Claude Horace BAIN (1917-1940)





401220 Sergeant

C.H.BAIN

Air Gunner
Royal N.Z. Air Force

214 Squadron, RAF

30th November 1940 Age 33



Sergeant-Observer C. H. Bain, of Hamilton, killed in a flying accident on active service.

Claude Horace Bain was born in 1917 the son of David Robert and Louise Bain, of Claudelands, Hamilton, New Zealand. When he enlisted on 7 May 1940 Claude was employed as an architect.

He served as 401220, Sergeant, Air Gunner in the Royal New Zealand Air Force attached to 214 Squadron RAF which was based at RAF Stradishall.

During the night of 29-30 November 1940, the Wellington IC T2893 of the Reserve Flight, 214 Sqn RAF, took off at 0051 hrs from RAF Stradishall for a delivery flight to Luqa, Malta. The pilot, Sqn Ldr B J McGinn, a highly experienced pilot with more than 4200 hours to his credit, was from 70 Sqn based in Egypt and was one of the pilots of this squadron who went to Britain to collect the first Wellingtons with which his squadron was re-equipping. He had flown one operation with 214 Sqn on the 14th, a raid to Schiphol airfield.

The Wellington experienced an engine failure shortly after taking off and the pilot turned back. Flaps failed and he could not maintain height. Landing flares also failed. Most multi-engined RAF aircraft carried these during night flying from about mid-1930s, the theory being that as they descended following engine failure, they could release one or both of these flares to try to establish what type of country lay below to enable the pilot to choose the best landing site available. These were a type of parachute flare and were probably

a considerable advance on the earlier type of fixed flare carried under the wingtips of most single-engine aircraft of the time.

Between 0100 hrs and 0110 hrs, the Wellington struck trees, crashed and caught fire near Poplar Farm, Elmdon, Essex, south of Duxford, and approximately 25 miles south west of RAF Stradishall. Two of the six crew were killed, one of whom was Claude who was aged 33 years, and three wounded.

The Crew members were:

Sqn Ldr B J McGinn (pilot) Wounded
Plt Off J A Parker Wounded
Plt Off A D Brisbane Wounded
Sgt R D F Clarke unhurt
Sgt John Raggenbass (wireless operator/air gunner) Killed
Sgt Claude Horace Bain RNZAF (air gunner) Killed

Sgt Claude Horace Bain, RNZAF, was buried at Haverhill cemetery, Suffolk, England, grave 132, section U. Sgt John Raggenbass, RAFVR, originally from Dumfries was buried in Stockport where his family were residing.

The Northern Advocate reported the death of Claude Horace Bain on 6 December 1940.

Advice has been received from England by Mr and Mrs D. R. Bain, of Te Aroha Street, Hamilton, that their son, Sergeant-Observer Claude Horace Bain, of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, has been killed in a flying accident while on active service. Sergeant-Observer Bain was aged 23.

On 30 November 1943, the following memorial was placed in the New Zealand Herald Vol 80 issue 24754.

IN MEMORIAM

BAIN.—In loving memory of our dearly-beloved son and brother, Sergeant-Observer Claude Horace Bain, R.A.F., killed on active service November 30, 1940.—Dearly loved and sadly missed.—Inserted by his mother, father, sisters and brothers.