



In Memory of
Pilot Officer
ROBERT LESLIE OWEN RYDER
404626, Royal Australian Air Force
who died age 25
on 08 November 1941

Son of Arthur Owen Ryder and Florence Gardiner Ryder;
husband of Marjorie Ryder,
of Roma, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour
ROTTERDAM (CROOSWIJK) GENERAL CEMETERY, THE NETHERLANDS



PILOT OFFICER
ROBERT LESLIE OWEN RYDER
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
SERVICE NUMBER: 404626

Pilot Officer Robert Leslie Owen Ryder, the son of Arthur Owen Ryder and Florence Gardiner Ryder, was born at Toowoomba in Queensland on 31st January 1916. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. He was enrolled in the Reserve of the Royal Australian Air Force on 14th March 1940 after swearing the statutory oath of allegiance. At the age of 24 years and 8 months he was enlisted in the Citizen Air Force of the R.A.A.F. at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane on 11th October 1940 after giving a commitment that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. At the time of his enlistment he was married, employed as a Grazier and resided with his wife at "Duiedar", via Roma in Queensland. His physical description was that he was 5 feet 9 inches in height and weighed 126 pounds. He had a medium complexion, hazel eyes and brown hair. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion. He gave his next of kin as his wife and also his father, Mr Arthur Owen Ryder, residing at "Bardlomgy", via Wallumbilla in Queensland.

Pilot Officer Robert Ryder was allotted the service number of 404626. He joined No. 2 Initial Training School at Lindfield in New South Wales on 14th October 1940. He joined No. 2 Embarkation Depot at Bradfield Park in Sydney on 4th January 1941 to prepare for overseas service on attachment to the Royal Canadian Air Force for further training. He embarked from Sydney on 23rd January 1941. He joined No. 2 Air Observer School at Edmonton in Alberta on 17th February 1942. He joined No. 2 Bombing & Gunnery School at Mossbank in Saskatchewan on 12th May 1941. He joined No. 1 Air Navigation School at Rivers in Manitoba on 24th June 1941. After completing his training at Rivers he was awarded the Air Observer Qualification Badge on 23rd June 1941. He joined No. 1. Manning Depot at Halifax in Nova Scotia on 22nd July 1941. He was appointed to the rank of Probationary Pilot Officer on 22nd July 1941. He emplaned from Canada for overseas service on attachment to the Royal Air Force on 6th August 1941 and he deplaned in England on 9th August 1941.

Pilot Officer Robert Ryder joined No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre in Bournemouth after his arrival in England. He joined No. 20 Operational Training Unit at Royal Air Force Station Lossiemouth on 23rd August 1941. He joined No. 75 (New Zealand) Squadron at Royal Air Force Station Harwell for operational duty at on 31st October 1941. Pilot Officer Robert Ryder was a Navigator and crew member of a 75 Squadron Wellington Bomber ICZ 8942 that failed to return from an operational flight on 8th November 1941. A radio message had been received from the aircraft to say that it had been forced to leave the target area but did not indicate the reason nor the aircraft's position at that time. Subsequent information from German sources that was received by the International Red Cross Committee in Switzerland stated that the aircraft crashed at Zuidland and that

Robert Ryder and three other members of the aircraft's crew had been killed and buried in the municipal cemetery at Grooswijk in Rotterdam.

At a later date further news was received from Sergeant Thompson, a member of the crew who had been imprisoned at Stalag VIII B in Germany, stated that he had attended the funeral of Pilot Officer Ryder and Squadron Leader Atkins on 16th September 1941.

Pilot Officer Robert Ryder was 25 years of age at the time of his death. His headstone in the Rotterdam (Crooswijk) General Cemetery contains the family inscription "'Greater Love Hath No Man". His name is commemorated on Panel No. 129 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.



Australian War Memorial photograph P10648.006 showing students at No. 1 Advanced Navigation School in Rivers, Manitoba in front of an Anson aircraft. Pilot Officer Robert Leslie Owen Ryder is 6th from the left in the back row.

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a day student on 29th July 1929 and he left the School on 8th December 1933. His parent was shown as Mr Arthur Owen Ryder of Toowoomba. He passed the Junior examination in nine subjects and the Senior examination in eight subjects. He also participated in Shooting in the School's Cadet Unit.

External Links:

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