

FS Douglas John Mackenzie 417211 RAAF

Douglas was born on 18 November 1916 in Parkside, South Australia, the son of Walter James Mackenzie and Vera Mackenzie nee McFie. In July 1942 he married Mary Elizabeth Hanrahan in Norwood, South Australia.

Educated at Gilles Street School and Unley Junior Technical School, Adelaide, Douglas served in the 48th Battalion Signals Regiment militia for six months, and was employed as a milk carter when, in August 1941, he volunteered for service in the RAAF.

Called up in January 1941, Douglas completed his training in Australia in November 1942 with the award of his WOp/AG badge, and embarked for the UK in January.

Following advanced training at 10 (O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Dumfries, Scotland, 82 OTU RAF Ossington, Nottinghamshire, where he converted to multi crew/multi engine ops on the Wellington, and 1651 HCU RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire for conversion to the Stirling, in October 1943 Douglas was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire, converting to the Lancaster in April.

On 1/2 May 1944, 120 Bomber Command crews, including sixteen 75(NZ) Sqn Lancasters, were tasked with an operation against the railway marshalling yards at Chambly, France. The aim of this raid was to disrupt the German supply lines and were part of the broader strategy to prepare for the Normandy landings.

At 22:44 Douglas, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Mepal in Lancaster I ME689 (AA-Y).

On return, at 00:45 on 2 May, Douglas's aircraft was intercepted by a night fighter, and crashed at Saint Arnoult, Seine-Maritime, France, killing all on board. A joint claim was made by Hptm Martin Drewes of the Stab III./NJG1 and Ofw Karl-Heinz Kamp of the Stab III./NJG4.

Also killed: S/L Euan Wilfred Sachtler RNZAF (Pilot); FO Allan Gleave Heron (Nav); PO Michael Ferdinand Lombard (AB); FS Thomas Alexander Peevers RNZAF (AG); Sgt John Gilbert Pettifer (AG); Sgt Piers Trevor Stevens (FE)

Douglas is buried in Poix-de-Picardie Churchyard, Somme, France

Douglas is commemorated on Wall Panel 202

Photo Source: IBCC

