

Sgt Christopher James Kendal 412342 RNZAF

Christopher was born on 19 October 1921 in Wellington, New Zealand, the son of Christopher Kendal and Edith Maude Kendal nee South.

Educated at Napier Boys' High School, Christopher was employed as a shop assistant in his father's business when, in May 1941, he applied for service with the RNZAF.

Called up in April 1941, after initial training in New Zealand, Christopher was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In November 1941 Christopher was awarded his WOp/AG badge and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU at RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, in August 1942 Christopher was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn, flying the Wellington, at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk. In November 1942 the squadron converted to the Stirling and moved to RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire.



On 17 December 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with a minor op against Fallersleben, Lower Saxony, Germany, home of the Opel works. A combined force of 22 aircraft, including five 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. This type of limited op proved to be a costly failure 8 crews were lost, and only 3 aircraft successfully bombed the Opel Works. Four 75(NZ) aircraft failed to return.

At 18:00 on 17 December 1942, Christopher, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Newmarket in Stirling I R9247 (AA-W).

Whilst outbound, Christopher's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Walter Milius, Fw Werner Blasius and OFw Ernst Maas of the I./NJG 3, flying a DO217 from Vechta Airfield. The aircraft crashed near Vechta Airfield, 30 miles SW Bremen, Germany, killing all on board. This was Christopher's 16th Op.

Also killed: PO Mervyn Oliver Clark RNZAF (Obs); FS John Fellows RCAF (AG); FS Henry Edward Rousseau (Pilot); Sgt Reginald Crosby Mocock (AB); Sgt William Wilson Morton (FE); Sgt Henry Welsh Pullar RNZAF (AG)

Originally buried in the Russian Cemetery, Vechta, Germany, in October 1947 Christopher was moved to Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

During property development in 2019 at Vechta Airfield, the wreckage of a Stirling aircraft with human remains were found. The serial number of the aircraft was recovered and found to be R9247. DNA sampling was completed and compared with those of surviving family, allowing the remains to be positively identified and placed with those originally laid to rest.

Christopher is commemorated on Wall Panel 193

Photo Source: www.aucklandmuseum