Sgt Harold Paull Stanfield Annells 408008 RAAF

Harold was born on 30 May 1912 in Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia, the son of William Charles Annells and Ruby Annells nee Stanfield.

Educated at Friends School, Hobart and Hobart Technical College, Tasmania, Harold was employed as a machine operator and clerk when, in February 1940, he volunteered for aircrew service in the RAAF.

Called up in May 1940, Harold completed his training in Australia in February 1941 with the award of his Observer badge, and he embarked for the Middle East in April.

Following a short time in the Middle East Pool, in June 1941 Harold was sent to 70 OTU, Nakuru, Kenya, where he was trained to operate as a member of a multi engined aircraft in Middle Eastern conditions. In October 1941 Harold was posted to 55 Sqn at LG 17, Egypt. On 30 October Harold was the Observer flying Blenheim R3600 which was attacked, forcing the crew to ditch offshore near El Alamein. Slightly injured, Harold and the crew managed to swim ashore.

In January 1942 Harold was posted back to the Middle East Pool at Ismalia, Egypt before, in July 1942, Harold re-mustered as Navigator before joining 223 Sqn at LG98. By November, the squadron was operating from LG86, Bir Abo Ogus II, Egypt.

On 5 November 1942, seventeen 223 Sqn crews were tasked with an op to bomb retreating enemy motor transport at the road and rail crossing south of Maaten Baggush, 35 miles east of Mersa Matruh, Egypt.

At 14:14 on 5 November Harold, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed LG86 Bir Abo Ogus II, Egypt in Baltimore III AG941.

Whilst over the target, two squadron aircraft - AG941 and AG966 collided. Four members of the two crews were seen to bale out, and only three parachutes were seen to open.

At 15:15 Harold's aircraft crashed 200yds left of the Daba Matruh road. On 7 November, four bodies were recovered by the First Armoured Division and buried at the crash site.

Also Killed: WO2 Roderick Charles Mutch RCAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Robert Henry Stevens (WOp/AG)

In October 1943 Harold was moved to El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt

Harold is commemorated on Wall Panel - NYE