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Biesiot, Leslie Hendrik

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



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 28/11/1913. Joined WAGR 21/10/1929 aged 15 as Junior Worker, Locomotive Branch, Bunbury. Appointed to Labourer 28/11/1934 and Cleaner 10/12/1934
("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning and otherwise working around locomotives whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder).

Transferred to Cue 3/6/1936 and promoted to Fireman 26/6/1938. Transferred to Narrogin 11/1/1939 and East Perth 10/6/1940.

Enlisted in RAAF 6/7/1942. Pilot Officer, died in aircraft accident in Cambridge, England 30/9/1944.

Military service information

Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Service:	Royal Australian Air Force
Military unit:	No.1651 Conversion Unit (RAF)
Service number:	427370
Date of death:	30 September 1944
Place of death:	United Kingdom
Age:	30
Rank at time of death:	Pilot Officer

Buried/commemorated: Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England

Leslie Biesiot enlisted in the Royal Australian Air force (RAAF) on 6 July 1942. He was allocated service number 427370 and before long was transferred to England where Allied Air Forces were heavily engaged in both defensive and attack operations against Germany and constantly needed more crews.

At the time of his death he was at No.1651 Conversion Unit, which then as was based at Wratting Common in England. A conversion unit was one where crews went temporarily to be trained on a different aircraft, often when moving to larger aircraft. But even in training, accidents happen, and Leslie Biesiot died in an aircraft accident in Cambridge, England on 30 September 1944. It appears from one of the family notices that he was training at the time to fly the Stirling bomber, a 4-engine plane designed for bombardment and then the largest bomber of Allied forces.

Additional/personal information:

Leslie Biesiot was born in 1913 in Albany, a son of Hendrik and Hilda Maud Biesiot. On 6 October 1936 he married Lorna Josephine McGrath. The couple welcomed a daughter Lesley Patricia in Cue Hospital 29 January 1938 (*The West Australian)*

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In 1943 Lorna's brother Frank McGrath died in Scotland, also in an aircraft accident.

> BIESIOT, L. H, (Pilot-Officer, RAF). -A proud and loving tribute to the memory of my darling Len, accidentally killed in aircraft accident at Cambridge, England, September 30. 1944; dearly loved husband and Pal of Lorna, darling Daddy of Lesley.
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> BIESIOT, L. H, (Pilot-Officer, RAAF). —Beautiful memories always of my darling hero Daddy, who flew to heaven in his Stirling bomber on September 30, 1944. Always In the heart of his baby daughter Lesley. Both *The West Australian* 6/10/1944p1
>
> BIESIOT. L. H. (P1lot-Officer, RAAF). -A tribute to the memory of my Mate and Pal, killed in aircraft accident. September 30. Inserted by his footplate mate, Joe Dickinson. So long, Les. *The West Australian* 7/10/1944p1

His gravestone carries the inscription "Till the day breaks".

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----------