FS John Burns Winter 421805 RNZAF



John was born on 2 October 1920 in Invercargill, South Island, New Zealand, the son of John Henry Winter and Bertha Bessie Winter nee Mullins.

Educated at Southland Boys' High School, John was initially employed as a warehouseman by Messrs. Bing Harris & Co Ltd, Invercargill before he joined the Mercantile Marine. In January 1941 John applied for service with the Fleet Air Arm; however; he was unsuccessful, and applied for service with the RNZAF.

Accepted into the RNZAF, John enlisted in March 1942 and commenced pilot training in New Zealand; however, when his training was terminated he re-mustered as Observer and, in August 1942, he was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme.

In April 1943 John completed his flying training in Canada with the award of his Observer badge, and in May he was posted to 34 OTU RAF Pennfield Ridge, New Brunswick where he qualified on the Ventura. In August 1943 John embarked for the UK and, following advanced training at 13 OTU RAF Bicester, Oxfordshire, and conversion to the Mitchell, in January 1944 John was posted to 98 Sqn at RAF Dunsfold, Surrey.

On 8 May 1944, twelve 98 Sqn aircraft were tasked with a Noball Op against a target at Bois Coquerel, Pas de Calais, France. "Noball" was the overall designator for attacks against the launching sites for the V-1 flying bombs in Northern France and the Low Countries.

At 17:05 on 8 May 1944 John, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Dunsfold, Surrey in Mitchell II FV913 (VO-J).

The target was reached and successfully bombed; however, on return they encountered heavy flak and John was hit in the head by shrapnel. The aircraft landed at RAF Friston, East Sussex and John was taken immediately to hospital, but died 30 minutes after landing, having never regained consciousness. This was his 30th flight.

John is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

John is commemorated on Wall Panel - Not Yet Erected

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com