

## **F/O Colin Robert Moore Richardson 412697 RAAF**

Colin Richardson was a very experienced pilot who was killed along with the rest of his crew when their Lancaster crashed into a hill in Leicestershire a month before the war in Europe ended.

He was one of six Australians and one Englishman who died when Lancaster ND949 LE-Z (pictured below) hit a hill near the village of Foxton, near Market Harborough, at 0310 hours on 9 April 1945 as they returned from a bombing raid on a synthetic oil refinery near Leipzig. They had been diverted due to bad weather and it was later believed either a faulty or wrongly-adjusted altimeter led to the crash.

ND949 had taken off from East Kirkby at 1800 hours the previous night for the attack which destroyed the Molbis refinery at Lutzkendorf, one of the last supplying fuel supplies to German forces.



Colin and his crew were on their fourth operation with No. 630 Squadron after joining it in January. Colin was an 'above average' pilot who had become a qualified instructor at RAF Upavon after completing his pilot training, and had lodged 1,140 hours flying time by the time he arrived at East Kirkby, including a spell as a day instructor on the grass runway at RAF Caistor, in Lincolnshire.

He was finally designated for operational training in September 1944 and, after completing his course with the crew at 1654 Heavy Conversion Unit at Wigsley, he was posted to 630 on 5 January 1945.

Colin was the 23-year-old son of Robert and Viola Richardson of Tottenham, New South Wales, his father having served in France with the Australian Army in the Great War. He was born in the small town of Mendooran in New South Wales and he was employed as a grazier before enlisting. Colin is now buried in Botley Cemetery in Oxford (Plot H/1. Grave 182).

The others who died were the flight engineer Sgt. Bernard Gibbons (who was also a qualified pilot), navigator Flt. Sgt. Herbert Burton RAAF, bomb-aimer F/O Robert Martin RAAF, wireless operator F/O William Forrester RAAF, mid-upper gunner Flt. Sgt. Anthony Bowman RAAF and rear gunner Flt. Sgt. Frederick Howlett RAAF.

His name can be found on panel 090.

Sources: 630 Squadron/Australian Virtual War Memorial.

