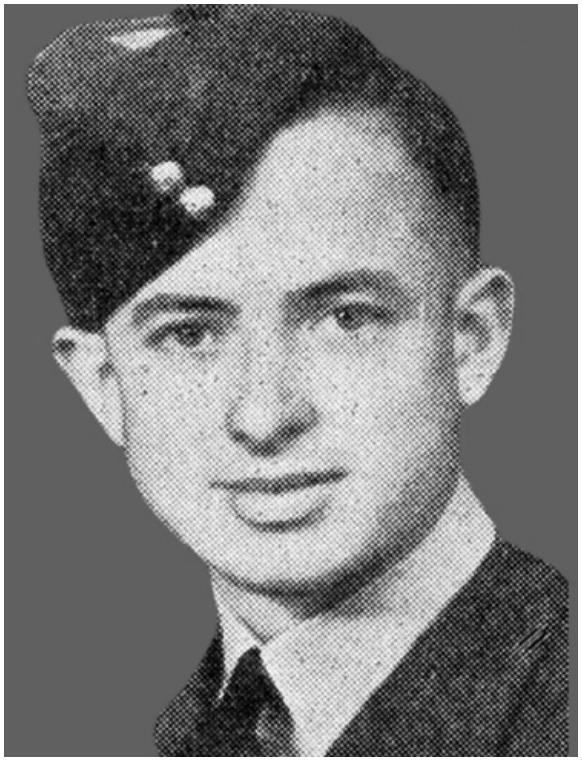
PO Alexander Alfred Wilson 422336 RNZAF



Alexander was born on 10 December 1919 in Palmerston North, New Zealand, the son of James Alexander Graham Wilson and Eunice Wilson nee Cornford.

Educated at Helensville District High School and Wellington Technical College, Alexander was employed as a farm hand in Te Poi, Waikato when, in March 1941, he applied for aircrew service in the RNZAF.

Called up in April 1942, Alexander completed his pilot training in New Zealand in November with the award of his Wings, and in March 1943 he embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 7 (P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Peterborough, Cambridgshire, 56 OTU, RAF Tealing, Dundee and 59 OTU RAF Milfield, Northumberland, in July 1944 Alexander was granted a commission and posted to 486 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Newchurch Kent.

On 31 July 1944 Alexander was tasked with an anti-diver (V-1) patrol. ‘‘Op Diver” was the British code name for the V-1 flying bomb campaign launched by the German Luftwaffe in 1944 against London and other parts of Britain. Diver was the code name for the V-1, against which the defence consisted of anti-aircraft guns, barrage balloons and fighter aircraft. Alexander’s task was to patrol the area between Beachy Head and Hastings, Sussex.

At 14:48 on 31 July, Alexander departed RAF Newchurch, Kent in Tempest V EJ586 (SA-).

At 15:05 Alexander collided mid air with a 91 Sqn Spitfire at 2000 ft after coming behind a cloud bank to intercept a V-1 in the vicinity of Bexhill, Sussex. Alexander’s aircraft struck the Spitfire with the left-wing tip, just behind the cockpit. Both aircraft crashed, killing the pilots. Alexander crashed at Halse Farm Hooe, 4 miles WNW of Bexhill. It was later established that the Spitfire had accidently entered Alexander’s patrol area.

Alexander is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey

Alexander is commemorated on Wall Panel – Not Yet Erected

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum