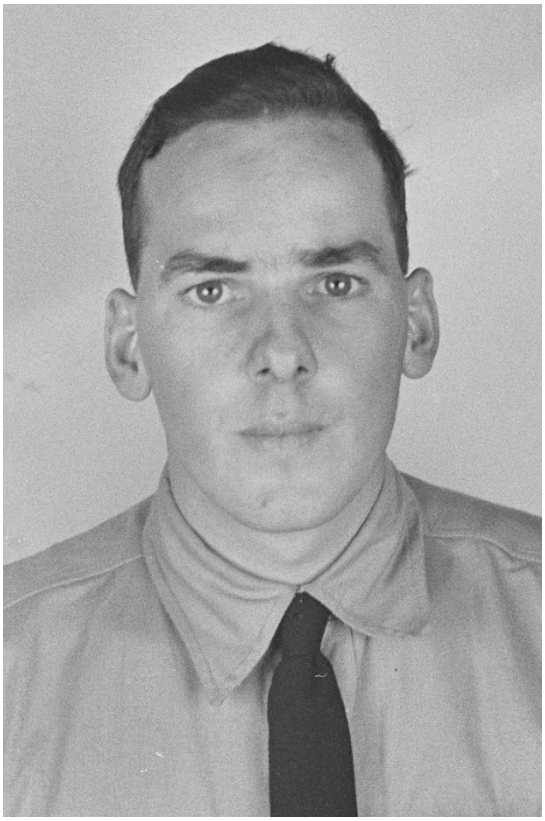
FS William Albert Taylor 434523 RAAF



William was born on 14 November 1922 in Warwick, Queensland, Australia, the son of Albert Edward Taylor and Edith Clarice Taylor nee Higson.

Educated at Goomeri State School and Rockhampton Grammar School, Queensland, William was employed as a bank clerk in the Rockhampton Branch of the Bank of Australia when, in April 1942, he joined 56 Battery, Royal Australian Engineers, serving until September 1942 when he was attached to the General Discharge Depot, transferring to the RAAF in December 1942.

William completed his flying training in Australia in January 1944 with the award of his WOp/AG badge and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 4 (O) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF West Freugh, Dumfries, Scotland, where he re-mustered as Wireless Operator, 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire, 1654 HCU RAF Nottinghamshire and 5 Lancaster Finishing School RAF Syerston, Newark, Nottinghamshire, in January 1945 William was posted to 463 Sqn at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire.

On 2/3 February 1945 Bomber Command was tasked with attacks on Karlsruhe, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, part of Bomber Command's final winter offensive against German transport and urban-industrial targets. The attack belonged to the same period as heavy raids on Ludwigshafen, Mainz and other Rhine cities, when the bomber force was supporting the wider collapse of German communications behind the front; however, night fighters were still active over south-western Germany.

A combined force of 261 aircraft, including seventeen 463 Sqn crews, was allocated to the op.

At 20:07 on the 2 February William, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Waddington in Lancaster I ME298 (JO-B).

Whilst over the target at 14,000ft, William's aircraft was attacked by a night fighter, setting the port inner and wing on fire. The Captain ordered the crew to bale out which was acknowledged by the whole crew; however, only the Navigator and Flight Engineer escaped and were taken as POW. The aircraft crashed in a wooded area 14 miles SE of Karlsruhe, killing five of the crew.

Also killed: FO Richard Kay Oliver RAAF (Pilot); WO John Johnson RAAF (AB); FS Allen Bernard Barrett RAAF (AG); FS Robert John Lyons RAAF (AG)

Originally buried in Unterowisheim Civil Cemetery Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, in October 1947 William was moved to Durnbach War Cemetery, Bayern, Germany.

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 105

Photo Source: naa.gov.au