

PO Robert Daniel 40747 RNZAF

Robert was born on 11 April 1916 in Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Horace Daniel and Margaret Rose Daniel nee Green.

Educated at Greymouth Technical High School, Robert was employed as a storeman and clerk in Greymouth before serving full time as a member of the Territorials in the 30th Rifle Battalion until the declaration of war.

In November 1939, Robert applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF and was called up for training in March 1940. Robert completed his training in New Zealand with the award of his Observer badge in July.

Arriving in the UK in September 1940, Robert completed his training at 13 OTU RAF Upwood, Cambridgeshire, and arrived on 18 Sqn at RAF Great Massingham, Norfolk in January 1941.

On 21/22 Mar 1941 Bomber Command ordered an op against the U-Boat base at Lorient, France. On the afternoon of 21 March, ten 18 Sqn Blenheim crews, with one spare airframe, departed RAF Great Massingham for RAF Boscombe Down, Wiltshire to launch the op from there, with the plan to return to RAF Great Massingham on completion of the op. Eight crews from 18 Sqn participated in the raid.

At 23:39 on 21 March Robert, operating as the Observer, and the crew departed RAF Boscombe Down in Blenheim IV T2038 (WV-M). Poor visibility and bad weather conditions prevented four of the crews from locating the target and results were poor. On return, the weather forced the crews to land around the country, with aircraft diverting to RAF Great Massingham, RAF Boscombe Down, RAF Middle Wallop, Hampshire, RAF Church Fenton, Yorkshire and RAF Wittering, Cambridgeshire. For unknown reasons, in the early hours of 22 March, Robert's aircraft crashed near to RAF Digby, Lincolnshire, killing all on board. This was Robert's 6th op.

Also Killed: PO George Hendry Cowings (Pilot); Sgt Eric Arthur Lee (WOp/AG)

Robert is buried in All Saints Cemetery, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, next to his pilot

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 152

Photo Source: www.aucklandmuseum.com

