

FS James Douglas Follett 41319 RNZAF

James was born on 19 January 1921 in Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand, the eldest son of Douglas Francis Follett and Emma S Follett nee Payne.

Educated at Marton Junction School, James was employed as a farm hand on the family farm when, in December 1939, he applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in January 1941, after initial pilot training in New Zealand, in April 1941 James was sent to Canada to complete his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Awarded his wings in September 1941, James was posted to the UK the same month.

Posted to 11 OTU at RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, in July 1942, James completed his conversion training and was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Bourn, Cambridgeshire, before the squadron moved to Stradishall, Suffolk in August.



On 28/29 August 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against Nuremberg, Germany, a strong economic and infrastructure hub, with symbolic importance as the "City of the Nuremberg Rally". A combined force of 159 aircraft, including seven 101 crews, were allocated to the op.

On the night of 28 August, James and his crew departed RAF Stradishall in Wellington III X3754 (SR).

At 23:51, whilst on the outbound leg, James's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Walter Ehle & Ofw Ludwig Leidenbach of Stab II./NJG 1, flying a Bf 110 from St Trond (Sint-Truiden) airfield. The aircraft crashed at Cheratte, Visé, Liège - only the Observer survived and became a POW. This was James's 15th op.

Also Killed: Sgt Frank Ernest Kearns RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt John Ramsey (AG); Sgt Murray Swann RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in the Brustem Airfield Cemetery, St Trond, Belgium, in February 1947 James was re-located to Heverlee War Cemetery, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 165

Photo Source: IBCC