

WO Norman Harry Lavin 403582 RNZAF

Norman was born on 9 December 1920 in Palmerston North, Manawatū-Whanganui, New Zealand, the son of John Harry Lavin and Fanny Hazel Lavin nee Bishop.

Educated at Palmerston North Central School, Norman was employed as a mechanic by Selwyn Motors Ltd, Palmerston North when, in September 1939, he applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in September 1940, following basic training in New Zealand, in November Norman was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In May 1941 Norman was awarded his WOp/AG badge and embarked for the UK in June.

Following advanced training at No 1 Signals School RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire and 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire where he converted to multi crew/multi engine on the Wellington, in May 1942 Norman qualified for his Air Bomber badge and was posted to 103 Sqn at RAF Elsham Wolds, Lincolnshire.

In November 1942 Norman was posted to 199 Sqn RAF Blyton, Lincolnshire where he operated on the Wellington until March 1943 when he was attached to 1656 HCU RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire for Lancaster conversion. Returning briefly to 199 Sqn, in May 1943 Norman was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor, Yorkshire.

On 12/13 June 1943, Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Bochum, part of a series of strategic bombing ops against the industrial heartland of Germany during the "Battle of the Ruhr". A combined force of 503 aircraft, including twenty-three 101 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op.

At 22:41 on 11 June Norman, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor in Lancaster III ED987 (SR-A)

At 02:26 on 13 June Norman's aircraft was intercepted by Obfw Hermann Sommer of the Ergänzungsstaffel/NJG2 (attached to 1./NJG1) flying a Bf110 from Gilze-Rijen Airfield. The Lancaster crashed into the North Sea, West of Zandvoort, Noord-Holland, killing all on board. This was Norman's 28th op.

Also killed: FO Denis Charles Goodwin (Nav); FS William Douglas McMurachy RCAF (AG); FS Ernest Joseph St. Germain RCAF (AG); Sgt Richard George Claydon (Pilot); Sgt Ronald Vincent Fielding (WOp); Sgt Alexander McIntyre Law (FE)

Norman has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Norman is commemorated on Wall Panel 61

Photo Source: www.aucklandmuseum

