PO Bruce Ian Hamilton Hicks 417078 RAAF



Bruce was born on 9 March 1916 in Moonta, South Australia, Australia, the youngest son of Joseph Edmond Hicks and Edith Alice Hicks nee Hooper.

Bruce was employed as a farmer when, in July 1941, he volunteered for service with the RAAF. Called up in December 1941, Bruce completed his flying training in Australia in February 1943 with the award of his wings. In April 1943 Bruce embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training, in October 1943 Bruce was posted to 116 sqn at RAF Heston, London.

In August 1944 Bruce was posted to 13 OTU RAF Bicester, Oxfordshire for conversion to the Mitchell and, in October 1944, he was posted to 98 Sqn at RAF Hartford Bridge, Hampshire, and granted his commissioned the following month. As the Allied armies advanced following the Normandy landings, the squadron was moved to Base 58, Melsbroek, near Brussels, Belgium.

On 2 February 1945 thirty aircraft from 2 Group, 139 Wing, 2nd Tactical Air Force, including six 98 Sqn aircraft, were detailed to attack the Oil Mill at Helden, Limburg, Netherlands.

At 09:15 on 2 February 1945, Bruce and his crew departed Melsbroek in Mitchell II FW224 (VO-V).

Shortly after take-off, Bruce's aircraft slid out of the formation emitting smoke from one engine. The aircraft failed to maintain height and crashed 2 miles South of Malines, Belgium, killing all on board.

Also Killed: PO Edward Anthony Bogan RAAF (WOp/AG); PO George Arthur Winter (Nav); FS Albert Barker DFM (AG)

Bruce is buried in the Brussels Town Cemetery, Belgium

Bruce is commemorated on Wall Panel NYE

Photo Source: vwma.org.au