

PO Mervin Arthur Ericksen 416103 RNZAF

Mervin was born on 15 August 1917 in Dannevirke, Taranaki, New Zealand, the son of William Sylvanus Ericksen and Ethel Mary Ericksen nee Parkins. In January 1939 he married Helen Matilda May in New Zealand. They had one son.

Educated at Dannevirke High School, Mervin was employed as a salesman and window dresser by the firm of Kingsway Outfitters Ltd, New Plymouth when, in April 1941, he volunteered for service in the RNZAF.

Called up in November 1941, Mervin commenced pilot training; however, when his training was terminated in February 1942, he re-mustered as Observer and was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In September 1942 Mervin was awarded his Navigator badge and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at No 10 (O) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Dumfries, Scotland and 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire, in May 1943 Mervin was awarded his commission and, following Stirling conversion at 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in June 1943 he was posted to 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire.

On 23/24 August 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Berlin, Germany. A combined force of 727 aircraft was allocated to the op, including twenty-three 75(NZ) crews.

At 21:04 on 23 August Mervin, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Mepal in Stirling III BF465 (JN-K).

In the early hours of 24 August, Mervin's aircraft crashed 3 miles south of Lanke, near Bernau, Germany, 4 miles SW Biesenthal, Brandenburg, NNE of Berlin, killing six of the seven-man crew. The Mid Upper Gunner was able to bale out and was taken as a POW. This was Mervin's 15th op.

Also killed: PO Andrew Rankin (Pilot); PO James Third (AB); FS Frederick William Thorstensen RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Frank Morris Freeman (FE); Sgt George Ogden (AG)

Originally buried in Friedhof Biesenthal, Brandenburg, Germany, in November 1946 Mervin was moved to the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery, Germany.

Mervin is commemorated on Wall Panel 161

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum

