

In Memory of
Flight Sergeant

Elliot Livesey Cole

401302, Royal Australian Air Force who died on 31 January 1943 Age 23

Son of Rupert Chester Cole and Beryl Marjorie Cole, of Caulfield, Victoria, Australia.

Remembered with Honour
Scampton (St. John the Baptist) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

401302 Flight Sergeant Elliot Livesey COLE, RAAF was killed when Lancaster ED428, crashed at Reepham level crossing at 0715hrs on 31st January 1943

The aircraft, callsign 'E-Easy' of 49 Squadron, had taken off at 0226 that morning from RAF FISKERTON on a mission to Hamburg. A letter to F/Sgt Cole's father tells how, after successfully completing the mission, the aircraft undershot the runway of Fiskerton aerodrome while coming in to land, struck a tree and crashed at Reepham Crossings, ¼ mile north west of the aerodrome (and 2 miles east north east of Lincoln).

A circumstantial report prepared on behalf of Wing Commander SLEE, Commanding 49 Squadron, states that, from questioning Sgt PHILLIPS, the sole survivor, it would appear that the wrong QFE (air pressure at ground level) was set on the aircraft altimeter. This would cause the altimeter to indicate that the aircraft was at a greater height than it actually was.

Six of the crew were killed:

[401302](#) F/Sgt Elliot Livesey COLE - Pilot RAAF(Age 23)

[111535](#) Fg/Off Frank RIDLEY (Nav.B)

[404849](#) Sgt James Arthur Gerald BROWNE (WT/AG) RAAF (Age 25)

[403187](#) F/Sgt Llewellyn GREY RAAF (Age 26)

[572542](#) Sgt Frederick Stanley Tristram PITTARD (F/E)

[1324081](#) Sgt William Charles WOOD(R/G)

1001700 Sgt E PHILLIPS, the Mid Upper Gunner survived but was injured.

Fg/Off RIDLEY, Sgt BROWNE, F/Sgt GREY, and Sgt PITTARD rest with F/Sgt COLE in Scampton (St John the Baptist) Churchyard.

Elliot Livesey COLE was born in Caulfield, Victoria on 19th June 1919 to Rupert Chester COLE and Beryl Marjorie COLE.

After primary school he attended Caulfield Grammar from Feb 1932 to Nov 1934

In 1938 Elliot joined the 2nd Cavalry Division of the Australian Army, a part time militia unit tasked with the defence of the western approaches to Melbourne in the event of invasion. By the time he enlisted in the RAAF he had achieved the rank of Lance Corporal working with the divisional signals unit.

Prior to enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force he was employed as a window dresser for the Clerical Drapers 'Georges Ltd' where he had worked for 4 ½ years prior to May 1940 when he applied for aircrew selection.

Elliot first volunteered for aircrew duties in May 1940 but it wasn't until 1st February 1941 that he was enlisted at No.1 Recruiting Centre Melbourne as an AC2 and posted to No.1 Initial Training School at Somers, Victoria

At the conclusion of initial training, Elliot was promoted to Leading Aircraftman and posted to No. 3 Elementary Flying Training School, Essendon, Victoria on 03/04/41 where he learned his early flying on Tiger Moth, Gipsy Moth and Wackett Trainer aircraft

On 29/05/41 Elliot was posted to No. 2 Embarkation Depot, Bradfield Park and embarked at Sydney on 13/06/1941 for Canada and UK.

On arrival in Canada he was posted to No. 7 Service Flying Training School at MacLeod, Manitoba where he was awarded his Pilot's 'Wings' and promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 25/09/41

Elliot waited at No. 1 'Y' Depot Halifax, Nova Scotia, for transport across the Atlantic, taking passage for the UK on 07/10/41 and arriving at No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre, Bournemouth on 19/10/41.

From here, he was posted to No. 3 Service Flying Training School, South Cerney, Gloucestershire for multi engine aircraft training on the Avro Anson and then to 14 Operational Training Unit (OTU), Cottesmore, Rutland on 09/12/41.

It was on 25/03/1942, while at 14 OTU, that Elliot was promoted to temporary Flight Sergeant although notification did not reach him at that time.

On 12/05/1942 Elliot was posted to 49 Squadron at RAF Scampton. 49 Squadron were, at that time, beginning their conversion from the infamous Avro Manchester to the Avro Lancaster which had a different crew composition.

Elliot did not fly any operational missions in a Manchester aircraft and instead undertook conversion training to operate in the Lancaster, being posted to 49 Squadron conversion flight from 10/08/42 to 19/08/42 to complete this training.

Sgt Cole's first operational Lancaster mission is recorded as being On 27/08/42 to Kassel as part of Pilot Officer FAWKE's crew.

Further missions followed:

OSNABROOK on 27/08/42

SAARBRUKEN on 01/09/42

KARLSRUHE on 02/09/42

DUISBERG on 06/09/42

FRANKFURT on 08/09/42

DUSSELDORF on 10/09/42

BREMEN on 13/09/42

WILHELMSHAVEN on 14/09/42

KRUPPS factory in ESSEN on 16/09/42 when the mission was aborted because of engine and fuel problems

Mining off SWINEMUNDE on 18/09/42 when the tailplane and rudder were damaged by flak and the rudder jammed.

MUNICH on 20/09/42

WISMAR on 23/09/42 when 16 incendiaries failed to drop because of an electrical fault

AACHEN on 05/10/42

OSNABROOK on 06/10/42

WISMAR on 12/10/42

KEIL on 13/10/42

The Schneider factory at LE CREUSOT in daylight on 17/10/42

GENOA on 22/10/42 and again on 07/11/42

There is some confusion in the records as F/Sgt COLE's personal records indicate he was posted to 1654 Conversion unit on 15/11/42. On the same date Flight Sergeant GREY, Sergeant BROWNE and Flying Officer RIDLEY were posted to 1654 Conversion Unit to form a new crew together with Flight Sergeant COLE as Pilot, Sergeant BRAMLEY as Flight Engineer, Sergeant PHILLIPS as mid upper gunner and Sergeant WOOD as rear gunner.

Unfortunately, 49 Squadron's records indicate that on the night of the day on which he reported to 1654 Conversion Unit he was flying with his 'old crew' to attack GENOA. This discrepancy makes the entries in 49 Squadron records, particularly those showing him attacking TURIN on 20/11/42 and 08/12/42, suspect.

The first mission of the newly constituted crew was on 21/12/42 to MUNICH and on 16/01/43 the same crew flew a mission to Berlin.

The next night, the 17th January, they again attacked BERLIN but for that mission Flying Officer RIDLEY, the Navigator, was replaced by Flying Officer WATTS.

When ED 428 took off on its final mission Flying Officer RIDLEY was back but flying in Sgt BRAMLEY's place as Flight Engineer, in a change that cost his life, was Sgt PITTARD.

Flight Sergeant Elliot Livesey COLE appears to have completed 27 operational sorties, close to the end of the thirty that normally comprised a first 'tour' of operations with Bomber Command.

His father received the dreaded telegram on 4th February 1943, the day Elliot and four of his comrades were laid to rest in Scampton Village Churchyard.

MESSAGE FORM

Office Serial No. _____

Call IN
and
Preface OUT

No. of Groups
GR

Office Date Stamp.

Enc JA.

DELIVERY PERSONAL.

(Above this line is for Signals use only.)

TO* **MR. R.C. COLE, 55 WANDA ROAD, CAULFIELD. VIC.**

FROM* AIR BOARD, MELBOURNE

Originator's Number.

P.A. **657**

Date.

4/FEB.

In Reply to Number and Date.

DEEPLY REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR **SON, SERGEANT ELLIOTT LIVESEY COLE**
HAS LOST HIS LIFE AS RESULT OF
FISKERTON, ¹⁹⁴³
AIR OPERATIONS NEAR ~~AT~~ LINGS, ENGLAND ON **THIRTY-FIRST JANUARY** (.)
THE MINISTER FOR AIR JOINS WITH AIR BOARD IN EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHY IN YOUR
SAD BEREAVEMENT.

TO: POSTMASTER

P.A. REQUEST ADVISE AIR BOARD BY COLLECT TELEGRAM WHEN ACCOMPANYING
WAR CASUALTY TELEGRAM ADDRESSED TO

HAS BEEN DELIVERED
FROM: AIR BOARD.

This message must be sent AS WRITTEN
and may be sent by W/T.
Signature

This message must be sent IN CYPHER
and may be sent by W/T.
Signature

Originator's Instructions.* Degree of Priority.*

TIME of ORIGIN

2/30/43

T.O.R.

*Originator to insert "NOT" if message is not to go by W/T over any part of the route. (Below this line is for Signals use only.)

System in.	Time in.	Reader.	Sender.	System out.	Time out.	Reader.	Sender.	System out.	Time out.	Reader.	Sender.	T.H.I.

*The Signal Department is responsible that these details are transposed to the appropriate portion of the message form and that all possibility of compromising distinguishing signals, etc., by omitting to remove their signification from the address, etc., is avoided. Before delivery of the message these details are to be re-inserted in P/L.

Compounding their grief, Elliot's parents must have struggled to imagine the service life of their son ten and a half thousand miles from home. As Elliot had served, and died, in a Lancaster they wrote and asked to visit the Lancaster which had been returned to Australia as a War Memorial and to raise money for war bonds (G- George, now preserved at the Australian War Memorial Canberra).

They received a reply that it had sustained damage in a landing accident and it would therefore be some time before it could be visited.

It wasn't much to ask for the loss of a son.