Date, John Matthew

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



Plaque L258 in Lovekin Drive, Kings park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Tramways
Designation:	Clerk

Rail employment notes: Born 28/1/1924. Joined Tramways 26/2/1940 aged 16 as Junior Clerk, Perth.

(The tramways of Perth and adjoining suburbs were compulsorily purchased by the WA Government in 1913 and were placed in the management and responsibility of the WA Government Railways. The records of employees, including Honour Rolls prepared after the war, reflected this combined operation. The tramways were still the responsibility of the Commissioner of Railways during the second War.)

Enlisted in RAAF 5/10/1942. Flying Officer, killed in action 17/6/1944.

Military service information

Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Service:	Royal Australian Air Force
Military unit:	No.77 Squadron (RAF)
Service number:	427807
Date of death:	17 June 1944
Place of death:	Germany
Age:	20
Rank at time of death:	Flying Officer

Buried/commemorated: Runnymede Memorial, Surrey, England, United Kingdom

Enlisted in Royal Australian Air Force 6/10/1942 but later attached to Royal Air Force (UK). Flew with RAF No.77 Squadron.

77 Squadron had gone through several reformations, but in 1944 was operating Handley Page 'Halifax' heavy bombers, and based at RAF base Full Sutton. This was a period of intense and dangerous action. During their service with the RAF's Bomber Command, Halifaxes flew a total of 82,773 operations and dropped 224,207 tons of bombs, while 1,833 aircraft were lost. The Halifax was also flown in large numbers by other Allied and Commonwealth nations, including the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF),

John Date was killed in action while flying over Germany, over the industrial region along the Rhine River between Essen and Düsseldorf. Unfortunately, as was too often the case with airmen lost in Europe, his body has never been found. He is remembered on the RAF memorial in Surrey England.

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Additional/personal information:

John Date was born in the Perth district in 1924. He was a son of Matthew Herbert Date and Florence Date. The family moved around – his father was born in Broken Hill NSW, was in Perth by 1919 when he married Florence Brown and when John was born in 1924, but later moved to Victoria where he died in 1975 (Vic.BDM 7318/1975, WA BDM 862/1919 et.al.)

It was some timebefore authorities confirmed the date of his loss and family notices appeared on the second anniversary:

> DATE, J. M. (F/O., R.A.A.F).--Treasured memories of our beloved son, missing over Sterkrade, Germany. June 17, 1944, loved brother of Lorna and Betty. As we loved you, so we miss you.
>
> DATE.-A tribute to the memory of John. Flying Officer. R.A.A.F. lost in raid over Germany. June 17. 1944. Ever reuembered by Dan Herlthy.
>
> DATE. J. M. (F/0.. R.A.A.F).-To the memory of John. a pal, missing in air operations over Sterlkrade, June 17. 1944. Always remembered by the Gang. All *The West Australian* 17/6/1946p1

His parents dedicated a plaque to him in Kings Park in 1948, as shown above. (L258).

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. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

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