

## **P/O James Herbert John English DFC 413843 RAAF**



**A 460 Squadron Lancaster pictured at RAF Binbrook**

James English was a very experienced bomber pilot, having completed 28 operations with 460 (Australian) Squadron, flying Lancasters from RAF Binbrook in the late summer and autumn of 1943.

On the night of 2/3 December he and his equally experienced crew took a war correspondent, Mr Norman Stockton of the Sydney Sun, with them on an operation to Berlin.

Their aircraft, W4881 AR-K, was attacked by a night fighter in the Brandenburg area as it approached the target. The fighter's first attack killed the mid-upper gunner and badly wounded the rear gunner before setting fire to the aircraft. As the bomber went into a dive, P/O English remained at the controls to give his crew the chance to escape. Three did so (the flight engineer Sgt. William Miller, navigator P/O Neville Anderson DFC RAAF and bomb-aimer Flt. Sgt. Arthur Catty), but the remainder of the crew were killed, along with Norman Stockton, when the Lancaster crashed at Groningen, near Brandenburg.

The others who died were the wireless operator Sgt. Arthur Cole, mid-upper gunner WO2 Ivan Rodin RCAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Alex Kan RAAF. All four are buried in the Berlin War Cemetery along with the 40-year-old war correspondent.

James English was 22 and before the war had been a teacher in the town of Thirroul in New South Wales. He was the son of James and Eileen English of Sydney and it was his father who collected his son's Distinguished Flying Cross in 1945, awarded in March 1944 for his 'skill and courage'.

James' name can be found on IBCC panel 033

Photographic source: Peter Green Collection