

FS James Brooks Hamilton Smith 416630 I

James, known as Jimmy, was born on 7 March 1923 in Maitland, South Australia, Australia, the son of William John Hamilton Smith and Adelaide Mary Belle Smith nee Williams.

Educated at King's College, Kensington Park, James was employed on the family farm when, in March 1941, he volunteered for service in the RAAF.

Called up in July 1941, James completed his aircrew training in Australia in February 1942 with the award of his wings, and he embarked for the UK in June 1942.

Following advanced training at 16 OTU RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, 12 OCU RAF Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in May 1943 James was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.

On 22/23 June 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Mulheim, a major centre of manufacturing in the Ruhr industrial region. A combined force of 557 aircraft were allocated to the task, including eight 218 Sqn crews.



At 00:10 on the 23 June James and his crew departed RAF Downham Market in Stirling III BF572 (HA-K).

At 02:09 James's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein flying a Bf110 of Stab IV./NJG7 flying from Gilze-Rijen airfield, Netherlands. The aircraft crashed into the North Sea, 25km W of Den Haag, Zuid Holland, killing 6 of the 7 man crew. The Rear Gunner survived and was taken as a POW.

Post war analysis confirmed this was a very successful attack, with 64% of the town reported as destroyed.

Also killed: FS George Labiuk RCAF (AG); Sgt Reginald Harrison Cramm (Nav); Sgt Wyndham Henry Davies (AB); Sgt Cederic Roland Minns (WOp/AG); Sgt Gilbert Ernest Rose (FE)

James was washed ashore near Castricum, and is buried in Castricum Protestant Churchyard, Noord-Holland, Netherlands.

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 244

James's brother, Private Colin George Hamilton Smith 2/8 Field Ambulance, AAMC, died in service 2 May 1941 in Tobruk, Libya

Photo Source: www.tracesofwar.nl