

FS Louvain Trevor Cairns 402437 RNZAF

Louvain, known as Trevor, was born on 16 November 1916 in Waimate, Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Robert Cairns and Elizabeth Cairns nee Latimer.

Educated at Timaru Technical College, Louvain was employed by the Internal Affairs Department when, in November 1939, he applied for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in July 1940, Louvain was employed on ground duties until November 1940 when he was sent to Canada for WOp/AG training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In May 1941 Louvain was awarded his WOp/AG badge and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, in May 1942 Louvain was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

On 26/27 July 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Hamburg, Germany, regarded as a maximum effort for the regular bomber squadrons. A combined force of 403 aircraft, including fifteen 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. Two 75(NZ) aircraft failed to return.

Shortly before midnight on 26 July 1942, Louvain, operating as the Front Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell in Wellington III X3714 (AA).

Nothing further was heard from the crew, and the circumstances of their loss is unknown. This was Louvain's 5th Op.

Also killed: PO Philip Charles Spittal RNZAF (Obs); FS Norman Albert Bryson RNZAF (AG); FS Colin Valentine McPherson RNZAF (Pilot); FS Stanley David Ross RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Raymond Patrick Coppersmith RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Louvain has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Louvain is commemorated on Wall Panel 140

Louvain's brother, FS Vickers Kitchener Cairns RNZAF was also killed whilst flying in the Pacific Theatre. Both men have no known grave.

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com

