

**Flt Sgt Owen Preston
Smith RAAF 423344**



Owen Smith was a twenty-nine-year-old Australian bomber who died along with five of his crew when their aircraft was shot down by a night-fighter during an attack on Stuttgart on the night of 20th/21st February 1944. It was their sixth operation together.

His aircraft, ND338 LE-Q of 630 Squadron, had taken off from East Kirkby, one of fourteen from the squadron joining a force of 598 bombers heading for the southern German city. An effective diversion led to only nine aircraft were lost although a second from 630 crashed on take-off.

ND338 was intercepted by a night-fighter fitted with upward-firing cannon, and crashed near the small town of Plittersdorf, close to the Rhine and the French border. The only survivor was the wireless operator, Sgt Angus Newson.

The others who died were the pilot PO Harold Mackintosh RAAF, flight engineer Sgt Elwyn Hughes, navigator Flt Sgt Geoffrey Slater, mid-upper gunner Flt Sgt Stephen Tatai RCAF and rear gunner Flt Sgt Burton Howard RCAF. All were buried in Plittersdorf before being reinterred in the Durnbach War Cemetery.

Owen's name can be found on panel 099.

Sources: 630 Squadron Association.