

## **Sgt James Allison McConnell 414646 RNZAF**

James was born on 15 November 1920 in Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand, the son of James Allison McConnell and Jessie Campbell McConnell nee Rennie.

Educated at Otago Boys' High School and Kings High School, Dunedin, James was employed as a commercial traveller when, in August 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in August 1941, James completed his pilot training in New Zealand in December 1941 with the award of his wings.

Arriving in the UK in March 1942, following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, in September 1942 James was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk.

On 24/25 October 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Milan, the main industrial and economic centre of Italy, including the home of the Caproni Aircraft Factory. This was the second op to Milan in as many days. A combined force of 71 aircraft, including five 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. Two squadron aircraft failed to return.



At 19:00 on 24 October 1942 James and his crew departed RAF Mildenhall in Wellington III BJ725 (AA).

Whilst homeward bound, at 02:54 on 25 October, James's aircraft was intercepted by Lt Ludwig Meister, flying a Bf110 of Stabl./NJG4 from Florennes Airfield, Belgium. The aircraft crashed at Wargnies-le-Grand, Nord, France, killing all on board. This was James's 9th Op.

Also killed: Sgt Vallance Albert Oliver Dimock RNZAF (AG); Sgt Arthur Quinn (WOp/AG); Sgt Selwyn Clarence Smith RNZAF (Obs); Sgt Douglas Noel Tonkin RNZAF (WOp/AG)

James is buried in Valenciennes (St. Roch) Communal Cemetery, Nord, France

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 207

Photo Source: [75nzsquadron.wordpress.com](http://75nzsquadron.wordpress.com)