PO Robert Ernest Yarra 413707 RAAF



Robert, known as Bob, was born on 28 January 1923 in Gladstone, Queensland, Australia, the son of Alfred Ernest Yarra and Harriet Yarra nee Welch.

Robert was employed as a junior clerk by Grafton City Council when, in February 1941, he volunteered for aircrew duties in the RAAF.

Called up September 1941, following basic flying training in Australia, in May 1942 Robert was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In October 1942 Robert was awarded his Wings and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 5 (P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Tern Hill, Shropshire and 61 OTU RAF Rednal, Oswestry, Shropshire, in April 1943 Robert was posted to 453 Sqn at RAF Hornchurch, Essex. Commissioned in November 1943, by April 1944 Robert was operating with the squadron from RAF Detling, Kent.

On 14 April 1944, 453 Sqn was tasked with an attack on a Noball target, about 16 miles north of Abbeville, Somme, France. “Op Noball” was the Allied designation for ops against the ski-site launching ramps for V-1 flying bombs.

At 12:25 twelve squadron aircraft departed RAF Detling, Robert flying as No. 3 in Red Section in Spitfire LFIX MK234 (FU-Y).

As the section approached the target it met intense anti-aircraft and, at 12:50 shortly after he had dropped his bombs, Robert’s aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire over Ligescourt, Somme, France. The starboard wing came away, and the rest of the aircraft disintegrated and crashed in flames in the vicinity of the target.

Robert is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France.

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel – Not Yet Erected

Robert’s brother, Flt Lt John William Yarra DFM RAAF (Pilot), was killed in a 453 Sqn Spitfire on 10 December 1942.

Photo Source: aircrewremembered