



In Memory of

Sergeant

JAMES ALEXANDER STEVENSON

405028, Royal Australian Air Force

who died age 20

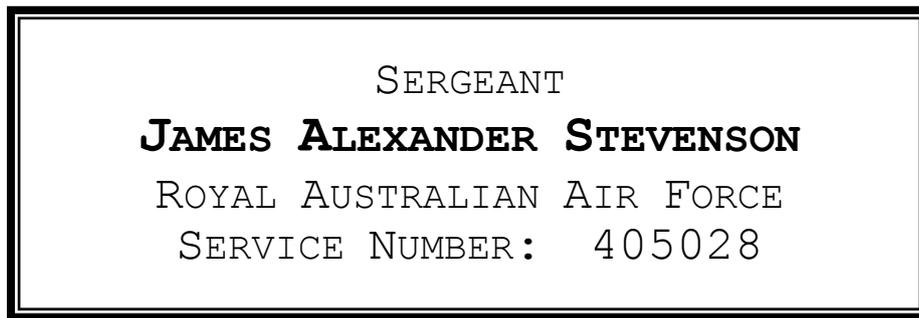
on 16 March 1942

Son of James Alexander Stevenson and Janet Whitelaw Stevenson,
of Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour

COTTESMORE CHURCHYARD EXTENSION, ENGLAND





Sergeant James Alexander Stevenson, the son of James Alexander Stevenson and Janet Whitelaw Stevenson (nee Jenkins), was born at Newcastle in New South Wales on 7th July 1921. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. After leaving school he entered employment as a Clerk in the Sales Office of the Toowoomba Foundry. He applied for aircrew training in the Royal Australian Air Force on 24th April 1940. He was enrolled in the Reserve of the R.A.A.F. on 3rd June 1940 after swearing the statutory oath of allegiance. At the age of 19 years and 5 months he was enlisted in the Citizen Air Force of the R.A.A.F. at No. 3 Recruiting Centre in Brisbane on 5th January 1941 after giving a commitment that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. He had previously served for 13 months in the Citizen Military Forces with the 25th Infantry Battalion. His physical description at the time of enlistment was that he was 5 feet 9 inches in height and weighed 134 pounds. He had a medium complexion, hazel eyes and dark brown hair. He stated that he was of the Presbyterian religion. He gave his next of kin as his father, Mr John Alexander Stevenson, residing at 39 Rome Street in Toowoomba.

Sergeant James Stevenson was allotted the service number of 405028. He joined No. 3 Initial Training School at Sandgate in Queensland on 5th January 1941. He joined No. 1 Air Observer School at Cootamundra in New South Wales on 3rd April 1941. He joined No. 1 Bombing & Gunnery School at Evans Head in New South Wales on 30th June 1941. He joined No. 1 Air Navigation School at Parkes in New South Wales on 25th August 1941. After completing his training at Parkes he qualified for the Air Observer Qualification Badge and was promoted to the rank of Temporary Sergeant on 19th September 1941. He joined No. 3 Embarkation Depot at Sandgate in Queensland to prepare for movement overseas on attachment to the Royal Air Force on 19th September 1941. He embarked from Brisbane in Queensland on 16th October 1941. He travelled to Canada and then embarked from Canada on 12th November 1941. He disembarked in England on 22nd November 1941 and on the following day he joined No. 3 Personnel Despatch & Reception Centre at Bournemouth. He joined No. 14 Operational Training Unit at Royal Air Force Station Cottesmore on 9th December 1941 where he was trained for night bombing.

Sergeant James Stevenson was an Air Observer/Navigator and crew member of a No. 14 Operational Training Unit Royal Air Force Hampden aircraft 1AD 988 that crashed whilst on an operational training flight at Thisleten, 3 miles from Cottesmore Aerodrome, United Kingdom, on 16th March 1942 killing all four members of the crew. The Air Board notified his father who resided at 39 Rome Street, Toowoomba, that he had died of his injuries and he was buried in the

Cottesmore (St Nicholas) Churchyard Extension, Rutland in the United Kingdom at 2.45 p.m. on 20th March 1942.

The findings of a subsequent accident investigation reported the following:

The aeroplane was flying at about 400 feet when it turned to port and dived into the ground with about 45 degrees bank to starboard. It appears that there may have been some defect in the flaps causing only one to come down, but no proof can be found. All parts appear to have been mechanically perfect. From the layout of the debris of the aircraft it appears to have struck the ground with the starboard wing tip and cartwheeled. Witnesses state that the aircraft was in a left hand turn just before crashing. From examination of the flap jacks the starboard flap did not come down and the port one may have done so. The selector lever was in the "flaps down" position. It therefore appears that the aircraft was turning into land and on applying flap only the port flap functioned. Which would cause the aircraft to bank and dive to starboard. It is thought that due to low cloud the pilot approached to land low, and when he applied flaps only the port one may have come down thus causing the aeroplane to half roll into the ground.

His photo and the following report was published in the local newspaper:

Sergeant Observer J.A. (Alex) Stevenson, elder son of Private J.A. Stevenson and Mrs Stevenson, 39 Rome Street, Toowoomba, who died of injuries received in an air accident while on active service on March 16. His mother was advised to this effect on March 19. Further information received from the Air Ministry stated that the funeral took place at Cottesmore Village cemetery, Rutland, England, yesterday. Sergeant Observer Stevenson, who would have been 21 years of age on July 7 this year, enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force from Toowoomba on January 5, 1941, and arrived in England six weeks later. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School, and was a member of the Past Grammar Cricket Club and the Past Grammar Rugby Union Football Club. At the time of his enlistment he was employed at the Toowoomba Foundry. His father saw service in the war of 1914-1918, and at present is serving with the Garrison Battalion.

His headstone in the Cottesmore Churchyard Extension contains the family inscription "In Life Undaunted In Death Unafraid – We Remember Him".

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a day student on 30th January 1934 and left the School on 4th December 1936. His parent was shown as Mr J.A. Stevenson of Toowoomba. He passed the Junior examination in seven subjects. After leaving the School, he was a member of the Past Grammar Cricket Club and the Past Grammar Football Club.

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