FS John Richmond Riley 415182 RAAF



John was born on 13 June 1914 in Fremantle, Western Australia, Australia, the son of John George Riley and Beatrice Jemima Riley nee Turner.

Educated at Fremantle Boys' School and Perth Technical College, John was employed as a shipwright when, in May 1940, he volunteered for service with the RAAF.

Despite holding a pilot's licence from the Western Australia Royal Aero Club and with 4 years service with the Naval Reserve, it was not until July 1941, that John was called up and was sent for Air Gunner training in Australia.

In April 1942 John was awarded his Air Gunner badge and embarked for the UK in July. Following advanced training at 1656 HCU at RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, in February 1943 John was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor, Yorkshire

On the night of the 9/10 April 1943, Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Duisberg, a major logistical centre in the Ruhr Area and location of chemical, steel and iron industries. A combined force of 109 aircraft, including eight 101 Sqn crews, were allocated to the task. Two crews failed to return.

At 20:29 on 9 April John, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Holme on Spalding Moor in Lancaster III ED608 (SR-T).

At 23:14 whilst over the target at 21,000 feet, John's aircraft was hit by flak. The bombs were jettisoned and the order was given to bale out. Five of the crew left the aircraft successfully and were taken as POW. Both of the Air Gunners failed to evacuate the aircraft and were killed when the aircraft crashed at Grefrath to the West of Duisberg.

Also Killed: Sgt Thomas Arthur Bird (AG)

Originally buried in Mönchengladbach Town Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, in July 1946 John was transferred to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 90

Photo Source: naa.gov.au