

Sgt John Henry Savage 404620 RNZAF

John was born on 28 April 1909 in Christchurch, South Island, New Zealand, the son of Herbert John Savage and Margaret Savage nee Robinson.

Educated at Christchurch Technical College, John served as a Territorial with the 16th Battery, New Zealand Artillery whilst employed by the boot manufacturers of H B Duckworth Ltd in Christchurch.

Volunteering for aircrew duties in the RNZAF, John commenced his initial training in New Zealand in November 1940, before travelling to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In December 1941, he was awarded his Air Gunner's badge and posted to the UK.

Arriving in the UK in January 1942, John completed his training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and arrived on 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk on 17 July 1942.

On 28/29 July 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against the industrial target of Hamburg. A combined force of 256 aircraft, including seventeen 75 (NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. This was planned to be a much larger raid but bad weather in the North of England prevented many squadrons from participating. The weather en-route was equally poor, and the 91OTU aircraft were recalled. Losses were heavy, and six 75(NZ) Sqn crews were lost.

On the night of 28 July John, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III BJ599 (AA-U). At 01:26 John's aircraft was coned by searchlights and shot down by heavy (schwere) flak, crashing near Steinbeck, Buckholz in der Nordheide, Niedersachsen, about 20 miles NW of the target. All on board were killed. This was John's 2nd op, and his first on the squadron.

Also Killed: PO Murray Ellis Carncross RNZAF (Obs); FS George Alister Hutt RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt James Gordon McMurchy RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt William Clerken O'Shea RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in Stade Communal Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany, in September 1946 John and the crew were moved to Becklingen War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany.

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 238