

FS Joseph George Arkless Fisk 412874 RNZAF

Joseph was born on 1 May 1915 in Lemington, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, the son of Joseph George Arkless Fisk and Fanny Grace Fisk nee Shannon. In 1926 the family emigrated to New Zealand, settling in Aramaho, Manawātū-Whanganui. In 1941 he married Amelia Jocelyn Peterson in new Zealand.

Educated at the Aramoho Public School, Joseph was self-employed as a milk vendor when, in June 1940, he applied for service with the RNZAF.

Called up in May 1941, Joseph commenced pilot training in New Zealand; however, when his training was terminated he re-mustered as Observer and was sent to Canada for training under the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Whilst in the middle of Observer training, Joseph re-mustered to Air Bomber and, in October 1942, he was awarded his Air Bomber badge and embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Wescott, Buckinghamshire, and 1667 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in May 1943 Joseph was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire.

On 31 August 1943, Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Berlin. A combined force of 622 aircraft, including eighteen 75(NZ) Sqn crews were allocated to the Op. Four aircraft failed to return

At 20:32 on 31 August Joseph, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Mepal in Stirling III EH905 (AA-R). Moderate to heavy flak co-operating with searchlights, together with enemy fighters in great prominence were reported in the target area by returning crews.

In the early hours of 1 September whilst in the target area, Joseph's aircraft crashed at Genshagen near Ludwigsfelde in the grounds of the DB factory, 11 miles SE of Potsdam, killing five of the crew. The Rear Gunner baled out, and the Mid Upper Gunner was blown out, both were taken POW. This was Joseph's 19th Op.

There are two claims to the loss of Joseph's aircraft. It is known that the Stirling was struck leading to a catastrophic failure of the flight controls. Initially, the intelligence received by 75(NZ) Sqn suggested the aircraft was hit by a bomb load released by an allied aircraft flying above. However, a post war investigation into the loss of a Bf110 from 5./NJG 1 concluded that this aircraft struck Joseph's aircraft with full force, separating the wing of the fighter, leading to the crash of both aircraft.

Also killed: PO George Vincent Helm RNZAF (Pilot); FS Donald Mackay Stewart RNZAF (Nav); Sgt Arthur John Bishop (WOp/AG); Sgt Oliver McCoo (FE)

Originally buried in the Russian Prisoner of War Cemetery, Ludwigsfelde-Heide, Brandenburg, 20 miles South of Berlin, in April 1947 Joseph was moved to the Berlin 1939 - 1945 War Cemetery

Joseph is commemorated on Wall Panel 164

Photo Source: IBCC

