

PO Osborne Harvey Keedwell 41427 RAF

Osborne was born on 10 June 1913 in Levin, Manawatu-Wanganui, New Zealand, the son of Clarence Stanley Keedwell and Elizabeth May Keedwell nee Harvey.

Educated at Levin District High School and Wellington College, Osborne was employed as a Produce Traveller for Abraham and Williams Ltd before leaving New Zealand for the United Kingdom in August 1938 where he enlisted in the RAF in October 1938. On completion of his Pilot training he was posted to 57 Sqn, before his final posting to 107 Sqn.

In an effort to slow the German advance through Belgium, on the 12 May 1940, British and French bombers were sent to attack the German army formations between Maastricht and Gembloux and to bomb the bridges over the Meuse. The goal was to cause enough damage so that the debris and rubble would block the roads, thus effectively impeding the Wehrmacht.



On the morning of 12 May 1940, 12 Blenheims from 107 Sqn, as part of a combined force of 42 Blenheims, took off from RAF Wattisham, Suffolk. This would prove to be a very costly raid, with 11 aircraft being lost, 4 from the Squadron. Osborne and his crew departed RAF Wattisham at 0810 in Blenheim IV P4914 (OM).

The Squadron aircraft reached their objective and carried out accurate bombing with excellent results, but they were subject to heavy anti-aircraft fire for a distance of 15 miles from the target, which increased to an intense barrage over the objective. Eleven out of the 12 aircraft were hit by the fire. After the bombing of the bridges had been completed the formation was forced to open out owing to the increasingly intensive and accurate anti-aircraft fire. Before the formation could close, it was set upon by enemy fighters.

Osborne's aircraft was shot down by Bf109s of 2./JG 27 at 0925 shortly after attacking the target, and crashed near Voroux-Goreux, Liège.

Also killed were : Sgt Leonard John Merritt (Observer), AC2 Leslie Askham Berridge (WOp/AG)

Osborne is buried in a collective grave with his crew in the Voroux-Goreux Communal Cemetery, Liege, Belgium

Osborne is commemorated on Wall Panel 192

Photo Source: <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph>