



IN MEMORIAM

Warrant Officer George James Roney RNZAF

No 33 Squadron RAF

1 January 1922 - 6 October 1944

417113 Warrant Officer George James RONEY RNZAF

No 33 Squadron RAF



Early life and education

George James Roney was born in the town of Oamaru in the province of Otago, New Zealand on 1 January 1922. He was the youngest son of George Charles Roney, a baker originally from Adelaide, Australia, and his wife, Rosannah. George had five elder siblings, two sisters and four brothers. His early education was at Oamaru North, followed by a secondary education at Waitaki Boys' High School where he attained matriculation standard. George had considerable sporting ability and his name is still visible on the Honour Board of Waitaki Boys' High School, being a member of his school's first rugby fifteen, and playing an 'outstanding part' in athletics. He went on to win the Junior Otago High Jump Championship in 1941 and tied equal for the North Otago Championship as a member of the North Otago Amateur Athletic Association. He also belonged to the Athletic Football Club and to the Oamaru Miniature Rifle Club.

After leaving school, George was apprenticed locally as a motor mechanic for Maude Brothers, the Ford Dealership in Oamaru. He joined the Territorials on 6 September 1940 (for 2 years) and moved with them up to Christchurch.

The Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF)

The New Zealand government established the New Zealand Permanent Air Force (NZPAF) in 1923, with a strength of four officers and seven other ranks; its Territorial attachment – the New Zealand Air Force (NZAF), retitled the Territorial Air Force (TAF) in 1930 - had around 100 members. Later that year, the Canterbury Aviation Company's assets were acquired for the NZPAF with the help of a £10,000 donation from Henry Wigram; the aerodrome at Sockburn, Christchurch, which was named after Wigram, became New Zealand's first military aviation base. In 1934 the NZPAF was renamed the RNZAF, which became an independent military service in 1937.

During the Pacific Defence Conference at Wellington, April 1939, the British and New Zealand Governments agreed that, in addition to providing personnel for local defence, the RNZAF's role in the event of a European war would be to provide trained aircrew to the RAF under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) which linked Canada, Australia and New Zealand in a training scheme to supply aircrew to Britain. It proved to be an important multi-national strategic decision.

This plan was formalised on 17 December 1939. New elementary flying schools and aeroplanes were established in New Zealand with a proposed annual output of 700 pilots and 730 observers and air

gunners. Britain supplied training aircraft, mainly Harvards and Oxfords. Another flying school was established at Woodbourne in 1939, and an aircraft factory to assemble Tiger Moth trainers was completed at Rongotai, Wellington, by early 1940.

At the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939 the RNZAF comprised 91 officers and 665 airmen, with 79 officers and 325 airmen in the TAF. The government accepted a British proposal to train New Zealand airmen for the RAF, as part of the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS). New Zealand agreed to provide the RAF with 880 fully-trained pilots a year and send another 1992 partially-trained airmen (520 pilots, 546 observers, and 926 air gunners) to Canada to complete their training. New training schools were established at Whenuapai, New Plymouth, Ōhakea, Harewood (Christchurch), and Taieri (Dunedin). An initial training school was set up at Rongotai (Wellington) which later moved to Levin.

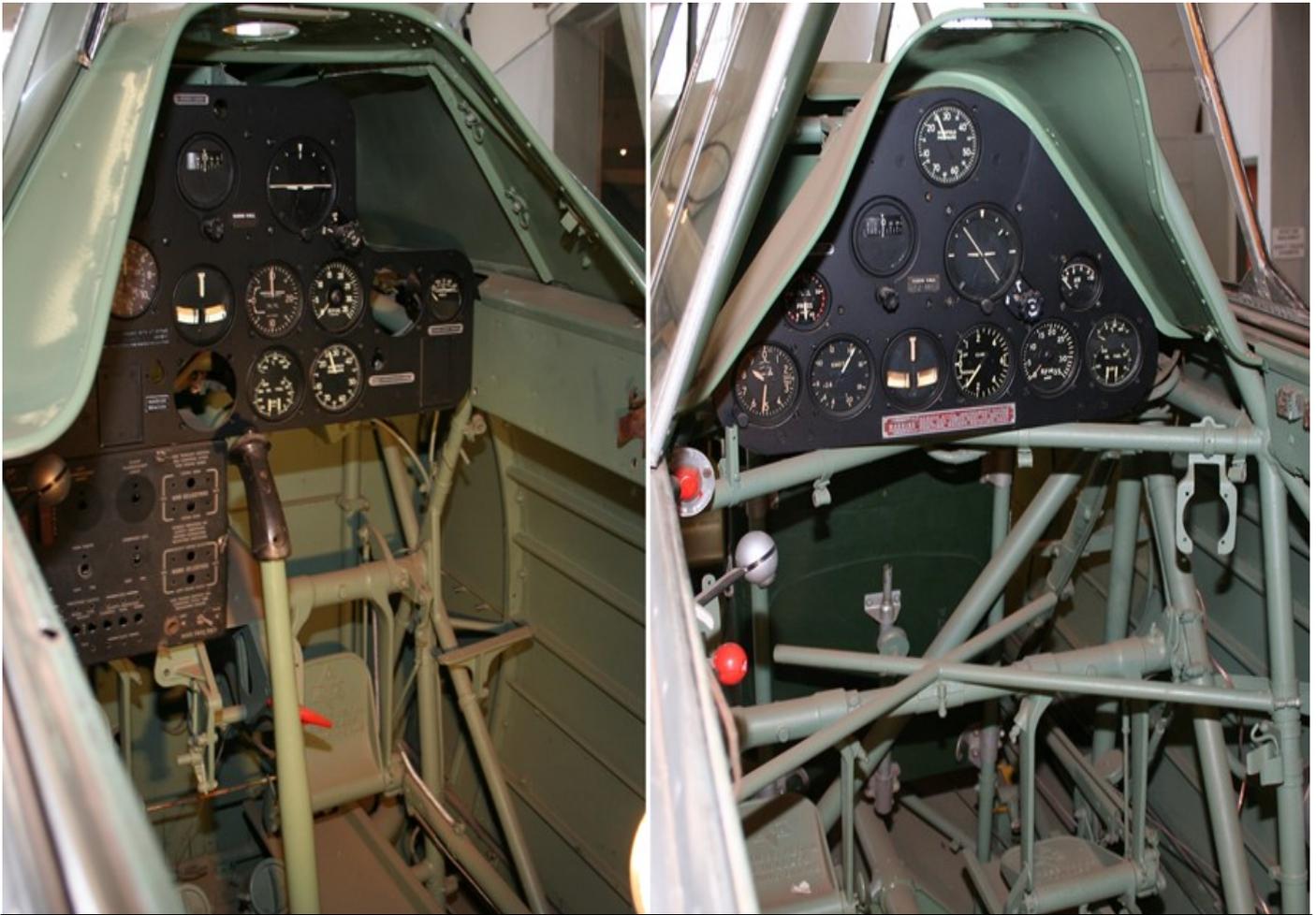
George enlisted on 21 December 1941 and joined the RNZAF as an Airman Pilot, Group V, (LAC A/Pilot U/T GP V) aged 19 years 355 days. George's enlistment papers state that he had dark hair, hazel eyes and stood around 6 feet tall. His father had to sign the consent form as George was under 21 when he enlisted.

Initial military service and training

George completed his basic military training, elementary and service flying training in New Zealand. His training started immediately after enlistment, with basic training at Initial Training Wing (ITW) Levin (22 December 1941 - 5 February 1942), and further training at ITW Rotorua (9 February – 3 April 1942). After that his flying training commenced, with initial flying training at No 1 Elementary Flying Training School (1 EFTS) Taieri, near Dunedin (2 May 1942 – 25 July 1942) and advanced training at Service Flying Training School (SFTS) Woodbourne, near Blenheim (27 July 1942 – 22 December 1942). The RNZAF F373 paperwork shows that George learned to fly in a Harvard and was awarded his pilot's wings on 19 October 1942. The Harvard, a single-engined advanced trainer aircraft made by North American Aviation



RNZAF Harvards at Onerahi Aerodrome, near Whangarei, New Zealand in 1961.



The Harvard - front cockpit (left) and rear cockpit (right).

used to train pilots of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), United States Navy (USN), Royal Air Force (RAF) and other air forces of the British Commonwealth during World War II and into the 1970s. The T-6 Texan, its official name, was known by a variety of designations depending on the model and operating air force. The United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) and USAAF designated it as the 'AT-6', the USN called it the 'SNJ', and British Commonwealth air forces called it the 'Harvard', the name it is best known by outside of the US.

Departure to Britain

On 19 December 1942 George was promoted to the rank of Temporary Sergeant and started a period of Special Leave, presumably for Christmas and New Year, possibly knowing the date that he would be sailing to Britain. He embarked in Wellington on 15 January 1943, with the ship sailing to Britain the next day. As he left New Zealand George became an attached member of the RAF. Several weeks later, on 27 March 1943, George arrived in England. His records show that he started the official in-country arrival process on 28 March down on the South Coast before commencing further flying training as a Spitfire fighter pilot at bases scattered across the country. From George's paperwork his progress towards becoming a fighter pilot with a front line squadron is clearly recorded, as follows:

28 March 1943: No 11 Personnel Despatch & Reception/Receiving Centre (PDRC) Bournemouth & Brighton

The Grand Hotel in Brighton, used as a PDRC at the time, was the hotel that was bombed by PIRA on 12 October 1984, in an attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

FOR WAR SERVICE ONLY

Within New Zealand or Overseas.

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE.

Air 37
12493

APPLICATION FOR ENLISTMENT.

In the trade of (1) Flight Mechanic or (2) _____
or (3) _____ or (4) _____
(Set out trades in order of preference.)

[NOTE.—This form is to be filled in by the applicant in his own handwriting. For full particulars of the conditions of enlistment, certificates required, &c., candidates are referred to pamphlet Air-6.]



1. Surname and Christian name (in full) (Block letters to be used.)
1. RONEY (Surname.)
George JAMES (Christian names.)
2. What is your private postal address?
2. 42 Reed St Camaru
3. In what country and on what date were you born? (True copy of birth certificate to be attached.)
3. New Zealand
1st January 1922 ✓
4. In what countries were your parents born?
4. Australia (Father.)
New Zealand (Mother.)
5. Are you married or single?
5. Single
6. Who is your next-of-kin (State name and relationship)?
6. Mr J. S. Roney
He is my father
7. What is the address of your next-of-kin?
7. 42 Reed St Camaru
8. (a) Have you passed the sixth standard of education? (Certificate of proficiency or competency to be attached.)
8. Yes
(b) If you have passed any higher examination please state it.
Have gained Senior Free Place.
9. What is your height (in socks)?
9. 6' 4"
10. (a) What is your present trade or occupation? (If an indentured apprentice, approval of employer must be attached.)
10. Apprentice to Motor Mechanic
Maude Bros, Ford Dealers, Camaru.
(b) Give the name and address of your present employer.
Apprentice to Motor Mechanic.
(c) What is your usual trade or occupation?
11. Have you been convicted of a criminal offence? (If so, state nature.)
11. No
12. (a) Give details of any service with H.M. Forces (Regular or Volunteer), and set out particulars of unit and date of joining and leaving.
12. Otago B. Coy.
Date joined 6-9-40
(b) Are you a member of any of the following. (Insert either "Yes" or "No" in each space.)

Royal Fleet Reserve.	Royal Naval Reserve (N.Z. Division).	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (N.Z. Division).	N.Z. Permanent Military Forces.	N.Z. Territorial Force.	National Military Reserve.	Special Force.
				YES		

13. Are you willing to be vaccinated or inoculated if and when required?
13. Yes
14. Are you willing to serve in any part of the world?
14. Yes
15. Give the full names and addresses of the persons who have furnished the references, copies of which accompany this application. A trade reference should be included if possible.
15. The Manager, Maude Bros, Camaru
Mr F. Williams
Rector, Waitaki Boys High School
Camaru.

K. Hamilton Mayor
Camaru

16. Are you accustomed to motor-vehicles? If so, state experience:
I work in a motor garage and am driving cars & trucks every day

17. If you have attended a Technical School, state school: Camour Technical School

Day course taken: _____ Duration of study ... _____ Years. Months.

Evening course taken: Motor Engineering Theory & Practice Duration of study ... Six months

SUBJECTS TAKEN. (Specify other subjects.)	DURATION OF STUDY.		SUBJECTS TAKEN. (Specify other subjects.)	DURATION OF STUDY.	
	Years.	Months.		Years.	Months.
Mathematics:			English:		
Science (State Division):					

What form or class were you in during your final term? _____

18. If you have attended a Secondary School other than a Technical School, state school: Daitaki Boys High School

Course taken: Commercial Duration of study ... 2 Years. Months.

SUBJECTS TAKEN. (Specify other subjects.)	DURATION OF STUDY.		SUBJECTS TAKEN. (Specify other subjects.)	DURATION OF STUDY.	
	Years.	Months.		Years.	Months.
Mathematics:	<u>2</u>		English:	<u>2</u>	
Science (State Division): <u>Chemical</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>French</u>	<u>2</u>	
<u>Physics</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>Commercial</u>	<u>2</u>	

What form or class were you in during your final term? Fourth Form IVB

19. Have you any other special qualifications you wish to advance in support of your application? If so, state them—

I am deeply interested in motor mechanics. Also a member of the North Otago Amateur Athletic Association won the Otago High Jump Championship 1941. I also play football. I am a member of the Camour Volunteers Rifle Club. I have had a substantial basic training in my work.

20. I certify that the statements contained in this application are true and correct in every particular.

Date: 19/6/40 Signature of candidate: G. J. Roney
Witness: W. S. Lombard
Occupation and address: George Camour

21. STATEMENT BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN. (Required only when the applicant is under the age of 21 years.)

I certify that the above-named, my son (insert "son" or "ward"), has my full consent to enlist in the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Father's signature in full: George Charles Roney

Address: 42 Reed St. Camour

Mother's or guardian's signature in full: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____, 19

22. If the consent of both your parents or your guardian is not set out in paragraph 22 above, the reasons why such consent has not been obtained or furnished must be set out in full: Mrs G. Roney Reed 1922.

[THIS SPACE IS RESERVED FOR DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY.]

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE.

CERTIFICATE OF THE SERVICE AND DISCHARGE OF

The corner of this Certificate
to be cut off if the man
is discharged with a
"Bad" Character
or with disgrace,
or if specially
directed by
the Air
Board.

Name : Roney George James Official No. NZ 417113.
(In full, surname first.)

Date of birth 1st January 1922. Age on entry into R.N.Z.A.F. : 19 years 355 days.

Place of birth : New Zealand. Town and Province : Dunedin Otago.

Occupation in civil life : Motor Mechanic.

Trade in R.N.Z.A.F. : Airman Pilot Group 4.

Religious denomination : Church of England.

Signature on transfer to the Reserve or discharge : _____

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT IN R.N.Z.A.F.

PRIOR ENGAGEMENT IN H.M. FORCES.

(a) Period	Date current Engage- ment commenced.	Age at that Date.	Terms of Enlistment.	Regular Service (Navy, Army, or Air Force).	PERIOD.		Rank on Discharge.
					From	To	
	<u>21-12-41</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>P.O.W.</u>				
(b) Date of completion years' active service :						
	Date of completion..... years' reserve service :						
(c) Period of engagement extended for years' active service.						
 years' reserve service.						
(d) Date of completion second engagement years' active service.						
 years' reserve service.						
				Territorial Service.			
				<u>Territorial 8 years.</u>			

DATE TRANSFERRED TO R.N.Z.A.F. RESERVE
(Period not to count as qualifying service for pension) :

DATE RECALLED FROM R.N.Z.A.F. RESERVE :

NAME, ADDRESS (in full), AND RELATIONSHIP OF PERSON (OR PERSONS) TO BE INFORMED OF CASUALTIES (to be entered in pencil) :

George Charles Roney (Father)
42 Wood St.
Dunedin.

PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE :

Full Christian names and surname of woman and whether spinster or widow :	Date and place of marriage :	Present address of wife :	No. and date of C.F. promulgating :	Initials of officer verify- ing entry :

CHRISTIAN NAMES OF CHILDREN.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH.	WHERE REGISTERED.

Description of Person.	HEIGHT.		CHEST.	COLOUR OF			Marks, Scars, or Wounds.
	Feet.	Inches.	Inches.	Hair.	Eyes.	Complexion.	
On entry as a boy							
On mustering as a man at age of 18 years Or on entry at 18 years or over .. .	<u>5</u>	<u>11 3/4</u>	<u>34 1/2</u>	<u>Dark</u>	<u>Steel</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>NIL</u>
On extension of service							
On re-engagement							
Further description, if necessary							

DISCHARGE PARTICULARS.

Date : _____ Address on discharge : _____

Total service { towards engagement : years..... days.
 towards pension : years..... days.

MOVEMENTS AND CASUALTIES.					PROMOTIONS, REDUCTIONS, AND REMUSTERINGS*		
Departure Authority.	Unit FROM which.	Unit TO which.	Date of Effect.	Arrival Authority confirming.	Authority.	Description.	Date of Effect.
ENLISTMENT		I.T.W.		P.O.R.			
M		LEVIN.	21-12-41	212/41	ENLISTED	L.A.C. PILOT U/T SP4	21-12-41
NO.R 2/42	I.T.W.	NO E.F.T.S.				promoted to the rank of	
	LEVIN.	17.W. ROTORUA	22-2-42	MOR. 2/42	16/1029/42	Temporary Sgt.	19-12-42
R.O. 14/42	I.T.W.	NO E.F.T.S.					
	ROTORUA	Jaine	6-11-42	POR 69/42			
P.O.R. 14/9/42	Jaine	No. 2. S.F.T.S.	25. 7. 42	POR	17(P)AFU	promoted T/F/S	19-6-43
POR 30/42	Woodbourne	Woodbourne	19-12-42	18/42	40/43		
		Special leave		30/42	84 S.S.U.		
		Embark NZ	15-1-43		1/44	1/49/0.	19-6-44
		11. P.D.R.C.	28-3-43.	39/43.			
18/43	13 PRC	17(P)AFU	29-6-43	34/43			
116				27/43			
43	17(P)AFU.	61 OTU.	30-11-43	1/43			
6/44	61 OTU.	1 TEL.	7-3-44.				
44	1 TEL.	84 S.S.U.	9-6-44	8/44			
		RAF ATTACHED	ED. POR 25/44	25/44			
25	84 S.S.U.	Doncaster	17-7-44	44			
44	RAF ATTACHED	ED. POR	25/44				
	Doncaster	84 S.S.U.	27-12-44				
6/44	84 S.S.U.	33 Spch.	7-8-44	1/44			
		Missing.	6-10-44	CCL 13/44			
		D.P.	6-10-44	CCL 18/44			

SUPERANNUATION FUND.

Date joined Fund :

Rate of contribution :

Date completes period for pension :

Date of reaching 55 years of age :

4

Name: *Roney, George James*
(In full, surname first.)

Official No. *NX 417113*

SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS AND COURSES OF INSTRUCTION, ETC.				TIME FORFEITED.				
Authority.	Description and Place.	Degree of Proficiency and Class of Certificate awarded.	Date.	Authority.	Cause.	Dates.		Number of Days.
						From	To	
			<i>22-12-41</i>					
<i>R.O. 9/42</i>	<i>I.T. Wing Levin</i>	<i>62.4%</i>	<i>10.</i> <i>5.2.42</i>					
<i>R.O. 17/42</i>	<i>I.T.W. ROTO RUA</i>	<i>79.2%</i>	<i>9.2.42</i> <i>3.6.42</i> <i>2.8.42</i>					
<i>P.O.R. 149/42</i>	<i>No. 1. E.F.T.S. Taiari</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>25.7.42</i> <i>27.7.42</i>					
	<i>No. 2. S.F.T.S. Woodhouse</i>	<i>83.9%</i>	<i>22.12.42</i>					

MISCELLANEOUS.

IDENTITY CARD No. *9065* ISSUED AT ROTORUA ON *1.4.42*

G. J. Roney.

Awarded the Flying Badge w.o.f. *19.10.42.*

Auth. *A.H.Q. R.O's 977/42.*

CASUALTIES, WOUNDS, GREAT WAR SERVICE, MEDALS, CLASPS, DECORATIONS, SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS, MENTIONS, ETC.		
Authority.	Nature.	Date of Effect.
<i>CC1 1577.</i> <i>CC1 1859.</i>	<i>Missing.</i> <i>Death Presumed.</i>	<i>6-10-44</i> <i>6.10.44.</i>



George kitted out in flying kit, date and location unknown.



George (4th from the left, seated on the wing), date and location unknown.

31 May 1943: 12 (NZ) Personnel Reception / Receiving Centre (PRC)

On 19 June 1943, while at 12 (NZ) PRC, George was promoted to the rank of Temporary Flight Sergeant.

29 June 1943: 17 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit ((P) AFU) Calveley, Cheshire

In December 1940, it was decided to build an airfield near the village of Wardle, Cheshire, north-west of Nantwich, as one of a number of airfields intended to boost the fighter defence of Merseyside. The airfield was built in 1941–1942, and had three concrete runways of between 1 100 yards (1 000 m) and 1 400 yards (1 300 m).

By the time the airfield was complete, the need for fighter defences for the North-West of England had declined, so it was decided to use it for training, with the station opening on 14 March 1942 as a Relief Landing Ground for No. 5 SFTS based at RAF Ternhill in Shropshire. On 13 April 1942 No. 5 STFS was renamed No. 5 (Pilot) Advanced Flying Unit ((P)AFU), continuing operations both from Ternhill and its satellites, including Calverley, which was the only one of Ternhill's satellites to have hard runways.

In May 1943 RAF Calveley became the main base for No. 17 (P)AFU, equipped with 174 Miles Master trainers, which moved from RAF Watton in Norfolk. To accommodate the unit's large number of aircraft, RAF Wrexham in North Wales served as a satellite airfield. No. 17 (P)AFU disbanded on 1 February 1944.

30 November 1943: 61 Operational Training Unit (OTU) Rednal & Montford Bridge

For the students participating in the training regime at 61 Operational Training Unit (OTU), day and night flying training was included. 61 OTU had formed at Heston, London in June 1941 and moved to Rednal, on the SW edge of Birmingham, in April 1942, with a satellite airfield at Montford Bridge, near Shrewsbury in Shropshire. The unit moved to Keevil in Gloucestershire in June 1945.

7 March 1944: 1 Tactical Exercise Unit (TEU) Tealing, Inveraldie, Angus, Scotland

In 1941, the MOD decided to build an aerodrome at Tealing. In October 1943 the name of the Tealing unit was changed to 1 Tactical Exercise Unit (TEU) under Combat Training Wing, specialising in air firing and evasive action.

By January 1944 the TEU was operating up to 110 aircraft. In February 1944, RAF Tealing exchanged 40 Hurricanes for 38 Spitfires from Grangemouth. Just prior to D-Day, 1 TEU at Tealing was put on operational readiness to re-enforce the regulars in the unlikely event of a German counter-attack from Norway, but the unit was stood down on 15 June. The TEU disbanded on 31 July 1944.

9 June 1944: No. 84 Group Support Unit (GSU) Aston Down, Gloucestershire

No. 83 GSU and No. 84 GSU were holding units for the operational squadrons of the 2 Groups that were part of the RAF's 2nd Tactical Air Force (2 TAF). The GSUs maintained a large number of aircraft of all types used by the squadrons in each Group, prepared ready for issue to the squadrons to replace losses. The GSUs also had conversion flights to provide type conversion and continuation training for the pool of pilots posted to the GSU to await demand for replacements from the squadrons. No. 84 GSU formed at Aston Down on 14 February 1944, with Typhoon Is, Tempest Vs, Spitfire IXs and Mustang Is. No. 84 GSU moved to Thruxton on 13 July 1944, and later to Lasham, near Odiham in Hampshire.

On 19 June 1944, while he was with No. 84 GSU, George was promoted to the rank of Temporary Warrant Officer. Several weeks later, on 6 August 1944, George's skills were required by a front line squadron and he was posted to No. 33 Squadron at the Advanced Landing Ground at Selsey, East Sussex.



Spitfire LF Mk IX *MH434*, markings of No.222 Squadron RAF (Duxford's Old Flying Machine Company).

The Supermarine Spitfire

George trained on, and flew operationally, one of the most important British fighter aircraft of World War II, the Supermarine Spitfire. Some records calculate that nearly 23 000 of these aircraft were built. Having taken to the air for the first time in 1936 the Spitfire was under constant development in order to be able to assert itself as the enemy developed new types of aircraft. The model produced in greatest volume was the Mk. IX, with numbers ranging from 5 665 to over 7 000.

The Spitfire Mk IX was very much a stop-gap solution to an unforeseen new development in the capabilities of enemy fighters, namely the appearance of the German Focke-Wulf Fw 190. When the FW190 arrived at the Channel front in September 1941, this new aircraft was markedly superior to the then-predominant British fighter, the Spitfire Mk. VB. The next planned Spitfire general-purpose fighter, the Mk. VIII, incorporated several refinements developed in the previously developed Mk. III prototype, and extensive re-tooling was necessary to get production underway. The main improvement of the Mk. VIII, however, laid in the introduction of the new two-stage two-speed-supercharged Merlin engines, and the most expedient solution to make these available to the RAF was to adapt the readily available Mk. V airframe to this engine. Thus, the first 100 or so examples of the Mk IX were simply conversions of Mk VC airframes, performed either at Rolls-Royce or at Supermarine.

As is so often seen, temporary solutions become permanent; so great was the Mk. IX's success that it ended up as the second-most produced Spitfire mark. Counting also the very similar Mk. XVI, the overall production of this type of the Spitfire actually surpassed that of the Mk. V. One consequence of the rushed introduction of this version was that numerous refinements could be, and were made during its long production run.

As stated above, in the early months of 1942 there was much pressure to get Spitfires into production using the new two-stage supercharged Merlin 61 engine and to solve this problem the Mk. V was fitted with a Merlin 61 engine and designated as the Mk. IX. Although the Mk. V's airframe did not have the strength improvements of the Mk. VII and VIII that were really needed for the more powerful engine, the Mk. IX still proved to have vastly improved performance over the Mk. V. The Merlin 61 was phased

out early in 1943 in favour of the Merlin 63 and 63A. During the second half of 1943, production of the Merlin 63 powered F Mk IX was discontinued in favour of the Merlin 66 powered LF Mk IX.; the letters 'PV' before the aircraft's serial number '160' indicate that George's aircraft was indeed powered by a Merlin 66 engine.

On 6 October 1944 George was flying a Spitfire with the designation LF Mk IXe. The 'LF' are role prefix letters, and 'LF' stands for 'Low Altitude Fighter', a Spitfire only designation. Other role prefixes used by the Spitfire included 'F' (Medium Altitude Fighter), 'HF' (High Altitude Fighter) and 'PR' (Photo Reconnaissance). The variants of the Spitfire IX, XI and XVI were also distinguished by suffix letters to indicate wing types. The Spitfire used five different wing types, designated 'a - e', which had the same dimensions but different arrangements of armament and fuel tanks, as listed below:

a - 8x .303 inch (7.7 mm) Browning machine guns (300 rounds/gun).

b - 2x 20 mm Hispano HS.404 cannons (60 rounds/gun) and 4x .303 inch (7.7 mm) Browning M1919 machine guns (350 rounds/gun).

c - universal wing allowing either 'a', 'b', or 4x 20 mm Hispano HS.404 cannon armament. The main landing gear was strengthened and moved 2 inches (5 cm) forward to reduce the tendency to 'nose over' on landing, and gave provision for a 250 lb (113 kg) bomb under each wing. In practice, most aircraft carried 2x 20 mm Hispano HS.404 cannons (120 rounds/gun) and 4x .303 inch (7.7 mm) Browning M1919 machine guns (350 rounds/gun).

d - long-range wing for reconnaissance versions with armament replaced by fuel tanks.

e - universal wing allowing two weapon fits:

2x 20 mm Hispano HS.404 cannons (280 rounds/gun) and 2x .50 inch (12.7 mm) Browning M2 machine guns (500 rounds/gun)

or

4x 20 mm Hispano HS.404 cannons (280 rounds/gun).

In summer 1944 several other major improvements were made to the Mk. IXs coming off the production line. They were fitted with the Mark II Gyro Gunsight, which calculated the correct angle of deflection to use when leading the target. Its introduction doubled the effectiveness of their gunnery and was a major factor in Allied air superiority. The introduction of the E Type wing removed the .303 machine guns mounted in the outer wings, as most aircraft at that time had armour impenetrable by .303 bullets. The 20 mm Hispano cannon were moved outboard and the more effective .50 calibre Browning heavy machine gun was introduced; this improved armament was more effective for both air-to-air engagements and air-to-ground attacks.

As a result of its over-powerful engine and four bladed propeller, the Mk. IX had a tendency to swing to one side during takeoff. This was solved by fitting a larger rudder, giving the pilot better control during takeoff. To aid the pilot's lookout, a new cut-back rear fuselage and a 'tear-drop' or 'bubble' canopy was introduced to the Mk IX. Many Spitfire pilots who were shot down were done so by enemies who approached in the aircraft's blind spot. In trials, the new hood design was found to bring about great improvements to all-round visibility and with several modifications, was standardised on later Spitfires. Extra internal fuel tanks were fitted, as the Spitfire had an embarrassingly short radius of action when operating over enemy territory. External wing tanks had been used as a temporary measure, but they increased drag and had to be jettisoned before entering combat.

<http://www.spitfireperformance.com/spitfire-IX.html> - an excellent site for Spitfire Mk IX performance assessment from Boscombe Down circa 1942.

http://spitfiresite.com/2010/07/anatomy-of-spitfire-cockpit.html/04n_15_015 - This article, now revised and updated, provides a complete photo reference to the layout and operation of the Spitfire cockpit. The aircraft serving as the subject is Supermarine Spitfire Mk. Vb BL628 YO-D, recently completed by Avspecs

Ltd in Auckland, New Zealand. Due to the fantastic quality of the restoration work which took full 30 years, the cockpit of this Spitfire conforms almost entirely to wartime production standards. For this reason, the photographs on this website serve as a reliable reference to the cockpit layout of the production Spitfire Mk. V. The cockpit photographs reproduced below are of a Spitfire Mk IX.



**Cockpit of Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IX, Aviation Museum Prague Kbely,
markings of No. 310 Squadron RAF.**



'The Office'

No. 33 Squadron RAF

No.33 Squadron had moved from Britain to the Middle East as a bomber squadron in 1935, becoming a Gloster Gladiator-equipped fighter squadron on 1 March 1938. The Gladiators were taken into action against the Italian Air Force in North Africa in June 1940, with great success. The Gladiators were replaced in September 1940 by Hawker Hurricanes, and it was Hurricanes that the Squadron took to Greece to take part in the fighting against the Italians in Albania. Operations began in February 1941 but were soon disrupted by the German invasion of Greece, and in April only four air-worthy Hurricanes remained. These were evacuated to Crete, where three more were lost during the German *Luftwaffe* attacks on the island prior to the airborne invasion. Only one aircraft survived to return to Egypt.

In Egypt new aircraft were quickly found, and the squadron provided fighter cover during the see-saw battles against Rommel and the Africa Corps that ended with the victory at El Alamein. After El Alamein the squadron was used to protect the coastal shipping that supported the advance west along the coast towards the final German stronghold in Tunisia. By the end of 1943 the squadron had converted to the Supermarine Spitfire, and in April 1944 these were taken back to Britain to take part in the D-Day landings and the campaign in Western Europe. In the month before D-Day the squadron flew a mix of fighter sweeps, bomber escort and day intruder missions. After D-Day it eventually moved to France, and operated as a fighter-bomber squadron until December 1944.

Apart from a brief spell at Fairwood, now Swansea Airport in South Wales, and two days at Plumetot in France, the Squadron operated for most of June, July and August from airbases in South East England, putting them within easy flying time of France. George joined No. 33 Squadron on 6 August 1944, an important month for the Allies, with the Americans finally breaking out of the Cotentin Peninsula at the beginning of the month, and by the end of the month Paris had fallen and the Normandy Campaign was over. Allied air assets began to move over to France in force to provide close support for the advancing Armies, using former *Luftwaffe* bases and rapidly built, temporary Advanced Landing Grounds (ALG). The airfields that No. 33 Squadron operated from between 6 August until 15 December 1944, when the squadron flew back to Predannack in Cornwall to re-equip with Hawker Tempests, are shown below:

1 April 1944:	MersaMatruh
1-23 April 1944:	On the way back from Egypt to Britain
23 April -17 May 1944:	NorthWeald,Essex
17 May-3July 1944:	Lympne,Kent
3-17 July 1944:	Tangmere,WestSussex
17 July-6 August 1944:	Funtington,West Sussex
6-12 August 1944:	Selsey, East Sussex (ALG, satellite for Tangmere)
12-18 August 1944:	Fairwood Common, Gower Peninsula, west of Swansea
18-19 August 1944:	Selsey
19-20 August 1944:	ALG B.10 Plumetot, France
20-31 August 1944:	Tangmere
31 August-7 September 1944:	ALG B.17 Carpiquet, France
7-10 September 1944:	Lympne
10-12 September 1944:	ALG B.35 Le Treport, France
12 September-2 November 1944:	ALG B.53 Merville, France
2 November-15 December 1944:	ALG B.65 Maldegem, Belgium

While in France George was amongst a group of RNZAF Spitfire pilots who were visited by the New Zealand High Commissioner, Mr William Jordan, from his London home. This visit took place on 26 September while George was operating from the temporary, British ALG at Merville, and his name can be seen on the bottom of the right hand column, above Warrant Officer N.E.M. MacDonald, in the newspaper report on page 18.



KITES ON
DISPERSAL AT
MERVILLE.

Above and following pages: Photographs from No. 33 Squadron's albums showing the conditions at Merville airfield while the Squadron was based there from 12 September to 2 November 1944. The four bladed propeller of the Mk IX, and the Squadron code '5R' are visible.

VISIT TO FRANCE HIGH COMMISSIONER N.Z. SPITFIRE PILOTS MET

(Official News Service)

LONDON, Sept. 27.

The High Commissioner for New Zealand, Mr. Jordan, had breakfast at his London home yesterday morning, but at midday he was lunching with New Zealand Spitfire pilots in north-eastern France in an officers' mess built by the Germans, and occupied by them until about a month ago. Mr. Jordan made a brief trip to France to visit the New Zealand Fighter Squadron based there. He was accompanied by Air-Commodore Olsen and Group-Captain T. W. White, senior New Zealand air liaison officer in Canada, who is visiting Britain on matters connected with training.

"I found our squadron working hard and in great heart," said Mr. Jordan. "While there I saw it take off on operations. The men are living as comfortably as can be expected, and seem to be enjoying their experience in France. They sleep in tents, but have some fine messing facilities bequeathed by the Germans."

His son, Squadron Leader W. F. Jordan, who is a signals expert and has been in France since the day after D day, travelled to the aerodrome to meet him, and Group-Captain D. J. Scott, of Hokitika, flew in from his airfield not far away. The party also met the officer commanding the group to which the New Zealand Squadron belongs. Flying in and out of France, they noticed how farmers were at work in the fields as if nothing had ever disturbed them, and saw some of the flying-bomb sites. The visit took Mr. Jordan to the border of Belgium and the same general area where he fought in the last war.

Other New Zealanders Mr. Jordan met in France were: Squadron Leader J. G. Pattison, Flying-Officer A. C. Hutton, Flight-Lieutenant J. N. King, Flying-Officer D. A. Roberts, Flying-Officer D. G. L. Taylor, Pilot-Officer J. J. Robinson, Warrant-Officer A. J. Downer, Flight-Sergeant C. McInnes, Flight-Lieutenant L. S. Black, Flight-Lieutenant O. L. Hardy, Flight-Lieutenant L. M. Ralph, Flight-Lieutenant W. A. Newenham, Flying-Officer R. H. de Turret, Flying-Officer M. C. Mayston, Flying-Officer A. B. Stead, Flying-Officer J. F. P. Yeatman, Flying-Officer F. Transom, Pilot-Officer H. W. B. Patterson, Warrant-Officer D. F. Clarke, Flight-Sergeant R. M. Clarke, Flight-Lieutenant G. Pannell, Flight-Lieutenant W. G. Mart, Flight-Lieutenant L. G. Mason, Pilot-Officer G. G. Forrest, Warrant-Officer G. J. Roney and Warrant-Officer N. E. M. MacDonald.



Above: Mr Jordan meets pilots of No. 485 RNZAF Squadron, also part of 135 Wing and flying Spitfire Mk IXs.



ERK'S COOKHOUSE
AT MERVILLE.

“...The men are living as comfortably as can be expected, and seem to be enjoying their experience in France. They sleep in tents but have some fine messing facilities bequeathed by the Germans.” said Mr. Jordan.



OUR LIVING
QUARTERS.

(MERVILLE)

Operation SWITCHBACK and the Breskens Pocket

Following the D-Day landings in June 1944, and the subsequent breakout from Normandy and the Cotentin Peninsula, Allied supply lines became stretched as the armies rapidly advanced into France and Belgium. Montgomery's 'Narrow Front' thrust towards the Ruhr in September 1944 failed at Arnhem and led to a reappraisal of plans to open the port of Antwerp as a logistic hub much closer to the front lines. As well as trying to capture all of the ports along the Allied left flank - Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, Cherbourg, Dunkirk, Ostend and Zeebrugge - the Canadian First Army was also given the task of clearing the Scheldt Estuary from the North Sea to Antwerp, a 50 km (30 mile) stretch of water that was part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall. There were coastal batteries along both banks of the West Scheldt, and the island of Walcheren was considered to be one of the most heavily fortified sections of the entire Wall, standing guard at the mouth of the Estuary.

The Allies had reached Antwerp on 4 September 1944 and captured the city and port relatively easily, yet due to the focus on Operation MARKET GARDEN planners failed to recognise the importance of blocking the escape route being used to evacuate the German 15th Army across the Scheldt from Breskens to Vlissingen, along the South Beveland isthmus to Woensdrecht and Bergen op Zoom and into Germany. Over a three-week period the Germans carried out their own 'little Dunkirk' and had evacuated over 100 000 men, their vehicles and heavy equipment by 26 September.

Operations to take control of the Scheldt commenced in early October 1944, with Allied planning staff predicting a quick resolution, but such assumptions were extremely misplaced, as the poor Canadian infantry soon discovered. Poor weather, terrain completely unsuitable for heavy armour and fighting a well organised defensive force that had taken an oath to fight to the last man and used inundation to channel lines of advance into well planned killing zones turned the Canadian advance into a miserable footslogging campaign that measured gains in metres.

No.33 Squadron was part of the Allied air effort supporting the Canadian operations during the Battle of the Scheldt, operating from the temporary base at Merville in France for most of the period before moving forward to Maldegem in Belgium. It was from Merville that No. 33 Squadron flew missions to support Operation SWITCHBACK, the operation that commenced on Friday 6 October 1944, designed to clear German opposition from the Breskens Pocket in order to launch Operation INFATUATE 1 and 2, the amphibious assault on Walcheren. At around 1500 hrs on Friday 6 October 1944, Warrant Officer George Roney RNZAF took off in PV160, a Spitfire Mk IXe, part of an armed reconnaissance sortie.

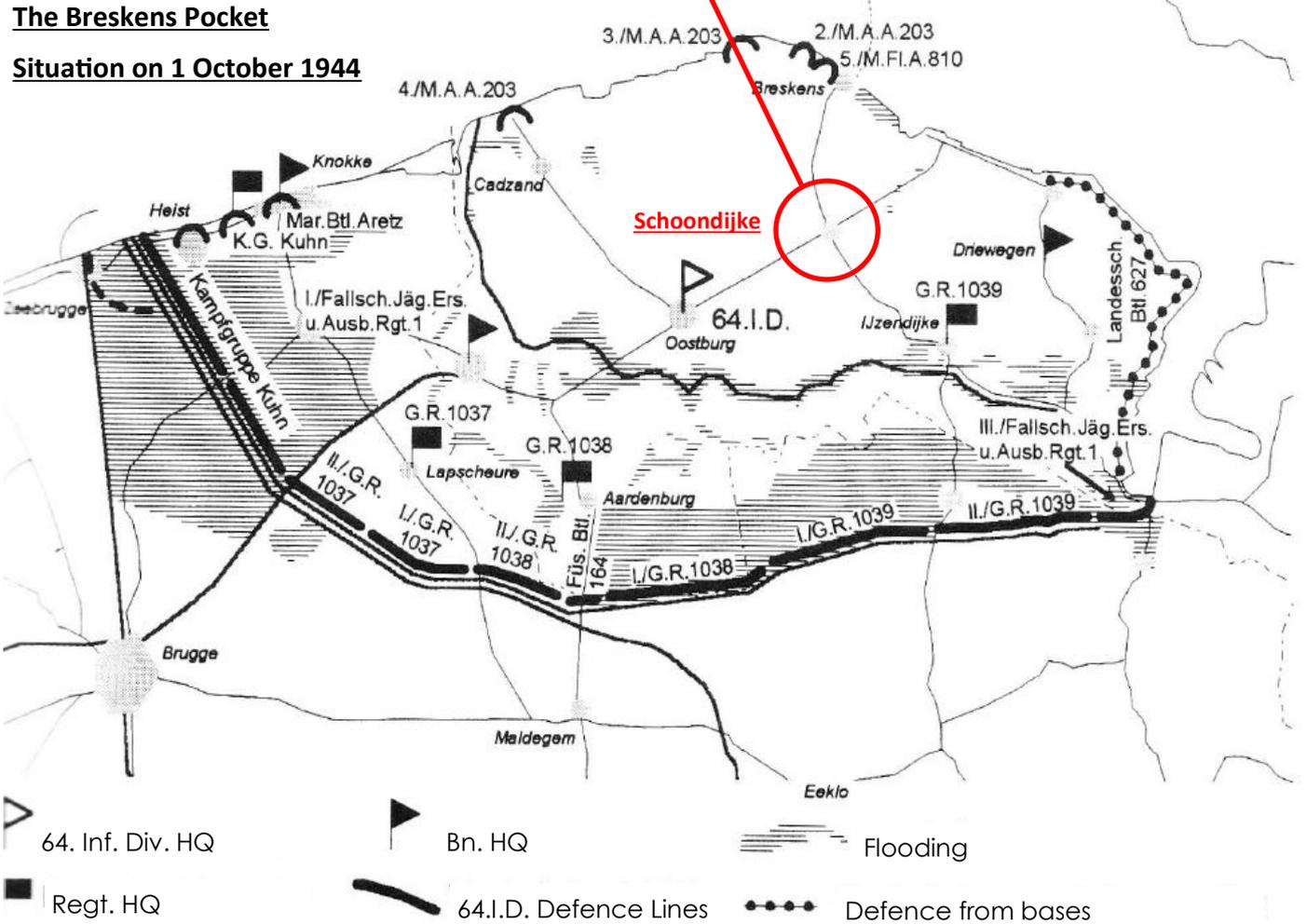
The Operational Records of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force (AEAF) and Air Defence Great Britain (ADGB) for 6th October 1944 state that the fighter planes and fighter-bombers of both commands carried out more than 1 000 flights above the occupied part of Netherlands that day. In Zeeland, air support was provided for the Canadian ground troops' attack across the Leopold Canal. Air attacks were carried out on German targets near many places in Zeeland-Flanders, including Biervliet, Oostburg and Hoofdplaat in the Breskens Pocket. The Air Branch War Diary of First Canadian Army states, "Friday—weather was good and a record number of sorties were flown today. On the ground the fighting around Tilburg and above the Leopold Canal has been very heavy. Operation SWITCHBACK began today and we now hold a small bridgehead over the Leopold Canal and most air support was directed into these areas...No 84 Group flew 719 sorties (armed recce 267, pre-arranged support 355, immediate support 8, tactical reconnaissance 42, photo recce 39 and artillery recce 8) and 123 Wing carried out most of the air support for Operation SWITCHBACK."

The good weather reported above also favoured the German air defence batteries in the Breskens Pocket, and during the mission three of No. 33 Squadron's Spitfires were shot down after they encountered heavy flak. Pilot Officer Clarke RAAF managed to parachute to safety and evade capture; the whereabouts of his aircraft are still unknown. Sgt McKee RAF nursed his aircraft south in an attempt to reach Merville, but crash-landed near Kortrijk in Belgium. Unfortunately George went down with his Spitfire, unseen by his



The Breskens Pocket

Situation on 1 October 1944





Allied photo reconnaissance picture of Schoondijke after the battle. Official Dutch damage assessments written after the end of the war stated that Schoondijke had been virtually removed from the map.

colleagues in his section. On 9 October 1944 the family received the dreaded 'Missing on air operations' telegram from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence, containing a message of sympathy from the Prime Minister and his Government. Letters of commiseration followed, firstly from George's Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader Ian Matthew, written on 23 October while 33 Squadron was still operating from Merville. On 17 November, two days after 33 Squadron had returned to Britain to commence its re-equipment with the Hawker Tempest down in Cornwall, George's close friend, Warrant Officer Evan MacDonald, who had been with George when they met the High Commissioner and who had been part of his section over Breskens, wrote from London. Both letters offer a vague picture of the events leading up to George's crash, stating that the bombing and strafing mission had been carried out successfully and the squadron was reforming to return to base. Warrant Officer MacDonald wrote that he had actually seen George turn away from his colleagues, and they thought he had returned to Merville ahead of them. From OC 33's letter it is clear that George had made a great impact during his time on the squadron and looked certain to be awarded a commission.

By combining amphibious and ground operations, supported by air whenever the weather conditions allowed, the Allies had managed to secure the Scheldt Estuary by 9 November. One hundred Royal Navy minesweepers then went into action to clear and open up the approach into Antwerp, an operation that was complete by 25 November. Three days later, on 28 November 1944, the first Allied convoy docked at the port, the first ship being a Canadian built freighter. The cost in civilian and Allied personnel and social infrastructure had been enormous, especially in the Breskens Pocket and on Walcheren island, which Bomber Command had flooded by breaching the dikes in four places in order to allow the North Sea to flood in twice a day and inundate many of the German positions. In September and October 1944 the air forces had carried out over 11 600 bombing and tactical support sorties and had dropped 8 454 tons of bombs on Walcheren alone.

At the end of the war the Dutch Government declared that the damage sustained in Zeeland was among the worst in the country, with many of the cities and towns in the province more or less obliterated. It would take the islanders until 2 February 1946 before the last breach was closed and the land started to dry out. House building started again in 1947, allowing people to move out of ex-military barracks, gun battery casemates and prefabs, with the last emergency housing unit finally closing in 1963. On 4 November 1947 there was an organised tree planting day across the island that had been known before the war as 'The Garden of Zeeland', the Dutch population having paid for the trees. Princess Juliana planted the first tree in Westkapelle that day. The following year her mother, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, planted the first tree in what became known as the Wilhelmina Forest to the south of Westkapelle.

Unfortunately for the family back in New Zealand it was almost a year before the RNZAF officially acknowledged that George's death had probably occurred on 6 October 1944, and the New Zealand Evening Post of 12th September 1945 listed George, along with numerous others, on their Air Casualties Roll of Honour. Due to the extensive destruction in Zeeland it was not until 9 June 1948 that a Dutch Military Salvage Squad, alerted by a farmer, finally located the wreckage of George's aircraft in the hamlet of Steenhoven. The team was able to recover George's remains and personal belongings, from which they were able to trace his family in New Zealand and inform them that George had been exhumed, identified, and given a proper burial in Grave 303B of Schoondijke General Cemetery in Zeeland.

50

URGENT

5/ 3/ 14773 DPR.

9th OCT. 1944

MR. B. RONEY
2 WARREN ST.
OAMARU

FILE.

11 OCT 1944

Initials

RECEIVED 12.11.44
11 OCT 1944

REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR BROTHER WARRANT OFFICER GEORGE JAMES RONEY HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING ON AIR OPERATIONS ON 6th OCT. 1944. THE PRIME MINISTER DESIRES ME TO CONVEY TO YOU ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT HIS DEEP SYMPATHY WITH YOU IN YOUR GREAT ANXIETY. LETTER FOLLOWING.

H. JONES
MINISTER OF DEFENCE



W/O. G. J. Roney, of Oamaru, missing on operations.

33 Squadron

R. A. F.

B. L. C.

23/10/44

Dear Mr Roney

Before you receive this letter you will have been notified by the air ministry that your son was reported missing on the 14th of this month. I hope you will forgive my not writing before but owing to communications being rather difficult at present, it is quite some time before we manage to find out any particulars and I have been postponing this letter in the hope that some news of your son would be forthcoming but unfortunately we have received none at the present time.

The Squadron was detailed to bomb and strafe enemy positions and had successfully carried out the operations and was reforming when it was noticed that your sons machine was missing. The section leader ~~got~~ called him on the R/T. Several times and when he received no answer went back to the area to look for him but unfortunately failed to find him.

George was one of the most promising ^{airman} pilots in the Squadron, and would shortly have been recommended for ~~the~~^a commission, which I am confident he would have received and his presence among us is very much missed. The other Pilots wish to join with me in offering you our deepest sympathy on your very great loss.

I hope that by the time you receive this letter we will have some more definite news but if in the meantime I can do any thing more to help you please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours very sincerely

Ian Matthew

S/Ldr.

O. C. 33. Squadron.

Letter 1

33 Squadron
R.A.F,
B.L.A.(?)
23/10/44

Dear Mr Roney,

Before you receive this letter you will have been notified by the air ministry that your son was reported missing on the sixth of this month. I hope you will forgive my not writing before but owing to communications being rather difficult at present, it is quite some time before we manage to find out any particulars and I have been postponing this letter in the hope that some news of your son would be forthcoming but unfortunately we have received none at this present time.

The squadron was detailed to bomb and strafe enemy positions and had successfully carried out the operation and was reforming when it was noticed that your son's machine was missing. The section leader called him on the R/T several times and when he received no answer went back to the area to look for him but unfortunately failed to find him.

George was one of the most promising airman pilots in the squadron, and would shortly have been recommended for a commission which I am confident he would have received and his presence among us is very much missed. The other pilots wish to join with me in offering you our deepest sympathy on your very great loss.

I hope that by the time you receive this letter we will have some more definite news but if in the meantime I can do anything more to help you please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours very sincerely
Ian Matthew
S/Ldr
OC 33 Squadron

N.Z. 42427. Wp Macdonald N.E.

33 Sqdn. B. L.A.

C/o N.Z. A. B. P. O.

London. 17./11/44.

Dear Mr. Roney and family

Naturally by this time you have had the news of your son George. I am writing this letter to try and give you some idea of what happened. Geo & I joined this Squadron together, after spending many happy months together we always flew together and what we had we shared and in all we were almost brothers. I was flying in the same section as George. 6 weeks ago today & after doing our job 3 of us broke one way & I saw George break to the right. When we came to join up he wasn't there, and so we thought he had returned to base but no. I have waited all this time, just to get some more information but any more news will be a day or two yet. I won't endeavor to make the situation brighter or worse, because yourselves and we pilots here can only hope for the best.

I have written to the general manager of the P. O. Savings bank in London about George's bank book. £16. odd. and he advised

me to send it to you and you can take the necessary action with it.

I had to go through his kit and I took care to put his very personal kit in the right-hand parcels and cigs he owned I gave to his ground crew to whom he was very attached.

Well Mr Roney I will write as soon and as often as possible and hope in a short time you should have more definite news. I have some rather good photos of George which I will send to you. Meanwhile we shall keep on hoping and I shall close with kindest regards to all at Reed St.

Yours sincerely

Evan Macdonald.

Letter 2

NZ 42427 W/O Macdonald N.E.
33 Sqdn. B.L.A.
c/o NZ A.B.P.O.
London 17/11/44

Dear Mr Roney and family,

Naturally by this time you have had the news about your son George. I am writing this letter to try and give you some idea of what happened. George and I joined this squadron together, after many happy months together we always flew together and what we had we shared and in all we were almost brothers. I was flying in the same section as George 6 weeks ago today and after doing our job 3 of us broke one way and saw George break to the right. When we came to join up he wasn't there, and so we thought he had returned to base but no. I have waited all this time, just to get some more information will be a day or two yet. I won't endeavour to make the situation brighter or worse, because yourselves and we pilots here can only hope for the best.

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Well Mr Roney I will write as soon and as often as possible and hope in a short time you should have more definite news. I have some rather good photos of George which I will send to you. Meanwhile we shall keep on hoping and I shall close with kindest regards to all at Reed St.

Yours sincerely,
Evan MacDonald

:IMS

5/3/14773 DPR.

Mr. E.B. Roney,
Box 417,
WELLINGTON.

6th September, 1945.

Dear Mr. Roney,

Further to my letter of the 30th July, 1945, I regret to advise that Air Ministry has now officially presumed the death of your brother, Warrant Officer George James Roney, as having occurred on the 6th October, 1944.

The Minister of Defence desires me to convey to you on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Government his deepest sympathy with you in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) T. A. BARROW
AIR SECRETARY.

DEPARTING

date _____ sent by _____
signature _____

[Handwritten signature]

6/9/45

Received by parents with

[Handwritten mark]

ROLL OF HONOUR

AIR CASUALTIES

The following New Zealand air personnel serving overseas have been reported casualties:-

KILLED.

HENLEY, William J. H., Pilot Officer. Mr. W. J. Henley, 11 Henley Road, Mt. Eden, Auckland (f.).

MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED.

MACFARLANE, Hamish D., Flying Officer. Mr. A. MacFarlane, Leithfield Beach, Amberley (f.).

DANGEROUSLY ILL.

BARLOW, Edward R., Flying Officer. Mrs. E. Barlow, 67 West Street, Feilding (m.).

KILLED IN ACTION—PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING.

BOOCOCK, Walter, Pilot Officer. Mrs. M. A. Woolley, 554 Church Street, Palmerston North (m.).

HUDSON, Gordon D., Flying Officer, A.F.C. Mrs. W. Hudson, 37 Weymouth Street, New Plymouth (m.).

PRESUMED DEAD—PREVIOUSLY RECLASSIFIED MISSING BELIEVED KILLED.

MILN, Montague J., Flight Sergeant. Mr. R. Miln, Castle Craig, Private Bag, Te Kuiti (f.).

PRESUMED DEAD—PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING.

BRUNTON, William E., Flight Sergeant. Mr. D. Brunton, 57 Pioneer Road, New Plymouth (f.).

CROFT, Lawrence P., Flying Officer. Mr. I. F. Croft, Mt. Brown, Amberley (f.).

EDWARDS, Thomas S., Flight Sergeant. Mrs. T. S. Edwards, care G. Urquhart, Main Road, Otorohanga (w.).

GOOD, Nolan A., Flight Sergeant. Mrs. A. G. Good, Liverpool Street, Trentham (m.).

GREEN, George A., Flying Officer. Mrs. J. M. Jope, Cape Foulwind, via Westport (m.).

... .. Flight Sergeant.

Mrs. C. Revell, Papatati, Wanganui (s.).

HOSIE, Bruce J., Flying Officer. Mrs. R. Hosie, Manaia, Taranaki (m.).

HOWELL, Edward, Pilot Officer. Mrs. M. A. B. Howell, care M. P. S. Sherriff, Huntley School, Marton (m.).

JEFFARES, Brian C., Pilot Officer. Mrs. R. A. Jeffares, 2 Pembroke Road, Stratford, Taranaki (m.).

MEHARRY, Henry J., Flight Lieutenant. Mr. D. K. Meharry, 54 Pleasant Street, Onehunga, Auckland (f.).

RABONE, Paul W., Squadron Leader, D.F.C. Mr. C. W. Rabone, Keri Keri Central, Bay of Islands (f.).

RONEY, George J., Warrant Officer. Mr. C. Roney, 42 Reed Street, Oamaru (f.).

ROWBERRY, Geoffrey W., Pilot Officer. Mr. C. W. Rowberry, 25 Highbury Road, Kellburn, Wellington (f.).

SAMPSON, Thomas, Pilot Officer. Mrs. W. Sampson, Longbeach, Ashburton (m.).

WYLLIE, Thomas, Flying Officer. Mr. A. Wyllie, Beech Road, Papakura, Auckland (f.).

MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED—PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING.

ECKHOLD, Morris C., Flying Officer. Mrs. E. Eckhold, Ngapara, Oamaru (m.).

GUDGEON, John B., Pilot Officer. Mr. J. E. Gudgeon, 13 Stonehurst Street, St. Albans, Christchurch (f.).

SAFE AT JACQUINOT BAY—PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING BELIEVED KILLED.

WARREN, Ronald C., Warrant Officer. Mrs. I. Warren, 188 Ferry Road, Christchurch (m.).

SAFE AT SINGAPORE—PREVIOUSLY REPORTED PRISONERS OF WAR.

CLOUSTON, Wilfred G., D.F.C., Squadron Leader. Mr. A. W. Clouston, 337 Whaka Road, Rotorua (f.).

DENSE, Ernest W., L.A.C. Mrs. E. H. Dense, Kotuku, West Coast (m.).

IRONSIDE, Cyril A., Flying Officer. Mrs. C. A. Ironside, 114 Broadway Avenue, Palmerston North (w.).

MEREDITH, Samuel O., L.A.C. Mrs. S. O. Meredith, 25b Taylor's Road, Bryndwr, Christchurch (w.).

MILLAR, Ronald D., D.F.M., Flight Lieutenant. Mrs. M. Millar, 160 Onepu Road, Lyall Bay, Wellington (m.).

SARGENT, Sydney E., L.A.C. Mrs. E. M. Sargent, Post Office, Tinroto (w.).

VIBERT, John G., Warrant Officer. Mr. R. A. Vibert, 161 Grafton Road, Auckland (f.).

SAFE AT MOUKDEN, MANCHURIA—PREVIOUSLY REPORTED A PRISONER OF WAR.

Still no word from Air force. but they
sent back Georges log book.

You could type this pencilled scrawl.

To R. Poney ^{Dear Sir} etc.

As commander of the Civil
defence of the ministry of home defence Affairs
of Holland I received a letter from the mayor of
the village of Schoondijke. Province Zeeland,
whereat he requested to dig up an English
~~flying officer~~ machine in which yet should be
the pilot

Although I only have the charge to clear the
south of our country of munitions which remained
here after the war I regarded it as my duty
to that young deliverer of our country who
gave all that he had for us, to do my best
to exhume him and give him a worthy
resting place.

We found your brother George James and
out of his pay book I read his and your name
and address

Further I found on his body his identity
card some French money a drive license

a flute I gave order to look carefully for some personal ~~item~~ article, because I thought that you should like to receive these, but we found only the named articles

As soon as I perceived that we ~~should~~ find your brothers body I let it be known to the mayor and I confided all the found articles to his charge.

We have buried your brother on the cemetery of Schoon dyke and I and my men have decided to adopt your brothers grave

I am feeling myself very happy that I could do something for one of our deliverers and that is also the sentiment of my men

Also I am pleased that I could find out the name of your brother so that you and your family at present know the last resting place of your brother

I hope to receive from you or any member of your family a notice that my letter has been arrived

I beg you to give my salutations to your family

Yours faithfully

Clem Van Dallen.

That letter to Ron was written in English

by

Mr Clem Van Dallen

Afd CT Hulpverl. Dienst

Parade 5

Venlo Holland.

Letter 3_1948?

still no word from air force but they sent back Georges logbook
You could type this pencilled scrawl

To R Roney Dear Sir etc,

As commander of the civil defence of the ministry of Home Affairs of Holland I received a letter from the mayor of the village of Schoondyke, Province Zeeland, whereat he requested to dig up an English flying machine in which yet should be the pilot

Although I only have the charge to clear the south of our country of munitions which remained here after the war I regarded it as my duty to that young deliverer of our country who gave all that he had for us, to do my best to exhume him and give him a worthy resting place.

We found your brother George James and out of his paybook I read his and your name and address Further I found on his body his identity card some French money a drive licence a flute I gave order to look carefully for some personal article because I thought you should like to receive these, but we found only the named articles

As soon as I perceived that we should find your brother's body I let it be known to the mayor and I confided all the found articles to his charge.

We have buried your brother on the cemetery of Schoondyke and I and my men have decided to adopt your brother's grave

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I hope to receive from you or any member of your family a notice that my letter has been arrived

I beg you to give my salutations to your family

Yours faithfully

Clem Van Daelen

That letter to Ron was written in English by
Mr Clem Van Daelen
Afd CT Hulpverl. Dienst
Parade 5
Venlo, Holland

Translation

Dear Family.

On 10th June 1948 the undersigned was appointed to survey the digging up of a Spitfire which crashed round about 14th Oct 1944 near the municipality of Schoonduyke, a village in the Netherlands province of Zeeland district Zeeuw's Vlaanderen

The main object of digging up the above plane however was to find the pilot because witnesses of this accident declared that they had not seen anybody jump from the plane.

After two days hard work our labour was rewarded among the remains of the plane there were the remains of a human being. After having dug up the pilot it could not have been anyone else. we could see from the pay book which we found on him the following name and particulars
George James Roney Born 1-1-

occupation of civil life motor mechanic
single. From other particulars I could gather
that the above Roney came from N.Z.

Although all particulars regarding
G.J.R. will be sent on by the local authorities
of Schoondijke I myself also feel obliged to tell
you of your sons death and to condole with
you in your sad loss.

On June 12. 1948 George was buried at
Schoondijke I was there to

Should there be anything you would
like me to do for you I shall be only too pleased
to help you.

The quarter master of the State police
(Sgd.) F. Picavet

Frans Picavet
Midwoudsestraat 12.
Schoondijke
Netherlands

Letter 4 _1948?

Translation

Dear Family ,

On 10 June 1948 the undersigned was appointed to survey the digging up of a spitfire which crashed round about 14th Oct 1944 near the municipality of Schoondyke, a village in the Netherlands, province of Zeeland, district Zeeuws—Vlaanderen

The main object of digging up the above plane however was to find the pilot because witnesses of this accident declared that they had not seen anybody jump from the plane.

After two days of hard work our labour was rewarded. Among the remains of the plane there were the remains of a human being After having dug up the pilot it could not have been anyone else. We could see from the paybook which we found on him the following name and particulars:
George James Roney Born -/-/-/ occupation of civil life motor mechanic Single

From other particulars I could gather that the above Roney came from N.Z.

Although all particulars regarding G.J.R. will be sent on by the local authorities of Schoondyke I myself also feel obliged to tell you of your son's death and to condole with you in your sad loss.

On June 12.1948 George was buried at Schoondyke I was there to.

Should there be anything you would like me to do for you I shall be only to pleased to help you.

The quarter master of the State police
(sqd) F Picavet

Frans Picavet
Midwoudsestraat 12
Schoondijke
Netherlands

GEMEENTE



SCHOONDIJKE

No.

To

Bericht op schrijven van:

Mr. G.C. Roney,

Onderwerp:

42 Reed Street

O A M A R U
New-Zealand.

Bijlagen:

Schoondijke, 10th September 1948.

Undoubtedly you will have heard that in this community at the 9th of June 1948 is found the body of your son w/o G.J. Roney killed in action at October 6th 1944.

I hope you can excuse me for not writing sooner, but I had to wait for the pictures made from the burrial, which took place at June 12th in the morning at nine o'clock. The grave is kept bij the villa-ge of Schoondijke and I assure you that it always will be to find in perfect condition. A clergyman was present when the burrial took place.

The properties of your late son found in the plane will be sent to you as soon as possible. They are: some french banknotes a pay-book, some coins and a flute.

At September 9th an officer from the Royal Air Force took a visit to the grave and told me a cross would be placed next week with the following inscription: Spitfire IX PV. 160 33 Squadron NZ.417113 w/o G.J. Roney (RNZAF) k/a 6-10-44.

The enclosed pictures are taken at the day of the burrial just before and after it had taken place and represent numbered consecutively the following: 1. Coffin standing at the bier covered with pall and flowers, 2. Clergyman M.W.J. Schopenhauer holds the funeral oration on the opened grave; from right to left Clergyman M.W.J.Schopenhauer, Mr.F.A.van Rosevelt, Burgomaster of Schoondijke, Mr.F.Picavet, policeman, Mr.J. van de Walle, grave-digger, Mr.M. Marinisse, police-man, Mr.M.Bruijnooge, undertaker's man.3. After the coffin was sunk into the grave Mr. F.A. van Rosevelt, Burgomaster of Schoondijke laid flowers.

Clergyman Schopenhauer promised me to write you personally.

If I can do anything for you or your family, I always will be to your service.

The Burgomaster of Schoondijke,



5/3/14773- P.R.8.

18th. Nov. 1948.

Mr. G.C.Roney.
42 Reed Street.
OAMARU.

Dear Mr. Roney,

With reference to my letter of the 28th. July, 1948, concerning your son Warrant Officer George James Roney, I have to advise that additional information has now been received from Air Ministry.

This states that your son was pilot of the Spitfire, P.V. 160 of No. 33 R.A.F. Squadron, which took part in an armed reconnaissance in the area of Brestans on the 6th. October 1944. The squadron encountered a large amount of heavy opposition from enemy flak, and two aircraft were hit and forced to land, the pilots baling out safely. W/O. Roney's aircraft was lost sight of during the operation, and it can only be assumed that his aircraft was shot down, and the pilot was unable to bale out in time.

Later investigation in this area confirmed that in July last, a Dutch Military Salvage Squad excavated the wreckage of an aircraft which had recently been reported by a farmer Mr. Dekker. This aircraft had crashed in the hamlet of Steenhoven. The remains of the pilot were also recovered from the wreckage, and from documents found on the body it is definite established these were the remains of your son George James Roney.

The report states that the effects recovered from the wreckage were an R.A.F. paybook, a whistle, and French money to the value of 1475 francs (old style), these, the Burgomasters Secretary stated had been forwarded on to you.

Your son's remains have now been interred in the Schoondijk Communal Cemetery, Grave No. 303 (bis), and a suitably inscribed temporary cross has been erected. A permanent headstone will be erected immediately labour and materials are available, and I am to assure that your son's grave will be carefully tended at all times.

I am fully aware of the distressing nature of these details Mr. Roney, at the same time I am sure you would prefer to be given all the information received by this Department. I can only trust that the knowledge that your son's body has at last been recovered and given a Christian burial, may prove of some consolation to you.

Once again on behalf of the Air Board, I desire to express my deepest sympathy in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,

J. Barrow
AIR SECRETARY.

ly Ints.
19/11/48

FILE
19/11/48

57/3/14773

CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS

DECEASED PERSONNEL (AIR)

NO. 417113 RANK WO NAME RONEY. 9 J
(Surname) (Initials)

QUALIFIED FOR:-

- 1. The 1939-45 Star
- 2. The Atlantic Star
- 3. The ~~London~~ ~~Europe~~ Star
- 4. The Africa Star
- 5. The Pacific Star
- 6. The Burma Star
- 7. The Italy Star
- 8. The France & Germany Star
- 9. The Defence Medal
- 10. The War Medal 1939/45
- 11. The N.Z. War Medal

CLASPS:

Battle of Britain /
Africa /
Others /

(number above)

(Delete those for which airman does NOT qualify)

Assessed by STD

Checked by 10

STARS AND/OR MEDALS DESPATCHED WITH RIBBONS.

TO: W/ C Roney 7
42 Reed Street
Dunedin

DATE: 30 MAY 1950

INITIALS: S

SCHEDULE NO. 3895

R4. ISSUES NOTED ON FORM 547.

INITIALS: _____ DATE _____ / _____ /50.



Above (L-R): 39-45 Star, France & Germany Star, The Defence Medal, The War Medal 1939-45, The NZ War Medal.
Below: The King George VI Memorial Cross, awarded to the next of kin of all New Zealand servicemen and women who were killed while on war service or operational service overseas .





Above: Modern map showing Schoondijke, the Groeneweg and Steenhoven.

Below: Schoondijke Municipal Church. The cemetery where George is buried is behind this church.



417113 WARRANT OFFICER
G. J. RONEY
PILOT
ROYAL N.Z. AIR FORCE
6TH OCTOBER 1944 AGE 22





George Roney (right) and his brother, Stanley (left).

Like so many young men of his time, including George's brother, Stanley, who served with the New Zealand Army in North Africa, Egypt and Italy, seeing action at El Alamein and Monte Cassino, most left their countries of birth with a spirit of adventure mixed with a sense of pride and duty at the opportunity to serve their country. Like many of those young men, George did not return to his homeland, nor have the opportunity of leaving descendants who would remember his heroism and sacrifice – such a full and active life cut so incredibly short. By the end of the war, 3 635 RNZAF personnel had been killed on active service, 350 in the Pacific and 3285 in Europe.

I am extremely grateful to the members of the Roney family living in New Zealand and Australia who have been so generous in sharing their treasured memories with me while I researched George's life. Over the years members of the Roney family have made the long journey over from New Zealand to pay their respects and leave a piece of '*pounamu*', the New Zealand greenstone that holds a special place in the hearts of the people of the South Island, on George's resting place. One of his nieces had never met her 'Uncle George', as she was born just 3 weeks after he was shot down. However, on 24 September 2015 she and her husband made the journey from Australia to Europe. They were able to visit George's grave and lay a New Zealand flag and a knitted poppy.

Warrant Officer George James Roney RNZAF is the only known member of No 33 Squadron RAF who fell during the battle, and he now rests in peace just a few minutes flying time away from Walcheren. Sadly it took the Squadron 72 years to find George again and recount his story, a man who can now take a deserved and lasting place in the Squadron's history. In memory of the valour shown by so many during the bitter and extended struggle to wrest the heavily defended Scheldt Estuary from a determined enemy, let us ensure that his sacrifice, and the sacrifice of so many others, is recognized and never forgotten.

Lest we forget.

Loyalty.

THE BATTLE OF THE SCHELDT

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1944

MILES 5 0 5 10

- Canadian forces
- British or Polish forces
- United States forces
- Flooded areas
- ONLY PRINCIPAL ROADS SHOWN

