

Sgt Raymond Edgar Graham 404483 RNZAF

Raymond was born on 8 April 1921 in Oamaru, Otago, New Zealand, the son of Francis Alexander and Jeannie Graham.

Educated at Otago Boys' High School and King Edward Technical College, Raymond was employed as a telephonist by the Post and Telegraph Department, Dunedin when, in November 1939, he volunteered for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in November 1940, Raymond completed his basic flying training in New Zealand before, in February 1941, he was sent to Canada to continue his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. When his Observer training was terminated in October, he re-mustered as Air Gunner. In January 1942 Raymond was awarded his Air Gunner badge and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire for multi crew/multi engine training on the Wellington, and 218 Conversion Flight, RAF Marham, Norfolk for conversion to the Stirling, in September 1942 Raymond was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.

On 10/11 September 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Dusseldorf, a significant centre of steel, armament and engineering industries. The attack also intended to disrupt transport networks essential for supplying the German war effort.

A combined force of 479 aircraft, including ten 218 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op. Two squadron crews failed to return.

At 21:25 on 10 September Raymond, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Downham Market in Stirling I BF351 (HA-C).

At 23:54, Raymond's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein of 9./NJG 2 flying a Ju88 from Gilze-Rijen Airfield, Netherlands. The aircraft crashed at Sint Philipsland, Zeeland, killing all on board. This was Raymond's 1st op.

Also Killed: WO2 Geoffrey Eaton Milligan RCAF (Pilot); FS Dick Emeny (WOp/AG); Sgt Reginald William Bowler (AG); Sgt Jack Ward Humphrey (Obs); Sgt Maurice Varey Tate RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Robert Vallance (FE)

Originally buried in the Bergen-op-Zoom German Military Cemetery, in April 1946 Raymond was moved to the Bergen-op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands

Raymond is commemorated on Wall Panel 172