



In Memory of

**Pilot Officer**

**DONALD JAMES WALLACE**

**429418**, 80 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force  
who died age 20  
on 24 August 1944

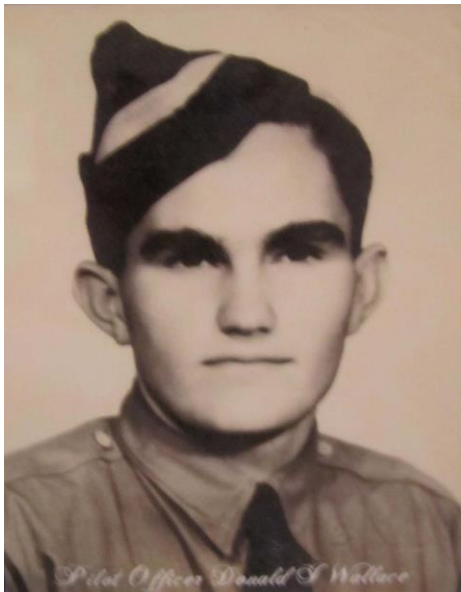
Son of Dr Thomas Irby Wallace and Sheila Malcolm Wallace,  
of Camp Hill, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour

LAE MEMORIAL, PAPUA NEW GUINEA



PILOT OFFICER  
**DONALD JAMES WALLACE**  
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE  
SERVICE NUMBER : 429418



Pilot Officer Donald James Wallace, the son of Doctor Thomas Irby Wallace and Sheila Malcolm Wallace (nee Scott), was born at Longreach in Queensland on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1924. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. He was enrolled in the Reserve of the Royal Australian Air Force on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1942 after swearing an oath of allegiance. He was issued with Reserve Badge No. 9254. At the age of 18 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 15<sup>th</sup> September 1942 after giving a commitment that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional twelve months. He had previously served in the Citizen Military Force with 'B' Company of the 11<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Hughenden for 2 months and with the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion for 3 months. At the time of enlistment he was an unmarried student and residing at the General Hospital in Longreach. His physical description at the time of enlistment was that he was 6 feet 1 inch in height and weighed 158 pounds. He had a dark complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion. He gave his next of kin as his father, Dr. Thomas Irby Wallace, c/- Longreach General Hospital. In September 1944, his father's address was changed to c/- Mrs Crawford, Daphne Street, Wilston, Brisbane.

Pilot Officer Donald Wallace was allotted the service number of 429418 and he joined No. 3 Initial Training School at Sandgate in Queensland on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1942 where he learnt the basics of service life. He joined No. 5 Elementary Flying Training School on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1942 and No. 5 Service Flying Training School at Uranquinty in New South Wales on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1943. He was attached to No. 3 Wireless & Gunnery School at Maryborough in Queensland on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1943. He had been promoted to the rank of Temporary Sergeant on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1943. He was attached to No. 1 Embarkation Depot at Melbourne in Victoria on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1943. He joined No. 2 Operational Training Unit at Mildura in South Australia on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1943. He joined No. 1 Reserve Personnel Pool at Townsville in Queensland on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1943.

Pilot Officer Donald Wallace joined No. 80 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force at Townsville in Queensland for operational duty on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1943. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Flight Sergeant on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1943. The squadron moved to Nadzab in New Guinea on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1944 where it flew patrols around Nadzab escorting Allied bombers and ground attack missions against the Japanese forces in and around Alexshafen and Madang. The squadron later moved to Cape Gloucester in New Britain on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1944 and to Hollandia on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1944. The squadron moved to Noemfoor on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1944. He was commissioned as a Probationary Pilot Officer on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944.

Pilot Officer Donald Wallace was an Interceptor Fighter Pilot of an 80 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force Kittyhawk Fighter A29-631 that was lost during air operations while dive bombing and enemy target at Babo (Dutch New Guinea) on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1944 as a result of enemy anti-aircraft fire. His father was notified by telegram on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1944 that he was missing and believed killed. Squadron Leader Atherton, Commanding Group No. 157 R.A.A.F. wrote the following letter to his father on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1944:

*Dear Mr Wallace, In connection with the occasion on which your son, Flight Sergeant James Wallace, was reported missing believed killed, in direct operations against the enemy, I desire to convey to you and Mrs Wallace my profound sympathy. Your son was serving with my unit for ten months, and, during that time, I was in close contact with him. In my capacity as his Commanding Officer, I considered his work, bearing and character, an inspiration to his fellow pilots and comrades, and had no hesitation in recommending him for commissioned rank. This recommendation has been submitted and is under consideration at the present time. With the other members of the unit, I offer you and yours, our deepest sympathy. Sincerely, G. Atherton.*

*Subsequent information revealed that "Kittyhawk A29-631 was one of four aircraft of 80 Squadron which carried out a dive bombing attack on Babo Strip on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1944, aircraft A29-631 was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire at approximately 6000 feet. The aircraft burst into flames and continued in a spiral dive and crashed on the west side of Babo Strip. The aircraft exploded on impact and no trace of the pilot having bailed out was observed and it is considered that the pilot remained with his aircraft and would have been killed".*



**Australian War Memorial photograph OG1751  
Bombing up No. 80 Squadron Kittyhawk Fighters at Noemfoor Island.**

**An extensive search was made by a R.A.A.F. search party for the remains of the pilot and crashed aircraft in the swamps surrounding Baba Strip in June 1947 however they were unable to locate the crashed aircraft. The following report was sent to Dr. Wallace:**

**Dear Sir, I refer to previous correspondence with regard to your son, the late Pilot Officer Donald James Wallace. Since the termination of hostilities two R.A.A.F. search parties have visited Babo and with the help of local natives, carried out a thorough search of the area in which your son's aircraft crashed. I regret that all efforts to locate the aircraft and recover his body for burial were unsuccessful. A native who saw the aircraft crash said that it exploded on impact and there can be no doubt that your son was killed instantaneously. At the time the aircraft was shot down an area near the Babo strip had been cleared. After the termination of hostilities it had again become covered with a dense undergrowth so that in spite of two separate searches, each extending over several days, the aircraft could not be located. In the circumstances it is proposed to commemorate your son by including his name on a memorial to be erected at a later date by the Imperial War Graves Commission in memory of all those who have no known grave. The location and form of this memorial have yet to be decided by the Commission, but as soon as particulars are known they will be conveyed to you. May I again assure you of the sincere sympathy of this Department in your great loss. Yours sincerely, M.C. Langslow, Secretary.**



Australian War Memorial photograph P10029.019 showing 80 Squadron pilots grouped in front of a Curtiss P40 Kittyhawk. Flight Sergeant Donald James Wallace is somewhere in this group.

Pilot Officer Donald Wallace, for his service during World War 2, qualified for the Pilot Qualification Badge, the 1939/1945 Star, the Pacific Star, the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal 1939/1945. His name is commemorated on Panel No. 104 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a boarder on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1938 and he left the School on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1941. His parent was shown as Mr Thomas Irby Wallace of Longreach. He received passes in both the Junior and Senior examinations and was Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Cricket and 1<sup>st</sup> XV Rugby teams in 1941. He was also a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> IV Tennis and Swimming teams. He was Senior Prefect in 1941 and a member of the Cadet Unit. He also received Colours in cricket, football and swimming.

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