

Sgt Ernest Francis Sydney Moncrief 411087 RNZAF

Ernest was born on 24 December 1916 in Morrinsville, Auckland, New Zealand, the son of Capt Ernest George Moncrief MC and Amy Ellen Moncrief nee Empson.

Educated at Pukekohe Technical School, Ernest worked as a farm hand, a fitter and wireman with the Franklin Electric Power Board as a fitter and wireman, and latterly as a porter for New Zealand Railways.

In December 1939 Ernest volunteered for aircrew duties in the RNZAF. Called up in February 1941, after initial training in New Zealand, Ernest was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme where, in September 1941, he received his WOp/AG badge.

Arriving in the UK in October 1941, Ernest completed his training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and whilst here participated in two ops to Germany. On 14 June 1942 Ernest was posted to 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

On 29 June 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against the industrial target of Bremen. A combined force of 253 aircraft, with sixteen 75 (NZ) crews were allocated to the op.

At 23:25 Ernest, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III X3539 (AA-T). Successfully attacking the target, extensive damage was reported in the industrial area of Bremen, with the Folke-Wolf factory and AG Weser U-Boat construction yard significantly damaged.

Whilst on the return, Ernest's aircraft was intercepted by Oblt Egmont Prinz zur Lippe-Weissenfeld of the 5./NJG 2 flying a Bf110 from Gilze Rijen. At 03:08 Ernest's aircraft crashed into the Waddenzee, south of Ameland, Friesland, killing all on board. This was Ernest's 10th op.

Also Killed: PO Walter Jack Monk RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt John Gordon George Hegan RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Murdoch Gordon McGregor RNZAF (AG); Sgt Douglas Haig Randle (Observer)

Ernest's body was recovered and he is buried in Westdongeradeel (Holwerd) Protestant Cemetery, Friesland, Netherlands.

Ernest is commemorated on Wall Panel 213

Photo Source: www.aucklandmuseum.com

