

FS Murray Arthur Smith 442286 RAAF

Murray was born on 9 March 1925 in Kensington, South Australia, the son of Hector Arthur Smith and Gertrude Elsie Smith nee Coppinger.

Educated at Norwood District High School, Murray was employed as a junior clerk by Buyers Ltd, Thebarton, South Australia when, in March 1943, he volunteered for aircrew service in the RAAF.

Called up in April 1943, Murray completed his training in Australia in February 1944 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, and in March 1944 he embarked for the UK.

Completing advanced training at 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire and 1658 HCU RAF Riccall, Yorkshire, in January 1945 Murray was posted to 462 (RAAF) Sqn at RAF Foulsham, Norfolk.

On 24/25 February 1945, Bomber Command was tasked with operating a diversionary sweep over Northern France to draw enemy fighters into the air.

A combined force of 74 training aircraft was allocated to the op, and 462 (RAAF) Sqn were detailed to carry out a "Spoofing" flight to Neuss, Rhein-Kreis Neuss district, North Rhine-Westphalia. Of the ten squadron aircraft allocated to the op, four failed to return.

At 17:03 on 24 February 1945 Murray, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Foulsham in Halifax III PN429(Z5-E).

Murray's aircraft crashed at Monchengladbach Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, killing all on board. Post war research of the German fighter archives state three Halifax aircraft were shot down this night, and the squadron were the only ones on the op operating the Halifax; therefore, it is likely the crew fell victim to the fighters drawn up by the sweep.

Also Killed: F/L John Stuart Tootal (Pilot); WO Norman Joseph Hall RAAF (WOp); WO Ernest Ronald William Oliver RAAF (AB); FS Patrick John Paul Carlon RAAF (AG); FS William Francis Duncan RAAF (Nav); FS Geoffrey Harrison-Broadley (AG/SDO); Sgt Trevor Ephraim David (FE)

Originally buried on the airfield, following research by the Missing Research and Enquiry Service, in November 1945 the crew was moved to the Monchengladbach Town Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, where they were buried with full military honours. In August 1946 Murray was moved to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Murray is commemorated on Wall Panel 244

Photo Source: recordsearch.naa.gov.au

