

PO Rodney Ernest Duffy 413838 RAAF

Rodney was born on 20 November 1919 in Woollahra, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Ernest Duffy and Rose Duffy nee Willis. In October 1942 he married Betty Lorraine Henderson in Sydney, New South Wales.

Rodney was employed as a radio service mechanic when, in September 1941 he enlisted in the RAAF.

Rodney completed his aircrew training in Australia in May 1942 with the award of his Wings, and transferred to the UK in October 1942.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in August 1943 Rodney was granted a commission and posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.

On 22/23 September 1943, Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Hanover, the first major raid to the city for 2 years and the first of a series of four raids on this target. Hanover was an important railway junction at the intersection of two major east-west and north-south routes and was the fifth most active industrial centre in the Third Reich. A combined force of 711 aircraft were allocated to the task, including fifteen 218 Sqn crews. Three squadron crews failed to return.

At 18:50 on the 22 September Rodney and his crew departed RAF Downham Market in Stirling III EJ105 (HA-N).

In the target area, Rodney's aircraft was damaged by flak which killed the Rear Gunner, and part of his turret fell from the aircraft taking him with it. The Rear Gunner was found near Benstorf, south of Hanover, with parts of the gun turret nearby. The Mid Upper Gunner and Flight Engineer baled out and were taken as POW.

The remaining four crew nursed the aircraft homewards. On reaching the East Anglian coast of England, and with one engine on fire, the Stirling crashed in the early hours of 23 September at Hall Farm, Barrow, 5 miles WSW of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, killing the four remaining crew members. This was Rodney's 7th op.

Also killed: FO Wilfrid Selwyn Pryce-Williams (AB); FS Thomas Douglas Ellis RAAF (Nav); FS Roy Lawrence Gehrig RAAF (AG); FS Arthur Henry John Morgan RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Rodney is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridgeshire

Rodney is commemorated on Wall Panel 158

Photo Source: naa.gov.au

