

FS William Francis Duncan 13488 RAAF

William was born on 17 December 1920 in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, the son of William David Alexander Duncan and Mary Ada Florence Duncan nee Smart.

Educated at East Kew Central School and Melbourne Boys' High, William was employed as a clerk to a chartered accountant in Melbourne when, in March 1941, he enlisted in the RAAF.

William served as a general duties clerk until May 1943 when he re-mustered as aircrew and in August 1943, he was sent to Canada to complete his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In March 1944 William was awarded his Navigator badge and embarked for the UK the following month.

Completing advanced training at 8(O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Mona, Anglesey, Wales, 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire and 1658 HCU RAF Riccall, Yorkshire, in January 1945 William was posted to 462 (RAAF) Sqn at RAF Foulsham, Norfolk.



On 24/25 February 1945, Bomber Command was tasked with operating a diversionary sweep over Northern France to draw enemy fighters into the air.

A combined force of 74 training aircraft was allocated to the op, and 462 (RAAF) Sqn were detailed to carry out a "Spoofing" flight to Neuss, Rhein-Kreis Neuss district, North Rhine-Westphalia. Of the ten squadron aircraft allocated to the op, four failed to return.

At 17:03 on 24 February 1945 William, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Foulsham in Halifax III PN429(Z5-E).

William's aircraft crashed at Monchengladbach Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, killing all on board. Post war research of the German fighter archives state three Halifax aircraft were shot down this night, and the squadron were the only ones on the op operating the Halifax; therefore, it is likely the crew fell victim to the fighters drawn up by the sweep.

Also Killed: F/L John Stuart Tootal (Pilot); WO Norman Joseph Hall RAAF (WOp); WO Ernest Ronald William Oliver RAAF (AB); FS Patrick John Paul Carlon RAAF (AG); FS Geoffrey Harrison-Broadley (AG/SDO); FS Murray Arthur Smith RAAF (AG); Sgt Trevor Ephraim David (FE)

Originally buried on the airfield, following research by the Missing Research and Enquiry Service, in November 1945 the crew was moved to the Monchengladbach Town Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, where they were buried with full military honours. In August 1946 William was moved to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 158

Photo Source: recordsearch.naa.gov.au