

FS William Louis Jarvis 414691 RAAF

William was born on 31 December 1917 in Gosford, New South Wales, Australia, the son of William Edward Jarvis and Mary Elizabeth Jarvis nee Whilen.

Educated at St Laurence School, South Brisbane and Yeronga State High School, Queensland, William was employed as a labourer when, in May 1941, he volunteered for aircrew duties in the RAAF.

Called up in November 1941, Laurence completed his flying 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 where he qualified on the Wellington and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk for conversion to the Stirling, in August 1943 William was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire.

On 23 September 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Mannheim, an industrial and communications centre home to vital war industries including the manufacturers of naval armaments, the Daimler-Benz works and the BASF chemical plants. A combined force of 628 aircraft, including eighteen 75(NZ) Sqn crews, were allocated to the op. Three squadron crews failed to return.

At 19:52 on 23 September William, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire, in Stirling III EH935 (JN-K).

Homeward bound, at 23:07 William's aircraft was coned by searchlights and intercepted by Uffz Heinz Amsberg of 9./NJG 1 flying a Bf110 from Twente Airfield, Netherlands. The aircraft caught fire and, following unsuccessful attempts to extinguish the flames, the pilot ordered the crew to bale out. The aircraft crashed between Edesheim and Knoringen, SE of Neustadt, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, killing five of the crew. Only the Air Bomber and Mid Upper Gunner were able to bale out and were taken as POW.

Also Killed: FO Laurence John Kirkpatrick RNZAF (Pilot); FO Hugh Powell Sands RNZAF (Nav); Sgt Charles Percival Ellins (FE); Sgt Joseph Edwards Hoey (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in Knoringen Cemetery, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, in April 1948 William was moved to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 189

William's brother, LAC Vincent Edward Jarvis, was killed on 1 July 1942 in a flying accident whilst undergoing aircrew training in Winnipeg, Canada.

Photo Source: naa.gov.au