

## **Sgt Eric Francis Gannaway 402110 RNZA**

Eric was born on 21 December 1919 in Napier, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, the eldest son of Cyril Francis Harold Gannaway and Miriam Elsie Laurel Gannaway nee Tasker.

Educated at Napier Boy's High, after leaving school Eric was employed in a variety of positions in Napier, including shop assistant, clerk and motor driver.

In December 1938 Eric unsuccessfully applied for a Short Service Commission in the RNZAF, but on the outbreak of war he was accepted for aircrew training.

Called up in July 1940, Eric completed his training in New Zealand with the award of his Air Gunner badge in September 1940, transferring to the UK the following month.

Following advanced training, Eric was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn in March 1941.

On 11 May 1941 92 aircraft, including eleven from 75(NZ) Sqn, were tasked with a night bombing op against the industrial port of Hamburg.

At 23:20 Eric, operating as the Rear Gunner, departed RAF Feltwell in Wellington Ic R1589 (DX). Whilst climbing out on track, coasting out at Cromer at 4000ft, Eric's Wellington was attacked by an unseen fighter. The aircraft was badly damaged and Eric was hit by a cannon shell. The crew immediately aborted the op, jettisoned the bombs into the sea and rendered first aid to Eric.

At 00:45 on 12 May the Wellington landed back at RAF Feltwell where, despite the crews efforts, Eric succumbed to his wounds a short time later. This was Eric's 10th Op.

Eric is buried in St Nicholas Churchyard, Feltwell, Norfolk

Eric is commemorated on Wall Panel 168

Photo Source: [5nzsquadron.wordpress.com](http://5nzsquadron.wordpress.com)

