

Sgt John Gordon George Hegan 411075 RNZAF

John was born on 6 February 1919 in Christchurch, New Zealand, the son of Joseph Edward Leslie Hegan and Martha Edwards Hegan nee Candlish.

Educated at Christchurch Boys' High School, John was employed as a boot maker by Duckworth Turner Ltd in Christchurch when, in April 1940, he applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in March 1941, after initial training in New Zealand, John was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme where, in September 1941, he received his WOp/AG badge. Arriving in the UK in October 1941, John completed his training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and arrived on 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in June 1942.

On 29 June 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against the industrial target of Bremen. A combined force of 253 aircraft, with sixteen 75 (NZ) crews were allocated to the op.

At 23:25 John, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III X3539 (AA-T). Successfully attacking the target, extensive damage was reported in the industrial area of Bremen, with the Folke-Wolf factory and AG Weser U-Boat construction yard significantly damaged.

Whilst on the return, John's aircraft was intercepted by Oblt Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld of the 5./NJG 2 flying a Bf110 from Gilze Rijen. At 03:08 John's aircraft crashed into the Waddenzee, south of Ameland, Friesland, killing all on board. This was John's 5th op.

Also Killed: PO Walter Jack Monk RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Murdoch Gordon McGregor RNZAF (AG); Sgt Ernest Francis Sydney Moncrief RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Douglas Haig Randle (Observer)

John's body was recovered and he is buried in Westdongeradeel (Holwerd) Protestant Cemetery, Friesland, Netherlands.

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 180