



In Memory of  
**Leading Aircraftman**  
**CLIFFORD DAVID SEARLE**  
**405261**, Royal Australian Air Force  
who died age 29  
on 22 August 1944

Son of Joseph Esau Searle and Margaret Ellen Searle;  
husband of Eunice Valerie Searle,  
of Hendra, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour  
SYDNEY MEMORIAL, AUSTRALIA



LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN  
**CLIFFORD DAVID SEARLE**  
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE  
SERVICE NUMBER: 76295

Leading Aircraftman Clifford David Searle, the son of Joseph Esau Searle and Margaret Ellen Searle (nee Chandler), was born at Westbrook in Queensland on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1914. He attended the Newtown State School during the years 1926 until 1928. He studied at the Toowoomba Grammar School in 1930/1931. He applied for aircrew training in the Royal Australian Air Force on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1942. At the time of his application, he was married with one child and employed as Refrigeration Mechanic at the Wallangarra Meat Works in Queensland. He gave his next of kin as his wife, Mrs Eunice Valerie Searle, residing at 6 Campbell Street in Toowoomba. His wife's address was later changed to 3 Goodwood Street, Hendra, Brisbane. He was enrolled in the Reserve of the Royal Australian Air Force on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1942 at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane after swearing an oath of allegiance. On 13<sup>th</sup> May 1942, when living at 197 Margaret Street in Toowoomba, he stated that he was having difficulty studying the Physics component and asked that he be considered for Ground Staff training in the Royal Australian Air Force. He was subsequently discharged from the Reserve on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1942 and enlisted into the Citizen Air Force of the R.A.A.F. as a Trainee Group 5 at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1942. His physical description at the time of enlistment was that he was 6 feet in height and weighed 197 pounds. He had fair complexion, hazel eyes and light brown hair. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion.

Leading Aircraftman Clifford Searle was allotted the Service Number of 76295 and later that day he joined No. 3 Recruit Depot at Maryborough in Queensland on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1942. He then attended No. 3 School of Technical Training at Ultimo in Sydney in New South Wales on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1942 where he trained as a Fitter. He was remustered as a Fitter on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1942 and posted to No. 3 Aircraft Depot at Amberley in Queensland on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1942. He joined No. 3 Embarkation Depot at Brisbane in Queensland on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1943. He was promoted to the rank of Leading Aircraftman on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1943. He joined No. 1 Reserve Personnel Pool at Townsville in Queensland on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1943. He joined No. 42 Radar Wing at Townsville on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1943 and No. 57 Radar Station at Castle Hill in Townsville on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1944. He returned to No. 1 Reserve Personnel Pool at Townsville on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1944. He was posted No. 1 Repair and Servicing Unit at Higgins Field on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1944.

Leading Aircraftman Clifford Searle, a member of No. 1 Repair & Salvage Unit, was a passenger on a No 5 Communication Unit Royal Australian Air Force Norseman Aircraft A7 1-1 that experienced a power failure and made a forced landing into the sea approximately eight miles south east of Boigu Island in the Torres Strait during a travel flight from Horn Island to Merauke on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1944. He was proceeding on posting to the No. 1 Repair & Salvage detachment at Merauke. All five crew exited the aircraft. Three of the crew survived when a native came to their

assistance in a canoe, however, the pilot and Clifford Searle were missing after the crash. Air and sea searches were carried out but no trace was found of their remains. It was believed that they may have been taken by sharks whilst trying to swim to the island.



*Australian War Memorial photograph 128975  
A Royal Australian Air Force Norseman aircraft.*

Clifford Searle's name is commemorated on the Sydney Memorial for the Missing in New South Wales and on Panel No. 113 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. It is commemorated locally on the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.

For his service during World War 2 he had entitlement for the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal 1939/1945.

**External Links:**

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