Murphy, John Anthony

A West Australian railway employee killed while on military service for their country



Memorial plaque L253 in Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways
Branch:	Chief Mechanical Engineer's
Designation:	Apprentice car and wagon builder

Rail employment notes: Born 8/7/1923. Joined WAGR 7/11/1939 aged 16 as Apprentice Car & Wagon Builder, CME Branch, Midland Workshops.
In this era, the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch included the major workshops at Midland (then Midland Junction) employing a wide range of tradesmen to work on locomotives, carriages and freight wagons as they were built or passed through for repairs, and also trained apprentices in many trades.

Given leave to enlist in RAAF 2/7/1942.

Military service information:

Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Service:	Royal Australian Air Force
Military unit:	No. 640 Squadron (RAF)
Service number:	427394
Date of death:	28 April 1944
Place of death: .	Belgium
Age:	20
Rank at time of loss:	Flight Sergeant
Memorialised:	Bergen-op-Zoom War Cemetery, Netherlands

John Murphy enlisted and joined the Royal Australian Air Force. However after early training in Australia he was seconded to the Royal Air Force in the UK.

John was an air gunner and flying in a Royal Air Force unit, No.640 Squadron, when he died in action flying over Belgium.

No.640 Squadron was a heavy bomber unit, flying Mk III Halifax planes. These were 4-engine machines built by the Handley Page company in the UK. The squadron was based at Leconfield in the East Riding of Yorkshire and flew raids against sites in Germany and/or military targets in areas occupied by Germand forces in Holland, Belgium and France.

Additional/personal information:

According to a dedication presetned at the dedication of a plaque in Kings park in 2007,

> Flight Sergeant John Anthony Murphy, of 640 squadron, known to all as Jack, was born at Manjimup in July 1923. He was the third child of Tom and Teresa [nee Lanican] Murphy who came to Western Australia in 1921 as part of the group settlement scheme.

An older sister Teresa Margaret Murphy had been born in East Perth in 1921 and married Leon Lewis in Fremantle in 1942. However John's birth was not registered in WA and it appears there were other siblings as well.

His family arranged for the inscription "GOD KEEP YOU "JACK" TILL WE MEET AGAIN. MUM, DAD, SISTERS & BROTHERS" on his gravestone in the Netherlands. There were no family notices in Perth papers and it is not known how many siblings there were.

His service medals would be:

> 1939-1945 Star
> Aircrew Europe Star (For Aircrew commencing their tour after 06 Jun 1944 they would get the France and Germany Star in lieu of the Aircrew Europe Star. Those who qualified for the Aircrew Star and later did a tour after 06 June 1944 got a rosette on their Aircrew Star ribbon.
> War Medal
> Australian Service Medal

All WAGR empolyees who died in war are remembered by the Peace Monument at former Railway Workshops, Midland, Western Australia. John is also remembered by plaque L253 in Kings Park (pictured).

Further information and/or photos may be added as available. Information may also be found on the Australian War Memorial website: *https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people*

Abbreviations: WAGR= Western Australian Government Railways (& Tramways at some periods); MRWA= Midland Railway of Western Australia; BDM=Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages website; AWM=Australian War Memorial (Canberra and website); CWGC= Commonwealth War Graves Commission (including website). DVA=Department of Veterans' Affairs (including website)

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR Honour Roll and WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Medal information by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

----------Lest we forget----------