

422385 : Flight Sergeant Arnold GAWITH.

RV/MP

PARENTS : Mr. & Mrs. F. Gawith of Eltham.

Arnold Gawith was born on the 4th November, 1919, at Havera. He received his secondary education at Stratford Technical High School, where he passed his Matriculation Examination. The sports in which he was actively interested were rugby, cricket, tennis and swimming. Prior to his enlistment in the R.N.Z.A.F. he was employed as a cheese maker by the Eltham Dairy Company, Eltham.

Flight Sergeant Gawith applied for service with the R.N.Z.A.F. on the 7th March, 1941, and was enlisted at Rongotai on the 27th March, 1942, where he was employed on ground duties, as a transport driver. On the 27th July, 1942, he was posted to the Initial Training Wing, Rotorua, and in October proceeded to No. 2 Elementary Flying Training School, Ashburton, where he commenced his flying training. On the 28th December, 1942, he was posted to No. 1 Service Flying Training School, Wigram, where - on the 15th March, 1943, he was awarded his flying badge. He was promoted to Sergeant on the 6th May, 1943, and to Flight Sergeant on the 6th November, 1943. He embarked for the United Kingdom on the 29th May, 1943.

F/Sgt. Gawith arrived at No. 12 (RMAAF) Personnel Despatch & Receiving Centre, Brighton, on the 8th July, and on the 3rd of the following month was posted to No. 14 Advanced Flying Unit. With this unit at Banff, Banffshire, and the nearby satellite aerodrome of Dalriach, he carried out air exercises as pilot of Oxford aircraft. On the 19th October, 1943, he was posted to No. 11 Operational Training Unit, Westcott, Buckinghamshire. From this base and the nearby satellite aerodrome of Oakley, he crewed up and completed his operational training on Wellington aircraft. Early in March he proceeded to No. 311 Ferry Training Unit,

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Moreton-in-the-March, Gloucestershire. On the 11th March, he proceeded by Wellington aircraft to Italy via Hurn, Rabat Sale, Kelson Blanche, Catania, and Gelson, and on arrival was posted to No. 70 Squadron, Tortorella, Foglia, West. With this Squadron he carried out twelve operational flights, the targets including marshalling yards at Milan, Vicenza and Campine, in Italy; and Budapest (2), in Hungary; ship installations at Leghorn and Spezia, Sans Stefano (2) and Piombino; and a railway bridge at Latisana, in Italy.

On the night of the 23/24th May, 1944, F/Sgt. Gawith was pilot of a Wellington bomber aircraft which took off from Tortorella Landing Ground on air operations against the target of Perentino, in Italy. The aircraft failed to return to its base and all the members of the crew, including F/Sgt. Gawith, were reported missing. Subsequently his death was officially presumed. Later information received from the Missing Research and Enquiries Unit, stated that F/Sgt. Gawith was buried in the Anzio Beachhead Cemetery, Italy. There were two other New Zealanders in the crew - F/Sgt. Allwright (air bomber) of Wellington and F/Sgt. T. Waaka (W.O.A.8) of Rotorua.

5/2/8849 AS2  
507 hrs. as pilot.

Mr. F. Gawith (F)  
Mountain Road,  
Eltham, PARANAKI.