

W/C Donald Teale Saville 74738 DSO DFC RAFVR

Donald, known as "The Mad Aussie", was born on 22 December 1903 in Portland, NSW, Australia, the son of John Saville and Isabella Saville nee Teale. Educated at All Saints College, Bathurst, Sydney Grammar School and Friends School, Great Ayton, Yorkshire, Donald was employed by the Commonwealth Portland Cement Co. Ltd when, in 1927, he joined the RAAF as a cadet. Completing his pilot training at Point Cook, Victoria, Donald accepted a short-service commission in the RAF and embarked for the UK. Returning to Australia in May 1932, Donald flew as a test pilot at Mascot, Sydney, was a flying instructor with the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Aero Club, and finally a senior pilot with Australian National Airways.



In 1939 whilst on holiday in the UK, Donald joined the RAFVR and, due to his age, was posted to the Ferry Pool Service and eventually became its Commanding Officer. In 1941 he accepted a reduction in rank to transfer to Bomber Command. Following operational training, Donald was posted to 12 Sqn, followed in December 1942 by a posting to 458 Sqn RAAF and deployment to Fayid, Egypt in February 1942. Whilst in Egypt Donald was appointed CO of 104 Sqn in Kabrit. Moving to Malta in November, in December 1942 Donald was awarded the DFC. His citation read: *"Within two weeks of his arrival in Malta this officer completed numerous sorties. By his splendid leadership and untiring efforts, he has contributed materially to the success obtained by the squadron he commands. In November 1942 at night, he took part in three attacks on enemy airfields in Tunis. In spite of heavy opposition and bad weather the objective was bombed from low level. The next night he participated in 3 attacks on Comiso airfield where a large fire was started. His determination and courageous example has inspired his fellow pilots".*

In March 1943, on completing a full tour of ops, Donald took command of 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk. On 24/25 July 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an attack on Hamburg, the first night of "Operation Gomorrah" a campaign of air raids which would last for eight days and seven nights. A large city and industrial centre, Hamburg's shipyards, U-boat pens, and the Hamburg-Harburg area oil refineries were attacked throughout the war. A combined force of 791 aircraft, including twenty 218 Sqn crews, was allocated to the op. The crew were to be part of the 3rd wave over Hamburg. At 22:20 on 24 July Donald and his crew departed Downham Market in Stirling III BK567 (HA-P). Whilst on the run into the target, at 01:11 on 25 July, Donald's aircraft was intercepted by Fw Hans Meissner flying a Bf110 of 6./NJG3 from Schleswig Airfield. With two engines on fire, Donald ordered the crew to bale out. The Stirling crashed 1/2-mile SW of Einfeld, 3 miles North of Neumunster, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, killing seven of the eight-man crew. The Bomb Aimer escaped and became a POW. This was Donald's 58th op.

Also Killed: Flt Lt John Lancelot Birbeck DFC (AG); Flt Lt Thomas Albert Stanley DFC (WOp/AG); PO William Job Brighton (Nav); PO Thomas Darling Fairgrieve DFM (FE); FS Hugh Walter Beavis RNZAF (Pilot); FS Adam Black Seaton Howat (AG)

Originally buried in Neumunster Civil Cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, in September 1946 Donald was moved to Hamburg Cemetery, Germany

Donald is commemorated on Wall Panel 238

Donald was posthumously awarded the DSO. His citation read: *"This officer has completed a very large number of sorties and has displayed outstanding determination to achieve success. He is a fearless commander who invariably chooses to participate in the more difficult sorties which have to be undertaken. Whatever the opposition, WC Saville endeavours to press home his attacks with accuracy and resolution By his personnel example and high qualities of leadership, this officer has contributed materially to the operational efficiency of the squadron."*

Photo Source: 218 Sqn