

FS John Pritchard 417887 RAAF

John was born on 22 June 1921 in Wishaw, Lanarkshire, Scotland, the son of Robert Thomas Townsley Pritchard and Ann Paterson Pritchard nee Syme. In 1927 the family emigrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide, South Australia.

Educated at Woodville District High School and the School of Mines, Adelaide, South Australia, John was employed as a clerk when, in April 1941, he volunteered for service in the RAAF.

Called up in January 1942, John completed his training in Australia in April 1943 with the award of his Navigator badge and embarked for the UK the following month. In October 1943 John re-mustered as Air Bomber.

Following advanced training at 30 OTU RAF Hixon, Staffordshire and 11 Base, RAF Blyton, Lincolnshire, for conversion to the Lancaster, in April 1944 John was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire.



On 30 June/1 July 1944 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against railway yards at Vierzon, a small town 60km south of Orleans, France, 118 aircraft, including ten 101 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op. Three squadron crews failed to return.

At 22:19 on the 30 June John, operating as the Air Bomber, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire, in Lancaster I DV301 (SR-Y).

At 01:30 on 1 July, shortly after John's crew had finished their bombing run, the aircraft was intercepted at low level by a night fighter and crashed at L'Autiere near Langon, a village 12 miles E of Vierzon, killing all on board. This was the crew's 17th op.

Also killed: FO William Roberts Cuthbertson (Nav); PO James Nelson Brown (Pilot); FS Albert Thomas Couch RCAF (AG); FS Carl Victor Krieg RAAF (SDO); FS David Urquhart RCAF (AG); Sgt Thomas Lyth (WOp/AG); Sgt John William Offord (FE)

John is buried in the Langon Communal Cemetery, Loir-et-Cher, France

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 87

Photo Source:naa.gov.au