

'25212 FLIGHT SERGEANT ALFRED ALEXANDER SIMPSON

Wife : Mrs G E Simpson of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Parents: Mr & Mrs F J Simpson of Gisborne.

Alfred Simpson was born on 10 October 1915, at Gisborne. He received his secondary education at Gisborne High School, where he gained his Senior Free place. Prior to his application for aircrew training in the RNZAF he was a student at the Bible Training Institute Auckland, and at the time of his enlistment was a home missionary in the Presbyterian Church.

Flight Sergeant Simpson applied for aircrew training on 13 May 1941 and on the 30th May 1942, he entered the Aerodrome Defence Unit at Waipapakauri, where he was employed on ground duties. On 14 August 1942, he was posted to Rotorua, where, on 1 October, he entered the Initial Training Wing and remustered to Air Observer. On 24 December 1942, he embarked for Canada for instruction under the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Shortly after his arrival in Canada, Flight Sergeant Simpson was posted to No. 8 Bombing and Gunnery School, Lethbridge, Alberta. He contracted pleurisy during the early stages of his training and was confined to hospital for approximately one month. On 13 June 1943, he resumed training at No 7 Air Observers' School, Portage la Prairie Manitoba, where on 6 August 1943, he was awarded his air bomber's badge and promoted to Sergeant. He was promoted to Flight Sergeant on 6 February 1944. He later embarked for the United Kingdom.

Flight Sergeant Simpson arrived in England on 1 September 1943, and on the 5th of the following month, was posted to No 3 (Observer) Advanced Flying Unit, Halfpenny Green, Worcestershire. On 6 November 1943, he was posted to No 11 Operational Training Unit, where he trained as an air bomber on Wellington aircraft at Westcott, Buckinghamshire, and the nearby satellite aerodrome of Oakley. During April 1944, he was posted to No 1651 Conversion Unit, Wratting Common, Cambridgeshire, where he took part in air exercises as air bomber on Stirling aircraft. Late in May he proceeded to No 3 Lancaster Finishing School, Feltwell, Norfolk, and on 15 June 1944, commenced flying in Lancaster aircraft with No 75 (NZ) Squadron Mepal, Cambridgeshire. With this squadron he carried out a number of operational flights. The targets on these sorties included Valenciennes, Rimeux, Paris, and Montdidier, in France.

On the night of 20/21 July 1944, Flight Sergeant Simpson was air bomber of a Lancaster aircraft which took off to bomb Homberg in Germany. The aircraft failed to return to its base, and all the members of the crew, including Flight Sergeant Simpson, were reported missing. This was his 11th operational flight. Later, information was received from the International Red Cross Committee stating that one RAF member of the crew was a prisoner of war, and the other members of the crew had lost their lives. Flight Sergeant Simpson was buried in the Military Cemetery, Uden, Holland. There were two other New Zealanders in the crew, Pilot Officer H. Whittington of Hamilton, and Flight Sergeant A C Fletcher of Auckland. Flight Sergeant Simpson had 317 flying hours as an Air Bomber.