

Flt. Sgt. Eric Hempel Sherman 410739 RAAF



Eric was born in 1923, the son of Leonard John and Anna Clarin Sherman, of Stanhope, Victoria, Australia. He had seven siblings, all of them educated locally, with Eric being the first to go on to secondary school and matriculate. After school, he worked on the family orchard, however, when war broke out, and immediately following his eighteenth birthday, he enlisted in Melbourne, signing up in January 1942.

He undertook basic training, followed by wireless and gunner training, at Parkes, in New South Wales. He arrived in the UK in March 1943, spending time at No. 11 Personnel Dispatch and Reception Centre, in Brighton, before being posted to No. 18 OTU on 7 July. His family noted that, although his time there was short, he did manage to buy a bicycle, take a train to Aberdeen, and visit his Scottish cousins.

He was a wireless operator serving with 18 O.T.U. at RAF Finningley, South Yorkshire.

Wellington III X3800 VQ- took off from Finningley airfield at 1510 hours on 2 August 1943, on a day training mission. The exercise called for solo single engine flying practice without feathering, which involved shutting down one of the engines and flying on one good engine. During this routine the pilot was presumed to have lost control and, at 1530 hours, the aircraft was seen to dive into the ground in a deep spiral, crashing near Wroot, North Lincolnshire, and killing all on board. The cause of the crash was not determined.

Eric is buried at Finningley (Holy Trinity and St. Oswald) Churchyard Extension, Row D. Grave 3. The epitaph reads "In God's care. His duty nobly done". He was 19 years old.

The others who died with Eric were the pilot Sgt. Leslie Albert Charlton, navigator Sgt. Ronald Henry Smith and air bomber Sgt. John William Perry.

Eric is commemorated on IBCC Panel 96.

Photo courtesy of www.yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk