

COMMEMORATION 2023

FLYING OFFICER ALLAN ARMISTICE FRASER

Each year we commemorate an Old Boy who died in active service, in order to put a more human face on the names read out in the Roll of Honour and inscribed on the Shrine or one of the memorial plaques.

Today we remember **Flying Officer Allan Armistice Fraser, service number NZ 405030**

Allan Fraser was born on 11 November 1918 in Akaroa, the only son of Alexander and Mary Fraser, who also had two daughters – Thelma and Marie. The significance of his birthday, the day that World War One ended, is reflected in the choice of middle name that his parents gave him – Armistice.

At some stage, the family moved to Christchurch and, on 1 February 1926, Allan Armistice Fraser is recorded as a ‘first day’ pupil at the brand new West Spreydon School in Lyttelton Street.

From 1932 until 1936, Allan attended Christchurch Boys’ High School and appears to have been a good all-rounder, doing well in his studies, appearing often in junior cricket statistics for his batting and bowling efforts, having significant roles in annual drama productions, and playing rugby up to 2nd XV level.

On leaving school, he joined the firm of Sims Cooper Ltd (later AFFCO New Zealand) and worked for this firm until shortly before he joined the Air Force in 1940, moving to the North Island to begin his training. In 1941, Allan married Elizabeth Joan Buchanan of Wairoa, was commissioned as a Pilot Officer on 14 June 1941, and was soon after posted to 75 (RAF) Squadron flying Wellington bombers out Feltwell Air Base in England.

His Commanding Officer wrote, in a letter to Allan's parents:

"During his stay here your son had become one of the most popular members of the mess, being at all times of a friendly and cheerful disposition. He was a really fine pilot and an excellent captain of aircraft, keen and willing, and constantly displaying skill, courage and efficiency of a high order."

On 14 June 1942, Allan was promoted to the rank of Flying Officer. By this time he had already flown 32 bombing missions, most of these over Germany. On the night of 20 June, Allan and his crew of four took off from Feltwell to join a 185 strong bomber raid heading for Emden, a port and major ship-building city in northwest Germany. The target was reached and bombed but Allan Fraser's aircraft, codename X3760, was one of eight that did not return to base. The exact fate of the aircraft is not known but it is likely that it was shot down by a German nightfighter, crashing into the sea west of the Frisian islands.

The bodies of Flying Officer Allen Fraser and his radio operator, Flight Sergeant Arthur Christie, were washed ashore on the 12th July on the North coast of the island of Schiermonnikoog.

It is to be noted that both men were carefully examined by a German military doctor and a full record of probable cause of death and items found on them has been located in the local archives. Allan's body was still clothed and all items were carefully itemised, including an 'escape bag' containing maps and different types of money, his wallet, fountain pen, photos and newspaper cuttings.

The men were both buried with military honours by the local German garrison in registered graves in the local cemetery.

Arthur Christie had just turned 21 – he was born on 25 April 1921 so would have been 102 today.

Allen Armistice Fraser left behind his parents, who had lost their only son, and a young wife. He was just 23 years old.

FLYING OFFICER ALLAN ARMISTICE FRASER

- Son, husband, leader and Old Boy

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May they rest in peace