

Sgt George Wood Cook 412514 RNZAF

George was born on 3 March 1918 in Te Awamutu, Waikato, New Zealand, the son of Samuel Arthur Cook and Eva Harriet Cook nee Keam.

Educated at Otorohanga District High School and Hamilton High School, George competed further study at the Auckland Teacher Training College and Auckland University College.

George was employed as a teacher in Auckland when, in February 1940, he applied for aircrew service with the RNZAF.

Called up in April 1941, George commenced pilot training in New Zealand and, following basic flying training, in July was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme to continue his flying training. In September, George's pilot training was terminated and he re-mustered to Observer. In March 1942 George was awarded his Observer badge. Following further navigational training, in April George embarked for the UK.



On 27 December 1942 George completed his advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, where he qualified as a Bomb Aimer, and was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk.

On 3 February 1943, 263 Bomber Command crews were tasked with an operation against targets in Hamburg, Germany. Nine 75(NZ) Sqn Stirlings were allocated to the task. Two squadron aircraft failed to return.

At 18:21 George, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Newmarket in Stirling I R9250 (AA-W).

At 19:46 George's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Reinhold Knacke of the I./NJG1 flying a Bf110 from Gilze-Rijen Airfield, and crashed in the floodplains between Eck en Wiel and Ingen, Gelderland, 8km W of Tiel, Netherlands. Several crew members baled out, but none of the crew survived. The bodies of George, the Captain and Wireless Operator were left in the aircraft when the Germans realised that they were unable to recover it, and ordered the Dutch to bury the crashed Stirling. This was George's 2nd op.

Also killed: FO Harold Lowe DFC (WOp/AG); PO Kenneth Howard Blincoe DFC RNZAF (Pilot); PO Andrew James Newell Scott RNZAF (Pilot); FS Edward McDermott RCAF (AG); Sgt Frank Arthur Boese (Nav); Sgt Desmond Clearwater RNZAF (AG); Sgt Desmond David Hayward (FE)

The three crew members left in the crashed Stirling were recovered in August 1949 and were buried in Amersfoort (Oud Leusden) General Cemetery, Utrecht, Netherlands

George is commemorated on Wall Panel 147

Photo Source: IBCC