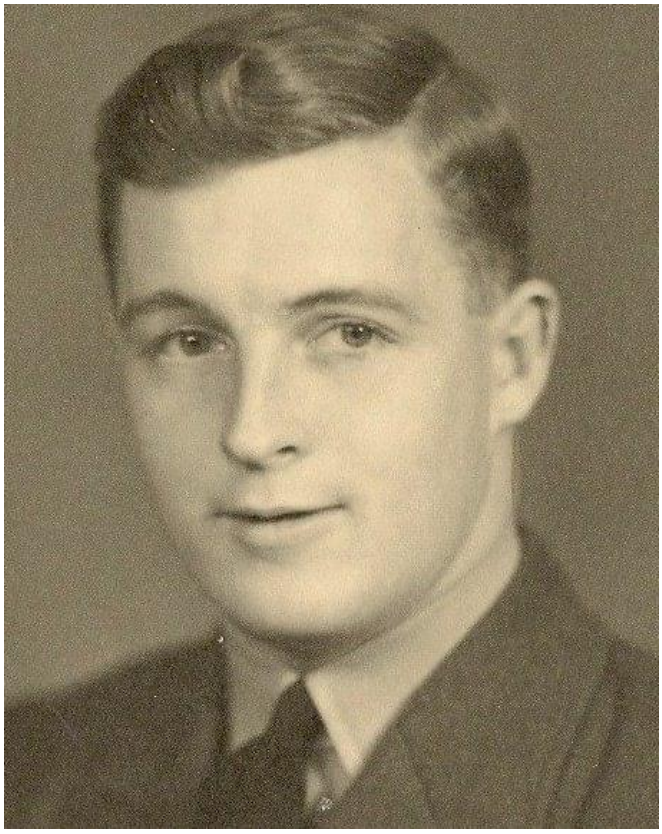
PO James William Waddell 422335 RNZAF



James was born on 29 July 1921 in Invercargill, New Zealand, the son of James Edward Waddell and Eleanor Waddell nee Wain. In 1943 he married Mary Eileen Mallett in Burton-upon-Trent.

Educated at Southland Technical College, James was employed as a car mechanic by A Russell & Co Ltd, Invercargill when, in May 1941, he applied for aircrew service in the RNZAF.

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

Following advanced training at 5 (P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Ternhill, Shropshire and 53 OTU, RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincolnshire, in July 1944 James was posted to 486 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Newchurch Kent and granted a commission the following month.

On 17 August 1944 James was one of a pair 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.

At 09:45 on 17 August, James departed RAF Newchurch, Kent in Tempest V JN805 (SA-U).

In poor weather, the two pilots lost sight of each other and James was last seen circling through clouds immediately prior to crashing into high ground at Colebrook Farm, Tenterden, Kent. This was James's 30th op.

James is buried in Burton-upon-Trent Cemetery, Staffordshire

James is commemorated on Wall Panel – Not Yet Erected

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum