



In Memory of

**Flight Sergeant  
ERIC JOHN BENJAMIN FLETCHER**

405547, No. 460 Squadron, R.A.A.F.

who died age 29

on 4 January 1943

Son of Frank White Fletcher and Jessie Henderson Fletcher;  
Husband of Yvonne Esme Fletcher, of Gympie, Queensland,  
Australia

Remembered with honour  
UDEN WAR CEMETERY



FLIGHT SERGEANT  
**ERIC JOHN BENJAMIN FLETCHER**  
No. 460 SQUADRON R.A.A.F.  
SERVICE NUMBER: 405547

Flight Sergeant Eric Fletcher, the son of Frank White Fletcher and Jessie Henderson Fletcher (nee Hunter) was born at Stanmore in Queensland on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1913. He was educated at the Manly State School during the years 1924 until 1927. He then attended the Toowoomba Grammar School during the period 1928 until 1930 where he completed the University of Queensland Junior Public Examination. He also studied several subjects with the Bankers Institute of Australia in 1930. Whilst a student at the Grammar School he was a member of the Cadet Corps. After leaving school he was employed in agricultural farming. He applied for aircrew training in the Royal Australian Air Force on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1940. At the time of his application he was residing with his wife and child at Eudlo, North Coast Line, Queensland. He was enrolled in the Reserve of the R.A.A.F. on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1940 after swearing an oath/affirmation of allegiance. At the age of 28 years and 1 month he was enlisted into the Citizen Air Force of the R.A.A.F. at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1941 after giving a commitment that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. His physical description at the time of his enlistment was that he was 5 feet 5 inches in height and weighed 122 pounds. He had a medium complexion, blue eyes and dark brown hair. He stated that he was of the Presbyterian religion. His wife, Yvonne Esme Fletcher's address was later changed to 37 Apolloman Road, Gympie, Queensland.

Flight Sergeant Eric Fletcher was allocated the service number of 405547 and proceeded to join No. 1 Initial Training School at Somers in Victoria on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1941 to learn the basics of Air Force life. After completing his training at Somers he joined No. 2 Wireless and Air Gunnery School at Ballarat in Victoria on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1941. He was a student on No. 14 Course at No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery School at Evans Head in New South Wales during the period 11<sup>th</sup> November until 13<sup>th</sup> December 1941. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Sergeant on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1941 and was awarded the Air Gunner qualification badge on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1941. He then joined No. 3 Embarkation Depot at Sandgate in Queensland on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1941 for pre-embarkation leave to farewell his family and finalize his personal affairs prior to embarking for overseas service. After completing his leave, he joined No. 2 Embarkation Depot at Bradfield Park in New South Wales on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1941 and Headquarters R.A.A.F. Base Laverton on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1941.

Flight Sergeant Eric Fletcher embarked by sea transport from Melbourne in Victoria for overseas service on attachment to the Royal Air Force on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1942 and he disembarked from the ship in the United Kingdom, on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 1942. Later that day he joined No. 3 Personnel Despatch and Reception Centre at Bournemouth. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Flight Sergeant on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1942. He joined No. 7 Air Gunnery School at Royal Air Force Station Stormy Down on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1942. He joined No. 460 Squadron Conversion Flight of the Royal

Australian Air Force at Royal Air Force Station Brighton on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1942. He joined No 1656 Conversion Unit at Royal Air Force Station on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1942. He rejoined No. 460 Squadron R.A.A.F. on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1942 for operational duty.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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*Australian War Memorial photograph 044728  
Avro Lancaster Mk I (B1 - "G" is for George), the same model f/Sgt crewed.*

Flight Sergeant Eric Fletcher was an Air Gunner and crew member of a No. 460 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force Lancaster bomber W4274 that was tasked to carry out a bombing raid on Essen in Germany. The aircraft crashed at Uden in Holland on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1943 with the loss of life of all crew members. At the time of his death Eric Fletcher was 28 years of age. Their bodies were interred in Catholic Cemetery at Uden, North Brabant, Holland. A telegram from the International Red Cross Committee notified the Air Ministry that he was dead.

After the War the No. 2 Section of the Missing Research and Enquiry Unit visited the cemetery and forwarded the following report to the Air Ministry.

*On February 13<sup>th</sup> February 1945 we visited the Gemeentchuis at Uden where we examined the Cemetery records. The information there tallied exactly with that which you gave in your casualty enquiry, namely that Harris, Fletcher, Brooks, Gray and Lonsdale were buried in graves 68,69,73, 74 and 75, respectively and that two unknowns were buried in graves No. 70 and 71. We were informed that the two bodies*

*which the Germans had not been able to identify had been very badly burned and that Fletcher was only identified by a laundry-mark on his clothing. All seven men were brought from the same crash which, according to the records, had occurred near Hatert. Fletcher, Harris and the two unknowns were buried on the 7<sup>th</sup> January and the other three on 14<sup>th</sup> January. We then went to the British Cemetery at Uden (Old Section). This cemetery is particularly well tended. The crosses are all painted with the Union Jack and all the graves have flowers growing on them and a surround of miniature privet hedge. The crosses do not bear full particulars such as service number and often there is no rank given. There are several obvious mistakes here such as the misspelling of Brooks, the incorrect initials of Lonsdale and the omission of one of the initials of Gray. We consider that grave No. 69 certainly contains the body of Fletcher but the only hope we have of distinguishing the remaining two is by exhumation, which has consequently been requested. The graves registration authorities will be informed of the alterations to be made on the crosses, when exhumation results are received.*

**Flight Sergeant Eric Fletcher, for his service during World War 2 was awarded the Air Gunner Qualification Badge, the 1939/1945 Star, the Air Crew Europe Star, the War Medal, and the Australian Service Medal. His name is commemorated on Panel No. 107 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Grammar School WW2 Honour Board. His name is commemorated on the Eudlo 1939-1945 In Memoriam Honour Board located in the Eudlo Community Hall.**

**Notes:**

**Eric John Fletcher had married Yvonne Esme Lucas, who was born on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1914, on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1937. They had one child, Jocelyn Henderson Fletcher, who was born on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1939.**

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