

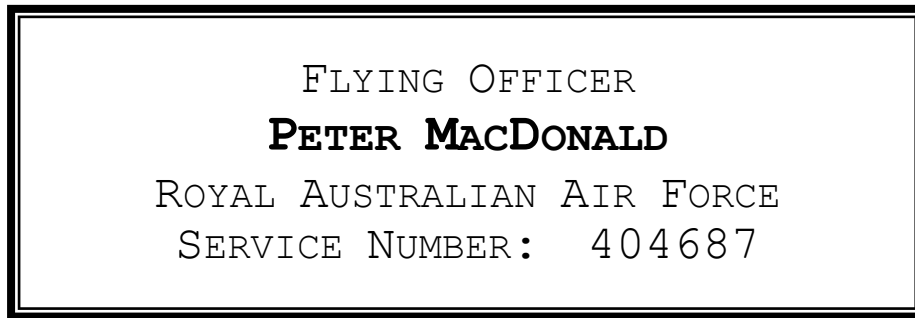


In Memory of
Flying Officer
PETER MacDONALD
404687, Royal Australian Air Force
who died age 27
on 11 March 1943

Son of Duncan MacDonald and Enid Maud Macdonald;
Husband of Orme Marsh MacDonald,
of Boonah, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour
TAUKKYAN WAR CEMETERY, BURMA





Flying Officer Peter MacDonald, the son of Duncan MacDonald and Enid Maud MacDonald (nee Ward) was born at Ipswich in Queensland on 9th January 1916. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. After leaving school he was employed as a Station Overseer of a sheep and cattle station at "Springfield", Quilpie, Queensland. He was enrolled into the Reserve of the Royal Australian Air Force on 30th May 1940 after swearing an Oath of Affirmation. At the age of 24 years and 8 months he was enlisted into the Citizen Air Force of the R.A.A.F. at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane on 8th November 1940 after giving a commitment that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. He was allotted the service number of 404687. His physical description at the time of his enrolment was that he was 5 feet 9 inches in height and weighed 147 pounds. He had a fair complexion, blue eyes, and light brown hair. He stated that he was of the Presbyterian religion. He gave his next of kin as his father, Mr Duncan MacDonald, residing at Peachester, North Coast Line, Queensland. He later changed his next of kin to that of his wife, Mrs Orme Marsh MacDonald, residing at "Kooroomba", Boonah, Queensland.

Flying Officer Peter MacDonald Joined No. 2 Initial Training School at Bradfield Park in Sydney on 10th November 1940 to learn the basics of of aircrew training. He joined No. 2 Elementary Flying Training School at Archerfield in Queensland on 9th January 1941 for basic aviation instruction on simple trainer aircraft. Whilst serving at Archerfield he married Orme Marsh MacDonald on 1st February 1941. He joined No. 3 Service Flying Training School at Amberley on 10th March 1941 as a member of Course No. 8 for advanced training for Pilots using single and multi-engined aircraft. At the completion of his training course at Amberley he was awarded the Pilot Qualification Badge on 26th June 1941. He was transferred to No. 3 Embarkation Depot at Sandgate and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer on 1st July 1941. He proceeded to No. 2 Embarkation Depot at Bradfield Park in Sydney on 11th July 1941 in preparation for travel overseas on attachment to the Royal Air Force. He embarked from Sydney by sea transport on 17th July 1941 and disembarked in England.

Flying Officer Peter MacDonald joined No. 52 Operational Training Unit at Royal Air Force Station, Debden, for training as a Pilot of the Hawker Hurricane aircraft on 10th September 1941 and completed his training on 27th October 1941. He joined No. 607 (County of Durham) Squadron of the Royal Air Force at Royal Air Force Station Manston on 28th October 1941. Whilst serving with No. 607 Squadron he was promoted to the rank of Flying Officer on 1st January 1942. He embarked with his Squadron by sea transport from the United Kingdom on 23rd March 1942 and disembarked at Bombay in India on 23rd May 1942. He re-embarked later that day and disembarked at Karachi in India on 27th May 1942. He was admitted to the 49th British General Hospital at Calcutta on 9th December 1942 and was a patient there until 19th December 1942.

Flying Officer Peter MacDonald was the Pilot of a No. 607 Squadron Royal Air Force Hurricane Fighter HV-781 that took off from Chittagong, went missing and was believed killed due to enemy action whilst on air operations from Bombay on 11th March 1943. His wife, Mrs Orme MacDonald,

residing at "Koroomba" at Boonah, was notified by telegram on 14th March 1943 that he was missing. The following letter was sent to her from the Casualty Section of the R.A.A.F. in Melbourne on 17th March 1943:

"Dear Madam, This letter is to confirm the telegram from this Department dated 11th March 1943, informing you that your husband, Flying Officer Peter MacDonald, is missing as a result of air operations on 11th March 1943. Your husband was the Pilot of a Hurricane aircraft which is presumed lost through enemy action while on an operational flight on the above date. I trust that the leaflet I enclose, which explains to you what action is taken to trace missing members, will be of assistance to you. Permit me to extend to you the sincere sympathy of this Department in the anxiety you are suffering. Yours faithfully, Secretary."

On 7th April 1943 the Casualty Section of the R.A.A.F. sent the following information to Mrs MacDonald:

"Dear Madam, I refer to previous communications concerning your husband, Flying Officer Peter MacDonald, who is missing as a result of air operations. A further report which has been received from India states that your husband set out with other aircraft of his Squadron to attack an enemy target. No gunfire or enemy opposition was encountered over the target area, but when our aircraft withdrew, it was found that your husband was not with the formation. None of the accompanying Pilots could give any information as to what happened to him after the attack was made, and I greatly regret to say that no further news of him has been received. I assure you that any further information which is received concerning your husband will immediately be conveyed to you. Yours faithfully, Secretary."

The Commanding Officer of No. 607 Squadron sent the following circumstantial report to the Air Ministry on 27th April 1943:

Flying Officer P. MacDonald with No 107829, Sergeant Peters as No. 2, took off at 0603 hours on 11th March 1943 from Chittagong on a Rhubarb Operation to the Yenangyat Singh area. (Note: Rhubarb operations were operations when sections of fighters or fighter-bombers would seek out targets of opportunity such as railway rolling stock, aircraft on the ground, or enemy troops and vehicles on roads).

The target was reached and oil derricks, a launch and jetties were attacked. A 20 foot chimney was noticed and the aircraft attacked this, flying line astern. After one of his attacks No. 2 saw that Flying Officer MacDonald's aircraft had disappeared from view. No. 2 orbited the area from 0 to 12000 feet for some 10 minutes but failed to see anything of his No. 1 and returned to Base arriving at 0920 hours. No flak or enemy opposition was encountered. No further news has been received of Flying Officer P. MacDonald.

At the time of his death he had completed 340 hours and 20 minutes non- operational flying and 63 hours 40 minutes operational flying on Hurricane aircraft. At the time of his death Peter MacDonald was 27 years of age.

After the war the location of his crashed aircraft was found by No. 56 Graves Registration Unit and on 5th December 1945 the Casualty Section of the R.A.A.F. conveyed the following information

to his wife who still resided at Boonah:



A Hawker Hurricane fighter photographed by Adrian Pingstone.

Dear Madam, It is with deep regret that I refer again to your husband, Flying Officer Peter MacDonald, who was reported missing in Burma on 11th March 1943. A signal from your husband's Squadron states that the wreckage of his Hurricane aircraft has been identified. At the site of the crash there is a grave which is marked with a cross and the propeller of the aircraft. Natives state that the aircraft was shot down, and a Japanese inscription indicates that the aircraft was destroyed in February or March 1943.

A report giving fuller details is awaited and will be communicated to you as soon as it is received. It is anticipated that in view of this information, action will be shortly be taken by Air Ministry, London, to presume for official purposes, that your husband has lost his life. May I again assure you of this Department's sincere sympathy in your sorrow, Yours faithfully, Secretary.

Flying Officer MacDonald's remains were recovered from the crash site and buried in the Meiktila Military Cemetery. His remains were exhumed in 1953 and finally laid to rest in the Taukyyan War Cemetery, Yangon, Burma.

Note:

His wife later remarried and became Mrs Orme Marsh Black and she resided at 23A Bruce Street, Toorak, Victoria.

Toowoomba Grammar School archives show that he started school on 1st July 1928 and left school on 4th December 1931.

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