WO John Johnson 425806 RAAF



John was born on 31 October 1921 in Gladstone, Queensland, Australia, the son of the Reverend John William Johnson and Kate Margaret Johnson nee Brookes.

Educated at the Southport School, Southport, Queensland, John was employed as a general clerk by Q.A.N.T.A.S Empire Airways, Brisbane, Queensland when, in October 1941, he volunteered for service in the RAAF.

Called up in April 1942, John completed his flying training in Australia in January 1943 with the award of his Observer badge. Following advanced training at No 1 Air Navigation School RAAF Parkes, NSW, where he was awarded his Air Bomber badge, and No 1 OTU RAAF East Sale, Victoria, in May 1943 John was posted to the newly formed maritime patrol sqn, 66 RAAF Sqn, RAAF Bundaberg, Queensland.

In November 1943 John embarked for Canada and was attached to No 1 Manning Depot, RCAF Station Toronto until March 1944 when he embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 4 (O) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF West Freugh, Dumfries, Scotland, 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire, 1660 HCU RAF Swinderby, Lincolnshire and 5 Lancaster Finishing School RAF Syerston, Newark, Nottinghamshire in January 1945 John was posted to 463 Sqn at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire.

On 2/3 February 1945 Bomber Command was tasked with attacks on Karlsruhe, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, part of Bomber Command's final winter offensive against German transport and urban-industrial targets. The attack belonged to the same period as heavy raids on Ludwigshafen, Mainz and other Rhine cities, when the bomber force was supporting the wider collapse of German communications behind the front; however, night fighters were still active over south-western Germany.

A combined force of 261 aircraft, including seventeen 463 Sqn crews, was allocated to the op.

At 20:07 on the 2 February John, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Waddington in Lancaster I ME298 (JO-B).

Whilst over the target at 14,000ft, John's aircraft was attacked by a night fighter, setting the port inner and wing on fire. The Captain ordered the crew to bale out which was acknowledged by the whole crew; however, only the Navigator and Flight Engineer escaped and were taken as POW. The aircraft crashed in a wooded area 14 miles SE of Karlsruhe, killing five of the crew.

Also killed: FO Richard Kay Oliver RAAF (Pilot); FS Allen Bernard Barrett RAAF (AG); FS Robert John Lyons RAAF (AG); FS William Albert Taylor RAAF (WOp)

Originally buried in Unterowisheim Civil Cemetery Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, in October 1947 John was moved to Durnbach War Cemetery, Bayern, Germany.

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 55

Photo Source: naa.gov.au