



Squadron Leader James William McGILVRAY

[1910 - 1942]



Name: James William **McGILVRAY**

Rank: Squadron Leader

Service Number: 232

Unit: 7 Squadron

Service: Royal Australian Air Force

Born: 11 June 1910; Wagga Wagga N.S.W

Enlisted: 9 December 1929; Richmond, N.S.W.

Date of Death: 9 June 1942 (aged 31 years)

Place of Death: Sale, Victoria

Cause of Death: Accidental

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.

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Buried / Commemorated: Wagga Wagga War Cemetery, [Presbyterian Sec. N.2. Grave A122]
Australian War Memorial [panel 99]

Next of Kin: Son of James Martin and Alice Jane McGilvray
Husband of Helen (Phyllis) McGilvray of Surfers Paradise, Qld

In Civilian Life:

At enlistment, lived at Glebe Point, Sydney, NSW. He was 6' tall, weighed 12 stone, dark complexion and hair and brown eyes.

He attended Wagga High School and studied science at Sydney University. In 1929 he was the University middleweight and light heavyweight boxing champion; and an all-round sportsman.

1936 – 37 Mathematics master at The Hale School, Perth.

1937 – Control Officer at Archerfield Airfield, Brisbane, Qld. Lived at Hamilton, Brisbane.

February 1939 - married Phyllis Helen Billington at Murwillumbah N.S.W.

July 1939 – son James John born

Military Service:

1927-28	Sydney University Regiment
December 1929	Citizens Air Force Cadet, 3 Squadron, Richmond
April 1930	Pilot Officer, 3 Squadron, qualified pilot.
July 1931	Flying Officer
January 1933	Transferred to Reserve
October 1939	Transferred to Active List, No 1 Flying Training School, Point Cook; Specialised Navigation Course, qualified navigator.
June 1940	Flight Lieutenant
August 1940	SHQ Richmond, navigational duties
June 1941	Instructor, 1 Air Navigation School, Parkes
July 1941	Chief Instructor, 2 Air Navigation School, Mt Gambier
October 1941	Squadron Leader
January 1942	Operations Officer, HQ North Western Area, Darwin
April 1942	1 Operational Training Unit, Hudson conversion course.
June 1942	7 Squadron, Bairnsdale

Circumstances of Death:

RAAF Lockheed Hudson A16-39 of No 7 Squadron, Bairnsdale crashed near Lake Reeve. via Long Point on the Ninety Mile Beach Victoria at about 8:15 pm E.S.T. on 9th June 1942. The aircraft had been on a seaward reconnaissance flight in company with two other Hudson aircraft from the Squadron looking for Japanese submarines near Gabo Island. Returning to Base in deteriorating weather the aircraft crashed.

The crash investigation revealed that the starboard engine failed not too long before the crash. The pilot placed the port airscrew into fine pitch and switched off the starboard engine. It is believed that whilst the aircraft was flying on the port engine only, it stalled and spun into the ground.

The crew of four were all killed: Squadron Leader J.W. McGilvray (Pilot); Sergeant M.J. Gawith (Observer), Sergeant F.R. Walton (Wireless Air Gunner), Sergeant E.D. Bayley (Wireless Air Gunner).

Sources included:

- Australian War Memorial
- National Archives of Australia
- Sundry web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents