

PO Robert Charles Davis 404480 RNZAF

Robert was born Robert Charles O'Brien on 25 December 1917 in Richmond, Victoria, Australia, the son of David O'Brien and Kathleen O'Brien nee McPhee.

Robert moved to Taumarunui, King Country, New Zealand where he changed his name to Davis. Educated locally, he was employed as an Accountant when war was declared.

Robert joined the RNZAF in 1940, and in December that year left New Zealand for training in Canada. He completed Gunnery School in Fingal, Ontario, Canada, graduating in May 1941, followed by Air Navigation School in Rivers, Manitoba.

In December 1941 110 Sqn was detached from RAF Wattisham to RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, Scotland in preparation for "Operation Archery", a large combined land, sea and air attack by British and Norwegian forces on the German bases on the islands of Vaagso and Maaloy off the Norwegian coast.

On 27 December 1941, six squadron aircraft were tasked with attacking enemy shipping off the Norwegian Coast between Obrestad and Flekke Fjord with the intention of drawing off German fighters from the Commando raid.

At 09:35 Robert, operating as the Observer, and the crew departed RAF Lossiemouth in Blenheim IV Z7422 (VE). A convoy was found and 4 of the 6 aircraft broke away from the leader near Eigeroe to attack the ships 4 miles south. Only 2 Blenheims were seen to leave the convoy and of those, one made a bad landing in the sea after being attacked by an enemy fighter and the other made a good landing in the sea with its port engine on fire.

The outcome of the operation at the time was regarded as a success with the destruction of facilities for manufacture of explosives, coastal defences, power station, nine merchant ships and four Heinkel aircraft. Although overall Allied casualties were considered relatively light, for Bomber and Coastal Commands it proved a costly exercise with the loss of eleven aircraft and thirty-one airmen killed. 110 Sqn lost 4 aircraft and crews.

Also killed : Sgt Norman Kaby (Pilot); Sgt Norman Coatesworth (WOp/AG)

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

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 153

