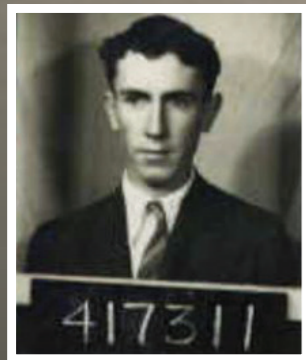


97 Squadron Lancaster being prepared for a bombing run



97 Squadron Crest

“HE WAS ONLY 19”



Peter Marsh with service number, from his RAAF file

Catherine Hall
College Archivist

Last ANZAC Day, a plain envelope was handed to a member of the Camberwell RSL. Inside were three World War II medals, belonging to Peter Andrew Marsh. The Camberwell RSL Secretary contacted the Xavier Archives as he believed that Peter Marsh was an Old Xaverian and the RSL were searching for any living relatives of Peter. In January this year, the Camberwell RSL handed the medals to the Xavier Archives for safe keeping, as they had been unsuccessful in locating any living family.

Peter Marsh was born on the 27 January 1924 to John and Phyllis Marsh of Middle Brighton. He attended Burke Hall from 1936 to 1937 and the Senior Campus from 1938 to 1940. In 1936 he won the junior obstacle race in the Burke Hall Athletics; in his final year of 1940 he was a member of the Under 15s football team as well as gaining his Intermediate Certificate before leaving Xavier.

In March 1942 he enlisted in the RAAF, aged 18. In May he was appointed to Air Crew and in November, Air Gunner. On 12 May 1943 he was promoted to Flight Sergeant in 61 Squadron RAF and on the 10 September transferred to 97 Squadron RAF, both squadrons under control of RAF Bomber Command.

Peter was an experienced gunner and had taken part in 38 successful operations when on 21/22 January 1944 targeting Magdeburg in Germany, his Lancaster bomber was reported as missing. Peter was presumed Killed In Action on 21 January 1944. A Missing Research and Enquiry team later reported that the aircraft crashed at Schmölau, 7 miles north of Wittingen and 35 miles north of Braunschweig. The crew were initially buried at Schmölau Cemetery in a collective grave. Peter's body was later recovered and is now buried in The Berlin 1939-1945 Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery in Charlottenburg, Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Berlin, Germany.



Peter Marsh's medals L-R: Air Crew Europe Star, 1939-1945 Star, 1939-1945 War Medal.

“Peter was posthumously awarded the Air Crew Europe Star, the 1939-1945 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal. He was only 19. Lest We Forget.”

84th ANZAC Commemorative Mass

The health and safety of our community is of the highest priority. In line with Government recommendations for large-scale events, this year's ANZAC Commemorative Mass has been cancelled.

