

FS William (Bill) George O'Neill 404496 RNZAF

William was born in 1921 in Dagaville, Auckland, New Zealand, the son of Edward O'Neill and Emily O'Neill nee Moore.

William completed his Observer training in Ontario, Canada in May 1941 before converting to the Blenheim IV at 42 OTU, RAF Andover, Hampshire with FO Looker and Sgt Cox. They were then posted as a crew to 13 Sqn at RAF Odiham in October 1941.

Although 13 Squadron was an army support unit, it was co-opted to Bomber Command throughout the period for which the "Thousand Bomber" raids were taking place. The squadron mainly flew intruder raids to key German aerodromes in an effort to neutralise the German night-fighter effort; however, on 25/26 June 1942 13 Squadron did fly as part of the main force in attack against Bremen.

On 25 June 1942, 13 Sqn were attached to 2 Group for bomber operations. Of the 9 aircraft flown, 5 were flown with the main "1000 Bomber" raid to Bremen, and 4 continued the "Intruder Operations". William, operating as the Observer, and the crew were tasked with an attack on the Nachtjagd base at Venlo, Holland.

At 23:50 on 25 June 1942, William and the crew departed RAF Wattisham in Blenheim IV T2254 (OO-A). On 26 June 1942 at 02:39, the aircraft was hit by flak and crashed near Aartselaar, Belgium.

Two squadron aircraft failed to return - both from the intruder attacks.

Also killed were: FO Peter Huxley Looker (Pilot); Sgt Gordon William Cox (WOp/AG)

William is buried in Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerp, Belgium

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 221.

Photo Source: Rootschat

