

SQUADRON LEADER KEVIN HARROLD WALSH

The son of Richard Walsh and Ellen (Nellie) Walsh nee Sexton was born twentieth of July in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixteen at Crawford's Private Hospital Mount Pleasant in South Australia. Losing his father just prior to his birth, Kevin would later show his concern and closeness to his mother when enlisting in the RAAF.

While attending Sacred Hearts College at Glenelg, his sporting prowess emerged as he participated in the Open Swimming Championships, played in the 1st XI Cricket Team and in the winter months played Golf. Other sports he played were Hockey, Football, and Tennis. Among his busy activities he was also for 18 months in the Army Medical Corps and showed an avid interest in flying.

He enlisted in the RAAF on the 15th of July nineteen hundred and thirty-six and completed Training a year later on the 22nd of July at the RAAF Training Base at Point Cook Victoria. Of note was his forced landing due to mechanical failure in which flying a Westland Wapiti, his only damage was that of the broken oil gauge which forced him down.

Following his completion of training this bright young lad of fair complexion measuring 5ft 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' and Grey Eyes, embarked on R.M.S. 'Orama' for London, England where he would start his service with the RAF and participated in several squadrons rising to the rank of Squadron Leader. He was of a smaller group flying Blenheims that was based in France during the German push in the early parts of the war and was lucky to come out unscathed and return to his base in England. While flying in the No. 139 Blenheim Squadron he was killed in action on the second of September nineteen hundred and forty-one flying into the Port of Ostend in Belgium. He was later buried on the 14th in Row B, Grave 4 Wenduine Communal Cemetery, Belgium.

SQUADRON LEADER KEVIN HARROLD WALSH'S (AKA The Mighty Atom) LAST MISSION:



On 2nd September 1941 a flight of six Blenheims from No. 139 (Jamaica) Squadron left from the airfield at Manston in Kent at 10:23am for a daylight anti-shipping operation to Blankenberghe & Ostend. Squadron Leader Kevin Walsh flying in the lead Blenheim serial No. Z7274, a few Hurricane bombers also comprising the striking force and a wing consisting of Nos. 242, 452 and 485 Squadrons escorted them. Their mission was to sweep from Dunkirk to Ostend attacking Shipping. Ship and shore anti-aircraft defenses were extremely active at the Port of Ostend on the approach the lead Blenheim managed to score a direct hit on a Merchant Vessel. Another Blenheim also hit the Merchant Vessel sinking it. Kevin Walsh in the lead Blenheim was shot down under heavy flak, the body of S/Ldr Walsh washed up to shore on the 14th of September while the body of his navigator F/Sgt Alfred George Hole had been recovered from the sea and later buried in England. Sadly the body of Wireless Operator/ Gunner Sergeant George Henry Brook was never recovered. The only other score for the mission was a small 5,000 Tonne anti-aircraft "flak ship". As the formation withdrew Willis saw one Blenheim returning at sea level without escort and was then shot down by two Messerschmidts

He was awarded the following medals: - 1945, 1939/45 Star; 1945, Air Crew Europe Star; 1945, War Medal 1939/45

Planes flown during his service: Avro 504 Trainer, Westland Wapiti, Hawker Hart, Hawker Audax, Hawker Hind, Bristol Blenheim I and IV

Military Service:

Bet. 15 July 1936 - 29 June 1937, Enlisted RAAF at Point Cook, Victoria, Australia

Bet. 18 September 1937 - 8 January 1938, 40064 RAF No. 6 Hart Squadron (Pilot officer)

Bet. 18 August - 18 September 1937, 40064 RAF No. 34 Hind Light Bomber Squadron

Bet. 8 - 31 January 1938, 40064 RAF No. 62 Hind Light Bomber Squadron

Bet. 31 January 1938 - 19 June 1939, 40064 RAF No. 108 Blenheim Squadron; **9 June 1939** promoted to Flying Officer

Bet. 19 June 1939 - 2 September 1941, 40064 RAF Squadron Leader of the No. 139 (Jamaica) Blenheim Squadron; **27 September 1940** promoted to Flight Lieutenant

No. 6 Squadron

Badge: An eagle, wings elevated, preying on a serpent

Motto: Oculi exercitus - 'The eyes of the Army.'

Authority: King George VI, January 1938.



No. 34 Squadron

Badge: In front of an increscent, a wolf passant.

Motto: Lupus vult, lupus volat - 'Wolf wishes, wolf flies'

No. 62 Squadron

Badge: A meteor.

Motto: Inseperato - 'Unexpectedly'

No. 108 Blenheim Squadron

Badge: An oak leaf. The unit was formed at Stonehenge and it adopted an oak leaf as a badge being symbolic of strength and age.

Motto: Motto: "Viribus contractis" ("With gathered strength").

Authority: King George VI, July 1938



No. 139 (Jamaica) Blenheim Squadron

Badge: In front of a crescent a fasces, the fasces is taken from the badge of No. 28 Squadron to which the nucleus flight of No. 139 Squadron was originally attached for a short period following its arrival in Italy (from England) where No. 28 was then based. This flight was later transferred to No. 34 Squadron (in whose badge a crescent appears) and operated with No. 34 until July, 1918, when together with another flight it became No. 139 Squadron. No. 34 Squadron supplied the bulk of the personnel for No. 139 Squadron.

Motto: "Si placet necamus" ("We destroy at will").

Authority: King George VI, December 1938.

