

S/L Euan Wilfred Sachtler 41362 RNZAF

Euan was born on 2 March 1920 in Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand, the son of Wilfred Sachtler and Janet Louisa Sachtler nee Brown.

Educated at Otago Boys' High School, Euan was employed as a shop assistant in the family business when, in February 1940, he enlisted in the RNZAF.

Called up in January 1941, Euan completed his pilot training in New Zealand in May 1941 with the award of his Wings, was granted a commission, and embarked for the UK in July.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, where he converted to multi crew/multi engine ops on the Wellington, and 1443 (Ferry Training) Unit, RAF Harwell, Oxfordshire, for long range navigation training, in January 1942 Euan was posted to 37 Sqn operating in the Middle East and Mediterranean theatres.



In December 1942, on completion of his tour of thirty five ops, Euan returned to the UK via South Africa and was posted to instructor duties on 11 OTU RAF Oakley, Buckinghamshire. In January 1944 Euan was posted to 1657 HCU, RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, where he converted to the Stirling and, in February, was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire. In April 1944 Euan converted to the Lancaster.

On 1/2 May 1944, 120 Bomber Command crews, including sixteen 75(NZ) Sqn Lancasters, were tasked with an operation against the railway marshalling yards at Chambly, France. The aim of this raid was to disrupt the German supply lines and were part of the broader strategy to prepare for the Normandy landings.

At 22:44 Euan and his crew departed RAF Mepal in Lancaster I ME689 (AA-Y).

On return, at 00:45 on 2 May, Euan's aircraft was intercepted by a night fighter, and crashed at Saint Arnoult, Seine-Maritime, France, killing all on board. This was Euan's 47th op. A joint claim was made by Hptm Martin Drewes of the Stab III./NJG1 and Ofw Karl-Heinz Kamp of the Stab III./NJG4.

Also killed: FO Allan Gleave Heron (Nav); PO Michael Ferdinand Lombard (AB); FS Douglas John Mackenzie RAAF (WOp/AG); FS Thomas Alexander Peevers RNZAF (AG); Sgt John Gilbert Pettifer (AG); Sgt Piers Trevor Stevens (FE)

Euan is buried in Poix-de-Picardie Churchyard, Somme, France

Euan is commemorated on Wall Panel 237

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com