

LAYING CROSSES IN BEDFORDSHIRE



During the month of August, thanks to the kind efforts of Nan and Dick Taplin who are members of the RAFA, Sud-Ouest branch France, more crosses have been laid. Out and about in Bedfordshire, they visited Kempston and Luton Cemeteries to lay ANZAC crosses on the graves of one young Australian and two New Zealand aviators.



KEMPSTON CEMETERY



RNZAF Sergeant Leonard James Casey 414957

Leonard was born in Herne Bay, Auckland, New Zealand on 10 February 1921. His parents Joseph and Frances ensured their son had a good education at both Sacred Heart College and Seddon Memorial Technical College in Auckland. A keen rugby player, Leonard also enjoyed weight-lifting. When full-time education was finished, Leonard found work as a shoe salesman for an Auckland firm by the name of Sargood, Son & Ewen. Leonard enlisted in September 1941 and commenced training as a pilot. By 11 May 1942 he had been awarded his flying badge. He arrived in the UK in July and continued training on Oxford aircraft before being posted to 51 Operational Training Unit in Bedfordshire. He crashed and died on 28 November 1942 during a training exercise. He was 21 years old and had not entered the war for which he had travelled so far.



RNZAF Sergeant Gordon Christian Noesgarrrd Miller 416521

Gordon was born in Woodville on 20 December 1919 and educated at Masterton Technical College, later playing for the Masterton Rugby team. He enlisted for the RNZAF in November 1941 and commenced training as a pilot, achieving his flying badge on 11 June 1942. Gordon embarked for the United Kingdom, arriving in 20 November to undertake further pilot training in Coventry and Lincolnshire. On 16 March 1943, Gordon was posted to No.51 Operational Training Unit to train on Beaufighter aircraft. Only seven weeks later during a training exercise, Gordon crashed and died on 6 May 1943. He was 22 years old.





Nan and Dick Taplin at Luton General Cemetery
Beside the grave of Calvert Byrne



RAAF Flight Sergeant Calvert Philip Byrne 436143

Calvert was the son of Philip and Delia Byrne who were from Tallong in New South Wales, Australia. Educated at Goulburn High School, Calvert enlisted with the Royal Australian Airforce on 1 November 1942 in Perth. There he undertook training as a pilot before embarking to the United Kingdom. Calvert was the pilot of an Airspeed Oxford when it crashed during a training exercise on 23 November 1944. He was 24 years old. A report in the Adelaide News on 27 December 1944 stated...

Flight-Sergeant Calvert Philip Byrne has died in Chester Hospital, Cheshire, England, from injuries received in an aircraft accident, according to advice received by his fiancée. Corporal Ada May Phair, Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, of North Norwood

His epitaph reads...

FLEW ON TO HIGHER GLORY. SO VERY DEARLY LOVED