

FS Donald Ernest Martin 413872 RNZAF

Donald was born on 7 December 1916 in Lambeth, London, the son of Frederick Ernest Martin and Hypatia Ethel Martin nee Robb. In 1920 the family emigrated to New Zealand and settled in Auckland. In 1941 he married Hazel Maud Williamson in New Zealand.

Educated at Mount Albert Grammar School, Donald was employed as a butcher when, in December 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in July 1941, Donald commenced pilot training in New Zealand; however, when his training was discontinued in November 1941 he re-mustered as WOp/AG and was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In October 1942 Donald was awarded his WOp/AG badge and embarked for the UK the following month.



Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire and 1651 HCU RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire for conversion to the Stirling, in June 1943 Donald was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire.

On 22/23 June 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Mulheim, a major centre of manufacturing in the Ruhr industrial region. A combined force of 557 aircraft were allocated to the task, including fifteen 75(NZ) Sqn crews. Four crews failed to return.

At 23:37 on the 22 June 1943 Donald, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, in Stirling I EF399 (AA-O).

At 02:25 on 23 June a wireless transmission was sent from Donald's aircraft indicating they had been badly damaged by flak. Shortly afterwards the aircraft was engaged by Hptm Egmont Prinz zur Lippe Weissendfeld of Stab III./NJG1, flying a Bf110 from Twenthe Airfield. At 02:47 the aircraft crashed near Markelo, Overijssel, 12 miles SW of Hengelo, Holland, killing all on board. This was Donald's 5th op.

Post war analysis confirmed this was a very successful attack, with 64% of the town reported as destroyed.

Also killed: FS Kenneth Alfred Burbidge RNZAF (Pilot); FS Andrew James McEwin RNZAF (AB); FS Walter Frederick Wilcockson RNZAF (Nav); Sgt Gibson Cameron (AG); Sgt George Lockey (FE); Sgt Kenneth Fazackerley Shaw (AG)

Donald is buried in the Markelo General Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands

Donald is commemorated on Wall Panel 205

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com