



In Memory of

Flight Sergeant
HORACE KEMPTON BEDWELL
404165, No. 158 Squadron, R.A.A.F.
who died age 21
on 30 April 1942

Son of Edward Kempton and Simona Jeanne Charlotte Bedwell
of Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour
RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL



FLIGHT SERGEANT
HORACE KEMPTON BEDWELL
No. 158 SQUADRON, R.A.A.F.
SERVICE NUMBER: 404165

Flight Sergeant Horace Kempton Bedwell the son of Edward Kempton Bedwell and Simona Jeanne Charlotte Bedwell (nee Cehlmann) was born at Toowoomba in Queensland on 22 November 1920. He attended the East State School and passed the State Scholarship examination. He then attended the Toowoomba Grammar School where he passed the Queensland University Junior Public Examination in 1936. He also attended evening classes at the Toowoomba Technical College where he studied accountancy, book keeping and auditing. He applied for aircrew training in the Royal Australian Air Force on 28th December 1939. He was enrolled into the Reserve of the Royal Australian Air Force on 7th April 1940. At the age of 19 years and 6 months he was enlisted into the Citizen Air Force of the R.A.A.F. at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane on 21st June 1940 after giving an undertaking that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. He was allotted the service number of 404165. Prior to his enrolment in the Royal Australian Air Force he was employed as a Bank Clerk. He had previously served for 2 years in Senior Cadets and for 2 years in the Militia with the 25th Battalion. His physical description at the time of his enrolment was that he was 5 feet 11 inches in height and weighed 145 pounds. He gave his next of kin as his father, Edward Kempton Bedwell, residing at 65 Curzon Street, Toowoomba. His father's address was later shown as being at the Princess Theatre in Toowoomba. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion.

Flight Sergeant Horace Bedwell joined No. 2 Initial Training School at Bradfield Park in Sydney on 24th June 1940. He joined No. 5 Elementary Flying Training School at Narromine in New South Wales on 17th October 1940. He returned to No. 2 Initial Training School at Bradfield Park on 19th November 1940 and joined No. 2 Embarkation Depot there on 7th December 1940 to prepare for movement overseas on attachment to the Royal Canadian Air Force. He embarked by sea transport from Sydney on 28th December 1940 and disembarked in Canada on 23rd January 1941. On the following day he joined No. 2 Air Observer School at Edmonton in Alberta. He then joined at No. 2 Bombing & Gunnery School at Mossbank in Saskatchewan on 21st April 1941. Upon completing his course at Mossbank he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 25th May 1941 and awarded the Air Observer Qualification Badge. He then joined No. 1 Air Navigation School at Rivers in Manitoba, Canada on 25th May 1941. He joined No. 1 (M) Depot at Halifax in Nova Scotia to prepare for overseas service in England on attachment to the Royal Air Force. He embarked from Canada by sea transport on 30th June 1941 and he disembarked in England on 29th July 1941. Upon arriving in England he joined No. 3 Personnel Despatch and Reception Centre at Bournemouth. He joined No. 22 Operational Training Unit at Royal Air Force Station Westbourne Mountford on 4th August 1941 where he was trained on Vickers Wellington aircraft for night bombing.

Flight Sergeant Horace Bedwell joined No. 104 Squadron at Royal Air Force Station Driffield for operational duties on 14th October 1941. No. 104 Squadron carried out night bombing operations over Germany and occupied France with Vickers Wellington aircraft. Whilst serving with the Squadron he was promoted to the rank of Temporary Flight Sergeant. His Squadron was renumbered No. 158 Squadron on 14th February 1942.

Flight Sergeant Horace Kempton Bedwell was an Air Observer and a member of the crew of a No. 158 Squadron Royal Air Force Wellington Bomber 2 Z8525 that took off from the Royal Air Force Station at Driffield, Yorkshire at 21.28 hours on 29th April 1942 to conduct a bombing attack at Ostend, Belgium, on the night of the 29/30th April 1942. The aircraft carried 12x250 pound general purpose bombs. Nothing further was heard from the aircraft after it left its base. The Air Ministry notified his father, residing at 65 Curzon Street in Toowoomba, that he was missing as a result of air operations. He was the only Australian member of the crew.

After the war all efforts to find any trace of the aircraft and establish whether the bodies of any members of the crew were ever recovered for burial proved unsuccessful and it was deemed that he and other members of the crew were lost at sea. His death was officially presumed to have occurred on 30th April 1942. His name is therefore commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial for the Missing in the United Kingdom. At the time of his death Horace Bedwell was 21 years of age.

Horace Bedwell's name is commemorated on Panel No. 118 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial, the Toowoomba Soldiers' Memorial Hall Honour Board, the Toowoomba Grammar School WW2 Honour Board and St. Luke's Parish Church Roll of Honour.

Horace Kempton's photo and the following report appeared in the local newspaper:

Major Kempton Bedwell and Mrs Bedwell, 65 Curzon Street, Toowoomba, have been advised by the Air Board that their son, Sergeant-Observer H.K. Bedwell, is reported missing from air operations on April 30. Sergeant-Observer Bedwell enlisted in the R.A.A.F. in February 1940. After training in New South Wales he left for Canada, where he graduated as a Sergeant-Observer. On his arrival in England he was attached to the R.A.F. Bomber Command as navigator of a Wellington bomber. Before his enlistment he was on the staff of the Union Bank at Jandowae. He was educated at the East State School and at the Toowoomba Grammar School.

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