

FS Ronald Harry Emmerson 410330 RAAF

Ronald was born on 26 September 1919 in Clifton Hill, Victoria, Australia, the son of Harry Alfred Emmerson and Pearl Irene Emmerson nee Watson.

Educated at Westgarth Central School and Northcote High, Ronald was employed as a Winderman by Australian Paper Mills, Fairfield when, in July 1941, he applied for aircrew duties in the RAAF.

Called up in December 1941, Ronald completed his aircrew training in Australia in February 1943 with the award of his Observer badge and he embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 9(O) AFU RAF Penrhos, Gwynedd, Wales, 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire where he qualified on the Wellington, and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk for conversion to the Stirling, in November 1943 Ronald was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire.

On 16/17 December 1943 four 75(NZ) Sqn crews were allocated to a mining "Gardening" op off the Frisian Islands - Nectarines Area.

At 17:00 on 16 December Ronald, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Mepal in Stirling III EF163 (JN-L).

On the return, whilst attempting to land in deteriorating weather, Ronald's aircraft crashed at Bedinghams Farm, two fields NW of the farm buildings, SW of the airfield in Sutton, Cambridgeshire. The pilot had lost visual references at low level, and it is believed that the aircraft's centre of gravity had also been adversely affected by a mine that had failed to release. Only the Mid Upper Gunner survived.

This was one of 41 other crashes that occurred on this night by aircraft returning to England in extremely poor weather conditions. This scale of losses by aircraft in these circumstances was the heaviest ever experienced by Bomber Command in a single night.

Also killed: FO Ralph Francis Jenkin RNZAF (Nav); PO Colin John Kinross RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Raymond Askew (FE); Sgt Willis Arthur Savage (WOp/AG); Sgt John Albert Warner (AG)

Ronald is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridgeshire

Ronald is commemorated on Wall Panel 161

Photo Source: recordsearch.naa.gov.au

