

FO Thomas Maxwell Taylor 408888 RAAF

Thomas, known as Max, was born on 6 August 1921 in Leongatha, Victoria, Australia, the son of Thomas James Taylor and Jane Emma Taylor nee Crisfield.

Thomas was employed as a bank clerk by the State Savings Bank in Leongatha when, in September 1940, he volunteered for service in the RAAF.

Called up in June 1941, Thomas commenced pilot training in Australia; however, in October 1941 when his training was discontinued he re-mustered as Observer.

In May 1942 Thomas completed his aircrew training in Australia with the award of his Observer badge, granted a commission in June 1942, and in August 1942 he embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire and 1656 HCU RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, Thomas completed Air Bomber training and in March 1943 he was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor, Yorkshire.

On the night of 16/17 April 1943, a combined force of 598 Bomber Command crews were tasked with an operation against the Skoda Armament works, Pilsen, Czechoslovakia with the main force of 327 crews targeting the works, and 271 crews on a diversionary raid to Mannheim. Fifteen 101 Sqn aircraft were allocated to the attack on the Pilsen factory.

At 21:21 on 16 April Thomas, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor in Lancaster I ED379 (SR-F).

At 01:26 on 17 April Thomas's aircraft was coned by searchlights of the lei. Scheinw. 11/XII and engaged by both heavy and light Flak units. At 01:28 the aircraft crashed in the district of Dutzendteich, Nürnberg. The WO/AG was the only crew member to bale out and was taken as POW.

The raid was not a success. A large asylum building 7 miles from the target was mistaken for the factory, and only 6 crews brought back bombing photographs which were within 3 miles of the real target. The Skoda works were untouched.

Also killed: FS Colin Kerr Menzies RAAF (Pilot); FS James Henry Fitch RCAF (AG); Sgt Henry Evans (Nav); Sgt Jack Monks (AG); Sgt Harold Albert Upton (FE)

Originally buried in the South Nurnberg Cemetery, Nuremberg, Germany, in September 1947 Thomas was moved to the Durnbach War Cemetery, Bayern, Germany.

Thomas is commemorated on Wall Panel 105

Photo Source: naa.gov.au

