

Sgt. Geoffrey Hugh Butler-Williams 402848 RNZAF

Geoffrey Butler-Williams, a 24-year-old observer, was killed in the early hours of 3 July 1942 after his Wellington was attacked by a night-fighter and crashed in Holland.

His aircraft, Wellington Z8579 of No. 12 Squadron, had taken off from RAF Binbrook at 2335 hours on 2 July as part of a force of 325 bombers taking part in what was the fourth in a series of attacks during a week, on the port and city of Bremen.

Geoffrey's Wellington was one of 13 bombers shot down after being attacked by a Bf 110 night-fighter flown by Lt. August Geiger, making it the seventh of his eventual 54 victories before his death more than a year later.



Both Geoffrey and his rear gunner are believed to have been killed by cannon fire from the night-fighter while the Australian pilot remained at the controls of the aircraft, allowing the other two crew members to escape by parachute before the Wellington crashed near the small Dutch village of Barchem, just inside the border with Germany.

Geoffrey was born in Sydney, Australia, the son of Hugh and Catherine Butler-Williams. He later moved to New Zealand and was educated at Auckland Grammar School. After leaving school he joined the shipping and transport company J. J. Craig Ltd., in Auckland, as a clerk, before enlisting in the RNZAF. He is remembered in Auckland Grammar School's roll of honour.

The others who died with him were the pilot Flt. Sgt. Ian Dunn RAAF and front gunner Sgt. David Evans. All are buried in Laren General Cemetery in Barchem. The two crew members who survived were the wireless operator/air gunner Flt. Sgt. Kenneth Hawkins and rear gunner Sgt. Stanley Morris.

Geoffrey's name can be found on panel 016.

Sources: Auckland Grammar School archives/Aircrew Remembered/RAAFA Aviation Heritage Museum/Auckland Museum (photo)/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook and Chris Everitt.