

FO Norman James Ritchie 412843 RAAF

Norman was born on 28 July 1921 in Paddington, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Frank Ritchie and Clarice Maud Marion Ritchie nee Rudd.

Norman was employed as a compositor by Associated News in Sydney when, in July 1941, he enlisted in the RAAF.

After completing basic training in Australia, in September 1941 Norman was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In March 1942 Norman was awarded his WOp/AG badge, granted a commission and in May embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 30 OTU RAF Hixon, Staffordshire, and 1656 HCU RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, in February 1943 Norman 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.

On the evening of 9 April Norman, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Holme on Spalding Moor in Lancaster III ED618 (SR-X).

As Norman's aircraft crossed the Dutch coast near Harlem, they were intercepted by Lt Oskar Köstler flying a Bf110 from Bergen Airfield who had picked up a signal on his onboard radar and spotted a lone Lancaster on the side of the main bomber stream's course.

Whilst flying west of Elburg, at 22:40 the Lancaster was hit in the bomb bay by the cannons and instantly exploded. Debris from the huge blast damaged the Bf110 and killed the pilot. The radio operator managed to bale out and survived. The Lancaster wreckage came down near Doornspijk, killing all on board.

Also Killed: WO John David Steele RCAF (Pilot); FS Michael John Bennett (Nav); FS Stanley Grundy DFM (AG); Sgt D'Arcy Gould (AB); Sgt John Hence (FE); Sgt William David George O'Brien (AG)

Norman is buried in Doornspijk General Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands

Norman is commemorated on Wall Panel 90

Photo Source: IBCC

