FS Ernest Henry Behrent 416079 RNZAF



Ernest was born on 20 May 1920 in Te Aroha, Waikato, New Zealand, the son of Henry Ernest Behrent and Elizabeth Sarah Behrent nee Butterworth.

Educated at the Hamilton Technical High School, Ernest was employed as a herd tester by the Auckland Herd Improvement Association when, in December 1940, he applied for aircrew service in the RNZAF.

Called up in November 1941, Ernest completed his aircrew training in New Zealand in June 1942 with the award of his Wings, and embarked for the UK in September.

Following advanced training at 12 (P) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Grantham, Lincolnshire, 51 OTU RAF Cranfield, Bedfordshire, and 54 OTU RAF Charter Hall, Berwickshire, in September 1943 Ernest was posted to 488 Sqn at RAF Bradwell Bay, Essex.

At 22:00 on 30 December 1943, Ernest and his Navigator departed RAF Bradwell Bay in Mosquito XIII HK375 (ME-) on a Ground Controlled Interception exercise .

At 22:10, Ernest passed over the airfield at 2000 feet heading west. The aircraft appeared to be slowly losing height and it was reported that the Mosquito was showing a red navigation light; however, this may have been an engine fire. Shortly afterwards, the Mosquito crashed into the sea 8 miles SE of the airfield. The aircraft was seen to be burning for about 12 seconds before it exploded. No wreckage or crew was ever recovered.

Also killed: FS Noel Breward RNZAF (Nav)

Ernest has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Ernest is commemorated on Wall Panel - NYE

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com