

FS James Stanley Gallagher 426364 RNZAF

James was born on 25 January 1921 in Oamaru, North Otago, New Zealand, the son of James Gallagher and Mary Gallagher nee Leen.

Educated at St Kevin's College, Oamaru, James was employed as a shop assistant by Woolworths (NZ) Ltd when, in May 1941, he volunteered for aircrew service in the RNZAF.

Called up in May 1942, James was briefly employed on ground duties until June, when he commenced basic aircrew training in New Zealand. In October 1942 James was sent to Canada to complete his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In March 1943 James was awarded his Observer badge and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at No.2 (O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Millom, Cumbria, 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire, 1651 HCU, RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, followed by Lancaster conversion training at 1678 HCU, RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, in December 1944 James was posted to 514 Sqn, also at RAF Waterbeach.



On 14/15 January 1944, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to Brunswick, the first major raid on this town of the war. A combined force of 498 aircraft was allocated to the op, including 23 514 Sqn crews.

At 17:22 on 14 January James, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster II LL679 (J1-J2).

The German controller tracked the bomber stream from just off the English coastline, and many German fighters entered the stream over Bremen, continuing to claim aircraft until the stream left the Dutch coast on the return leg.

James's aircraft crashed in the woods, one mile East of Lauenberg, near Dassel, Lower Saxony, Germany, having broken up in mid-air. Other 514 Sqn aircraft had bombed the target at around 19:15, and the location of the loss suggests that James's aircraft was attacked between 19:30 and 19:35. Hptm Erhard Peters of 9./NJG3, flying a Bf110 from Stade Airfield, claimed a Lancaster shot down at an unstated location at 19:33 and this claim is the most likely match for the loss of James's aircraft. This was the crew's first op on the squadron.

Also Killed: FS Arthur Edward Dimock RCAF (AB); FS Lancelot Kell RNZAF (WOp/AG); FS Paul Eugene Mason RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt John William Hennis (AG); Sgt Ronald Frederick Laishley (FE); Sgt Ernest James Oakley RCAF(AG)

Originally buried in Lauenberg Cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, in June 1947 James was moved to Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany.

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 167

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com