

PO Donald Gordon McCaskill 13573 RNZAF

Donald was born on 11 October 1923 in Wellington, New Zealand, the son of Lt Col Gordon Milton McCaskill and Gwendolyn Lillian McCaskill nee Rogers.

Educated at Nelson College, Donald was still a student when, in June 1940, he applied for service with the RNZAF.

Called up in June 1941, Donald was employed on ground duties until November when he commenced pilot training. Completing his training in New Zealand, in April 1942 Donald was awarded his Wings and he embarked for the UK in June.

Following advanced training at 3(P) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF South Cerney, Gloucestershire, 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in March 1943 Donald was granted a commission and posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire.

On 14/15 April 1943 July 1941 Bomber Command was tasked with an attack against Stuttgart, Baden-Wurttemberg, a significant industrial city including the Daimler and Porsche automotive factories, several military bases and the centre of rail transportation in SW Germany. A combined force of 462 aircraft, including eleven 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op.

At 21:32 on 14 April Donald and his crew departed RAF Newmarket in Stirling III BF513 (AA-E).

At 02:25 on 15 April Donald's aircraft was intercepted by Lt Friedrich Graeff of the Stabl./NJG4 flying a Bf110 from Florennes Airfield, guided by ground radar cell 7B based in Villers-deux-Eglises, Namur, Belgium. The Stirling crashed in Nismes Wood near the village of Regniessart, SE Couvin, Belgium, killing all on board. This was Donald's 7th op.

Also Killed: PO James Kennedy Grainger (Nav); Sgt Ernest Desmond Cook (AG); Sgt Bertram Elwell (AB); Sgt Reginald Thomas Charles Green (WOp/AG); Sgt Angus McVicar (FE); Sgt Ronald Alexander Smith RNZAF (AG)

Donald is buried in Florennes Communal Cemetery, Namur, Belgium

Donald is commemorated on Wall Panel 207

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com

