

Sgt James Gordon McMurchy 405539 RNZAF

James was born on 6 July 1911 in Ashburton, Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Donald Richard McMurchy and Barbara McMurchy nee Mackay.

Educated at Mayfield Primary School, James was employed as a farm hand when in December 1939 he applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in December 1940, after initial training in New Zealand, James was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme where, in September 1941, he was awarded his WOp/AG badge.

Arriving in the UK in September 1941, James completed his training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and arrived on 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk on 7 July 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 91 OTU aircraft were recalled. Losses were heavy, and six 75(NZ) Sqn crews were lost.

On the night of 28 July James, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III BJ599 (AA-U). At 01:26 James's aircraft was coned by searchlights and shot down by heavy (schwere) flak, crashing near Steinbeck, Buckholz in der Nordheide, Niedersachsen, about 20 miles NW of the target. All on board were killed.

Also Killed: PO Murray Ellis Carncross RNZAF (Observer); FS George Alister Hutt RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt William Clerken O'Shea RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt John Henry Savage RNZAF (AG)

Originally buried in Stade Communal Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany, in September 1946 James and the crew were moved to Becklingen War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany.

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 210

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com

