

PO Rupert John Smith 41950 RNZAF

Rupert was born on 7 February 1916 in Orange, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Ernest Harrison Smith and Emma Smith nee Harding. The family re-located to New Zealand when Rupert was a child, and they settled in Wellington.

Educated at Wellington College, Rupert was a farm hand on the family farm when, in June 1940, he applied for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in February 1941, Rupert completed his pilot training in New Zealand with the award of his wings in June 1941 and commissioned the following month.

In September 1941 Rupert arrived in the UK and after advanced training was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk from 12 OTU at RAF Chipping Warden, Oxfordshire.

On 8/9 June 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against the industrial target of Essen with the Krupp Armament Works the primary target. A combined force of 170 aircraft, including twelve 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op.



Just before midnight on 8 June Rupert and his crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III X3587 (AA-P).

At 01:32 Rupert's aircraft was coned by searchlights and hit by both heavy and light Flak. The aircraft crashed at Neuss, SW of Dusseldorf, Germany, killing all on board. This was Rupert's 12th op.

Also Killed: Sgt William Graham Clark (Obs); Sgt Barry Herbert Coulter (WOp/AG); Sgt Henry Edward Jones (AG); Sgt William Robertson Ramsay RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Originally buried in Dusseldorf North Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, in December 1946 Rupert and the crew were moved to the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Rupert is commemorated on Wall Panel 244

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com