

Sgt Desmond James Walshe 412912 RNZAF

Desmond was born on 24 July 1917 in Wellington, New Zealand, the son of James and Gertrude M Walshe.

Educated at St Patrick's College, Wellington Technical and Gilby's Commercial College, Desmond was employed by the Air Department when, in June 1940, he volunteered for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in May 1941, Desmond was sent to Canada for training as a WOp/AG under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In December, Desmond was awarded with his WOp/AG badge and in January 1942 he was transferred to the UK. Desmond completed advanced training at 11 OTU, RAF Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, and in August 1942 he was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk.

On the night of the 10/11 September 1942, 479 aircraft were dispatched for an attack on Dusseldorf. Thirteen 75(NZ) Sqn Wellingtons participated in the raid.



Shortly after 21:00 on 10 September Desmond, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Mildenhall in Wellington III BJ974 (AA).

In the early hours of 11 September, the aircraft crashed at Klasheider Weg in the Königsforst, 15km East Cologne, killing all on board. This was Desmond's 2nd op.

The op was considered a success, with the city hit in all areas other than the North. The industrial area was heavily damaged, limiting production for a considerable time; however, the raid took its toll on Bomber Command with 33 aircraft lost, 60 crew killed and 13 taken POW. Three 75(NZ) Sqn aircraft failed to return with the loss of 15 men.

Also Killed: Sgt Kevin John Devlin RNZAF (Obs); Sgt Alexander John Lock (AG); Sgt Walter Foch Kelcher RNZAF (Obs/BA); Sgt Thomas Otto Metcalfe RNZAF (Pilot)

Initially buried in Cologne South Cemetery, Germany, in May 1946 Desmond was re-located to the Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

Desmond is commemorated on Wall Panel 259

Photo Source: findagrave