FO Dudley Francis Ward 420413 DFC RAAF



Dudley was born on 25 January 1920 in Roseville, Ku-ring-gai, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Francis Hiller Ward and Anne Muriel Ward nee Lister.

Dudley was employed as a salesman and clerk by the oil company C.C. Wakefield & Co. in Sydney when, in June 1941, he volunteered for service in the RAAF. Called up in November 1941, Dudley completed his flying training in Australia in September 1942 with the award of his Wings. Granted a commission in November 1942, Dudley embarked for the UK in January 1943.

Following advanced training at 15(P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Grove, Oxfordshire, 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire and 1660 HCU RAF Swinderby, Lincolnshire, in March 1944 Dudley was posted to 463 Sqn at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire. The following month Dudley was awarded the DFC. His Citation read:

"FO Ward has completed numerous sorties and has set a fine example of skill and determination. One night in April 1944, he piloted an aircraft detailed for a bombing mission and soon after his attack had been successfully completed one engine of the aircraft failed. Shortly afterwards, two more failed and the bomber began to lose height. However, the flight engineer succeeded in re-starting one of the defective engines and the enemy coast was crossed at a low altitude eventually an airfield was reached, and FO Ward effected a safe landing. This officer displayed exceptional skill and determination throughout, and his achievement was worthy of the greatest praise."

On 10/11 May 1944 Bomber Command was tasked with attacks on the Belgian and French marshalling yards at Courtrai, Dieppe, Ghent, Lens and Lille. A combined force of 506 aircraft, including fourteen 463 Sqn crews was allocated to the op. The squadron's target was Lille, used by enemy forces for the transportation of supplies to the Western Front.



At 22:14 on the 10 May Dudley and his crew departed RAF Waddington in Lancaster I LL881 (JO-E).

Post war it was established that, whilst outbound, Dudley's aircraft exploded mid-air and the bulk of the wreckage fell on a factory in the southeast suburbs of Lille, France, killing all on board.

Also killed: FO George Oswald Jones RAAF (Nav); PO William John Lewis RAAF (FE); WO Lloyd George McKenzie RAAF (AB); FS John Henry Brown RAAF (WOp/AG); FS George Martin Dann RAAF (AG); FS Colin Henry Eastgate RAAF (AG)

Dudley is buried in Forest-Sur-Marque Communal Cemetery, Nord, France

Dudley is commemorated on Wall Panel 111

Photo Source: naa.gov.au