FS James Timothy Melvin 541524 RAF

James was born in 1918 in London, the son of James Timothy Melvin and Alice Maud Melvin nee Shaul.

A long serving member of 226 Sqn, James was operating in France as a WOp/AG throughout the Battle of France, when the squadron was posted to Belfast as part of Coastal Command, and finally when they returned to Bomber Command at RAF Wattisham in May 41.

On 2 July 1941, 12 aircraft from 226 Sqn, together with a fighter escort of 12 aircraft, were tasked with Circus 29 Operations against a power station at Lille, France. Circus Operations was the designation for fighter-escorted daylight bombing raids by light and medium bombers of 2 Group, Bomber Command, against targets in German-occupied northern Europe.

At 11:20 James, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Wattisham in Blenheim IV V6085 (MQ). Haze prevented target identification and the bombers attacked targets of opportunity, including Merville airfield. Bf109 fighters from I/JG2 and I/JG26 were already airborne and the close escort wing was harried from Lille to the Coast. Despite intense engagement, it was near Merville where the Bf109s succeeded in getting through to the bombers. James's aircraft disappeared from the formation when, at 12:36, 9 Me109s attacked. The Blenheim crashed near Merville, killing James and the Observer. The Pilot managed to survive, but spent the remainder of the war in captivity. One other squadron aircraft was lost.

Also killed : Sgt Alexander Richard Batch (Observer)

James is buried in the Merville Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 211