

PO James Kennedy Grainger 42295 RNZAF

James was born on 1 January 1922 in Shannon, Manawatu-Whanganui, New Zealand, the son of William Grainger and Ida Thomasina Grainger nee Main.

Educated at Napier Boys' High School, James was employed as a clerk by the Police Department in Wellington when, in March 1941, he applied for service with the RNZAF.

Called up in January 1942, following basic training in New Zealand, in April James was sent to Canada to complete his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In September 1942 James was awarded his Observer badge and he immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in March 1943 James was granted a commission and posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire.

On 14/15 April 1943 July 1941 Bomber Command was tasked with an attack against Stuttgart, Baden-Wurtemberg, a significant industrial city including the Daimler and Porsche automotive factories, several military bases and the centre of rail transportation in SW Germany. A combined force of 462 aircraft, including eleven 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op.

At 21:32 on 14 April James, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Newmarket in Stirling III BF513 (AA-E).

At 02:25 on 15 April James's aircraft was intercepted by Lt Friedrich Graeff of the Stabl./NJG4 flying a Bf110 from Florennes Airfield, guided by ground radar cell 7B based in Villers-deux-Eglises, Namur, Belgium. The Stirling crashed in Nismes Wood near the village of Regniessart, SE Couvin, Belgium, killing all on board. This was James's 4th op.

Also Killed: PO Donald Gordon McCaskill RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Ernest Desmond Cook (AG); Sgt Bertram Elwell (AB); Sgt Reginald Thomas Charles Green (WOp/AG); Sgt Angus McVicar (FE); Sgt Ronald Alexander Smith RNZAF (AG)

James is buried in Florennes Communal Cemetery, Namur, Belgium

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 172

Photo Source: IBCC

