

FO John Gall DFC 416476 RNZAF

John was born on 11 November 1923 in Maza, North Dakota, USA, the son of John and Madge Gall. In May 1939 the family emigrated to New Zealand where John completed his education at Brant School, Argyle, Manitoba.

After leaving school, John worked as an apprentice baker until he applied for aircrew training in the RNZAF in January 1941. Unfortunately, John failed pilot training at 4 EFTS, Whenuapai, but re-mustered as an Air Observer and was sent to Canada for training in March 1942.

Following training in Toronto, John was awarded his Observer Badge in September 1942 and proceeded to England two weeks later. After advanced flying training at 11 OTU and 1657 CU, in April 1943 John was posted on to 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Newmarket, Suffolk.

Commissioned in June 1943, John completed 24 operational flights on the squadron and in December 1943 was awarded the DFC. His citation read:



"PO Gall has completed many successful operations against the enemy, in which he displayed high skill and fortitude to duty"

After a period on 1483 Gunnery Flight where he carried out air sea rescue flights, in March 1944 John was posted to 161 Sqn at RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire.

At 23:34 on 31 May 1944, John, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in Hudson III V9155 (MA-Q) on "Operation Beziqez", aiming to drop 2 Agents to the East of Eindhoven. Given the number of Dutch Agents that had been captured on landing, the two men were to be dropped blind.

Due to a Navigation error, the aircraft strayed over the heavily anti-aircraft defended Luftwaffe fighter base at Gilze-Rijen. Hit by flak, at 01:20 the aircraft crashed just outside the airfield near the water tower at Gilze, 10km East of Breda. All but the Air Gunner were killed instantly and, on the orders of the German authorities, were buried the following day in a communal grave in the Roman Catholic Cemetery at Gilze-Rijen. At the end of 1945, the crew were exhumed and reburied in Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands. John had completed 47 Ops, 17 of them on 161 Sqn.

Also killed : Flt Lt Warren Macauley Hale RCAF (Pilot); FO Michael Henry Hughes (AG); FO Arthur George Maskall DFM (WOp/AG); 2nd Lt Cornelis Martinus Dekkers (Agent); 2nd Lt Gerrit Jan Kuenen (Agent)

John is buried in Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 167

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com