks ago "The Mirror" told of the death in action of Pilot Officer Alan Irvine Crain, of Hollywood, WA whose Halifax bomber was shot down as he was returning from a raid on the Ruhr.

F/O D J Thomson, member of a NZ Squadron, writes to say that he was in Uden, Holland, where P/O Crain is buried and talked with the Burgomaster there.

"His aircraft crashed at a little village called Dodevaard, a few miles west of Arnhem," he says. "That was on June 17 last. He and 3 other members of his crew were brought to Uden for burial on June 20. The cemetery number is One, and they are buried in Row 7. P/O Crain's grave is No 84.

"All the graves are marked out with a little hedge of flowers, and have flowers growing on them. Very shortly crosses will be placed on them; shortage of wood and paint has made this impossible before."

F/O Thomson's home is Geraldton, but he formerly worked in Perth.

*The Mirror, Perth Saturday 9 June 1945 p2*



*Pilot Officer Alan Irvine Crain  
Uden War Cemetery 5.C.6  
Noordt Brabant, Netherlands  
Our Son. His was the Supreme Sacrifice*

# JOHN MATTHEW DATE

427807

Son of Matthew and Florence (née Rabald) Date of Mornington, Victoria, John was born 28 January 1924 at Subiaco, Western Australia and enlisted from there. John was with 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) 1941 to 1942 before joining the RAAF at No 4 Recruiting Centre on 6 October 1942.

John completed 4 ITS, WAGS at Ballarat and 3 BAGS gunnery school at West Sale in May 1943. He received his Air Gunner's Badge June 1943 and received his commission the same day. John embarked at Sydney on 11 August 1943 per *Mount Vernon* for Canada. He spent three weeks in hospital at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts suffering from Scarlett Fever. He eventually arrived in the United Kingdom 9 October 1943. After completing ops training at 27 OTU in October 1943 and 41 Base Conversion Unit in January 1944 John arrived at 77 Squadron 23 March 1944.



*SS Mount Vernon*

Halifax NA 508 took off from RAF Full Sutton, Yorkshire at 2315 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944, detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany.

## THE CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer R A W Blair - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H L Moore - Flight Engineer
RAAF	Pilot Officer L G Pratt - Observer
RAAF	Flight Sergeant G A Armstrong - Air Bomber
RAAF	Warrant Officer J P O'Meara - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flying Officer J M Date - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant D G Tastin - Tail Gunner

A 1947 report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated "*the Communal Police at Neuwer-Amstel reported that the aircraft crashed in flames at Neuwer-Amstel on the night of 16/17 June, 1944. German documents confirmed that only one body was recovered that of WO O'Meara*" He is buried at the Bergen-Op-Zoom War Cemetery, Netherlands.

Until 1990 the other six crew members had no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey. It was in June of that year that the wreckage of NA508 was uncovered by the Recovery Team of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, including the remains of five of the crew, who were buried at the Bergen op Zoom Canadian War Cemetery on 8 October 1991.

Flying Officer Date is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial the Cenotaph Undercroft State War Memorial, Kings Park Western Australia, the Subiaco Fallen Soldiers Memorial and the King's Park Gardens.

**DATE F/O John** (RAAF)- A loving tribute to our gallant Friend presumed killed in air operations over Germany June 17, 1944. Inserted by P/O Charles Bennetts (Uranquinty, New South Wales)  
Memories of happy days spent together, John

*The Western Australian Monday 17 September 1945*



*Memorial Plaque King's Park,  
Perth Western Australia*



*Subiaco Fallen Soldiers Memorial*



*Back Row – Left to Right  
L Pratt, J Date, D Tustin, H Moore  
Front Row left to Right  
J O'Meara, R Blair, G Armstrong  
(donor of photograph unknown)*



*Members of the crew  
of Halifax NA 508*



## SELWYN GEORGE DE VIS 423449



*Photo: Bill Foote*

Son of Frederick and Hazel de Vis of South Australia was born 11 July 1923 at Brisbane, Queensland. His father, Frederick Selwyn, served in World War I and also in World War II.

De Vis worked for the CSIRO on leaving school and at the time of enlisting on 30 June 1942 he was a laboratory technician at the Department of Anatomy Medical School at Sydney University and studying for a diploma in biological chemistry.

After completing the usual courses in Australia and being appointed Flight Sergeant in May 1943. Selwyn sailed on the *USS Matsonia* June 16, 1943 from Brisbane stopping at Auckland to pick up New Zealand service men and leaving there 20 June arriving San Francisco 3 July and United Kingdom a month later.



*USS Matsonia*

Selwyn joined 77 Squadron 11 August 1944 became a Pilot Officer December 1944

Halifax RG 529 - Their mission was to target oil refineries at Witten in the Ruhr Valley. From investigation it was concluded that the two aircraft, a Lancaster and the Halifax, had in fact collided on 19 March 1945 at Merklinde near Dortmund.

*"Investigation disclose that on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1945 two aircraft crashed at Merklinde four miles west of Dortmund; both aircraft fell at the same time and within one hundred yards of each other. The bodies of all members of both crews were found in the wreckage by the Germans and there can be no*

*doubt that all were killed instantly. Subsequent enquiries among the inhabitants fail to disclose the place of burial of the bodies and by the time the Missing Research and Enquiry service was operating in the area no identifiable wreckage remained.*

*It was thought that the crews had probably been buried in the main cemetery at Dortmund, but no reference to any burials from these crashes appeared in the cemetery register, which otherwise appeared to have been carefully kept. Recent (1951) investigations however, disclosed a group of unmarked and unregistered graves in the cemetery and, on exhumation, it was possible to establish the identity of all members of the crew.” (RAAF Casualty File)*

#### THE CREW:

RAF	Flight Lieutenant E Ward - Pilot
RAF	Flight Sergeant J A Anderson - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant E A C Pearce - Flight Engineer
RAF	Pilot Officer T M Kerr - Air Bomber
RAAF	Pilot Officer S G de Vis - Wireless Operator
RAF	Flight Sergeant J Dyke - Air Gunner
RAF	Flight Sergeant W J Edwards - Air Gunner

Fraulein Isle Schwars of Nerbeds, Germany wrote on two occasions to Mrs de Vis, Pilot Officer De Vis's mother, about the place of burial and the exhumation of his body. His uniform was identified as a different colour to the other crew members and the person was assumed by locals to be Australian.

In August 1950 Flt Lt Lott (RAF) presented a report about the exhumation of graves at Dortmund Cemetery the result was the discovery of 15 bodies which proved to be the crews of Halifax RG529 and Lancaster PB451. All bodies were identified positively except for two – DYKE and EDWARDS. The bodies were re-interred in Rheinberg British Military Cemetery.

Chorley suggests “*Evidence suggested that they were murdered on 19/3/1945. Lt Karl Schaefer was convicted of their massacre*”. Have not found records to verify this.

Pilot Officer de Vis is buried in the Rheinberg War Cemetery Plot 13, Row F, Grave 9 and was the last loss for 77 Squadron. He is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra High School and St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Reid ACT.



*Pilot Officer  
Selwyn George de Vis*



*Temporary Grave Marker*



*Second World War Memorial Book*  
*St John the Baptist Church Canberra*



*The crew of Halifax RG 529. Flight Lieutenant Ward (Pilot) on far left  
Pilot Officer Selwyn De Vis second from right. Photo: Bill Foote*

The photographs of Pilot Officer Selwyn De Vis, the crew and his headstone were supplied by the late William Foote DFC who was a member of 77 Squadron RAF.



# HENRY ARTHUR LAURENCE ELLIS DFC

## 412932



Flight Lieutenant Ellis was born 23 May 1921 at Waverley, Sydney the son of Gordon and Fanny Ellis.

Before enlisting Hal was working as a clerk for Vacuum Oil, Sydney. He enlisted at No 2 Recruiting Centre, Sydney on 15 August 1941 and after completing the mandatory courses received his Flying Badge in May the following year. He was promoted to Sergeant 17 September 1942 and Flight Sergeant 17 March 1943

Hal embarked at Sydney on 17 October 1942 arriving in the United Kingdom 16 December 1942. Hal's brother Sgt Gordon Bruce Ellis (413750) was working at the RAAF Office in London when Hal arrived in England. He was posted to 77 Squadron 25 July 1943 and received his commission as a Pilot Officer in September 1943 and his Flight Lieutenants bars on 15 January 1944.

Awarded a DFC for a night attack on Leverkusen, Germany, in November 1943. Promulgated in the *London Gazette* on 17 December 1943 page 5488 and the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* on 6 January 1944. The DFC was presented to his father Gordon Ellis by the Governor General, Lord Gowrie, at Government House, Sydney on 16 February 1946.

Halifax LL 143 took off at 2331 hours from RAF Station Elvington, on an operation sortie on the night of 19/20 February 1944, the target Leipzig. The crew were on their 30<sup>th</sup> operation.

#### CREW:

RAAF	Flight Lieutenant H A L Ellis - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant J N Schofield - Flight Engineer
RAF	Pilot Officer P H J Mackie - Navigator
RAF	Pilot Officer R D Sullivan - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant H F Payne - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Pilot Officer C W G Graham - Air Gunner
RAAF	Pilot Officer D Fletcher - Air Gunner

Both aircraft and crew were lost without trace and the crew have no known grave. They are remembered on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey, UK.

Flight Lieutenant Ellis is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial; the Waverley, NSW, Honour Roll and Runnymede Memorial to the Missing.



## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS



Henry Arthur Laurence Ellis (Aus 412932)  
Royal Australian Air Force 77 Squadron

One night in November 1943, this officer piloted an aircraft detailed to attack Leverkusen. When nearing the target the bomber came under heavy fire from the ground defences. Two of the aircraft's engines were hit and other damage was sustained. Undeterred, Pilot Officer Ellis flew on to the target and pressed home his attack. Not long afterwards both the defective engines became useless. In spite of this, Pilot Officer Ellis flew the bomber to base. He displayed superb skill, great courage and resolution

Flying Officer William Ernest Gifford HUMPHREY (127889), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 105 Squadron.

This officer has completed many sorties and has displayed commendable courage and determination. One night in November, 1943, he piloted an aircraft detailed to attack a target in the Ruhr. Whilst over the target area the aircraft was subjected to heavy anti-aircraft fire. A shell burst close under the nose of the bomber and caused damage to the controls. Flying Officer Humphrey was injured in the foot by a fragment of shrapnel which cut away the toe of his flying boot. Nevertheless, he pressed home his attack with vigour, afterwards flying the damaged bomber to an airfield in this country. This officer displayed a high degree of skill and resolution throughout.

Pilot Officer Henry Arthur Laurence ELLIS (Aus.412932), Royal Australian Air Force, No. 77 Squadron.

One night in November, 1943, this officer piloted an aircraft detailed to attack Leverkusen. When nearing the target the bomber came under heavy fire from the ground defences. Two of the aircraft's engines were hit and other damage was sustained. Undeterred, Pilot Officer Ellis flew on to the target and pressed home his attack. Not long afterwards both the defective engines became useless. In spite of this, Pilot Officer Ellis flew the bomber to base. He displayed superb skill, great courage and resolution.

Pilot Officer Harold Wallace MITCHELL (Can./J.18923), Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 429 (R.C.A.F.) Squadron.

One night in November, 1943, this officer piloted an aircraft which attacked Stuttgart. When more than 100 miles from the target one of the bomber's engines became unserviceable. Pilot Officer Mitchell continued to the target, however, and despite heavy fire from the ground defences, pressed home his attack, afterwards flying the aircraft safely to base. He displayed great skill, determination and devotion to duty.

#### *Distinguished Flying Medal.*

Aus.414342 Flight Sergeant William Walter DODSWORTH, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 199 Squadron.

One night in November, 1943, this airman was the pilot of an aircraft detailed to attack Leverkusen. In the bombing run the aircraft was hit by shrapnel. The gun turrets and the inter-communication system were rendered unserviceable and a fire started. In spite of this, Flight Sergeant Dodsworth coolly continued his run and successfully attacked the target whilst other members of the crew dealt with the fire which they succeeded in extinguishing. In harassing circumstances, Flight Sergeant Dodsworth displayed skill, coolness and resolution of a high order.

Aus.425680 Flight Sergeant Roy Alexander LEARMONTH, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 619 Squadron.

This airman was the rear gunner of an aircraft which attacked Berlin one night in November, 1943. During the operation the bomber was attacked by two enemy aircraft. In the ensuing fight, Flight Sergeant Learmonth displayed great skill, giving his captain clear and concise evading directions whilst using his guns to good effect. Following his accurate burst of fire, one of the enemy aircraft caught fire and dived steeply and the other one terminated the engagement. By his resolute work, Flight Sergeant Learmonth contributed materially to the success of the operation. He has participated in many sorties and his keenness and vigilance have always been evident.

*Air Ministry, 17th December 1943.*

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following award:—

#### *Military Medal*

539610 Acting Flight Sergeant Charles Louis SCHOFIELD, Royal Air Force, No. 74 Squadron.

On the 6th October, this airman was detailed to man an Italian Breda gun at Simi. He remained on the site for seven days sharing the duties with another airman. The gun was in a key position and was attacked incessantly by Stukas, but Flight Sergeant Schofield remained at his post and fired

his gun even when the flash eliminator was burnt off and the sights had fallen off owing to the heat of the gun. This airman probably destroyed one of the enemy aircraft although he had been wounded in the arm. On the first day of the invasion of Simi some Germans were detected below the position of the gun. Flight Sergeant Schofield participated in an attack against them and brought back one of the enemy's wounded.

#### AMENDMENTS.

In notification of 19th October 1943 (p. 4618, col. 2), for Acting Warrant Officer (now Pilot Officer) Raymond Frank DENTON (1390294) read Acting Warrant Officer Raymond Frank DENTON (1390284).

In notification of 24th September, 1943 (p. 4248, col. 2), awards of allied decorations. In heading preceding name of Lieutenant-Colonel Stephen Alexander Melville, O.B.E., South African Air Force, for "Commander" read "Officer."

*Air Ministry, 17th December, 1943.*

#### ROYAL AIR FORCE.

#### GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH.

##### *Promotion.*

*Air Cadets. (temp.) granted the rank of Air Cadet. (war subs.):—*

J. W. JONES, C.B. 10th Nov. 1943.

T. A. LANGFORD-SAINSBURY, O.B.E., D.F.C., A.F.C. 16th Nov. 1943.

*Gp. Capt. (temp.) granted the rank of Gp. Capt. (war subs.):—*

3rd Nov. 1943.  
A. M. WRAY, D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C., A.F.C.

T. N. McEVoy, O.B.E.

J. SILVESTER, C.B.E. 10th Nov. 1943.

*The undermid. are granted the rank of Wg. Cdr. (war subs.):—*

*Wg. Cdrs. (temp.):—*

A. V. BAX, A.F.M. (05189). 29th Oct. 1943.

H. E. BUFTON, D.F.C., A.F.C. (33223). 1st Nov. 1943.

S. W. B. MENAUL, D.F.C., A.F.C. (33272). 7th Nov. 1943.

10th Nov. 1943.

A. E. TAYLOR (22030).

C. S. MOORE (26185).

S. G. BIRCH (34120). 12th Nov. 1943.

17th Nov. 1943.

G. C. TOMLINSON, O.B.E., D.F.C. (05214).

L. C. SLEE, D.S.O., D.F.C. (32021).

G. J. GRINDALL, D.F.C., A.F.C. (32226).

H. P. BROAD, D.F.C. (26174). 20th Nov. 1943.

Sqn. Ldr. T. M. HORGAN, D.S.O., D.F.C. (40114). 4th Nov. 1943.

*Flt. Offs. to be Flt. Lts. (war subs.):—*

J. ARCHER, A.F.C. (46394). 16th Aug. 1943.

B. WOOD (46175). 17th Aug. 1943.

C. E. FOOKS (47502). 9th Dec. 1943.

10th Dec. 1943.

P. S. BLOMFIELD (47767).

A. R. SHERWOOD (47574). (Seny. 1st May 1943.)

11th Dec. 1943.

G. A. CRAIG, D.F.M. (47605).

J. P. HAYES, D.F.M. (47610).

W. T. KEATES (47526).

W. R. CHALK, D.F.C. (47910). 12th Dec. 1943.

R. F. MASON (47675). 13th Dec. 1943.

15th Dec. 1943.

J. F. JOHNSTONE (47779).

R. N. LOWN (47877).

A. E. MAKINS (47579).

C. SHAW, D.F.C. (47515).

*Plt. Off. to be Flt. Off. (war subs.):—*

J. P. BEALE (31257). 15th July 1943.

*Plt. Offs. (prob.) to be Flt. Offs. (prob.) (war subs.):—*

E. L. ROBERTS (52758). 29th July 1943.

S. R. OLDRIDGE, D.F.M. (52769). 2nd Sept.

1943.

R. K. HEWITT (52750). 12th Sept. 1943.

S. T. MARSHALL (52802). 26th Oct. 1943.

L. J. GORNALL (52164). 10th Nov. 1943.

R. H. FROST (52693). 12th Nov. 1943.

F. H. SABAN (52768). 20th Nov. 1943.

A. D. HOWE, D.F.M. (52752). 25th Nov. 1943.

A. R. HOWELL (52542). 28th Nov. 1943.

Looking back a rather sad note - in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday 1 January 1944 there was an article under the heading of "Non-Stop Procession of Bombers" which lists at the end men from New South Wales who were attached to Bomber Squadrons and in fact on the last bomber raid to the Continent. Pilot Officer H Ellis from Sydney was amongst those listed. He was killed just two months later.

Flight Sergeant B H Stevens and Flight Sergeant D Fletcher are also mentioned, both killed on operations.



*Waverley War Memorial*



*Air Force Memorial to the Missing  
Runnymede*

# DONALD FLETCHER

## 412942



Pilot Officer Donald Fletcher born at St Leonards in Sydney on 18 January 1917 the son of Angus and Ella Fletcher of "Bandaloo", a property out of Manilla in New South Wales.

Donald was a farmer and enlisted in the Reserve at 2a Mobile Recruiting Unit in his home town of Manilla on 24 November 1940, he re-enlisted for active service in the Air Force on 15 August 1941 and was immediately sent to No1 ITS at Somers on Western Port Bay, Victoria. Donald joined No 26 Wireless Air Gunners (WAGS) course from 16 November 1942 to 10 December 1942 gaining his Air Gunners Badge. He acquired his Flying Badge on 10 December 1942.

He embarked from Melbourne on 15 January 1943 for the United Kingdom disembarking there on 17 March.

19 OTU in United Kingdom on 7 April 1943 was his first UK posting then onto 1652 Conversion Unit before joining 77 Squadron RAF on 25 July that year. Donald was appointed Flight Sergeant in June 1943 and promoted to Pilot Officer on 22 October and had flown Fairey Battle, Whitley and Halifax planes.

Pilot Officer Donald Fletcher was listed as missing in action on 20 February 1944.

Halifax LL 143 took off at 2331 hours from RAF Station Elvington, on an operation sortie on the night of 19/20 February 1944, the target Leipzig. The aircraft did not return and nothing further was heard of aircraft or crew who were on their 30<sup>th</sup> operation.

#### CREW:

RAAF	Flight Lieutenant H A L Ellis - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant J N Schofield - Flight Engineer
RAF	Pilot Officer P H J Mackie - Navigator
RAF	Pilot Officer R D Sullivan - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant H F Payne - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Pilot Officer C W G Graham - Air Gunner
RAAF	Pilot Officer D Fletcher - Air Gunner

Both aircraft and crew were lost without trace and the crew have no known grave. They are remembered on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey and Pilot Officer Fletcher is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Manilla and District Soldiers Memorial Hall.

Looking back a rather sad note - in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday 1 January 1944 there was an article under the heading of "Non-Stop Procession of Bombers" which lists at the end men from



New South Wales who were attached to Bomber Squadrons and in fact on the last bomber raid to the Continent. Flight Sergeant D Fletcher from Sydney was amongst those listed. He was killed just two months later.

Pilot Officer H Ellis and Flight Sergeant B H Stevens are also mentioned.



*Manilla and District Soldiers Memorial Hall*



*Air Force Memorial to the Missing  
Runnymede*

# KEVIN FRANCIS GALVIN

## 418382



Flight Sergeant Kevin Galvin was the son of John Michael and Grace Galvin of Thornbury, Victoria he was born 25 May 1923 in Unley Park, South Australia. He attended St Thomas' College before moving to St Kevins' College, Toorak.

Kevin was working as a clerk for Victorian Railways at the time of enlistment on 22 May 1942 at No 1 Recruiting Centre, Melbourne, he obtained his Wireless Operators Badge followed by an Air Gunners Badge in April the next year. He left Brisbane for the UK four weeks later arriving there on 7 July. He trained at 9AFU and 20 OTU, it was whilst at OTU he met other members of what was to be his crew and was promoted to Flight Sergeant on 4 March 1944. They then trained at 1658 HCU and joined 77 Squadron on 24 May 1944.

Barely two weeks later on the night of 8 June 1944 Halifax MZ701 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 0207 hours detailed to carry out a night flying training exercise. Almost immediately the plane crashed due to engine failure and loss of control. All the crew were killed.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer G L Hyde – Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H Fox - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant E F Chapman - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant D J Hutchison - Air Bomber
RAAF	Flight Sergeant K F Galvin - Wireless Operator Air
RAAF	Flight Sergeant J D Krone - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A Jordan - Rear Gunner

Six of the crew are buried in the Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery, Yorkshire. Sergeant Fox is buried in the Huddersfield (Lockwood) Cemetery. Flight Sergeant Galvin is buried Section B, Row E. Grave 17 of the Harrogate Cemetery.

*Kevin's funeral took place at the Royal Air Force Regional Cemetery, Harrogate on 13<sup>th</sup> June at 10am, the service being conducted by a Roman Catholic chaplain. Service honours were accorded, the coffin was covered with the Union Jack and the Last Post was sounded at the end. Representatives from the Squadron were S/Ldr A D Webb, F/Lt S E Wodehouse and F/O J S Nott. (F/O Nott was killed in a week later)*

During the early hours of 8th June 1944 the crew of this 77 Squadron aircraft were to undertake a night training exercise, they took off from Full Sutton airfield at 02.07hrs. While climbing away the aircraft suffered an engine failure which led to the instruments failing, the pilot lost control and the plane crashed into one of the dispersed W.A.A.F living sites on the north side of Elvington village. With the crash being close to Elvington airfield there were people soon on hand to try and rescue the crew. Five appear to have been killed in the crash but the pilot and one of the air gunner's died later in hospital.

*At approximately 0207 hours on June 8, 1944 the pilot was flying at a low altitude in the vicinity of RAF Station Elvington. He suddenly opened his throttles, did a steep turn to port, stalled, and the aircraft struck the ground in an inverted position, starboard wing first. At the time of the crash flaps and wheels were up and the crew were at the normal landing positions. The aircraft broke up and burst into flames on impact.*

Flight Sergeant Galvin is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour, Melbourne, Victoria.



*Flight Sergeant Kevin Galvin  
Greater Love hath no man*



*Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery*

*Sergeant D Hutchison 1560875 RAF, an Australian, was also on the ill fated plane. He had joined the RAF and his parents lived at Redfern in Sydney New South Wales.*

# NICHOLAS CHARLES GROB

## 425154



Flight Sergeant Grob was born 20 November 1919 at Rockhampton, Queensland, the son of Edward and Maria Grob of Yeppoon, Queensland. Nicholas was a dairy farmer at Yeppoon, Queensland and was a well known champion amateur cyclist. He enlisted at 3 Recruiting Centre, Brisbane 31 January 1942.

He acquired his Air Gunners Badge 4 February 1943 and made Flight Sergeant in August that year. He completed his Wireless Air Gunners Course at Maryborough, Queensland and his BAGS Course at Evans Head in New South Wales

Nicholas (Charlie) embarked 6 March 1943 at Melbourne for the United Kingdom arriving there 17 April. After completing the necessary courses in England he joined 77 Squadron 8 September 1943 he had been promoted to Flight Sergeant in August.

Halifax LL122 took off from RAF Elvington on 9 December 1943 detailed to carry out a non-operational day fighter affiliation training exercise, the plane spun in and crashed near Leavening which is just north of York. Five of the crew were killed and Flight Sergeant Simpson and Sergeant Clark were injured.

#### THE CREW:

RCAF	Pilot Officer J K Forest - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant L R Mace - Flight Engineer
RAF	Pilot Officer G O Sharpe - Navigator
RNZAF	Flight Sergeant R R J Simpson - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant J S Clark - Wireless Air Gunner
RCAF	Flight Sergeant E F J Hemming - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant N C Grob - Rear Gunner

Flight Sergeant Grob is buried in Grave 15, Row F, Section C of the Harrogate Cemetery and is also remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour Wowan, Queensland.

#### ROLL OF HONOUR

**GROB** – On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1943, in England, as a result of aircraft accident Flight Sergeant Nicholas Charles Grob, beloved son of Mr and Mrs E Grob, Pheasant Creek, Wowan

*Central Queensland Herald  
Thurs 23 December 1943*





*Flight Sergeant N C Grob  
He is not lost  
To loving hearts  
But only gone before*

Nicholas wrote home about an earlier flight, this one over Dusseldorf: *"There were moments when it seemed that if I put the wheels down I would have touched other planes. The sky was crowded with Lancasters and Halifaxes. Grey smoke rolled up from the dark red fires beneath us. I saw about 200 searchlights, but although about 30 coned a neighbour of mine we managed to avoid them. When I left the fires were burning fiercely and a ball of smoke had formed some thousands of feet above the town."*

### **Report on Halifax LL122 - [www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk](http://www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk)**

On 9th December 1943 the crew of this 77 Squadron aircraft took off from Elvington airfield at 10.09hrs to undertake a fighter affiliation exercise over the general area of the airfield. Ten minutes later the Halifax had climbed to 9,000 feet and met with the Hurricane, this fighter was to act as an attacking aircraft to allow the Halifax crew to practice taking evasive action during simulated attacking passes on the Halifax. The Hurricane made two successful attacks on the Halifax and the bomber crew took the necessary action. During the third attacking pass the Halifax made a diving turn to the left followed by a very steep turn to the right, the aircraft stalled and the aircraft then entered into a fast spin from which the pilot was not in control. Having lost control the pilot instructed his crew to abandon the aircraft but owing to the forces involved in the spin only two airmen were able to reach their parachutes and bale out. The pilot was unable to recover control of the aircraft and it spun into the ground from around 7,000 feet. Sadly the five remaining airmen were killed in the crash at 10.30hrs, which occurred on the hillside behind the village of Leavening, between Malton and Pocklington. The Accident Investigation Branch were asked to investigate this accident because it was thought that some form of structural failure or elevator overbalance problem prior to the aircraft stalling may have occurred, this investigation was inconclusive. (see "AVIA5/22 Report W1726" in the National Archives for more details).

PO Forest and Flt Sgt Grob are buried in the Harrogate (Stonefell) Cemetery  
Sgt Mace is buried in the Camberwell New Cemetery, London  
PO Sharpe is buried in the Sawbridgeworth (Great St Mary) Churchyard, Hertfordshire  
Flt Sgt Hemming is buried in the Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire.



Looking down and up towards the general area of the crash site of LL122, or at least where it is understood it crashed.



# ROBERT MEAD HOLLINGWORTH

## 414564



Flight Sergeant Robert Hollingworth was the son of William and Maude Hollingworth of Bowen Hills, Queensland. Robert was educated at Brisbane Boys College Toowong, Valley State School and University of Queensland. A bank clerk working for the Commonwealth Bank before enlisting he was born 21 May 1923. Robert enlisted 12 October 1941 at 3 Recruiting Centre, Brisbane. Re-mustered to Aircrew (P) 31 January 1942 and gained his Flying Badge 26 June 1942.

Embarked 13 December 1942 arriving in England 3 April 1943 and made Flight Sergeant a week later.

Halifax DT730 left RAF Elvington just before midnight on the night of 3/4 December 1943 to bomb Leipzig in Germany. Robert Hollingworth was the only Australian on board and he was attached from 1663 Conversion Unit.

### CREW:

RAF	Pilot Officer R J Caseley - Pilot
RAAF	Flight Sergeant R M Hollingworth - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pilot
RAF	Sergeant F E Ryder - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flight Sergeant C R Boyd - Navigator
RAF	Flight Sergeant W J H Webb - Air Bomber
RAF	Pilot Officer J Miller - Wireless Air Gunner
RCAF	Warrant Officer W R Farrell - Mid Upper Gunner
RCAF	Flight Sergeant K R Lees - Rear Gunner (POW)

In 1947 Robert's mother received information from the RAAF that states that the Missing, Research and Enquiry Service in Germany had sent the following – *“That subsequent to interrogation of inhabitants of the town of Cloppenburg, which is approximately thirty miles south west of Bremen, it was ascertained that your son's aircraft crashed near Cloppenburg on the night of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1943. Your son, together with six other members of his crew and a further six members of another aircraft which crashed in the same area on the same date are buried in a communal grave No 5, Row A of the cemetery of Cloppenburg.”*

An earlier report in 1945 stated – *a local farmer was interviewed and said the aircraft caught fire and broke to pieces in the air. In the fuselage were found three badly charred bodies and three others lying in the vicinity of the crash. A seventh man was found a week later in the forest”.*

A Missing Research and Enquiry team report in 1946 *“the aircraft crashed on the night of 3 December 1943 near Cloppenburg, seven of the crew were killed and Flight Sergeant Lees became a POW”*. All those killed are buried in the Becklingen War Cemetery, Germany.

Flight Sergeant Lees later reported: *"the aircraft exploded unexpectedly in mid air. It was shot down between Oldenburg and Cloppenburg near Bremen. As far as I know none of the others baled out before the explosion, and the Germans told me that all the others were killed"*.

Robert is buried in the Becklingen War Cemetery Collective Grave 9, E 1-3.

Robert's brother, Sergeant Pilot Alexander Hollingworth (404246) 102 Squadron RAF, was killed in action during an operational flight over Cherbourg 6 January 1942 and is buried in the Doncaster (Rosehill) Cemetery in Yorkshire, England.

Flight Sergeant Hollingworth is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour, Brisbane.



*Flight Sergeant  
Robert Mead Hollingworth  
He lived nobly and  
Died bravely*



*Becklingen War Cemetery  
Germany*





# GORDON LESLIE HYDE

## 422187



Pilot Officer Gordon Hyde was the son of William and Emily Hyde of Petersham born 5 June 1917 at Marrickville, Sydney. He worked as a Process Engraver for Hartland & Hyde Ltd in Sydney and enlisted at Sydney on 25 April 1942. Upon enlistment Gordon went straight to 2 ITS, followed by EFTS, SFTS at Mallala, and finally Bradfield Park on 28 April 1943.

Gordon acquired his flying badge on 5 March 1943, was promoted to Sergeant a couple of days later.

He embarked at Brisbane on 5 May 1943 arriving in the United Kingdom on 7 July. There followed PDRC 13 July 1943, 20 OTU 14 March 1944 and No 41 Base before he arrived at 77 Squadron on 23 May 1944. Promotion to Flight Sergeant in September followed and some six months later his commission to Pilot Officer on 14 April 1944.

Halifax MZ701 took off from RAF Full Sutton/Elvington at 0207 hours on the night of 8 June 1944, detailed to carry out a night flying training exercise. Almost immediately the plane crashed due to engine failure and loss of control. All the crew were killed.

#### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer G L Hyde – Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H Fox - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant E F Chapman - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant D J Hutchison - Air Bomber
RAAF	Flight Sergeant K F Galvin - Wireless Operator Air
RAAF	Flight Sergeant J D Krone - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A Jordan - Rear Gunner

Six of the crew are buried in the Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery. Sergeant Fox is buried in the Huddersfield (Lockwood) Cemetery. Gordon is buried Grave 18, Row E, Section B of the Harrogate Cemetery.

A RAF letter to his father in June 1944 explained the burial - “ *your son’s funeral took place at the Royal Air Force Regional Cemetery, Harrogate, Yorkshire, on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1944 at 10 am., the service being conducted by a Church of England chaplain. Service honours were accorded, the coffin was covered with the Union Jack and the Last Post was sounded at the end. Representatives from the Squadron were S/Ldr A D Webb, F/Lt. S E Wodehouse and F/O J.S. Nott (Australian). See Nott’s story.*

*Two wreaths were sent, from the Officers and the NCOs of the Squadron.”*

Pilot Officer Hyde is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial



*Pilot Officer Gordon Hyde  
His Duty Nobly Done*



*Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery  
Yorkshire. UK*



*Sergeant D Hutchison 1560875 RAF, an Australian, was also on the ill fated plane he had joined the RAF (see introduction) and his parents lived at Redfern in Sydney New South Wales.*

# DONALD ATHERTON IRVING

## 402359



AWM P07985.001

Flight Lieutenant Donald Irving was the son of Ernest and Dorothy Irving of Innisfail, Queensland, he was born in Brisbane 10 January 1916 and worked as a Sugar Chemist for the CSR Company before enlisting at No 2 Recruiting Centre in August 1940 and posted to 2 ITS then onto 6EFTS 19 September.

Donald left from Sydney for Canada in November for service overseas arriving Vancouver 23 December for movement to Calgary where he received his wings at No 3 SFTS, Calgary 10 April 1941. He had received his Pilot Officer's Commission on 9 April. Then it was onto the United Kingdom arriving on 25 April 1941, he joined 77 Squadron RAF on 28 July and was appointed Flight Lieutenant 25 January the following year.

While serving with the RAF in the United Kingdom he took part in eighteen operational flights over Europe, 8 as second pilot and 10 as captain. Flight Lieutenant Irving and crew took off from RAF Station Leeming in Yorkshire and, following an operation against German cruisers at Wilhelmshaven on the night of 27 February 1942, they were reported missing. An investigation by the Air Ministry found that the aircraft Whitley Z6943, piloted by Irving was reported to have been hit by anti-aircraft fire near Wilhelmshaven. No trace of the aircraft or crew were found.

#### CREW:

RAAF	Flight Lieutenant D A Irving - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H W Blackmore - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant J L S Price - Observer
RAF	Sergeant D Unsworth - Wireless Operator/Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant P W L Strachan - Air Gunner

In 1948 it was reported that after extensive searches and interrogation of German authorities in the area of Wilhelmshaven to Emden no trace of wreckage or crew could be found. The crew were recorded as lost at sea.

Z6943 took off from RAF Leeming to attack the *Scharnhorst* which was believed to be under repairs at Wilhelmshaven. 33 aircraft took part and the raid was considered a failure due to heavy cloud. [www.aircrewremembered.com](http://www.aircrewremembered.com) Luftwaffe night fighters defended with the result that 3 Whitleys from 77 Squadron were shot down. Post war investigations in 1946 revealed that Captain Friedelein in command of the German Navy Anti Aircraft battery saw 4 twin engine bombers hit by his anti-aircraft fire. Two of these planes exploded in the air and two others two flew out to sea on fire.



Donald is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede.



*Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede*

*Peter Eames*



## ALLAN WILSON JOHNSON 400118

Flight Sergeant Allan Wilson Johnson was born 3 May 1910 in Terang, Victoria the son of James and Norma Johnson of Lake View, Derrinallum, Victoria. Educated at Northcote Boys High, St Andrews College, Carlton and the University of Melbourne. Studied for the Presbyterian Ministry and after ordination he took on work for the Home Missionary. Although his occupation exempted him for war service Allan still enlisted.

He enlisted at No 1 Recruiting Centre, Melbourne on 27 May 1940. He completed courses at Ballarat, Cootamundra, BAGS at Evans Head before embarking for the United Kingdom on 7/9 April 1941 arriving in the United Kingdom 1 August 1941. He joined 77 Squadron in March 1942. Alan was an Air Observer. He was promoted to Sergeant 7 March 1941 and Flight Sergeant 7 September 1941

He died on 24 April 1942 when Whitley VZ9363 crashed at 01.11 hours at Grevenkrug near Bordesholm, Germany. VZ9363 had taken off from Leeming to join 160 other aircraft to bomb the port city of Rostok. Also on board the ill-fated plane were Sergeant B. Whitham RAF, Sergeant A Whitacker RAF and Sergeant R Wilde RAF.

Originally buried in a communal grave at Bordesholm the crew were reinterred and individually buried at Hamburg Cemetery at Ohlsdorf after the war.

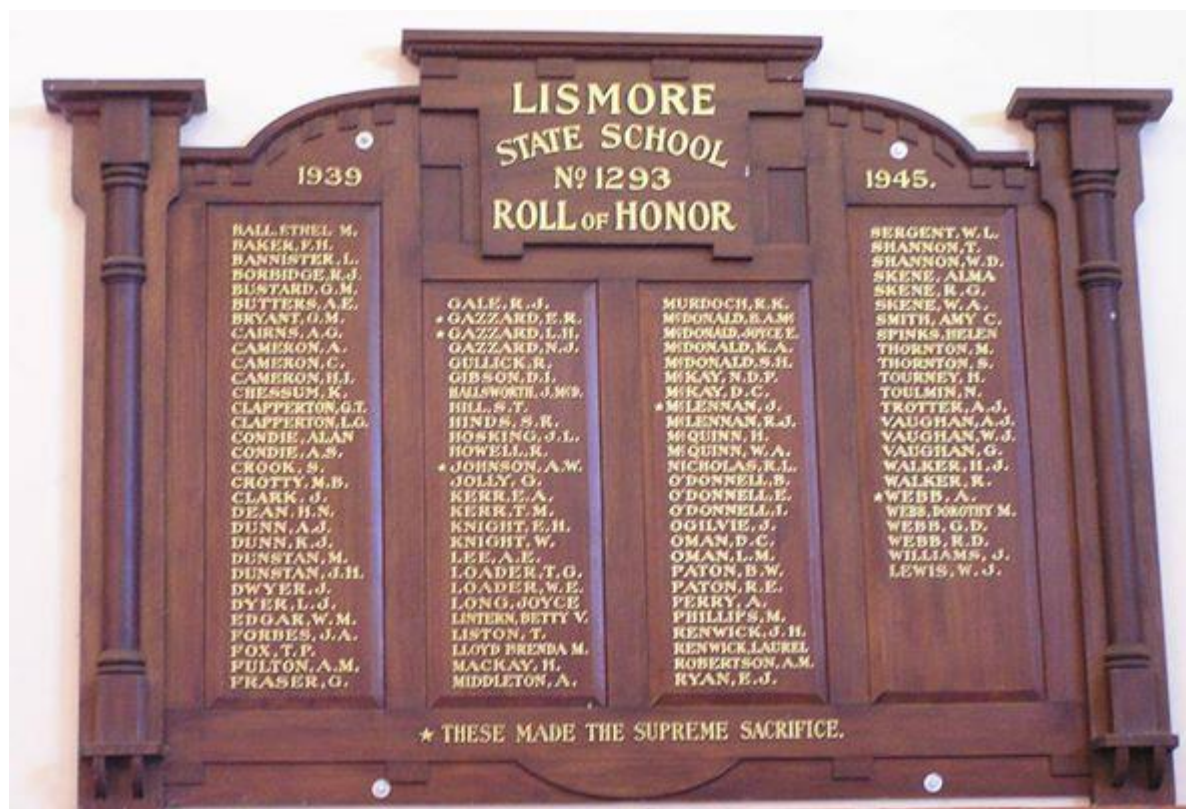
Allan is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Derrinallum War Memorial – plaque shown below.



*Flight Sergeant  
Allan Wilson Johnson  
No greater love hath no man  
Than that he lay down  
His life for his friends*



*Derrinallum War Memorial      Photo – Graeme Saunders*



*Lismore State School, Victoria*

## AIDAN JORDAN 429663



Flight Sergeant Aidan “Jock” Jordon was born 5 September 1924 at Washington, Co Durham, England the son of William and Annie Jordon who later immigrated to Western Australia with their two children, Aidan and Pauline, arriving at Fremantle on 2 February 1928. The family travelled on the former troop ship, P & O’s *Borda*. Aidan’s father had been a miner in England and on arriving in Australia settled in Kalgoorlie a gold mining town.

Aidan attended Christian Brothers College and then the Goldfields Technical School at Boulder. Always interested in the Air Force he was an Air Cadet whilst attending Christian Bros College at Kalgoorlie. He joined “B” Flight Kalgoorlie Air Training Corp, 79 Squadron, in May 1942 his ATC Number being 35489.

Before enlistment on 16 October 1942 at No 4 Recruiting Centre in Perth, Aidan was attending the School of Mines and working as an Assistant Assayer for Paranga Mining and Exploration Company (gold mining).

Aidan gained his Air Gunners badge on 22 July 1943 and was promoted to Sergeant the same day. Before being posted overseas Aidan had completed various courses in Australia, including 1 WAGS (Wireless) at Ballarat where he trained on the CAC Wackett and the DC-2. He then moved to No 3 Bombing & Gunnery School at West Sale training on the Fairey Battle, and courses at Ascot Vale and Subiaco.



CAC Wackett – ADF Serials

He left Melbourne on 27 September 1943 arriving in the United Kingdom on 9 November after a journey by train across America from San Francisco to New York. Firstly posted to 20 Operational Training Unit in Lossiemouth, Scotland, here he experienced for the first time Wellington Bombers then onto 1658 Conversion Unit at Riccall, Yorkshire before arriving at 77 Squadron and the Halifax Bombers on 23 May 1944. He had been promoted to Flight Sergeant 22 January 1944.

Halifax MZ701 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 0207 hours on the night of 8 June 1944, detailed to carry out a night flying training exercise. Almost immediately the plane crashed due to engine failure and loss of control. All the crew were killed.

CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer G L Hyde – Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H Fox - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant E F Chapman - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant D J Hutchison - Air Bomber
RAAF	Flight Sergeant K F Galvin - Wireless Operator Air
RAAF	Flight Sergeant J D Krone - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A Jordan - Rear Gunner ( <i>FltSgt Jordan, at 18, was one of the youngest Australians to be killed on Bomber Command duties</i> )

During the early hours of 8th June 1944 the crew of this 77 Squadron aircraft were to undertake a night training exercise, they took off from Full Sutton airfield at 02.07hrs. While climbing away the aircraft suffered an engine failure which led to the instruments failing, the pilot lost control and at 02:07hrs it crashed into one of the dispersed W.A.A.F living sites on the north side of Elvington village. With the crash being close to Elvington airfield there were people soon on hand to try and rescue the crew. Five crew members were killed instantly but the pilot and one of the air gunner's (Flt Sgt Krone) appear to have been pulled clear of the burning aircraft though both died of their injuries in York Military Hospital later that day. Sous Lt Carrat FFAF, Sgt Chef Munier FFAF, Sgt St.Fileau FFAF, Sgt Chef Dubois FFAF, Caporal A Dubois FFAF, Soldat Gateau FFAF and W/O Smith RAF were given commendations for their actions at the crash site. ([www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk](http://www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk))

Six members of the crew are buried in the Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery in adjoining graves. Aidan Jordan Sec B. Row E. Grave 16. Sergeant Fox is buried in the Huddersfield (Lockwood) Cemetery.

Aidan's Funeral took place at the Royal Air Force Regional Cemetery Harrogate, Yorkshire on the 13 June 1944 at 10am. The service being conducted by a Roman Catholic Chaplain. Service honours were accorded, the coffin was covered with the Union Jack and the Last Post was sounded. Representatives from the Squadron were Squadron Leader A D Webb DFC, Flight Lieutenant S E Wodehouse and Flying Officer J S Nott. *Jack Stewart Nott tragically killed – see his story*

*Aidan travelled to the United Kingdom with John Krone and they went together to Lossiemouth, 1658 Conversion Unit and sadly perished together on 8 June 1944.*

Aidan is remembered at the Australian War Memorial, Kings Park State War Memorial and the War Memorial at Boulder, Western Australia on the east facing side.



*Flight Sergeant Aiden Jordan  
Happy in Life  
Fearless in Death  
One of Nature's Gentlemen*



Mr and Mrs Bill Jordan, formerly of Boulder, who now reside in Victoria Park, have received the sad news of the death of their son Aidan "Jock", who has been killed in action in a Halifax bomber attached to the RAF Bomber Command. This bright young lad was popular and well known on the fields. A former member of the local Air Training Corps, he was one of the first to be transferred to the RAAF

*Sunday Times*  
Perth, Western Australia  
Sunday 27 August 1944 page 8

For many years the family placed a memorial in the papers on the anniversary Aidan's death.

**JORDAN, Aidan (Jock)**  
F/Sgt RAAF. Killed during air operations, England June 8 1944.  
Loved son of Mr & Mrs W E Jordan  
brother of Pauline and Bill

*The Western Australian*  
Monday 9 June 1952 page 20



*Roll of Honour Boards at 7 Wing AAFC HQ, RAAF, Pearce WA and Aviation Heritage Museum, Bullcreek, WA. Unveiled August 2016*

# JOHN DUNCAN KRONE

## 432211



*This photograph was inside a locket John sent to his mother from the UK  
Donated by Ralph Jackson*

John was the son of Stanley and Isabel Krone of Herne Bay, New South Wales and born at Peakhurst on 28 July 1924. He was educated at St Patricks College, Strathfield and friends recalled he was a cricket tragic. John was enrolled 2 Wing Headquarters ATC , Sydney 23 October 1941 (10141) 22 Squadron was the City of Sydney Squadron.

He was working as a clerk at the time of enlistment on 5 December 1942. John received his Air Gunners Badge 16 September 1943. He embarked from Melbourne on 27 September 1943 arriving in England 9 November. He was posted to 20 OTU at Lossiemouth, Scotland before moving to 1658 Conversion Unit at Riccall in Yorkshire. John was appointed Flight Sergeant on 16 March 1944 and arrived at 77 Squadron Elvington on 24 May 1944.

Halifax MZ701 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 0207 hours on the night of 8 June 1944, detailed to carry out a night flying training exercise. Almost immediately the plane crashed due to engine failure and loss of control. All the crew were killed.

#### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer G L Hyde – Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H Fox - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant E F Chapman - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant D J Hutchison - Air Bomber
RAAF	Flight Sergeant K F Galvin - Wireless Operator Air
RAAF	Flight Sergeant J D Krone - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A Jordan - Rear Gunner

After the crash John, who was severely injured, was taken to the York Military Hospital but succumbed to his wounds at 03.40 hours. His funeral was held at 10 am on 13 June 1944 at the Royal Air Force Regional Cemetery, Harrogate, Yorkshire along with five other members of the crew.

John Krone - Sec B. Row E. Grave 15. Sergeant Fox is buried in the Huddersfield Cemetery.

*He travelled to the United Kingdom with Aidan Jordon, they went together to Lossiemouth in Scotland, 1658 Conversion Unit and sadly perished together on 8 June 1944.*

*John's brother, Warrant Officer Henry Krone 413874, lost his life whilst engaged on a bombing attack on Stuttgart on 15 March 1944. He was with 460 Squadron RAAF, attached to RAF Binbrook, Lincoln, and is commemorated at Runnymede Memorial to the Missing.*

Flight Sergeant Krone and his brother are remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial, St Patrick's College Second World War Memorial Chapel and Honour Roll and Hurstville, Sydney, NSW Roll of Honour.



*Flight Sergeant John Duncan Krone  
Rest in Peace  
Let Perpetual Light  
Shine Upon Him, O Lord*



*Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery*

**KRONE**, June 8, Sgt John Duncan Krone RAAF 432211, dearly beloved son of the late Stanley Cyril Krone and Mrs Isabel Krone of The Myrtles, Peakhurst and beloved brother of Norman, Isabel, Donald, Mary and Peter. Missing in RAAF overseas aged 19 years.

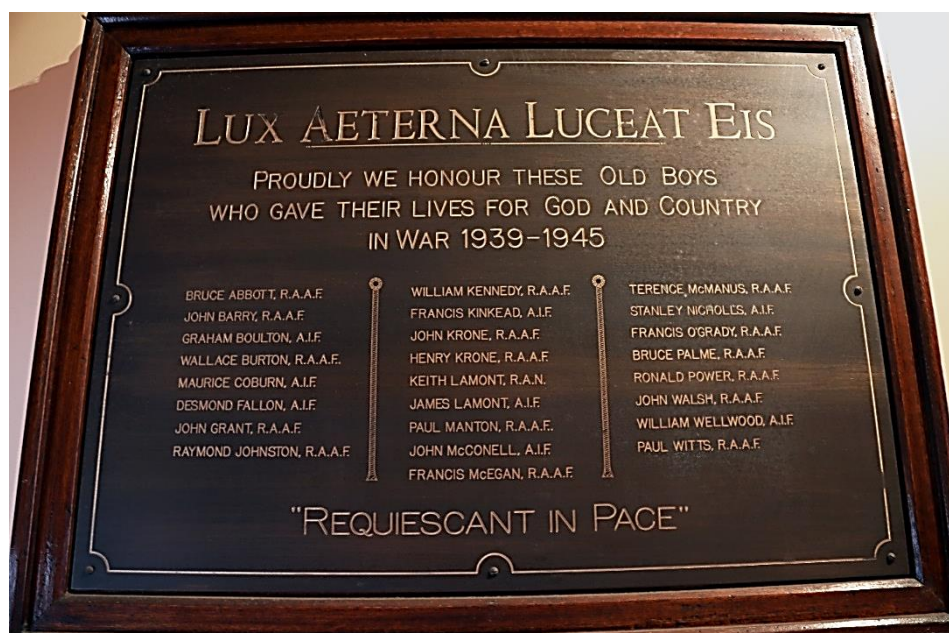
**KRONE**, June 8, killed in air crash in England, Sgt John Duncan Krone RAAF beloved nephew and cousin of Mr and Mrs G.R. Farrand and Mary and David, of Mullumbimby, NSW aged 19 years.

**KRONE**, June 8 Sgt John Duncan Krone, RAAF beloved nephew of Mr and Mrs Ernest McKinnon, of Algerley, Brisbane and cousin of Ernest, Eileen and Rita.

**KRONE**, June 8 killed in air crash in England Sgt John Duncan Krone RAAF beloved nephew and cousin of Mr and Mrs Lamond and family of Carrarong, Nowra

**KRONE**, June 8 killed during air operations in England, Sgt John Duncan Krone, RAAF of the Myrtles, Peakhurst, beloved nephew of Miss Theresa McKinnon of Peakhurst.

*Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 1 July 1944*



*St Patricks College – Strathfield NSW*

## STUART WALTER MACKAY 414809



Stuart Mackay was born in May 1923 the son of Ronald and Jean Mackay of Norman Park, Brisbane. He was working as an apprentice compositor for Biggs & Company, Printers when he enlisted on 9 November 1941. After flying training at 5EFTS, Narromine, Stuart embarked at Melbourne for Canada on 7 September 1942 headed for Canada, under the Empire Training Scheme, arriving there a month later.

Twelve months intensive training followed before he left Canada 26 August 1943 arriving in England 1 September going firstly to RAF Station Skaeabrae and Air Sea Rescue Flight before joining 77 Squadron. He had served with the RCAF from September 1942 to August 1943 and the RAF August 43 to June 44. He was appointed a Pilot Officer on 25 June 1943 and Flying Officer six months later on 25 December.

Halifax NA545 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 2315 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944 detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base. NA545 was one of seven aircraft from the Squadron that failed to return from the mission.

### CREW:

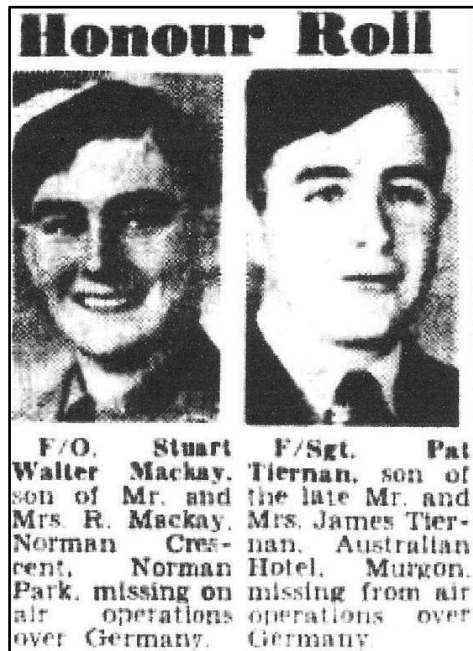
RAAF	Pilot Officer H W Bird - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant R A Castle-Hall - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant A B Freemantle - Navigator
RAAF	Flying Officer S W Mackay - Air Bomber
RAAF	Flight Sergeant R J Warren - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Flight Sergeant F A Meeghan - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant J A Lauder - Rear Gunner

It was later established that the aircraft crashed in the sea off the coast of Holland, and all the crew were killed. Pilot Officer Bird and Sergeant Castle-Hall are buried in the Terschelling General Cemetery. Sergeant Freemantle is buried in the Sage War Cemetery, Oldenburg, Niedersachsen, Germany. Flight Sergeant Warren is buried in the Texel Cemetery Noord-Holland. Sergeant Lauder is buried in the Vlieland General Cemetery, Friesland.

Flying Officer Mackay and Flt Sergeant Meeghan were lost at sea and have no known graves. Stuart MacKay is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey. UK.

In August 1945 after returning to Australia, Flying Officer C.B. Quartermain, who knew Stuart in Canada and Great Britain, sought out his mother so that he could return Stuart's watch to her.





*The Courier Mail, Brisbane. Saturday 12 August, 1944*



6 of the 7 crew of the crashed Halifax NA545 bomber.  
 Back: Frederick Meeghan, John Lauder & Alfred Freemantle  
 Front: Robert Warren, Harold Bird and Stuart McKay (Peter Hakze)



*Memorial to the Missing - Runnymede, Surrey UK*

# JOHN MARTIN MANTELL 402826

Son of Alfred and Sarah Mantell born at Grafton, New South Wales born 3 July 1915. John was educated at St Mary's School, Grafton he was an Air Force Reservist and was conducting a hairdressing saloon at Maclean at the time he enlisted at No 2 Recruiting Centre, Sydney on 14 October 1940.

John embarked from Sydney 28 November 1940 arriving Canada 23 December. He completed courses at No 2 Wireless School Calgary, No 2 BAGS at Moss Bank 23 May 1941 and No 1 M. Depot Halifax 25 June 1941 where he received his Air Gunners Badge. Left Canada 6 July 1941 arriving in the United Kingdom three weeks later.

He was attached to the RCAF from 28 November 1940 to 5 July 1941 and the RAF from 6 July 1941.

He received practically all his training in Canada before going onto England where he joined a night bomber crew, transferring in May of 1942 to the Coastal Command. Records indicate he was on loan from 77 Squadron to Coastal Command at the time of his death.

*Mrs Mantell's last message from her son was a cable in July saying he was enjoying leave in London. His elder brother is also in the RAAF. Daily Examiner, Thursday 20 August 1942*

Whitley Z9461 took off from RAF Chivenor, Barnstaple, North Devon, on 13 August 1942 to carry out an anti-submarine patrol and an aircraft search. At 1917 a message was received from the plane stating it was being attacked by 3 Arado Enemy aircraft in position 48 degrees north, 7 degrees west, approximately 100 miles west of Brest, France in the Atlantic Ocean. Nothing further was heard and when the aircraft became overdue a search was carried out by aircraft and surface vessels but without result. Later the crew in a dinghy of another aircraft, over which the Whitley was flying at the time of the attack and were later rescued, reported seeing an explosion in the distance.

## CREW:

RAF	Flight Lieutenant I Ralston - Pilot
RCAF	Pilot Officer C E Smith
RAF	Flight Sergeant R G Martin
RAAF	Flight Sergeant J M Mantell - Wireless Operator Air Gunner
RAF	Pilot Officer G Dawkins
RAF	Sergeant S T White

In 1950 it was recorded that the missing crew had lost their lives at sea.

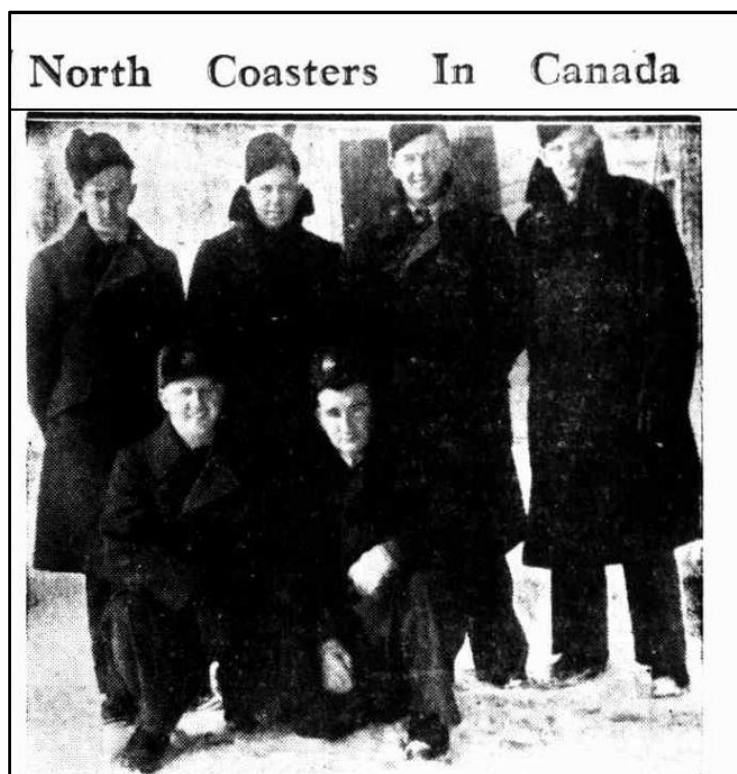
John Mantell is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial, the Grafton War Memorial, NSW and the Memorial to the Missing at Runnymede, Surrey.



*Memorial to the Missing - Runnymede, Surrey UK*



*Grafton War Memorial NSW*



With the thermometer a mere 12 degrees below freezing these North Coast men of the RAAF in training in Canada found it much warmer than a few weeks before, when the mercury went below zero, but they still needed their top coats. They are (back row, left to right) F G Jackson (Lismore), J. Mantell (Grafton) H. Harrison (Lismore) B. Yaeger (Coraki)  
Front Row: H. Hamlyn Harris (Murwillumbah), K Smith (Casino).

*Northern Star, Tuesday 10 June 1941*

# FRANCIS EDWIN MATHERS CGM

## 413221



AWM SUK10985

Pilot Officer Mathers was the son of Francis and Eunice Mathers of Pagewood, New South Wales he was born 8 November 1921. Francis enlisted at 2 Recruitment Centre, Sydney on 15 August 1941 and embarked for Britain on 2 July 1942 arriving in the United Kingdom 18 August. Before enlistment Francis had worked as a Bookkeeper/Clerk. He acquired his Flying Badge on 3 April 1942 and was promoted to Flight Sergeant 28 November 1942.

Pilot Officer Mathers was firstly posted to 76 Squadron and had his first flight with that Squadron on 18 March 1943, he was posted to 77 Squadron commencing flying on 5 May having been posted there with his British crew, after having completed PAFU, 20 OUT and 1652 Conversion Unit.

A few weeks later, on 2 June, he was wounded during air ops and spent some time in York Military Hospital. On 22 June 1943 Flight Sergeant Mathers and his crew successfully dropped their bomb load over Mulheim but unfortunately as they turned for home they were hit by flak. *"The starboard outer engine burst into flames, a few minutes later they were hit again and the port inner engine took fire. The fuel tanks were damaged and began to leak. The fires were extinguished but after having crossed the coast the Halifax was attacked three times by a Me110"* (Ref: 77 Squadron RAF). The Messerschmitt was shot down by the rear gunner Sergeant William Speedie. The aircraft suffered further damage when it made a wheels-up landing at Marlesham Heath. For his devotion to duty on this operation Flight Sergeant Mathers was immediately awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (CGM) the only one to a member of 77 Squadron and on 3 August 1943 he was commissioned as a Pilot Officer. Promulgated *London Gazette* 16 July 1943.

The rear gunner, Sgt. W F Spedie , and the Wireless Operator, Sgt Edward G O French, were both awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal.

On 5 September with the same crew as well as Sergeant Adams as second pilot, Pilot Officer Mathers left Elvington in Halifax JB839 on a raid on Mannheim. They failed to return and their aircraft was found the next day. They had been shot down and all killed.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer F E Mathers CGM - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant K A A Adams - 2 Pilot
RAF	Sergeant R Gough - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer W R Simpson - Navigator
RAF	Flight Sergeant W Goldsbrough - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant E G O French, DFM - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant G A Muffet - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Flight Sergeant W F Spedie, DFM - Rear Gunner



A 1946 report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated "a local priest reported that an aircraft was seen at approximately 1 am approaching from the direction of Bruchsal flying at a very low altitude. It crashed in swampy ground between the villages of Rheinhasen and Oberhausen, Germany". All the crew are buried in the Durnbach British Military Cemetery War Cemetery, Germany, in the Protestant faith and afforded full military honours. Pilot Officer Mathers is buried in 6.D.21.

Flight Sergeant Francis Mathers is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour in Sydney.

**FLEW WRECK  
HOME**

**Australian Pilot  
Decorated**

**MELBOURNE, Sunday.**—  
Flight-Sergeant Francis Edwin Mathers, 21, of Pagewood, pilot, has been awarded a Conspicuous Gallantry Medal and two R.A.F. air gunners D.F.M.s for their part in getting back to its base a badly damaged R.A.F. bomber and for having shot down an enemy fighter which attacked them.

Mathers is the third Australian to win the C.G.M.. His bomber was attacking an enemy target when heavily engaged by ground defences and repeatedly hit. Two engines were rendered unserviceable and the starboard aileron control shot away. Three petrol tanks which were pierced leaked rapidly. On the return flight the bomber gradually lost height and all movable equipment, including guns and ammunition was jettisoned.

Shortly after having crossed the enemy coast the bomber was intercepted by an enemy fighter. The fighter was shot into the sea.

*Sydney Morning Herald*  
Monday 19 July 1943

**CGM TO RAAF  
MAN**

**A VICTORIAN** airman serving in the RAF in England has been awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal.

He is Flt.-Sgt. Francis Edwin Mathers, 21, pilot, of Pagewood (Vic.), and is the third Australian to win the CGM.

His bomber was attacking an enemy target, when it was heavily engaged by ground defences and repeatedly hit.

Two engines were rendered unserviceable and the starboard aileron control was shot away.

Three petrol tanks which were pierced, leaked rapidly. On the homeward flight, the bomber gradually lost height and all movable equipment including guns and ammunition were jettisoned.

According to official reports, Mathers displayed superb airmanship to reach an airfield near the English coast where he made a successful crash-landing.

Two RAF air gunners were awarded D.F.M.s for their part in bringing the bomber home.

*Army News*  
Wednesday 21 July 1943

*The Imperial War Museum, Duxford, has an audio recording of Mathers who was interviewed after the raid on Mulheim on 22 June 1943*

## CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY MEDAL (FLYING)



Francis Edwin Mathers (413221)  
Royal Australian Air Force 77 Squadron RAF

One night in June, 1943, Sergeants French and Spedie were the wireless operator/air gunner and rear gunner respectively of an aircraft piloted by Flight Sergeant Mathers, which attacked Mulheim. Whilst over the target area, the bomber was subjected to heavy fire from the ground defences and was repeatedly hit. Two engines were rendered unserviceable in quick succession. While the starboard aileron control was shot away and 3 petrol tanks were pierced, all of which leaked rapidly. In spite of this, Flight Sergeant Mathers flew clear of the defences and set course for this country. On the return flight, the bomber gradually lost height and all movable equipment, including the guns of the mid-upper turret and some ammunition, were jettisoned. Shortly after crossing the enemy coast, the disabled aircraft was intercepted by an enemy fighter. In the ensuing engagement, Sergeant Spedie skilfully used his guns and, eventually with a devastating burst from close range, he shot the attacker down into the sea. The bomber was down to 500 feet but, displaying superb airmanship, Flight Sergeant Mathers, receiving much assistance from Sergeant French who diligently worked his wireless apparatus to obtain direction fixes, struggled on to reach an airfield near the coast. Although the undercarriage could not be lowered, this pilot successfully effected a crash-landing. In most harassing circumstances, Flight Sergeant Mathers displayed exceptional skill, courage and fortitude, while Sergeants French and Spedie displayed conduct worthy of the highest praise.

*Sergeants Edward George Owen French and William Spedie were both awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal*

Francis Mathers' father was presented with his CGM at Government House, Sydney on 13 April 1946 by the Governor General of Australia, Lord Gowrie.

London gazette 16 July 1943 page 3218 position 1

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette 11 November 1943 page 2435 position 8



*Pilot Officer  
Francis Edwin Mathers  
Only Past all Sorrow  
While We Remember You  
You Have Not Died*



*This haunting photograph of Durnback War Cemetery was taken by Spidge, Facebook*

Flying Officer Alexander Augustus VALE (115915), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 126 Squadron.

This officer has completed a very large number of sorties, including numerous fighter/bomber attacks on airfields, industrial targets and ports in Sicily and has achieved much success. In May, 1943, he attacked railway buildings at Syracuse, obtaining hits in the face of heavy anti-aircraft fire. Some days later he flew in a formation of fighters which acted as escort to a bomber force detailed to attack Augusta. Many hostile fighters were encountered and, in the ensuing combats, Flying Officer Vale damaged two of the enemy aircraft. This officer has displayed great keenness throughout.

Pilot Officer Colin Harben ROBINSON (N.Z.415786), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 158 Squadron.

One night in June, 1943, this officer captained an aircraft which attacked Bochum. On the return flight the aircraft was attacked by two enemy fighters. The aircraft was hit by gunfire and Pilot Officer Robinson was slightly injured in both legs by a cannon shell which passed between them. The rear turret was put out of action but, although the bomber was continuously attacked for some 15 minutes, Pilot Officer Robinson, by skilful evasive action, prevented further damage before the enemy aircraft were driven off. In very trying circumstances, this officer displayed great skill and determination. On two previous occasions his aircraft had been damaged by enemy action but he flew it safely to base.

#### Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Flying).

Aus.413221 Flight Sergeant Francis Edwin MATHERS, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 77 Squadron.

#### Distinguished Flying Medal.

1332367 Sergeant Edward George Owen FRENCH, No. 77 Squadron.

1555010 Sergeant William SPEDIE, No. 77 Squadron.

One night in June, 1943, Sergeants French and Spedie were the wireless operator/air gunner and rear gunner respectively of an aircraft piloted by Flight Sergeant Mathers, which attacked Mulheim. Whilst over the target area, the bomber was subjected to heavy fire from the ground defences and was repeatedly hit. Two engines were rendered unserviceable in quick succession, while the starboard aileron control was shot away and 3 petrol tanks were pierced, all of which leaked rapidly. In spite of this, Flight Sergeant Mathers flew clear of the defences and set course for this country. On the return flight, the bomber gradually lost height and all movable equipment, including the guns of the mid-upper turret and some ammunition, were jettisoned. Shortly after crossing the enemy coast, the disabled aircraft was intercepted by an enemy fighter. In the ensuing engagement, Sergeant Spedie skilfully used his guns and, eventually with a devastating burst from close range, he shot the attacker down into the sea. The bomber was down to 500 feet but, displaying superb airmanship, Flight Sergeant Mathers, receiving much assistance from Sergeant French who diligently worked his wireless apparatus to obtain direction fixes, struggled on to reach an airfield near the coast. Although the undercarriage could not be lowered, this pilot successfully effected a crash-landing. In most harassing circumstances, Flight Sergeant Mathers displayed exceptional skill, courage and fortitude, while Sergeants French and Spedie displayed conduct worthy of the highest praise.

#### Distinguished Flying Medal.

N.Z.416101 Flight Sergeant Wilfred Eric ELDER, Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 76 Squadron.

This airman was the captain and pilot of an aircraft which was detailed to attack Krefeld one night in June, 1943. On the outward flight, 1 engine of the bomber became unserviceable but, despite this, Flight Sergeant Elder continued to the target and pressed home a determined attack, afterwards flying the aircraft back to base. This airman displayed great skill and tenacity throughout, setting an inspiring example.

1381360 Sergeant Richard Sidney TAMPLIN, No. 23 Squadron.

As navigator, this airman has participated in many sorties, some of them whilst based in England. On one occasion, when his aircraft crash-landed and caught fire, Sergeant Tamplin

was mainly instrumental in extricating his seriously injured pilot from the cockpit. He showed complete disregard for his own welfare. In the Middle East, Sergeant Tamplin has participated in many attacks on rail communications in Sicily and Italy. This airman has displayed a high degree of skill and keenness.

Air Ministry, 16th July, 1943.

#### ROYAL AIR FORCE.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards:—

#### Distinguished Flying Cross.

Acting Wing Commander Walter Leslie JONES (43188), No. 113 Squadron.

Acting Wing Commander Harley Charles STUMM (70656), Reserve of Air Force Officers, No. 11 Squadron.

Flying Officer Owen Raymond CHAPMAN (N.Z.414589), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 268 Squadron.

Flying Officer Eric Wallace DUNLOP (106168), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 60 Squadron.

Flying Officer Alan Richard HILL (122080), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 268 Squadron.

Flying Officer David Samuel LORD (49149), No. 31 Squadron.

Flying Officer Trevor Eyre Drew MITCHELL (49740), No. 268 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Huon Andrew CHANDLER (N.Z.403944), Royal New Zealand Air Force, No. 615 Squadron.

#### Distinguished Flying Medal.

Aus.404160 Flight Sergeant (now Pilot Officer) Edward Leslie James ANDERSON, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 11 Squadron.

1382781 Flight Sergeant Frederick John BARNES, No. 268 Squadron.

581215 Flight Sergeant Frank Alfred HARBORD, No. 60 Squadron.

1127533 Acting Flight Sergeant Frank ROBINSON, No. 270 Squadron.

The above awards are for gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations.

Air Ministry, 16th July, 1943.

#### ROYAL AIR FORCE.

#### GENERAL DUTIES BRANCH.

Fig. Offs. to be Fit. Lts. (war subs.):—  
1st May 1943.

J. A. MCCUDDEN (45645).

A. WHITBY, D.F.M. (45721).

J. G. MCCATHIE (45947). 8th May 1943.

W. H. ARUNDEL (46310). 10th May 1943.

F. SUMNER (45840). 14th May 1943.

15th May 1943.

L. V. HARCOURT (45807).

L. W. G. WARD (45743).

G. F. HODDER (45841). 22nd May 1943.

Plt. Offs. to be Fig. Offs. (war subs.):—

11th May 1943.

D. C. J. COLLIER (Lt. E. Lan. R.) (50106).

R. CROGER (Lt. R.A.) (50109).

A. R. FARRUP (Lt. The Queen's R.) (50110).

H. T. FRY (Lt. King's Own R.) (50107).

B. M. GILES (Lt. R.T.R.) (50108).

W. C. GRIFFIN (Lt. R.A.) (50112).

C. W. HAYTHORNTHWAITHE (Lt. R.A.) (50111).

D. G. BENNETT (Lt. R.A.S.C.) (50288). 20th May 1943.

Plt. Offs. (prob.) to be Fig. Offs. on prob. (war subs.):—

D. E. C. CLARKE (49557). 2nd Jan. 1943.

2nd May 1943.

R. C. BRYANT (50592).

G. B. SUTHERLAND (51742).

W. W. BROWN (50803). 4th May 1943.

A. A. ARGENT (51740). 5th May 1943.

9th May 1943.

A. DUNHILL (50895).

H. W. GILL (51298).

J. N. COLLYER (50175). 10th May 1943.

F. BROCKLEBANK (50588). 13th May 1943.

J. F. DIXON (50856). 14th May 1943.

L. W. J. GAY (51733). 16th May 1943.



# KENNETH WILLIAM MORRISON

## 22395



AWM P09140.001

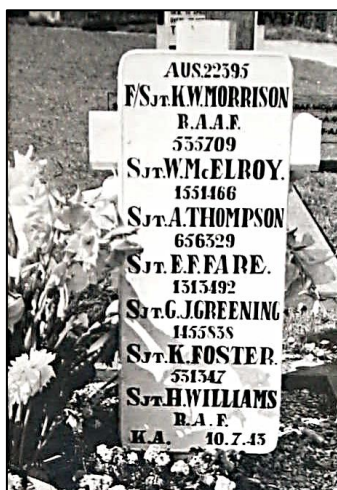
Flight Sergeant Kenneth Morrison, the son of William and Bertha Morrison, was born on 26 April 1913 at Wiluna, Western Australia. He was married and a practising Chartered Accountant before enlisting.

Kenneth enlisted at Brisbane on 13 May 1940 which sent him on a course to being a RAAF pilot receiving his Flying Badge on 2 April 1942. He left Sydney for the United Kingdom in June. Ken had been promoted to Flight Sergeant with effect 30 October 1942. After completing more courses in England he joined 77 Squadron RAF the beginning of July 1943.

Less than two weeks later whilst piloting Halifax JD126 over Arum, Holland on 10 July 1943 his plane was hit by flak and crashed at Witmarsum and exploded. The remains of all the crew were buried by local inhabitants in the Wonsersdeel (Witmarsum) Protestant church yard in a communal grave. The remains were recovered after the war and in 1952 Kenneth was reinterred at the Jonkerbos War Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands Collective grave 20. Row H 1-7 where he rests with his friends.

*His brother, Lieutenant Leslie Morrison (QX36772), was killed in action in Papua on the Sanananda Track on 7 December 1942. He was buried on the side of the track and reinterred after the war to Port Moresby (Bomana) War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea.*

Flight Sergeant Morrison is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour in Sydney.





*Flight Sergeant  
Kenneth William Morrison  
Always Beloved in Your  
Loved Ones' Hearts*



*Lieutenant  
Leslie Andrew Morrison  
His Duty Nobly Done*

**MORRISON** – In proud and loving memory of my dear sons, Lieut Leslie Andrew, killed in action Buna Dec 7 1942 and F.Sgt Kenneth Morrison lost in air operations over Germany 1943.

“Two Sons’ duty nobly done”

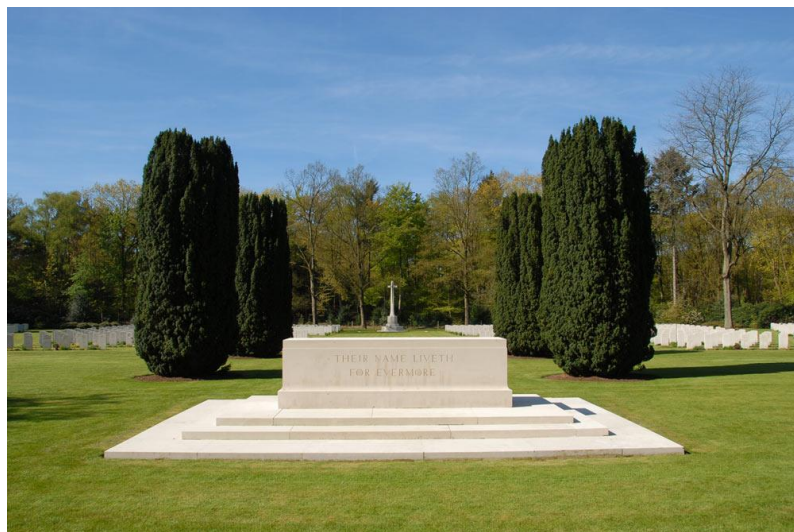
Inserted by Mum and Pop

**MORRISON** – In fond memory of Lieutenant Leslie Andrew killed in action Buna Dec 7, 1942 and brother Ken lost in air operations over Germany 1943.

Always remembered by the Scanlan Family

*Courier Mail*

*Saturday 7 December 1946*



*Jonkerbos War Cemetery  
Netherlands*

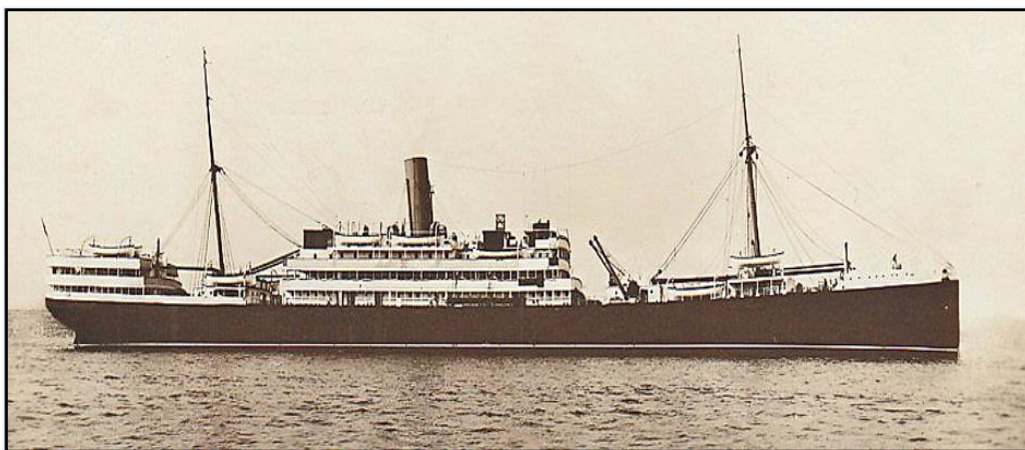
# RODERICK DE BURGH MORRISON

## 415435



Warrant Officer Roderick de Burgh Morrison was the son of Ulic and Gladys Morrison of Guildford, Western Australia . A salesman working for Harris Scarfe & Sandovers of Perth before joining the RAAF, he was born at Guildford in February 1922.

Roderick enlisted 12 October 1941 at No 4 Recruiting Centre, Perth, Western Australia. After training in Australia at Ballarat, WAGS Course 21, and West Sale (BAGS) and obtaining his Air Gunners Badge on 23 July 1942 he left from Melbourne for the United Kingdom per the *SS Ruahine* via New Zealand, arriving there in January 1943. He joined 77 Squadron RAF on 7 July, 1943.



*SS Ruahine*

Halifax LK729 took off from RAF Elvington on the night of 28/29 January 1944 detailed to bomb Berlin. Nothing was heard from the plane after take off. Six of the crew lost their lives and Sergeant Garner was to become a POW.

### CREW:

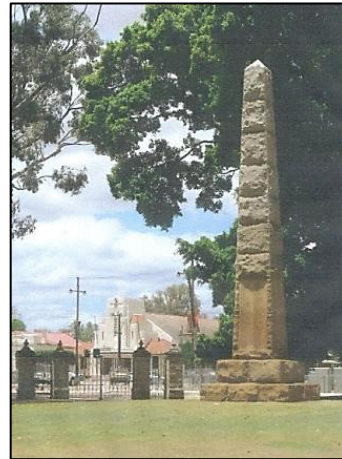
RAF	Pilot Officer J O R Webster - Pilot
RAF	Pilot Officer B J Kearley - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant G C Garner - Navigator
RAF	Flight Sergeant L R Lewis - Air Bomber
RAF	Flight Sergeant J W I Robinson - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant E R Prince - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Warrant Officer R de B Morrison - Rear Gunner

Warrant Officer Morrison was buried at Fleckenzechlin Ostprignitz, Germany Grave 1 Row 2. After the war many were moved from outlying cemeteries to the Berlin War Cemetery. Roderick was reinterred in Grave 9.J.6 in the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery. Sergeant Prince is also buried in the Berlin War Cemetery – Webster, Kearley, Lewis and Robinson have no known grave. Sergeant G C Garner became a Prisoner of War.

Warrant Officer Morrison is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial the Guildford War Memorial, Western Australia and the Cenotaph Undercroft State War Memorial, Kings Park W.A.



*Warrant Officer  
Roderick De Burgh Morrison  
His Duty Nobly Done*



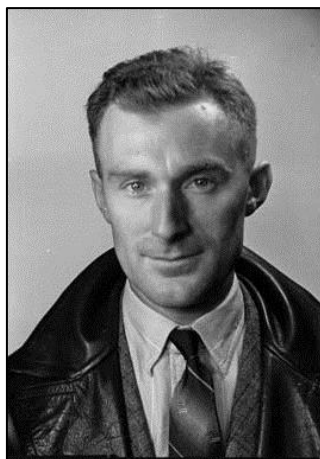
*Guildford WA  
War Memorial*



*State War Memorial  
Kings Park  
Perth, western Australia*



## NORMAN LINDSAY NEWELL 428888



Flight Sergeant Norman Newell was born 2 March 1913 at Paddington in Sydney the son of Norman and Mavis Newell. He married Margaret Sutton on 5 April 1939 at St Georges Church, Hurstville. An Accountant working for Premier Glass Company before enlisting in Sydney on 14 October 1942. He received his Air Gunners badge 24 June 1943.

Norman embarked at Brisbane for the United Kingdom on 14 July 1943 arriving there 26 August, he arrived at 77 Squadron 20 December 1943 and was promoted to Flight Sergeant four days later.

Halifax LW 341 left RAF Elvington on the night of 15/16 February 1944 – during a bombing raid to Berlin the plane crashed into the Baltic Sea south of the islands of Lolland and Falster.

### CREW:

RAF	Warrant Officer A F Edmunds - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant B Coughlin - Flight Engineer
RCAF	Flying Officer R E Padget - Navigator
RAF	Flight Sergeant J J Kennedy - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant C Tyler - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant N L Newell - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Flight Sergeant R W Wheeler - Rear Gunner

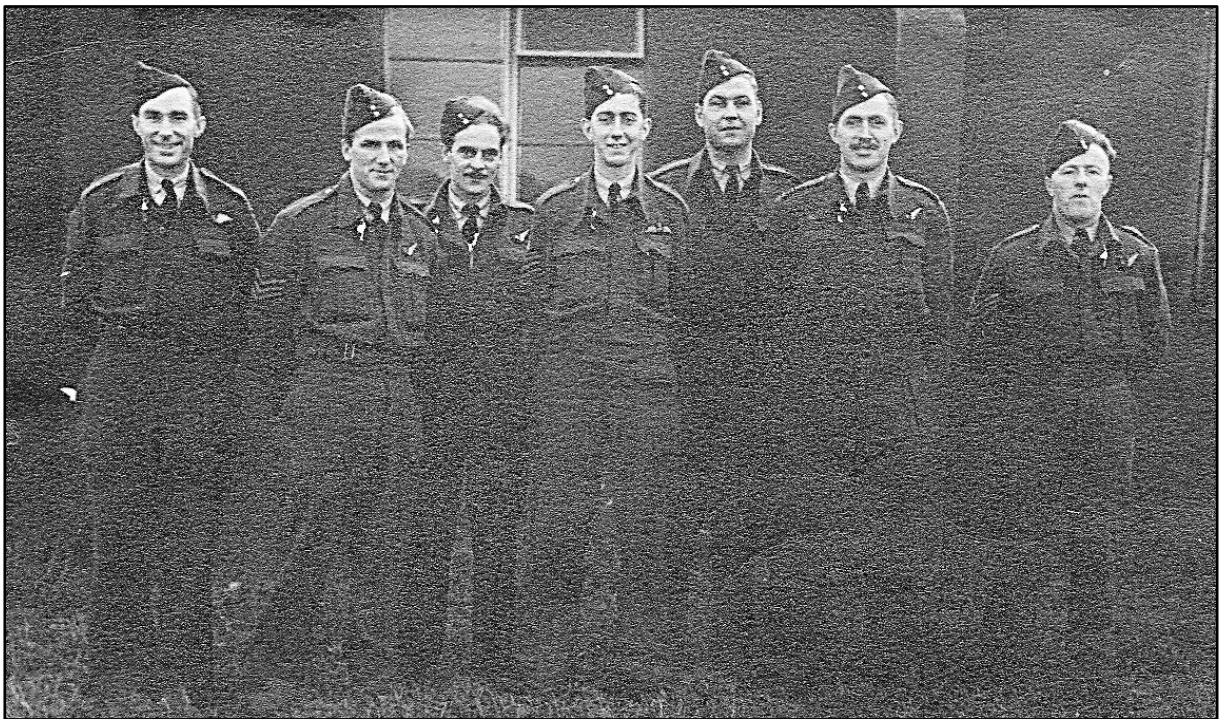
The aircraft crashed in the Baltic and all crew were killed. Flight Sergeant Newell was found on 30 August having drifted ashore on Riddertoft Strand Beach, a peninsula between the fjord of Nakskov and the Baltic Sea and buried in the Kappel Churchyard on the Danish Island of Lolland on 1 September 1944 by Vicar Albert Madsen at the request of the German Wehrmacht. The other crew members have no known grave.

The churchyard contains the graves of four Commonwealth airmen, Norman Newell and Flying Officer Peter Pritchard (RAF), who died 11 June 1941, and two unidentified graves. Norman is in Grave 8.

Flight Sergeant Newell is remembered with Honour at the Australian War memorial and the Roll of Honour at Carlton, (Kogarah) NSW.



*Flight Sergeant  
Norman Lindsay Newell  
To Live in the Hearts  
Of Those we Love  
Is not to Die*



*The crew of L.W. 341 - Norman Newell on the left.  
Photographer unknown International Bomber Command*



## KAPPEL KIRKEGÅRD - MONUMENT



*Here rest 4 allied airmen. They fell also in the fight for the freedom of Denmark.*

The memorial was erected with donations collected from the people of Western Zalandia.

# JACK STEWART NOTT

## 421543



Flying Officer Jack Nott was the son of Charles and Beatrice Nott and the husband of Airlie. Born 1918 at Armidale a bricklayer/builder by trade he had enlisted on 1 February 1942. After training in Australia he left for Canada on 2 July 1942 where he underwent a number of courses before moving to England. He commenced at 77 Squadron RAF on 9 November 1943 and had his first flight with them the next day.

Halifax MZ698 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 2320 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944, detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany. MZ698 was one of seven aircraft from 77 Squadron that failed to return after the mission.

Flying Officer Nott, the only Australian on board, was the Air Bomber, the other seven crew members belonged to the RAF. The aircraft crashed at St Oedenrode (Noord-rabant), a small town north of Eindhoven and west of the main road leading to Uden, Holland. Five of the crew were killed in the crash and Flight Sergeants Needham and Bulmer became POWs.

### CREW:

RAF	Flight Lieutenant S E Wodehouse
RAF	Flying Officer A H Ford
RAF	Sergeant D D Roberts
RAF	Flight Sergeant J H Bulmer
RAAF	Flying Officer J S Nott - Air Bomber
RAF	Flight Sergeant J W Needham
RAF	Sergeant R Cotter
RAF	Sergeant J H Brown

Flying Officer Nott evaded capture and was in hiding with the Dutch underground movement. He was conveyed to a transit address, the home of 60 year old Jacoba Pulskens, in the town of Tilburg, Holland. The Germans captured a member of the underground and learnt of the presence of Nott plus two other evaders, (R E Carter RCAF & R A Walker RAF). They raided the house and these three were captured and shot outside the house by the Gestapo on 9 July 1944. Flying Officer Nott and the two other airmen were shot whilst POWs in contravention of the Geneva Convention. Their bodies were firstly taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Tilburg and placed in coffins and then removed to the Vught Concentration Camp and it was assumed they were cremated. Flying Officer Nott has no known grave and his name is commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede. He was classified as killed while a prisoner of war. *Ref: Wingless by Tom Roberts*

*Mrs Jacora Pulskins was taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp and executed. The Germans involved in this war crime were later tried by a War Crime Tribunal and found guilty. Four were hanged. It was said she voluntarily took the place of a mother with children hoping to save their lives.*



The five crew members killed in the crash are buried in the Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery

Flying Officer Nott was posthumously Mentioned in Despatches – Promulgated in London Gazette 13 June 1946 page 2818, in recognition of his actions in endeavouring to avoid capture by the enemy. He was survived by his wife and son Antony.

He is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Armidale High School WW2 Honour Roll, Armidale City Bowling Club and the Prisoners of War Memorial at Ballarat, Victoria.



*Through paint and canvas, Canberra artist and Gallipoli Art Award winner Margaret Hadfield (Zorgdrager) captures this sacrifice and enduring legacy. In the forefront, the graves of the Australian Lancaster crew of pilot Michael Skarratt. Flying Officer Jack Nott (right front), Flight Lieutenant Wallace Martin (right back), and Pilot Officer Lionel Gibbs (left front) offer ghostly images. Canberra Times 20 May 2014*

After the war, the Dutch turned in those who murdered the three airmen and they were hanged. A memorial was erected to Jacoba near her home and another opposite bearing the names of the three airmen. Jack's son, Tony, who was only three when his father was murdered, travelled from Australia as a special guest at the unveiling.

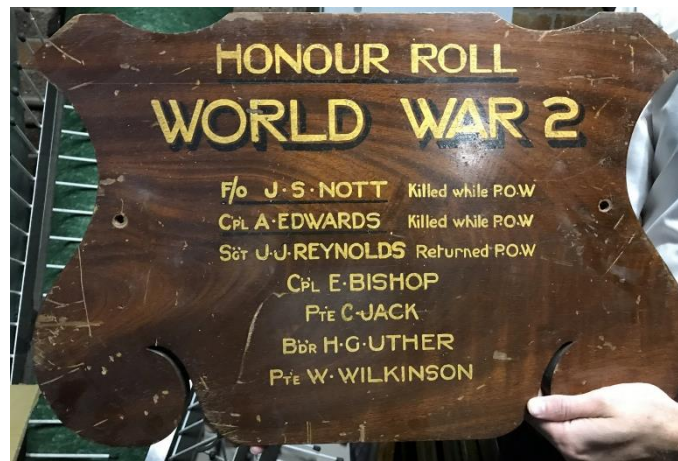


Memorials to Jacoba Pulskens and the three airmen in Tilburg the Netherlands

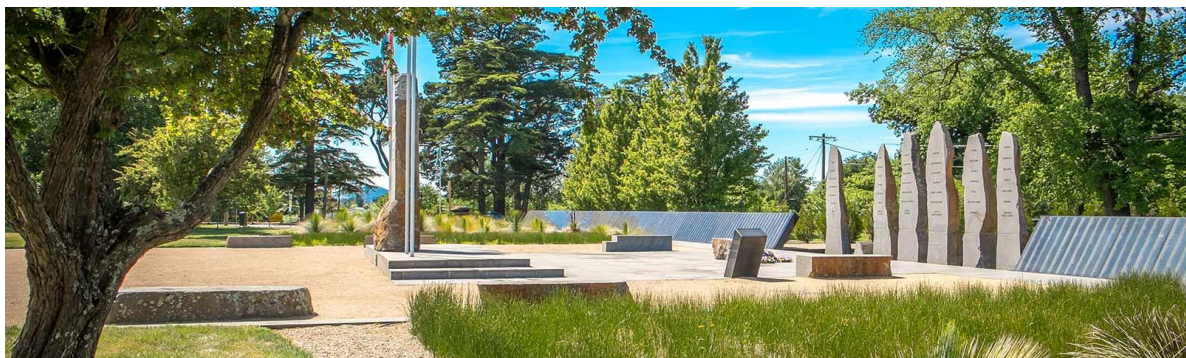




*Armidale High School - photograph Graham Wilson*



*Armidale City Bowling Club Photograph – Graham Wilson*



*Prisoner of War Memorial, Ballarat, Victoria*

# FRANCIS JOHN O'GRADY

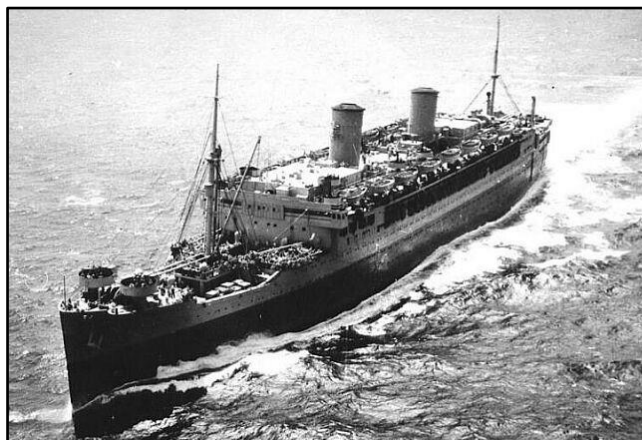
## 411811



*Photo – St Patrick's College*

Flight Sergeant Francis O'Grady was the son of John and Lillian O'Grady, born at Rose Bay, Sydney on 26 March 1920. He attended St Patrick's College at Strathfield. A Clerk with the Post Master General's Department before enlisting on 25 May 1941 at Sydney. Loved football and cricket.

After initial training Francis left Sydney on 16 October 1941 per the *SS Mariposa* which by then had been converted to a troop carrier. (see picture below). His attachment to the RCAF started as of the day he boarded the *Mariposa*. They sailed to Auckland to pick up men from the RNZAF leaving Auckland 20 October, stopping at Suva before arriving in Canada on 4 November where he completed his training first at Calgary 3SFTS then at Halifax in March the following year before going to England on 28 March 1942. Francis was promoted to Flight Sergeant on 27 August and posted 77 Squadron on 2 December 1942.



*SS Mariposa*

*maritime.com*

Halifax JD 152 took off from RAF Elvington at 2239 hours on the night of 27/28 May 1943, detailed to bomb Essen, Germany.

### CREW:

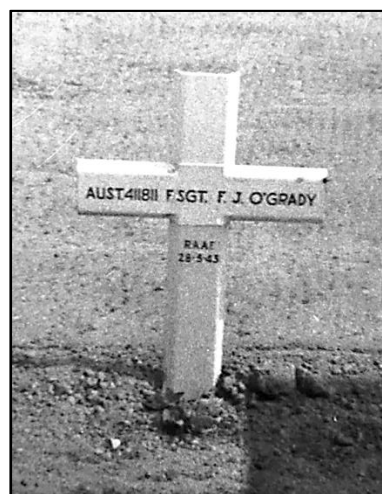
RAAF	Flight Sergeant F J O'Grady - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant G H Garrard - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer B C McGrath - Navigator
RAF	Flight Sergeant C Clarke - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant W R Beadsmoore - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant W A Manning - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant C B Anderson - Rear Gunner

A report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated "*the aircraft crashed in flames at Lavesum about 4 kms north of Haltern, Germany*". All the crew were killed and they are buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Kleve, Germany. Plot XII Row F No 10.

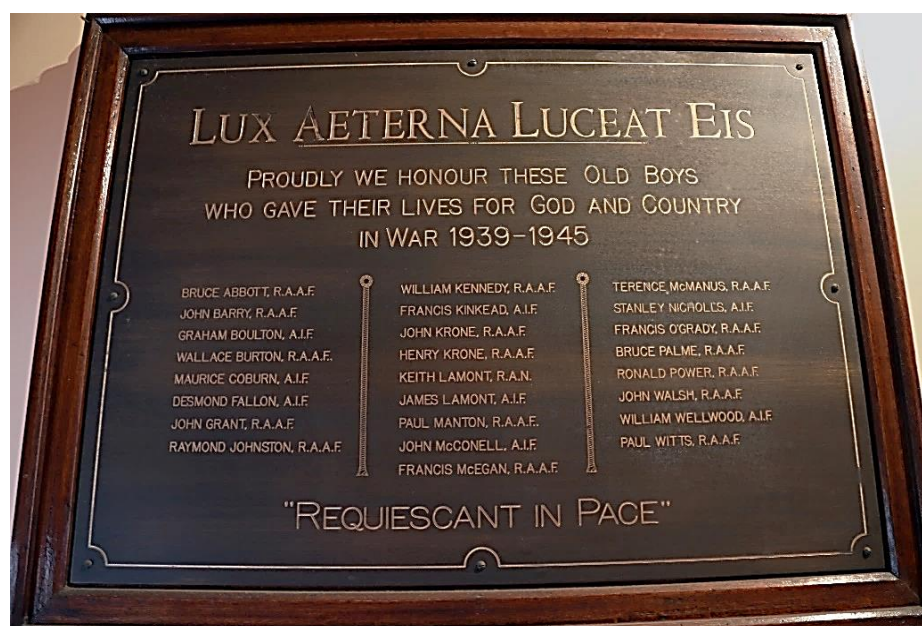


Two months before the fatal crash Francis was the pilot of Halifax JB865, with the same crew except for Sergeant Beadsmoore, when, on 4 April, they were hit by flak as they were leaving the target area of Essen and sustained damage and loss of brake pressure. They returned safely to Elvington.

Flight Sergeant O'Grady is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour, Sydney and St Patrick's College, Strathfield.



*Flight Sergeant  
Francis John O'Grady  
Eternal Rest Grant Unto Him, O Lord;  
May He Rest In Peace (cwgc)*



*St Patrick's Honour Roll*

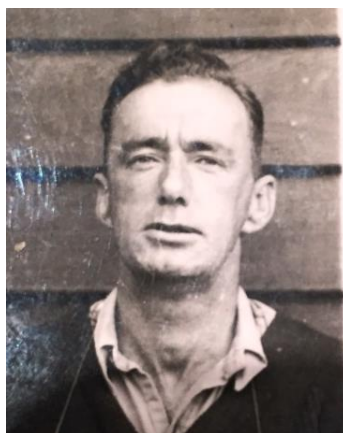


*Sydney War Memorial – Hyde Park*



# JOHN PATRICK O'MEARA

## 410370



Warrant Officer John O'Meara was the son of Michael and Susan O'Meara and was born on 30 April 1909 in Melbourne, Victoria and educated at Christian Brothers College and St Patricks College Ballarat. The husband of Kathleen O'Meara they had a daughter, Patricia. He was a school teacher by profession.

Enlisted 6 December 1941 at No 1 Recruiting Centre, Melbourne. Francis started his Wireless Air Gunners Course 5 March 1942 (WAGS Course 23), finishing in October before moving onto 3BAGS at Sale and acquiring his Air Gunners Badge. He embarked in Melbourne 15 January 1943 to UK arriving 19 March posted in to No 77 Squadron 23 March. Warrant Officer 12 May 1944.

Halifax NA 508 took off from RAF Full Sutton, Yorkshire at 2315 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944, detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany. Shot down at 02.16 at Amstelveen near Amsterdam.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer R A W Blair - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H L Moore - Flight Engineer
RAAF	Pilot Officer L G Pratt - Observer
RAAF	Flight Sergeant G A Armstrong - Air Bomber
RAAF	Warrant Officer J P O'Meara - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flying Officer J M Date - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant D G Tastin - Tail Gunner

A 1947 report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated "*the Communal Police at Neuwer-Amstel reported that the aircraft crashed in flames at Neuwer-Amstel on the night of 16/17 June, 1944. German documents confirmed that only one body was recovered that of WO O'Meara*" He is buried at the Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Netherlands in a joint grave with an unidentified comrade. 12.F.2. The bodies were exhumed on 1 July 1953 and formally identified.

Until 1990 the other six crew members had no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey. It was in June of that year that the wreckage of NA508 was uncovered by the Recovery Team of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, including the remains of five of the crew, who were buried at the Bergen op Zoom Canadian War Cemetery on 8 October 1991.

Warrant Officer O'Meara is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour in Melbourne



*Warrant Officer  
John Patrick O'Meara  
His Duty Fearlessly and Nobly Done  
Ever Remembered*



*Back Row – Left to Right:  
L Pratt, J Date, D Tastin, H Moore  
Front Row – Left to Right:  
J O'Meara, R. Blair, G. Armstrong  
(donor of photograph unknown)*



*Members of the Crew  
Of Halifax NA508*

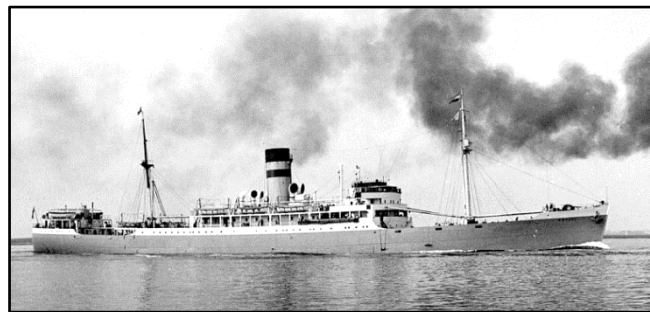
# ROBERT JAMES PEGGS

## 415913



Pilot Officer Robert James (Jim) Peggs, the son of Robert and Pathama Peggs of Kalamunda, Western Australia, was born at Pingelly, Western Australia on 21 February 1924. Jim was educated at Perth Boys School and Senior Technical College obtaining the Leaving Certificate. He worked as a storeman before enlisting on 29 March 1942 at 4 Recruiting Centre, Perth.

He qualified as an air gunner in April 1943 at 3 BAGs, West Sale, having also completed the Wireless Air Gunners Course 33 at Ballarat. Jim left Sydney per the *SS Umtali* on 22 June arriving in England in September and was attached to 466 in December of that year. He flew his first flight in England on 8 December 1943. Flew 7 sorties with 466 before he was posted to 77 Squadron RAF in May the following year and a month later promoted to Pilot Officer.



*SS Umtali*

*photo Kevin Blair*

Jim and three other crew members were killed when their Halifax LL138 crashed after an operation bombing railway facilities at Orleans, in France, on 23 May 1944, having taken off from RAF Full Sutton. Just ten minutes after releasing their bomb load they were attacked by a night fighter damaging the controls and forcing the Halifax into an uncontrollable dive. Three of the crew managed to bale out of the stricken aircraft the remainder of the crew were killed during the initial attack. Jim and three other crew members were buried at Seris Communal Cemetery, France on 26 May. The other crew members (Haworth, Hale and Taylor) were taken as prisoners of war. Flight Sergeant Hale died within a few days of his injuries and is buried in the Nantes (Pont-du-Cens) Communal Cemetery. Taylor also died as a POW, and Haworth was returned to England at the end of the war.

### CREW:

RAF	Warrant Officer G T Haworth - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant R A Rose - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flight Sergeant C T Hale - Navigator
RCAF	Flying Officer A A Beatty - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant R G James - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Pilot Officer R J Peggs - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant J D Taylor - Rear Gunner

Remembered with Honour Australian War Memorial and the Centotaph Undecroft, State War Memorial, Kings Park Western Australia



*Left to Right: R.A. Rose (RAF), R.J. Peggs (RAAF),  
R.G. James (RAF), A.M. Beatty (RCAF)*  
(photo Isabelle Perrot)



*Pilot Officer  
Robert James Peggs  
Not Just To-day  
but Every Day  
In Silence We Remember you.  
Our Son "Jim"*



*State War Memorial,  
Kings Park, Perth Western Australia.*



# LANCELOT GEORGE PRATT

## 425210



Pilot Officer Lancelot Pratt was the son of George and Eva Pratt and the husband of Helena Pratt of Redcliffe in Queensland. He was born 10 September 1916 at Toowoomba, Queensland. He worked as a sleeper cutter before enlisting at Brisbane on 31 January 1942. He and Helena had two children, Robert George and Dawn Isobel.

Having obtained his Air Observers Badge and Navigators Badge he embarked at Melbourne on 6 March 1943 and after time in Halifax, Canada he set sail for England on 8 April, arriving in the United Kingdom 17 April. After postings to 27 OTU, 11 PDRC and 41 Base Headquarters he arrived at 77 Squadron on 23 March 1944. He received his commission to Pilot Officer on 15 June 1944.

Halifax NA 508 took off from RAF Full Sutton, Yorkshire at 2315 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944, detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany. One of seven 77 Squadron Halifaxes lost on this raid

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer R A W Blair - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant H L Moore - Flight Engineer
RAAF	Pilot Officer L G Pratt - Observer
RAAF	Flight Sergeant G A Armstrong - Air Bomber
RAAF	Warrant Officer J P O'Meara - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flying Officer J M Date - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant D G Tastin - Tail Gunner

A 1947 report by a Missing Research & Enquiry team stated "*the Communal Police at Neuwer-Amstel reported that the aircraft crashed in flames at Neuwer-Amstel on the night of 16/17 June, 1944. German documents confirmed that only one body was recovered that of WO O'Meara*" He is buried at the Bergen-Op-Zoom War Cemetery, Netherlands.

Until 1990 the other six crew members had no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey. It was in June of that year that the wreckage of NA508 was uncovered by the Recovery Team of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, including the remains of five of the crew, who were buried at the Bergen op Zoom Canadian War Cemetery on 8 October 1991.

Pilot Officer Pratt is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Memorial to the Missing at Runnymede.



*Back Row – Left to Right: L Pratt, J Date, D Tastin, H Moore  
Front Row left to Right: J O'Meara, R Blair, G Armstrong (donor of photograph unknown)*

**PRATT** - In memory of my dear Husband  
425210. Pilot Officer Lancelot George Pratt,  
presumed to have lost his life over Germany 17  
June 1944.

Inserted by his loving Wife and two children.

**PRATT** - In loving memory of P/O Observer  
Lance Pratt, presumed to have lost his life over  
Sterkrade, Germany. 17/6/44

Always remembered

Inserted by his Mother, Lewis & brothers and  
sister.

*Courier Mail  
Monday 17 June 1946*



*Members of the crew  
Of Halifax NA 508*

# JOHN DOWNING PYE

## 404262

Pilot Officer John Pye the son of Albert and Lillian Pye and husband of Marcia, was born 4 October 1917 at Tamworth. John was with the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion from 1936 to 1940 until he signed up to join the RAAF on 19 July 1940 in Brisbane.

He completed pilot training in Australia, acquiring his flying badge on 13 January 1941, before being posted to England arriving there in August 1941 where he furthered his flying skills at 19 OTU before joining 77 Squadron on 5 October 1941. He was promoted to Pilot Officer on 26 February 1943.

Halifax DT796 took off from RAF Elvington at 0039 hours on the night of 26/27 April 1943, detailed to bomb Duisberg, Germany.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer J D Pye - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant E J Tassell - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer R C Stewart - Navigator
RAF	Pilot Officer D W Atter - Air Bomber
RAF	Flight Sergeant G E Barfoot - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant P Gibbs - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant J R Wells - Rear Gunner

Crashed into Essen after being coned by searchlights of the 4.Flakscheinwerfer – Abteilung 518 and hit by heavy flak and crashed on the Scheidstrasse at Essen-Haarzoph, Germany. Two of the crew Pilot Officer Pye and Sergeant Wells were killed in the crash and the others became POWs.

Pilot Officer Pye was initially buried in the North Military Cemetery Dusseldorf but was re-interred on 2 October 1946 to the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.

*Flying Officer Stewart a POW took part in the mass escape of Air Force Officers from Sagan. He was re-captured and handed over to the Gestapo and was murdered on or about 29 March 1944. He is buried in the Poznam Old Garrison Cemetery, Poland.*

Pilot Officer Pye is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour, Ballina, NSW.



*Pilot Officer John Downing Pye  
Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Have Mercy on His Soul*



*Ballina RSL Sub-Branch Museum*

*Photograph - Roger Johnson*



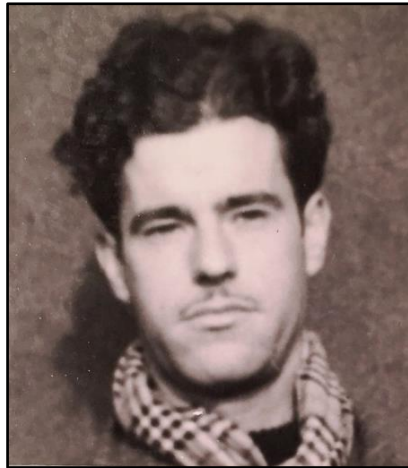
*Reichswald Forest War Cemetery.*

*Photograph Hans van der Veen*



# LOUIS FREDERICK SAMSON

## 415186



Sergeant Louis Samson was the son of Horace and May Samson of Gosnells in Western Australia. He was born 29 August 1921 at Fremantle in Western Australia and educated at Nedlands State School, Claremont Central School, Perth Senior Technical College and enjoyed outdoor sports - football, swimming and surfing. Employed as a Grocers' Assistant before enlisting on 21 July 1941 at Perth, Western Australia.

He attained his Flying Badge in March 1942 and made Sergeant the following month. Louis left for overseas on 16 June 1942 from Sydney arriving United Kingdom 25 August 1942.

Appeared on the casualty list issued from Berlin International Red Cross quoting German sources.

Halifax JB847 took off from RAF Elvington at 2141 hours on the night of 8/9 April 1943, detailed to bomb Duisberg, Germany.

### CREW:

RAF	Flight Lieutenant J W Balley - Pilot
RAAF	Sergeant L F Samson - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pilot
RAF	Sergeant J W R H Woodley - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant T S McStay - Navigator
RAF	Pilot Officer R Wilson - Air Bomber
RAF	Flight Sergeant P A Greene - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant R W Hedicker - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant T Crossland - Rear Gunner

The aircraft was homebound at 15,000 feet when, over St Quentin, it was attacked from below by a night fighter. The order to bale out was given, but only Pilot Officer Wilson succeeded in leaving the aircraft before it crashed at Moyvilliers near Estree-St-Denis in France. Wilson became a POW and the other seven crew members perished. They were buried in the Creil Communal Cemetery, France on 12 April. Sergeant Samson is buried in Plot 2, grave 350.

Sergeant Samson was a member of 1658 Conversion Unit, attached to 77 Squadron, at the time of his death on 9 April 1943.

Sergeant Samson is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial, the Nedlands, Western Australia, Roll of Honour and the Undercroft of the State War Memorial, Western Australia.



*Sergeant Louis Frederick Samson  
At the Going Down of the Sun  
And in the Morning  
We Will Remember Him*

In 1946 flowers and a fragment of the aircraft were forwarded to his mother by the RAAF from Madame Benoit who stated *“that she and her daughter were able to get past the German sentries who were guarding the scene of the aircraft crash, and found your son’s body lying at the foot of a tree. He was dead but they put some flowers on his body and managed to take away a fragment of the aircraft”* Ref NAA



*Location Unknown*

# EDWIN ALFRED SIMS

## 413676



Flight Sergeant Edwin Sims the son of Edwin and Ethel Sims was born June 1914 at Lidcombe, Sydney. He enlisted 12 September 1941 No 2 Recruiting Centre, Sydney. Prior to enlisting Edwin had worked as a truck driver and had some experience flying with Kingsford Smith Air Services.

He left Melbourne 22 May 1942 for Canada arriving 20 June, four months later he arrived in the United Kingdom and after further training and familiarization he joined 77 Squadron on 16 June 1943. Edwin had been promoted to Flight Sergeant on 9 April 1943.

Edwin completed Course 58 Empire Training Scheme at the No 6 Service Flying Training School at Dunnville, Ontario, Canada between June and October 1942 where he obtained his Flying Badge on 19 October.

Halifax JD213 took off from RAF Elvington at 2329 hours on the night of 22/23 June 1943, detailed to bomb Mulheim, Germany.

### CREW:

RAAF	Flight Sergeant E A Sims - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant J Westbarn - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flight Sergeant D H R Kelly - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant T W C Luther - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant T Ogle - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Sergeant J Fitzsimmons - Mid Upper Gunner
RCAF	Sergeant O D Thompson - Rear Gunner

The plane was shot down by a night fighter, all the crew were killed and it was presumed they had lost their lives at sea. Crashed in the North Sea 30 km northwest from Ostende, West Vlaanderen

Flight Sergeant Sims is buried in the Wenduine Communal Cemetery, Belgium. His body was washed ashore and he was originally buried in grave 284 marked Unknown, the body was exhumed in 1946 and identified as Edwin Sims and reinterred in Grave 10, row B.

Flight Sergeant Kelly is buried in the Bergen General Cemetery and Sergeant Ogle is buried in the Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery. The other four crew members have no known grave and they are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede.

Flight Sergeant Sims is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial.



*Flight Sergeant  
Edwin Alfred Sims  
His duty fearlessly and nobly done.  
Ever remembered*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00943.001

*Group portrait of members of Course 58 who attended the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) at the No. 6 Service Flying Training School at Dunnville Airport, Canada, between June and October 1942.  
Edwin Sims is 5<sup>th</sup> from left in the back row.*



*Left to right - R.K. Inch, K.W. Porter, U/K  
K.H. Walsh, R.E. Parrack, U/K, E.A. Sims*



# BADEN HENRY STEVENS

## 422312



Flight Sergeant Baden Stevens was the son of Frederick and Bertha Elvira Stevens born on 25 June 1917 at Neutral Bay Sydney. He married Alice Hamerton in 1939 and they had three children and lived at Abbotsford (Sydney).

Before the war he was a driver with in the AIF 8<sup>th</sup> Field Company 1<sup>st</sup> Division 1931-1934

Before enlisting on 26 April 1942 in Sydney Baden was a Tram Conductor working in Sydney. He received his Air Gunners Badge in December 1942. After training in Australia he embarked at Melbourne for the United Kingdom on 15 January 1943 arriving there 17 March 1943. He joined 77 Squadron on 25 July 1943.

Halifax HR946 took off from RAF Station Elvington, near York, at 1637 hours on the 20/21 January 1944 to bomb Berlin.

### CREW:

RAF	Flight Lieutenant V H Surplice, DFC - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant L Ashton - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pilot
RAF	Sergeant A A Timson - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant J L Duffy DFM - Navigator
RAF	Sergeant H P Hopkins - Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant T King DFM - Wireless Operator
RAF	Sergeant K Emeny - Air Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant B H Stevens - Rear Gunner

After the war captured Germany documents confirmed that his plane a Halifax Bomber HR946 crashed 7.30 pm on 20 January 1944 in Berlin Falkenberg Rieselfelder, Germany. All the crew except Sergeant Duffy, DFM, who became a prisoner of war, are recorded as missing.

HR946 was one of 22 Halifaxes that failed to return that night. It was Bomber Commands heaviest defeat of the war. Intercepted above Berlin Falkenbury by a Night Fighter captained by Olt Helmuth Schulte

Duffy when interrogated as a POW *"I last saw Flight Sergeant Stevens prior to my own departure from the aircraft. Since then I have received no further information concerning Flight Sergeant Stevens."*

Sergeant Duffy later stated that the Germans had told him that all the remaining members of the crew lost their lives. Following post war searches and enquiries it was recorded that the seven missing members had no known grave.

Just three days after Steven's crew being shot down Steven's wife received a letter from the CO in January 1944 extending his sympathy and that of other members of the Squadron. *"He had been with the Squadron for some time and will be very much missed here particularly amongst his fellow NCOs"*

In July 1949 Stevens wife was notified *"that despite exhaustive searches and enquiries it was not possible to locate your husband's grave or those of the six other members of the crew. It is reluctantly concluded that nothing more definite will now be received"*.

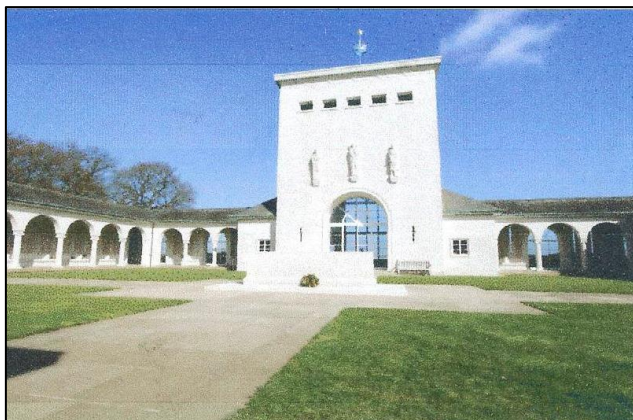
Looking back a rather sad note - in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday 1 January 1944 there was an article under the heading of "Non-Stop Procession of Bombers" which lists at the end men from New South Wales who were attached to Bomber Squadrons and in fact on the last bomber raid to the Continent. Flight Sergeant B H Stevens from Sydney was amongst those listed. He was killed just twenty days later.

Pilot Officer H Ellis and Flight Sergeant D Fletcher are also mentioned. Both these men were killed on a raid on Leipzig less than two months later.

Flight Sergeant Stevens is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial, the Roll of Honour at Drummoyne ( a Northern Sydney Suburb ) and the Memorial to the Missing at Runnymede.



*Drummoyne War Memorial*



*Memorial to the Missing  
Runnymede, Surrey UK*

# PATRICK EDWARD THOMAS TIERNAN

## 426711



Flight Sergeant Patrick Tiernan, the son of James and Mary Tiernan of Murgon in Queensland, was born on 23 June 1914 at Taringa via Brisbane, he attended Murgon State School and then boarded at Nudgee College, Brisbane. Before enlisting Patrick worked as a law clerk whilst studying law and was previously in the Army Reserve. He joined the Air Force on 18 July 1942, did an air gunners course among other courses and received his badge on 19 August 1943.

Patrick embarked from Brisbane on 11 September 1943, per the *SS Matsonia*, bound for the United Kingdom where the ship arrived on 19 October. After finishing more training in England and attachment to other squadrons, he was posted to 77 Squadron on 25 April 1944. Patrick had been promoted to Flight Sergeant on 19 February 1944.

Halifax MZ715 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 2326 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944 detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany. MZ715 was one of seven aircraft from the Squadron that failed to return from the mission. The attack was aimed at the Fischer-Tropsch synthetic petrol plant at Sterkrade. The weather was bad, thick clouds covered the target and they could do little but bomb the target through the cloud which had little effect on the production of fuel. The most fatal event in the history of 77 Squadron

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer A I Crain Pilot
RAF	Sergeant V Gledhill - Flight Engineer
RAF	Flying Officer T R Davies - Navigator
RAAF	Warrant Officer A A Braid - Air Bomber
RAF	Warrant Officer A J Owen - Wireless Air Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant P E T Tiernan - Mid Upper Gunner
RAAF	Flight Sergeant A J Burns - Rear Gunner

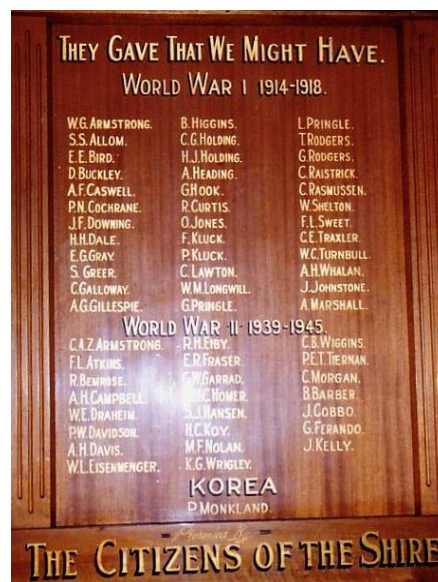
The aircraft exploded in the air throwing Warrant Officer Owen clear, he was captured and became a POW but had to spend some time in hospital recovering from his injuries. Debris was scattered between Ochten and Dodewaard, two small villages on the banks of the Waal. The six other members of the crew were killed.

Pilot Officer Crain, Sergeant Gledhill, Flying Officer Davies and Warrant Officer Braid are buried in the Uden War Cemetery. Patrick Tiernan and Flight Sergeant Alfred Burns are buried together in Comrade Grave 316 at Dodewaard General Cemetery

Flight Sergeant Tiernan is remembered with Honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Murgon Roll of Honour.



*Flight Sergeant  
Patrick Edward Tiernan  
His Duty Fearlessly and Nobly Done  
Ever Remembered R.I.P.*



*Murgon Roll of Honour*



The citizens of Dodewaard in the Netherlands have been tending the graves of Australian airmen Patrick Tiernan, from Murgon, and Alfred Burns, from Sydney since they were shot down over their town during World War II. In 2014 they conducted a Memorial Day in honour of the two airmen. Those who travelled to the Netherlands for the occasion included the Murgon school principal, Greg Smith and school captains, Geoffrey Kinsella and Kirsten Upton photographed with the memorial display mounted opposite the graves of Alfred Burns and Patrick Tiernan. [southburnett.com.au](http://southburnett.com.au)



## ROBERT JAMES WARREN 429838



Flight Sergeant Robert Warren the son of William and Florence Warren was born on 8 April 1916 at Yorketown in South Australia. Before enlisting on 12 September 1942 at 5 Recruiting Centre Robert was the manager of the Farmers' Union Butter Factory at Stansbury. He married Valerie Bullock in April 1943.

Robert completed various RAAF courses in Australia including 32WAGS course at Ballarat then completing 3 BAGS before leaving from Brisbane, on board the *SS Matsonia*, bound for the United Kingdom on 15 June 1943 arriving July. He was promoted to Flight Sergeant in November and joined 77 Squadron on 8 May 1944 after completing courses at 19 OTU and No 41 Base.

Halifax NA 545 took off from RAF Full Sutton at 2315 hours on the night of 16/17 June 1944 detailed to bomb Sterkrade, Germany. NA 545 was one of seven aircraft from the Squadron that failed to return from the mission.

### CREW:

RAAF	Pilot Officer H W Bird - Pilot
RAF	Sergeant R A Castle-Hall - Flight Engineer
RAF	Sergeant A B Freemantle - Navigator
RAAF	Flying Officer S W Mackay - Air Bomber
RAAF	Flight Sergeant R J Warren - Wireless Air Gunner
RAF	Flight Sergeant F A Meeghan - Mid Upper Gunner
RAF	Sergeant J A Lauder - Rear Gunner

It was later established that the aircraft crashed in the sea off the coast of Holland, and all the crew were killed. From captured German documents it was confirmed in October 1945 that Flight Sergeant Warren was washed ashore on the Island Texel and buried in the Texel (DenBurg) Cemetery on 6 July 1944.

Pilot Officer Bird and Sergeant Castle-Hall are buried in the Terschelling General Cemetery. Sergeant Freemantle is buried in the Sage War Cemetery, Oldenburg, Niedersachsen, Germany. Flight Sergeant Warren is buried in the Texel (Den Burg) Cemetery, Holland, K. 7.159 Sergeant Lauder is buried in the Vlieland General Cemetery, Friesland. Flying Officer Mackay and Flt Sergeant Meeghan have no known graves.

Flight Sergeant Warren is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and on the Honour Roll at Stansbury, South Australia



6 of the 7 crew of Halifax NA545.  
 Back: Frederick Meeghan, John Lauder & Alfred Freemantle  
 Front: Robert Warren, Harold Bird and Stuart McKay (Peter Hakze)



*Flight Sergeant  
 Robert James Warren  
 His Duty  
 Fearlessly and Nobly Done  
 Dearly Loved*



*Stansbury War Memorial*

JOHN LESLIE WILSON DFC  
412788



*AWM P09699.001*

Flight Lieutenant John Wilson was the son of Hugh and Grace Wilson born on 16 April 1917 at Ganmain in NSW. John married Mary O'Keefe in 1940 at Sydney and they had a son John Charles who was born in October 1941, he was working for Reckitt and Coleman, Sydney as a clerk before enlisting.

John enlisted firstly in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armed Regiment where he stayed for 300 days before being discharged on 20 September 1940 and re-enlisting in the RAAF. In July 1941 he moved to 2ITS and then on to 8EFTS at Narrandera, 3 SFTS at Amberley followed in December 1941 before being transferred to 1SFTS at Point Cook on 1 April 1942. He gained his flying badge early in 1942. He was discharged from the RAAF "on being granted a commission". Appointed Pilot Officer on 30 April 1942 and Flying Officer 30 October of the same year. John trained on Tiger Moths, Ansons and Oxfords.

John was posted on attachment to the RAF and embarked at Sydney 16 June 1942 to disembark in the United Kingdom on 24 August. After attending additional training in England, including 20 OTU, he was posted to 77 Squadron RAF on 4 April 1943 reporting for duty after 24 days leave.

On his last leave in the England he was admitted to hospital for three days.

Halifax JD413 took off from Elvington at 2016 on 1 September 1943 to attack Berlin and was shot down by a German fighter on the return journey. John and four other members of the crew were killed and he is buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. 18.A.16.  
Originally buried in the City Cemetery, Datteln, Germany- Row 1. Field 36. Grave 2.

CREW:

RAAF	Flight Lieutenant J L Wilson - Pilot
RAF	Flight Sergeant R W Barlow -
RAF	Sergeant James F Hopkins – Flight Engineer
RAF	Flight Sergeant J J Leicester – Navigator
RAF	Sergeant Robert Alfred Sims – Air Bomber
RAF	Sergeant E J Wilson Gunner
RAF	Sergeant J Baxter - Air Gunner
RAF	Pilot Officer K G Sheward - Air Gunner

Flight Lieutenant Wilson is remembered with honour at the Australian War Memorial and the Roll of Honour in Sydney, NSW.



*Flight Lieutenant John Leslie Wilson  
His Duty Nobly Done*

**WILSON**, Flt Lt. John Leslie, 412788, Captain Halifax Bomber, previously reported missing believed killed, now known to have lost his life in raid over Berlin September 1, 1943 and buried in town cemetery of Detteln, Germany. Beloved husband of Mary and father of John, "Crecy" Hazelbrook. Per Ardua ad Astra.

Also: Beloved grand-son-in-law of Mr and Mrs J. J. Stevenson, *Inglewood*, Manning Road, Double Bay.

Also: Dearly loved younger son of Mr & Mrs N Charles Wilson of Cecil Road, Rose Bay and loving brother of Marjorie (Mrs J A McLeish) and Keith (AIF). Treasured memories.

Also: Beloved son-in-law of Mrs M.M. O'Keefe, Greyholme, Wallaroy Crescent, Double Bay and brother -in-law of Ina (Mrs Ben ..... ) of San Francisco

*Sydney Morning Herald  
Saturday 19 May 1945*

## The Last Moments of a Brave Life

JD413 was one of 14 Halifax bombers of 77 Squadron RAF that took off from Elvington, Yorkshire on the summer's evening of 31 August 1943 to join more than 600 other aircraft in a raid on Berlin. The 8 man crew had been together for several months and had taken part in many operations. RAAF Flight Lieutenant John Wilson, the 26-year-old pilot and the only Australian on board, was on his 30<sup>th</sup> sortie – the maximum any crew member flew before transfer to less hazardous actions.

The crew had first flown the brand new JD413 in a raid on the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heart, the night before. There had been heavy flak but the aircraft returned to base at dawn undamaged.

The crew arrived at the aircraft shortly before the scheduled take off time for the Berlin raid and were told the Halifax's undercarriage had been replaced. This raised no real interest at the time but was to prove a fatal flaw for the mission. The two surviving crew members later concluded that the compass had not been re-swung after the major repairs and was giving false headings. While incorrect readings might not have proved disastrous but as the aircraft crossed the Dutch coast, its port engine lost its coolant and caught fire. The fire was extinguished and the propeller feathered.

The pilot could have turned for home. He chose not to, partly because turning back into a massive stream of unlit bombers was a high risk exercise in itself, and, perhaps, partly because the crew had been forced back with mechanical problems on a previous mission, he was determined to push on to Berlin. Flight engineer Jim Hopkins later reported that maintaining height was difficult on the three remaining engines and they eventually dropped their bombs over Berlin at 11,000 feet instead of the usual 18,000 feet. The inner port engine also drove the aircraft's hydraulic system – for the rest of the flight the pilot wrestled with almost dead controls. Hopkins noted that on the way to the target the guiding flares, dropped by pathfinder aircraft, seemed too far to port and the course was adjusted several times.

The return route was what the crews called the Cook's Tour – flying over relative flak and fighter-free southern Germany and northern France. It was longer but safer, except for those on JD413 whose faulty compass took them much too far to the north.

Losing height, the Halifax dropped through the clouds at just 7000 feet, right over the hotly defended Ruhr. Within minutes the aircraft was lit up by searchlights and the flak guns opened up. Jim Hopkins recalls that all hell broke loose. "The petrol tanks were holed and on fire and the skipper gave the order to bail out. I got into my chute and went to the rear exit. Leicester (the navigator) heard the skipper trying to get replies from the crew and told him he was about to jump. Jack (Wilson) replied "OK, best of luck". Another member of the crew was standing evidently paralysed



with fear and failed to put on his parachute and jump. Leicester couldn't get to him because the floor of the plane between them was gone.

Hopkins says he thinks the pilot was badly wounded but managed to keep the blazing aircraft under control long enough to allow three crew to jump. "Just after my chute opened there was a terrific flash – it must have been the aircraft hitting the ground."

Hopkins and Leicester, quickly rounded up, spent the rest of the war as POWs.

## FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JOHN LESLIE WILSON

*The following item was published in the Wagga Daily Advertiser in August this year and tells how a young RAAF bomber pilot who died more than 60 years ago could finally be awarded a posthumous Distinguished Flying Cross. Badly injured FLTLT John Wilson, originally from Ganmain, sacrificed his own life to keep a blazing Halifax bomber flying level long enough for some of his crew to parachute to safety. Remarkably, his son has only just learned of the tragic events that unfolded over Germany's Ruhr Valley in 1943.*

RAAF FLTLT John Leslie Wilson was 26 when his Halifax bomber JD413 of Yorkshire based 77 Squadron RAF was brought down by flak over the Ruhr Valley town of Datteln while returning from a raid on Berlin.

He and four of his crew were trapped inside the wreckage while three others parachuted to safety. One badly burned crew member died three days later while the other two survivors became Prisoners of War.

Manning the 88mm flak gun which brought down JD413 in the early hours of 1 September 1943, were three 16 year old members of the local Hitler Youth Brigade. One, Hugo Bresser, later became a Roman Catholic Priest.

Immediately after the downing, details were slim, FLTLT Wilson's young widow Mary was advised that her husband was missing in action. It was to be almost two years before his death was confirmed.

The flight engineer, Jim Hopkins, just 19 but already an RAF FLTSGT, wrote to her to explain what had happened on the ill-fated mission, but where the aircraft had crashed was apparently unknown to the RAF. Even FLTSGT Hopkins was unaware that his skipper had a son. As he pointed out later, the pilot was an officer and most of the other crew members held other ranks and they lived in separate barracks and only talked to one another during training and missions and that talk was nearly always technical.

But the Datteln locals knew the aircraft's fate – it had nose-dived into the soft ground not far from the centre of town and buried itself. The tip of one wing, all that appeared above the ground was quickly taken for the aluminium black market. The crater filled with water and JD413 was all but forgotten. In 1961 the Datteln council decided to build a swimming pool on the disused site right beside one of the town's main ring roads. Contractors preparing the foundations once again came across the wreckage of the bomber. They souvenired a few small items but almost overturned their excavator trying to lift the aircraft. They opted simply to tell nobody, fill in the hole with soil and build the pool straight over the top.

Halifax JD413 was once again forgotten – until 2005 when a new generation of Datteln authorities decided to build a bigger pool on the site. This time the exhumation of the wreckage was thorough and professional.

Under the direction of Andreas Wachtel, chief executive of the local major hospital but also a nationally recognized aviation forensic expert, the Datteln bog gave up its 62-year-horde. In the wreckage were the remains of the four crew who went down with the aircraft. FLTLT Wilson, the only Australian on board, was recognized by his ID tags and part of his flying tunic which was of different material to RAF uniforms. In his left-hand pocket were two coins – a penny and a florin – badly burnt on one side but undamaged on the other and now in the possession of his son.

The remains were buried with full military honours at the Reichswald Commonwealth War Cemetery near Kleve on the German-Dutch border. At the graveside along with Australian and British top brass was Jim Hopkins, now the only surviving crew member. Beside him, blessing the graves, was 79-year-old Father Hugo Bresser and in the background, fellow Hitlerjungen and 1943 aircraft gunner Theo Stevermann, but no Wilson family member.

FLTLT Wilson's widow Mary had died some years earlier never knowing what had really happened to her husband. The RAAF presumably could not find the pilot's only son, John, to notify him of the re-internment at Reichwald. He only learned of events by chance two years too late.

### *Wings Summer 2008*



Group portrait of pilots on course 34 of Blind Approach Training (BAT)  
Identified is FltLt J L Wilson( 412788) RAAF - 77 Squadron RAF.  
Front Row: third from left.



FltLt J L Wilson's Identity tag on display at the Yorkshire Air Museum.

For photographs of the excavation and burial please refer to  
[www.aircrewremembered.com/wilson-john-leslie.html](http://www.aircrewremembered.com/wilson-john-leslie.html)

# NOEL WILLIAM WRIGHT

## 37589

Halifax JD 465 left Elvington at 2024 on the night of 23/24 August 1943 bound for a bombing raid on Berlin. Unfortunately it crashed at Biesenthal and six of the eight man crew perished in the crash. Two were taken POW.

The crew consisted of:

RAF	Sdn Ldr N W Wright - Pilot - (Noel William)
RCAF	Sergeant S W Abrams - Air Gunner - (Stanley William)
RAF	Sergeant K W Darrah - Navigator - (Keith William)
RAF	Sergeant A R Downes - Flight Engineer - (Arnold Richard)
RAF	Sergeant R E Fuller - Pilot - (Russell Edward)
RAF	Sergeant R B Spence - Air Gunner - (Robert Barclay)
RAF	Flight Sergeant J Adamson - POW
RAF	Flying Officer J P Wod - POW

Their plane crashed at Biesenthal and the deceased were buried in the Municipal Cemetery, Biesenthal and after the war re-interred 23 November 1946 in the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery. Those killed are buried next to one another. Abrams 1-H8: Darrah 1-H7: Downes 1-H5: Fuller 1-H4: Spence 1-H6: Wright 1-H11.



*Squadron Leader  
N W Wright  
Pilot  
Royal Air Force  
24 August 1943 Aged 30  
Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery 1.H.11*

Noel Wright initially travelled to England per the *Comorin* (Ref: UK Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-1960) arriving in Plymouth on 20 February 1936, thence London the following day. His address in England being given as Officers Mess, RAF Oxbridge. Travelling with him was his friend, Ernest Whiteley, who had enlisted in the RAAF at the same time as Noel. In fact they have consecutive service numbers – Noel 37589 – Ernest 37588 (Ref: WW2 Nominal roll) Ernest went on to join 69 Squadron RAF, Flying boats, and was awarded a DFC in 1941.

Noel married Grace in Hong Kong in 1940 (Ref: GRO Index Army Marriages 1881-2005) . At the time of her husband's death Grace was living with her son, also named Noel William, at Appleby, Westmoreland.

*The Warwick News* (Queensland) wrote on Monday 19 August 1940, page 5, the following:

### ***More Hong Kong Arrivals***

*BRISBANE, Sunday - Twelve more evacuees from Hong Kong have arrived in Brisbane. They were brought by the fifth evacuee ship to call here. Most of the women went on to Sydney and Melbourne. They were told in Manila that Brisbane was far too unhealthy for their children. Mrs Noel Wright, the young Scotch bride of a young Queensland airman in the Royal Air Force, arrived to stay with her husband's parents, Mr and Mrs W W Wright of Milrae, Jandowae. She was accompanied by her mother, Mrs H. Swan and her nine-year-old sister, Fay.*

An article appeared in *The Dalby Herald* (Queensland) paper on Tuesday 28 September 1943, page 3 which tells us in some detail about the life of Noel and his wife.

### ***SQUADRON LEADER N.W. WRIGHT***

*Jandowae, Monday*

*Squadron Leader Noel William Wright, RAAF, son of Mr and the late Mrs W Wright, Milray, Jandowae, has been posted as missing. This advice has been received by relatives here from his wife, who is residing in England.*

*Squadron Leader Wright joined the RAAF in 1936 at the age of 19 years and, after training at Point Cook, went to England as Pilot Officer in 1937. From there, where he was promoted to the rank of Flight Lieutenant, he went to Hong Kong and there was aide-de-camp to the Governor, advancing to the rank of Squadron Leader.*

*Whilst in Hong Kong he was married to Miss Grace Swan, and at the outbreak of hostilities with Japan his wife and her mother were amongst those evacuated to Australia where they resided for some time with Mr and Mrs A Hoskin.*

*Squadron Leader Wright was transferred to Singapore and when the Japanese invasion took place escaped to Java, and narrowly avoided disaster there, the airfield being machine gunned by the Japanese as the RAAF personnel raced for their planes. India was his next stopping place, and from there he went to England, where he was engaged in making raids over enemy territory. It was from a raid over Berlin on August 23<sup>rd</sup> last that he failed to return.*

*Mrs Wright had given birth to a son during her stay in Queensland and sailed for Singapore when her husband was transferred there, and was residing there at the time of the first Japanese bombing of the city. At a minutes notice, with no time to pack any belongings, Mrs Wright boarded a ship for West Australia when the invasion of Singapore took place, and from there returned to Jandowae. Later with her mother, she lived for a time in Melbourne but anxious to be with her husband, who was now in England she braved the seas once more with her little son, leaving her mother in Melbourne with another of her daughters. Mrs Wright's terrifying experiences were not yet over, for the ship was torpedoed, but she and her baby were amongst those fortunate enough to be rescued. In a lifeboat Mrs Wright went through the terrible ordeal of watching the child who had been her son's constant playmate, and his father and mother, drown. Eventually she and her little boy arrived safely in England about 12 months before her husband's last flight.*

*Mrs Wright's father and brother are prisoners in Hong Kong and another brother was killed there.*

*The missing airman was well known in Jandowae having attended the State School here for a number of years, after which he went to live with Mr and Mrs A Hoskins at Motley (near Oakey). Mr Hoskins who is a cousin of Squadron Leader Wright, was head teacher there, and under his tuition the lad passed his scholarship, after which he attended the Toowoomba Grammar School and was successful in passing his Junior and Senior University examinations and was a Platoon Sergeant in the School's Cadet Unit. Noel finally joining the RAAF in 1935.*





*77 Squadron aircrew*