

FS Roy Lawrence Gehrig 421899 RAAF

Roy was born on 23 May 1923 in Hume Weir, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Albert Joseph Gehrig and Emma Christine Gehrig nee Stolz.

Educated at Henty Public School, New South Wales, Roy was employed as a motor driver and mechanic when, in July 1941, he volunteered for aircrew duties with the RAAF.

Called up in April 1942, Roy completed his aircrew training in Australia in January 1943 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, and he embarked for the UK in March.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in August 1943 Roy was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.

On 22/23 September 1943, Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Hanover, the first major raid to the city for 2 years and the first of a series of four raids on this target. Hanover was an important railway junction at the intersection of two major east-west and north-south routes and was the fifth most active industrial centre in the Third Reich. A combined force of 711 aircraft were allocated to the task, including fifteen 218 Sqn crews. Three squadron crews failed to return.

At 18:50 on the 22 September Roy, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Downham Market in Stirling III EJ105 (HA-N).

In the target area, Roy's aircraft was damaged by flak which killed Roy, and part of his turret fell from the aircraft taking Roy with it. Roy was found near Benstorf, south of Hanover, with parts of the gun turret nearby. The Mid Upper Gunner and Flight Engineer baled out and were taken as POW.

The remaining four crew nursed the aircraft homewards. On reaching the East Anglian coast of England, and with one engine on fire, the Stirling crashed in the early hours of 23 September at Hall Farm, Barrow, 5 miles WSW of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, killing the four remaining crew members.

Also killed: FO Wilfrid Selwyn Pryce-Williams (AB); PO Rodney Ernest Duffy RAAF (Pilot); FS Thomas Douglas Ellis RAAF (Nav); FS Arthur Henry John Morgan RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in Benstorf Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany, in July 1947 Roy was moved to the Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany.

Roy is commemorated on Wall Panel 168

Photo Source: naa.gov.au

