

Sgt John Stephen Wilson 402530 RNZAF

John was born on 7 October 1914 in Taihape, Rangitikei, New Zealand, the son of Stephen Anson Wilson and Christian Wilson nee Bremner.

Educated at Pukekohe Technical High School, John was employed as a milk salesman when, in October 1939, he applied for aircrew duties with the RNZAF.

Called up in July 1940, John was employed on ground duties until November 1940 when he commenced pilot training. In February 1941 John was sent to Canada under the Empire Air Training Scheme where, in June 1941, he was awarded his wings and was posted to the UK.

In August 1941 John completed his advanced training at 23 OTU RAF Pershore, Worcestershire, and was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

On 8 November 1941, 54 Bomber Command crews were tasked with an operation against industrial targets in Essen, Germany, home of the Krupp Steelworks. Eleven 75(NZ) Sqn Wellingtons were allocated to the task. Three squadron aircraft failed to return.

In the early evening, John and his crew departed RAF Feltwell in Wellington Ic Z8942 (AA-J).

Whilst homeward bound and transiting over the Netherlands, at 22:15 John's aircraft was coned by searchlights and hit by flak. The Wellington crashed at Zuidland, Zuid-Holland, 13 miles SW of Rotterdam, killing 5 of the crew. The Rear Gunner survived and was taken prisoner, but was killed on 19 April 1945 in a friendly fire incident during a forced march from the POW Camp. This was John's 14th op.

Also killed: PO Ralph Owen Foster RNZAF (Pilot); PO Robert Leslie Owen Ryder RAAF (Obs); WO Lawrence Beresford Hamilton Hope (AG) died 19 April 1945; Sgt Sir Charles Thomas Hewitt Mappin 4th Bt (WOp/AG); Sgt James Henry Reid (WOp/AG)

John is buried in Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands

John is commemorated on Wall Panel 267

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com

