

Sgt Thomas Otto Metcalfe 414386 RNZAF

Thomas was born on 18 July 1923 in Norsewood, North Island, New Zealand, the son of Joseph William Metcalfe and Dorothy Mary Metcalfe nee Moore.

Educated at Dannevirke District High School, Thomas volunteered for aircrew duties with the RNZAF in September 1940 whilst still at school.

Called up in July 1941, Thomas completed his pilot training in New Zealand with the award of his wings in January 1942.

In March 1942 Thomas was transferred to the UK and, following advanced flying training in August 1942 he was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk.

On the night of the 10/11 September 1942, 479 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Dusseldorf. Thirteen 75(NZ) Sqn Wellingtons participated in the raid.

Shortly after 21:00 on 10 September Thomas and his crew departed RAF Mildenhall in Wellington III BJ974 (AA).

In the early hours of 11 September, the aircraft crashed at Klasheider Weg in the Königsforst, 15km East Cologne, killing all on board. This was Thomas's 4th op.

The op was considered a success, with the city hit in all areas other than the North. The industrial area was heavily damaged, limiting production for a considerable time; however, the raid took its toll on Bomber Command with 33 aircraft lost, 60 crew killed and 13 taken POW. Three 75(NZ) Sqn aircraft failed to return with the loss of 15 men.

Also Killed: Sgt Kevin John Devlin RNZAF (Obs); Sgt Alexander John Lock (AG); Sgt Walter Foch Kelcher RNZAF (Obs/BA); Sgt Desmond James Walshe RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Initially buried in Cologne South Cemetery, Germany, in May 1946 Thomas was re-located to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

Thomas is commemorated on Wall Panel 211

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com

