## PO Alexander James Ryan 391367 RNZAF

Alexander was born on 12 September 1915 in Wanganui, New Zealand, the son of Peter Patrick Ryan and Margaret Ryan nee Quinlan.

Educated at Wanganui Technical College, Alexander was employed as a draughtsman by the Public Works Department in Tauranga, Rotorua and Wellington when, in 1939, he enrolled in the Civil Reserve of Pilots, and began training with the Wellington Aero Club.

On the outbreak of war, Alexander applied for service with the RNZAF and was called up in November. In May 1940 Alexander completed his pilot training in New Zealand with the award of his wings, was granted a commission and in July he embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 15 OTU RAF Harwell, Oxfordshire, in November 1940 Alexander was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

On 10 October 1941 Alexander was part of a crew tasked with completing an air test, and then transiting to RAF Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire for a pilot swap.

At 11:30 Alexander, operating as 2nd Pilot, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell in Wellington Ic T2550 (AA-L).

The air test was completed successfully, and the crew began the transit to RAF Bassingbourn. The weather deteriorated on route and, as the captain descended to pinpoint their position, the Wellington struck trees on a hill top at Heath Farm near Stapleford, 4 miles south of Cambridge. Only one crew member of the six on board survived. Alexander had completed 10 ops.

Also killed: PO Brian Patrick McNamara (Pilot); Sgt Richard Booth Elliott (Obs); Sgt John Olive (WOp/AG); Sgt Matthew Roy Ritchie (WOp/AG)

Alexander is buried in St Nicholas Churchyard, Feltwell, Norfolk

Alexander is commemorated on Wall Panel 236

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com