FS Keith James Watson 421799 RNZAF



Keith was born on 10 March 1923 in Palmerston North, Otago, New Zealand, the son of David James Watson and Emily Millicent Watson nee Fuller.

Educated at Palmerston North Technical College, Keith was employed as a motor mechanic by Buglass and Brewer Ltd, Palmerston North when, in April 1941, he applied for aircrew service in the RNZAF.

Called up in March 1942, following basic flying training in New Zealand, in August 1942 Keith was sent to Canada to complete his training under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In January 1943 Keith was awarded his Wings, and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 12(P) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Grantham, Lincolnshire and 54 OTU RAF Charterhall, Berwick on Tweed, in October 1943 Keith was posted to 488 Sqn at RAF Bradwell Bay, Essex.

At 00:05 on 3 February 1944, Keith and his Navigator 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 that Keith had been temporarily blinded when caught by the searchlight beams. Keith had completed two ops.

Also killed: FS Ernest Frank Edwards RNZAF (Nav)

Keith is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

Keith is commemorated on Wall Panel - NYE

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com