## FS Robert John Lyons 437622 RAAF



Robert was born on 5 November 1918 in Lewisham, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Alexander Francis Lyons and Elsie Clarice Lyons nee Patterson.

Educated at St Gregory's College, Cambelltown and Lewisham High School, in June 1940 Robert enlisted in the 2/107 Australian General Transport Company, 2nd AIF, where he was employed as a clerk. In December 1942, Robert requested a transfer to the RAAF.

Transferring to the RAAF in April 1943, following basic aircrew training in Australia, in August 1943 Robert was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Completing his flying training in May 1944 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, Robert immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire, 1654 HCU RAF Wigsley Nottinghamshire and 5 Lancaster Finishing School RAF Syerston, Newark, Nottinghamshire, in January 1945 Robert 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 Robert, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Waddington in Lancaster I ME298 (JO-B).

Whilst over the target at 14,000ft, Robert'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); WO John Johnson RAAF (AB); FS Allen Bernard Barrett RAAF (AG); FS William Albert Taylor RAAF (WOp)

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

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 65

Photo Source: IBCC