

Sgt William Arthur Titcomb 1291758 RAFVR

William was born on 19 August 1920 in Eltham, London, the son of Arthur Charles Titcomb and Annie Ida Titcomb nee Alcock.

Before joining the RAF and training as an Air Gunner, William was employed as an assistant in a newspaper tape room. William arrived on 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in June 1942.

On 28/29 July 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against the industrial target of Hamburg. A combined force of 256 aircraft, including seventeen 75 (NZ) crews, were allocated to the op. This was planned to be a much larger raid but bad weather in the North of England prevented many squadrons from participating. The weather en-route was equally poor, and the 91OTU aircraft were recalled. Losses were heavy, and six 75(NZ) Sqn crews were lost.

At 22:35 William, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III BJ661 (AA-X). Homeward bound, at 03:05 William's aircraft was intercepted by Lt Wolfgang Kuthe from 5./NJG2 and crashed into the IJsselmeer, East of Schellingwoude, Noord-Holland. Located in the central part of the fuselage, the wireless operator and front gunner managed to escape from the Wellington and were picked up by the Germans and taken as PoW. William's body floated free from the wreckage and was washed ashore on the other side of the IJsselmeer.

Also Killed: FS Martin John Byrne RNZAF (Obs); FS John Edward Gilbertson RNZAF (Pilot)

William is buried in the Harderwijk General Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands

William is commemorated on Wall Panel 254

Photo Source: IBCC

