

FS Ronald Hardy 429799 RAAF

Ronald was born on 13 April 1914 in Boulder City, Western Australia, the son of Corrie Hardy and Hilda Louise Hardy nee Crutchett.

Educated at Boulder Central School and Technical College, Ronald was employed in a variety of clerk positions around Western Australia and was the Treasurer at the Metro Theatre, Perth when, in February 1941, he volunteered for service in the RAAF.

Whilst awaiting call up, Ronald served with the 305 Light Aid Detachment, 10th Recce. Battalion & the 62nd Corps, Field Park Company.

Called up in October 1942, Ronald completed his training in Australia in November 1943 with the award of his WOp/AG badge and immediately embarked for the UK. In May 1944 Ronald re-mustered as Wireless Operator.



Following advanced training at No 2 Radio School RAF Yatesbury, Wiltshire, 4(O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF West Freugh, Dumfries, Scotland, 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and 71 Base RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire for Lancaster conversion, Ronald was briefly posted to 90 Sqn at RAF Tuddenham, Suffolk, before he was posted to 514 Sqn at RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire in January 1945.

On 3/4 February 1945, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to attack the Hansa Benzol Plant at Huckarde- Dortmund, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany. A combined force of 149 aircraft was allocated to the op, including eleven 514 Sqn crews.

At 16:19 on 3 February Ronald, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster III LM685 (JI-B2).

Returning crews reported slight to moderate heavy flak in the Dortmund and Ruhr areas, combined with considerable searchlight activity throughout the Ruhr. On the run up to the target, Ronald's aircraft was coned by searchlights and hit by flak, crashing near Gelsenkirchen, Nordrhein- Westfalen, killing all on board.

Also Killed: FO Alan Quillam Downward (Nav); FO Warren James Keating Fisher RCAF (Pilot); FO Donald Edward Stephens RCAF (AB); PO Alfred Hector Morrison RCAF (AG); FS William Barclay Warr (FE); Sgt Albert Richard McWhinney RCAF (AG)

Originally buried in Gelsenkirchen Cemetery, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany, in June 1949 Ronald was moved to the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany

Ronald is commemorated on Wall Panel 177

Photo Source: recordsearch.naa.gov.au