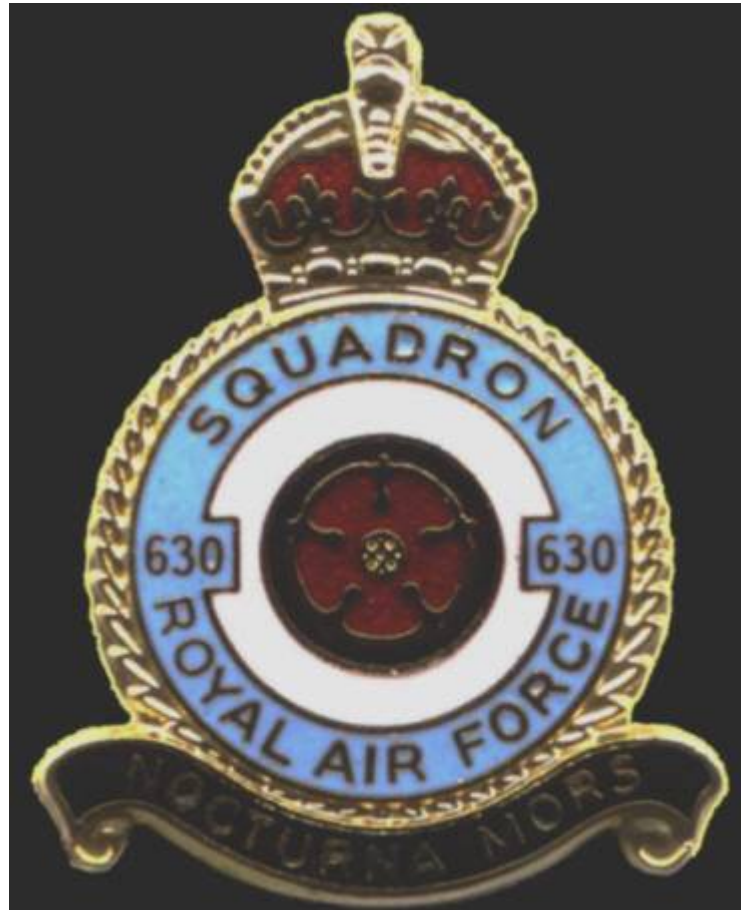


## New Information



**"NOCTURNA MORS"**

**"Death By Night"**

**This is New Information provided by  
Clive Henderson the Aircraft Pilot's  
brother in law.**

**We are grateful to him for his help and we are always looking for more information.**

This aircraft was piloted by my wife's brother Colin. He was with 630Sqd. based at East Kirkby Lincolnshire. The regimental numbers are not correct . As far as the RAAF personnel go change the first 5 in the number to an S, which would make F/O Colin Richardson AUS 412697.

Over the years we had understood the aircraft crashed at Folkeston. Prior to a visit to the UK in June of this year I got interested in finding more details and went for a search on the net and came across ltwright@nucleus.com. Larry gave me quite a bit of information identifying the crash site as Foxton Leicestershire however his work is copyright. Foxton and Folkeston don't sound all that different when you come from the other side of the world.

During June we visited Foxton and met Rev. Ian Johnston ,a kind and compassionate man who showed my wife, Nan and myself, the site of the crash and the site of the airfield that was 14OTU on Foxton Moor. Since returning we received a touching letter from Ian which I will answer. He gave us a book "the Foxton Story" by Derek Lewin which mentioned ND949. I was disappointed to read that he stated that Pilot Error could be the cause of the crash and that they were approaching runway 3.

After Foxton we visited East Kirkby the home base of 630 Sqd.

Back in London I went to the Public Records at Kew and obtained copies of the Operations Record for 8/9 April 1945 for both East Kirkby and 14OTU. The entry for 14OTU stated that there was no contact with the aircraft prior to the crash. We have obtained a copy of the crash from the RAF Museum. This states "aircraft returning from operations was diverted to another airfield. Aircraft acknowledged diversion and while proceeding to diversion airfield aircraft flew into the ground".

The findings of the inquiry were "that the cause of the accident was due to the wireless operator in failing to receive diversion by wireless". The base commander did not accept this finding. "AOC this command considers accident due to Error in Judgment on behalf of the pilot". I understand this type of a decision occurred often when all the crew are killed.

I am writing to Air Historical Branch (RAF) asking for more details, mainly to determine the name and location of the diversion airfield.

I was led to believe that it may have been 14 OTU at Foxton and I am sure Colin would not have attempted a landing with out obtaining permission to land from the tower and checking his altimeter for the hight of the airfield or changes to the barometric pressure.

In Colin's time in the RAAF he had made 340 night landings in Cranes, Oxfords Wellingtons and Lancaster's included 16 months as an instructor at 15(P) AFU and he had some 1310 flying hours in his logbook.

It is interesting to note that East Kirkby was 40ft above sea level while 14 OTU was 400ft above sea level.

I will let you know any details I can find out from Air Historical Branch (RAF).

Colin's name is on the Honour Roll at Plymouth and his name is also in the records of the War Graves Commission which can be accessed through <http://yard.ccta.gav.uk.cwgc/register>

I was told at East Kirkby that Australia would not permit the release of the names of next of kin to protect the family. Other countries permit the release of these details.

If you would like more details re F/O C. Richardson please let me know.

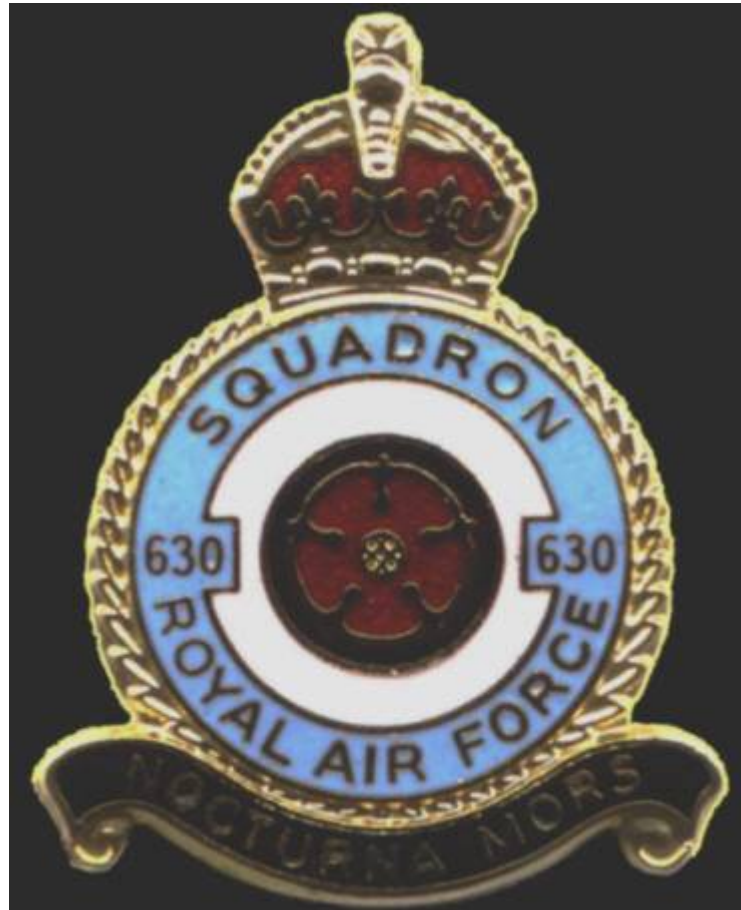
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I have photos of the graves of the four crew members buried at Botley They are together in a group at the front of the cemetery

Regards Clive Henderson

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## Mr Robert Cramp

### *A First World War Veteran Remembers*

Robert Cramp was a farmer's son, born in March 1899, the oldest of 9 children. The family large house opposite the Crown Inn in Tur Langton. Late in 1917 Robert was conscripted into the Army, joining, not the local Leicestershire's but a regiment depleted by the casualties in France, the Manchester's.

His initial training was at Cleethorpes and he adapted quickly to army life, but not to army food. At home the family always ate well and the change from Mother's roast meat to cookhouse stew was a problem that had to be solved. A resourceful and personable young man, Robert got permission to take early morning Holy Communion instead of normal Church Parades. This obvious devotion so impressed some of the ladies of the church that he was invited to their homes and once more could enjoy home cooking!.

Young Private Cramp was posted to France early in 1918, spending the first few days in a large transit camp. Seventy eight years later, he still remembers the names of two of the soldiers with whom he shared a tent. Recently released from "the glasshouse", Pte. Kennedy & ex-Sergeant McCauly, were accomplished thieves, a skill demonstrated when a whole cheese arrived in the tent!.

Some later when in the front line and moving cautiously under cover, McCauly was on top of the parapet showing every sign of having made a successful raid on the rum store. They found his body later. Even before this Robert was a teetotaler but the incident must have

strengthened his resolve not to drink alcohol. Indeed, he attributes his survival of the battles of the following months to having a clearer head than some of those who did take the daily issue of rum.

The seven or eight months before the end of hostilities, were spent not far from Cambrai, and his recall of names like Le Cateau, Pommereuil & Mormal Forest, show that despite his mostly light-hearted tales, he was indeed where some of the fiercest battles of the war were fought. Yet, in retrospect, Mr. Cramp still says, "Soldiering was easier than farming".

His farming background may well have saved his life. He recalls that at one time his unit was living (resting?) at a Chateau and they came to me and said, 'the Aid Post is

short of milk. Can anyone milk a cow?' ". He set out for the nearby village which was reported to be clear (of the enemy) and found it desolate. In the gateway of a smallholding he found a dead cow, but in the cowshed were two live ones. With his Dixie full of milk, "I set off to where the Chateau was but before I got there the Germans had blasted the place." Beating a hasty retreat, I never stopped running until I got to Le Cateau".

A rather more somber recollection was of a time when, back in the trenches, his Sergeant asked him and two others to accompany him to recover a man severely wounded in no-mans-land. With great difficulty they carried him back on a stretcher, but he had died before reaching their own lines. Looking in his pay-book for identification, Robert found that the poor fellow came from Empingham.

The great offensive in July 1918, in which the British Forces were involved in the Cambrai area, marked the beginning of the end of the war. We asked Mr. Cramp what was the reaction of himself and his comrades to the announcement of the Armistice. "Dumb. There was no jollification. I never saw a man smile ... A man said, 'My mate was shot at 10 minutes to eleven'."

The three or four months before returning home were wasteful and frustrating. There had been the chance of a Veterinary course for which farmer Robert had eagerly volunteered. "Draw two days rations and find your way to Amiens and report at Le Cateau on the way", he was told. He got a lift on a lorry but it did not go to Le Cateau and he never got to Amiens or the Veterinary course. What is more, "I left my two days rations on the lorry"!

Of his reactions to France as a country, he said, "I saw little of real France. Only desolate villages .... I have never been back". On mementoes, "My only souvenir was a German bayonet. My wife didn't like it so I got rid of it."

Pte, Cramp became Mr. Cramp when he was demobbed in Cambrai and in March 1919 he docked at Tilbury en route to Tur Langton and a long life as a successful farmer.

He joined the British Legion in 1922 but is not sure whether he was a founder member of the newly formed Market Harborough Branch.

### **Postscript;**

Sadly Mr. Cramp passed away on the 12th June 1999. 10 weeks after his 100th Birthday.

He was awarded The Légion D Honneur by the French in December 1998.

He was widely known and respected and will be greatly missed by all who knew



him.