

Sgt Selwyn Clarence Smith 41952 RNZAF

Selwyn was born on 18 January 1913 in Winton, Southland, New Zealand, the son of E. T. and Sarah Elizabeth Smith.

Educated at Winton District High School, Selwyn was employed by the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society when, in May 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in February 1941 for pilot training, after basic flight training in New Zealand, Selwyn was sent to Canada for the next phase. In April, Selwyn's training was terminated and he re-mustered as Observer. In April 1942 Selwyn was awarded his Observer badge and, following further navigation training, he embarked for the UK in June.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, in September 1942 Selwyn was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk.

On 24/25 October 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Milan, the main industrial and economic centre of Italy, including the home of the Caproni Aircraft Factory. This was the second op to Milan in as many days. A combined force of 71 aircraft, including five 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. Two squadron aircraft failed to return.

At 19:00 on 24 October 1942 Selwyn, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Mildenhall in Wellington III BJ725 (AA).

Whilst homeward bound, at 02:54 on 25 October, Selwyn's aircraft was intercepted by Lt Ludwig Meister, flying a Bf110 of Stabl./NJG4 from Florennes Airfield, Belgium. The aircraft crashed at Wargnies-le-Grand, Nord, France, killing all on board. This was Selwyn's 9th Op.

Also killed: Sgt Vallance Albert Oliver Dimock RNZAF (AG); Sgt James Allison McConnell RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Arthur Quinn (WOp/AG); Sgt Douglas Noel Tonkin RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Selwyn is buried in Valenciennes (St. Roch) Communal Cemetery, Nord, France

Selwyn is commemorated on Wall Panel 244

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com

