

FS James Stuart Miller 427220 RNZAF

James was born on 7 March 1911 in Otautau, Southland, New Zealand, the son of James White Miller and Ida Miller nee Campbell.

Educated at Dunedin Technical High School, James was employed as a gardener and dairy farmer in Dunedin when, in May 1941, he volunteered for service in the RNZAF.

Called up in July 1942, following basic training in New Zealand, in December he was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In June 1943 James was awarded his Air Bomber badge, and he immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 4(O) Advanced Flying Unit RAF West Freugh, Wigtown, Scotland, 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire, where he converted to multi crew/multi engine ops on the Wellington, and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk for conversion to the Stirling, in March 1944 James was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire, converting to the Lancaster in April.



As part of the "Transportation Plan", the targeting of bridges and rail infrastructure, in order to limit the German military response to the invasion of France, on 10/11 June 1944, 432 Bomber Command aircraft, including twenty-four 75(NZ) Sqn crews, were tasked with operations against railway targets at Acheres, Dreux, Orleans and Versailles. James's target was Dreux, Eure-et-Loir, France. Two squadron crews failed to return.

At 23:09 James, operating as the Air Bomber, and the crew departed RAF Mepal in Lancaster I ME702 (AA-Q)

Shortly after leaving the target in the early hours of 11 June, James's aircraft was hit twice by flak and broke up in the air, killing six of the crew. The Mid Upper Gunner survived to be taken POW. This was James's 16th op.

Also killed: FO Henry Herbert Marsh (Wop/AG); PO Lester Lascelles Bonisch RNZAF (Pilot); FS John Murdoch Thomas McKenzie RNZAF (Nav); Sgt Frank William Cousins (AG); Sgt William Thomas Reaveley (FE)

Originally buried in St Andre US Military Cemetery, Normandy, France, in June 1945 James was moved to Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France.

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 212

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com