Sgt James Wilfred Beaven 403566 RNZAF

James was born on 19 July 1910 in Harwarden, Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Alfred James Beaven and Margaret Beaven nee Tomlinson.

Educated at Hurunui School, North Canterbury and the North Linwood School, James was employed as a service station attendant when, in November 1939, he applied for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in September 1940, after basic training in New Zealand, James was sent to Canada for aircrew training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In May 1941 James was awarded his WOp/AG badge and embarked for the UK the following month.

After completing advanced training at 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire, in May 1942 James was posted to 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

At 03:15 on 22 May 1942 James, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk, in Wellington III Z1566 (AA) on a night cross country training flight.

Flying into unforecast bad weather, whilst descending through cloud to ascertain their position, the aircraft struck ground near Grindon in the Peak District, Staffordshire, killing 5 crew members. The Rear Gunner survived.

Also killed: PO Andrew Donald Mackay RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt John William Bode (Obs); Sgt Cyril Hayton (WOp/AG); Sgt Wilfred Hubert Smeaton RNZAF (Obs)

James is buried in Buxton Cemetery, Derbyshire

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 129