

F/Sgt. Cyril Robert Parkinson 425467 RNZAF

Cyril was born on 13 October 1918 in Warkworth, New Zealand, the son of William John and Elizabeth Parkinson (née Muir).

Educated at Te Rau-a-Moa School and Wellington Correspondence School, prior to joining the RNZAF Cyril was employed as a Motor Driver with several companies in and around Te Awamutu.

Cyril joined the RNZAF in May 1942 and, after initial training, in October 1942 he was sent to Canada under the Empire Training Scheme. He commenced Wireless Operator training but re-mustered in April 1943 to Air Gunner. Cyril was badged in June 1943 and proceeded to the UK the following month.

After arriving in the UK Cyril completed his conversion training and was posted to 101 Squadron at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire, on 15 March 1944. Cyril had completed just one op before he was killed.



On the night of 30/31 March 1944, 795 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Nuremberg. This was the last act of Bomber Harris's "Battle of Berlin", an attempt to destroy German morale by battering its cities night after night before the bomber force turned its attentions to preparing the way for D-Day in June. A direct route, full moon and a new German weapon, the upward firing gun fitted to many fighters, would make this an incredibly challenging and dangerous mission. More than 200 night-fighters based around the Ruhr and the Rhine took to the skies that night. Twenty-six 101 Squadron Lancasters participated in the raid.

At 2150 hours on 30 March 1944 Cyril, operating as an Air Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster III LM463 (SR-K2), tasked with ABC duties for the raid. At 0036 hours, whilst outbound, the aircraft was engaged East of Siegen at 18,000ft by a night fighter flown by Uffz. Bruno Rupp of 4./NJG3. The aircraft crashed near Dillenburg, Hessen, killing 6 of the 8 crew; the pilot (P/O Albert Lander RNZAF) and wireless operator (Sgt. W G Clapp) survived and were captured. Seven 101 Squadron aircraft were lost on the raid, with 47 men killed.

The raid was a major disaster for Bomber Command with the loss of 105 aircraft, Bomber Command's heaviest loss of the war. There were 721 casualties: 542 men died, 6 injured, 161 POWs, with just 12 airmen evading capture. The damage to Nuremberg itself was slight - 256 buildings destroyed and 75 enemy dead.

Also killed were the navigator F/O Mervyn Hutchinson RNZAF, air bomber F/Sgt. Raymond Cato RNZAF, special duties operator Sgt. Alfred Clayton, air gunner Sgt. Erod Johnson and flight engineer Sgt. Alexander Johnston.

Originally buried in Dillenburg Cemetery, Hessen, Cyril and the crew were moved to Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, in April 1947.

Cyril is commemorated on Wall Panel 82.

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com.