

WO Ernest Ronald William Oliver 427542 RAAF

Ernest was born on 21 January 1918 in Weymouth, Dorset, England, the son of Ernest Henry Oliver and Myrtle Jean Oliver nee Martin. In 1919 the family emigrated to Australia and settled in Fremantle, Western Australia. In November 1939 he married Evelyn Frazer in Perth, Western Australia. They had one daughter.

Educated at Beaconsfield State School and Fremantle Central Boys' School, Ernest was employed as an accounts clerk when, in December 1941, he volunteered for aircrew service in the RAAF.

Called up in July 1942, in April 1943 Ernest completed his training in Australia with the award of his Air Bomber badge, and in June 1943 he was sent to Canada to complete reconnaissance training. In October 1943 Ernest embarked for the UK.



Completing advanced training at 6(O) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Moreton Valance, Gloucestershire, 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire and 1658 HCU RAF Riccall, Yorkshire, in January 1945 Ernest was posted to 462 (RAAF) Sqn at RAF Foulsham, Norfolk.

On 24/25 February 1945, Bomber Command was tasked with operating a diversionary sweep over Northern France to draw enemy fighters into the air.

A combined force of 74 training aircraft was allocated to the op, and 462 (RAAF) Sqn were detailed to carry out a "Spoofing" flight to Neuss, Rhein-Kreis Neuss district, North Rhine-Westphalia. Of the ten squadron aircraft allocated to the op, four failed to return.

At 17:03 on 24 February 1945 Ernest, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Foulsham in Halifax III PN429(Z5-E).

Ernest's aircraft crashed at Monchengladbach Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, killing all on board. Post war research of the German fighter archives state three Halifax aircraft were shot down this night, and the squadron were the only ones on the op operating the Halifax; therefore, it is likely the crew fell victim to the fighters drawn up by the sweep.

Also Killed: F/L John Stuart Tootal (Pilot); WO Norman Joseph Hall RAAF (WOp); FS Patrick John Paul Carlon RAAF (AG); FS William Francis Duncan RAAF (Nav); FS Geoffrey Harrison-Broadley (AG/SDO); FS Murray Arthur Smith RAAF (AG); Sgt Trevor Ephraim David (FE)

Originally buried on the airfield, following research by the Missing Research and Enquiry Service, in November 1945 the crew was moved to the Monchengladbach Town Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, where they were buried with full military honours. In August 1946 Ernest was moved to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Ernest is commemorated on Wall Panel 220.

Photo Source: recordsearch.naa.gov.au