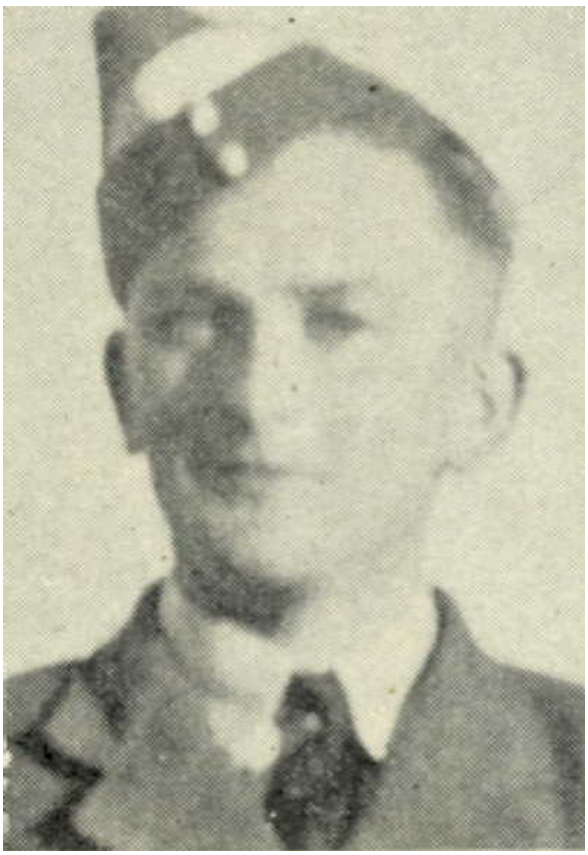
FS Ernest Frank Edwards 422378 RNZAF



Ernest was born on 23 April 1917 in Wakefield, Tasman, New Zealand, the son of Archibald William Edwards and Florence Helen Edwards nee Fairhall.

Educated at Nelson College, Ernest was employed as an orchard and garden worker in Redwoods Valley, Nelson when, in March 1941, he applied for aircrew service in the RNZAF.

Called up in March 1942, Ernest was employed on ground duties until July 1942 when he commenced Observer training in New Zealand. In October 1942 Ernest was sent to Canada to complete his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme where, in March 1943, he was awarded his Observer badge, and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 62 OTU RAF Usworth, Durham, and 54 OTU RAF Charterhall, Berwick on Tweed where he re-mustered to Navigator, in October 1943 Ernest was posted to 488 Sqn at RAF Bradwell Bay, Essex.

At 00:05 on 3 February 1944, Ernest and his Pilot departed RAF Bradwell Bay in Mosquito XIII HK363 (ME-) on an airfield canopy searchlight exercise.

At 01:45 the aircraft crashed out of control 1 mile south of RAF Bradwell Bay, killing both crew. It is believed the pilot had been temporarily blinded when caught by the searchlight beams.

Also killed: FS Keith James Watson RNZAF (Pilot)

Ernest is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

Ernest is commemorated on Wall Panel - NYE

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com