

FO John Clarence Frankcomb 401115 RAAF

John was born on 31 October 1914 in Ranelagh, Huon Valley, Tasmania, Australia, the youngest son of Thomas Amesbury Frankcomb and Maida Manie Selby Frankcomb nee White. In September 1940 he married Mary Blackwood in New South Wales, Australia. They had one daughter.

John was employed as a technical production advisor by the Australian Jam Company PTY Ltd when, in July 1940, he volunteered for aircrew duties with the RAAF. Called up in January 1941, John completed his pilot training in Australia in June 1941 with the award of his Wings, and he embarked for the UK in September.

Following refresher flying training and advanced training at 10 OTU RAF Abingdon, Oxfordshire, where he converted to multi crew/ multi engine ops, in February 1942 John was commissioned, and in May 1942 was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Marham, Norfolk where he converted to the Stirling. In July the squadron moved to RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.

On 14/15 September 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an attack on Wilhelmshaven, the primary base for the German Navy and the shipyards, docks and industry that supported them. A combined force of 202 aircraft, including six 218 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op.

At 19:55 on 14 September John and his crew departed RAF Downham Market, Norfolk, in Stirling I N3725 (HA-D "Dumbo") *shown below*.



Whilst over the target, the starboard inner engine failed. The crew commenced a return on the three engines; however, on final approach to base, the starboard outer engine lost power and, at 00:55 on 15 September, John's aircraft crashed 1 mile East of Stoke Ferry, Norfolk, killing six of the crew. The Wireless Operator and the Mid Upper Gunner survived

Also killed: FS Donald Ivor Pearce (Pilot); Sgt Sidney

Horace Ives RNZAF (AG); Sgt Ernest Trevor Pellow RNZAF (AG); Sgt Valentine Picken (FE); Sgt Ernest Watson (Obs)

John is buried in Marham Cemetery, Norfolk

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 166

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com