

Sgt Mark Kraljevich 403458 RNZAF

Mark was born on 24 September 1916 in Auckland, New Zealand, the only son of Croatian born Steve Kraljevich and Ivy Kraljevich nee Royal. In 1941 he married Margaret Barbara Addie McArthur in New Zealand.

Educated at Waiuku District High School, Auckland, Mark was employed as a taxi driver in his father's taxi company when, in December 1939, he applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in September 1940, Mark commenced pilot training in New Zealand. Following re-mustering to Observer, Mark was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme where, in August 1941, he was awarded his Observer badge.

Arriving in the UK in October 1941, Mark completed his training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and arrived on 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in May 1942.

On 28/29 July 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against the industrial target of Hamburg. A combined force of 256 aircraft, including seventeen 75 (NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. This was planned to be a much larger raid but bad weather in the North of England prevented many squadrons from participating. The weather en-route was equally poor, and the 91OTU aircraft were recalled. Losses were heavy, and six 75(NZ) Sqn crews were lost.

On the night of 28 July Mark, operating as the Observer, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III Z1570 (AA-B).

Homeward-bound, at 02:35 Mark's aircraft was intercepted by Lt August Geiger of the 8./NJG 1, flying a Bf 110 from Twente airfield, Netherlands. The aircraft crashed at Haftenkamp, Gölenkamp, Lower Saxony, Germany, killing all on board. This was Mark's 27th op.

Also killed: FS Arthur Grahame Johns RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Ronald Ellis (WOp/AG); Sgt Laurie Albert Frampton RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Leslie Ian Stewart RNZAF (AG)

Originally buried in Lingen New Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany, in June 1947 Mark and his crew were moved to Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Mark is commemorated on Wall Panel 195

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com

