

GROSVENOR, Robert Archer (417954 RAAF)



Image 1 © B. Grosvenor family collection 2010
circa. July 1943.

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|-----------------------|--|
| Name | GROSVENOR, Robert Archer Flight Sergeant RAAF |
| Service Number | 417954 |
| Date of Birth | 15th August 1923 |
| Died | 29th March 1944 |
| Place of Birth | Victor Harbor SA |
| Resident | Victor Harbor SA |
| Cemetery | Stonefall Cemetery UK |

Robert (Bob) Archer Grosvenor was born in Victor Harbor on 15 August 1923, the second of four children of Clifford Ivo Grosvenor and Lillian Grosvenor (nee Archer). Cliff Grosvenor was a veteran of the First World War and had served with the 50th Infantry Battalion and fought in the major battles of 1918. (Bob's brother Peter (b. 17 October 1921) enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force on 23 July 1942 and served as ground crew (cipher, signals) in the RAAF's Northern Command. He was discharged on 8 May 1945 under the regulations that allowed men to resume farming occupations). Robert was educated at Inman Valley Primary School and Victor Harbor High School and after leaving school in 1937, he gained employment as a dry cleaner in Victor Harbor.

On 15 August 1942, the day of his 19th birthday, Bob was accepted by the RAAF and undertook his basic training at No. 4 Initial Training School (ITS) at Mt. Breckan, Victor Harbor. On completion of his training he was mustered for pilot training and posted to No. 11 Elementary Flying School (EFTS) at Benalla, Victoria where he trained on Tiger Moths. After the completion of this training he was drafted for training on twin-engine planes and sent to No. 7 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) at Deniliquin, NSW. Not all pilot trainees were successful and on 31 May 1943, Bob was re-mustered and posted to No. 2 Bombers and Air Gunners School at Port Pirie, South Australia. He qualified for his air-gunner's badge on 24 June 1943 and was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

On 4 August 1943, after doing so well in his career, he was promoted to Sergeant. Bob embarked from Adelaide with other RAAF airmen. He sailed via Wellington, New Zealand, and to the United States, where they disembarked at San Francisco. They entrained to Boston on the east coast of the U.S. and then up to Halifax, Nova Scotia and then sailed to the United Kingdom. The airmen disembarked at Liverpool on 10 September 1943 and entrained to Brighton where they were processed at the 11th Personnel Depot & Receiving Centre (PDRC). After two weeks leave he was posted to No. 27 Operational Training Unit (OTU) at Lichfield. This OTU had been specified by the Air Board as the unit backing Australian squadrons. The OTU was where the airmen formed crews.

The airman were able to choose each other on the belief they were good pilots, gunners, navigators and bombers. Each crewman would be compatible with each other and develop into an efficient bomber crew that could work together.

On completion of their training at 27 OTU, on 30 November 1943, Bob and his fellow crewmembers were sent to 1652 Heavy Conversion Unit (HCU) at Marston Moor in Yorkshire. 1652 HCU had been formed on 2 January 1942 to train aircrews for conversion to heavy bomber aircraft, principally Halifax's.

The training course ran for three months and during this time Bob was promoted to Flight Sergeant. Poor weather conditions throughout this time restricted how much flying training could be undertaken, and by late March 1944, the airmen were approaching the end of their training conversion course.

On 29 March 1944, Halifax II numbered DT736 was detailed for a training flight and took off from RAF Marston Moor at 1935 hours. The Halifax was piloted by Flight Sergeant Keith Caladine, of Sydney, and its crew members were Flt Sgt Eric Lascelles Reay, Flt Sgt Peter Sinclair, Flt Sgt Ronald Walker, Flt Sgt Geoffrey Gooderham and Flt Sgt Robert Grosvenor. All were RAAF airmen and had trained together from 27 OTU.

The Halifax was reported to have crashed at map reference (sheet 78) 920635, in Ayrshire, Scotland, at 2215 hours, some two hours and 50 minutes into its flight. The crash site was at Southeraig, about one mile north of the town of Kilmarnock. The initial report advised there were no witnesses to the crash. All the crew were killed and were later buried in the Harrogate (Stonefall) Cemetery, Yorkshire. The accident enquiry later revealed that a blade had broken away from the outer starboard engine causing the pilot to lose control of the aircraft.

Flt Sgt Robert Archer Grosvenor is commemorated on Victor Harbor's war memorial.

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, August 2010. Updated by T.Young & M.Young 29/09/2025

Appendix



National Archives of Australia

417954

Image 2 © naa.gov.au 2010
circa 1944

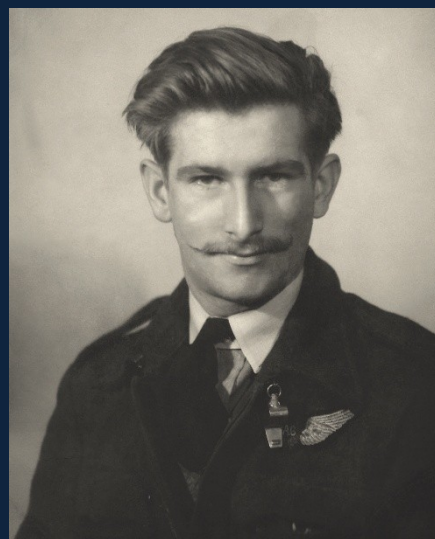


Image 3 © B. Grosvenor family collection
2010



Image 4 & 5 © naa.gov.au 2010
Enlistment photographs



USE OFFICIAL ADDRESS ONLY.

ENC. 11 A

From No.: *Sx39301* *WOT*
Name: *GROSVENOR, C.I.*
Unit or Group: *N.G.D.D.,*
A.I.F.



Date: *26-4-44*

166/16/311

C.O.

Casualty Section, 1st Lt Robert
R.A.A.F. Archer

Dear Sir,

Grosvenor

The news of the death
of my late son, in Ayrshire,
Scotland on the night of
March 29th 1944, reached me
on the 22nd inst.

My wife and I would
appreciate your forwarding
to us any further details
of this tragic happening which
may at present, or in future
be known. Particularly would
we like to know the manner
and location of interment.

Please forward any commun-
ication to above address.

Yours faithfully,
C.I. Grosvenor.

IN YOUR LETTER DO NOT REFER TO:

Ports of call—destination, descriptions of troops, or other information, which, if
intercepted, will be of value to the enemy.

National Archives of Australia

NAA: A705, 166/16/311

Image 6 © naa.gov.au

Letter from Bob's father Warrant Office Class 2 Clifford Ivor Grosvenor to the Defence
Department . 26 April 1944

ENC. 10A

C O P Y

TO RAAF HEADQUARTERS
FROM CHQ RAAF KINGSWAY

ALL95 CAS 443 APRIL 5

AUS421159 FLIGHT SERGEANT CALADINE K.J. AUS 417954 FLIGHT
SERGEANT GROSVENOR R.A. AUS410567 FLIGHT SERGEANT SINCLAIR P
AUS 426403 FLIGHT SERGEANT WALKER R.C. AUS 425094 FLIGHT
SERGEANT GOODERHAM G.A. AUS 426157 FLIGHT SERGEANT REAY E.L. ALL
DECEASED. CASUALTIES OCCURRED NEAR KILMAURS AYRSHIRE
SCOTLAND MAP REF Q89263 ABOUT 3 MILES NORTH WEST KILMARNOC.
AIR MINISTRY PCX222 AUSCAS088 MARCH 30 REFERS. ALSO QUOTES
RANKS GOODERHAM AND REAY SERGEANT RECORDS GLOUCESTER ADVISE
AUTHORITY ISSUED PROMOTE GOODERHAM FLIGHT SERGEANT WEF SEPL
4 1943. PROMULGATION ADVICE NOT YET RECEIVED. REAY PROMOTED
FLIGHT SERGEANT WEF AUGUST 4 1943 AUTHORITY 1652 CON UNIT FOR
AUS.4/44

(JLW - 10/4/44)

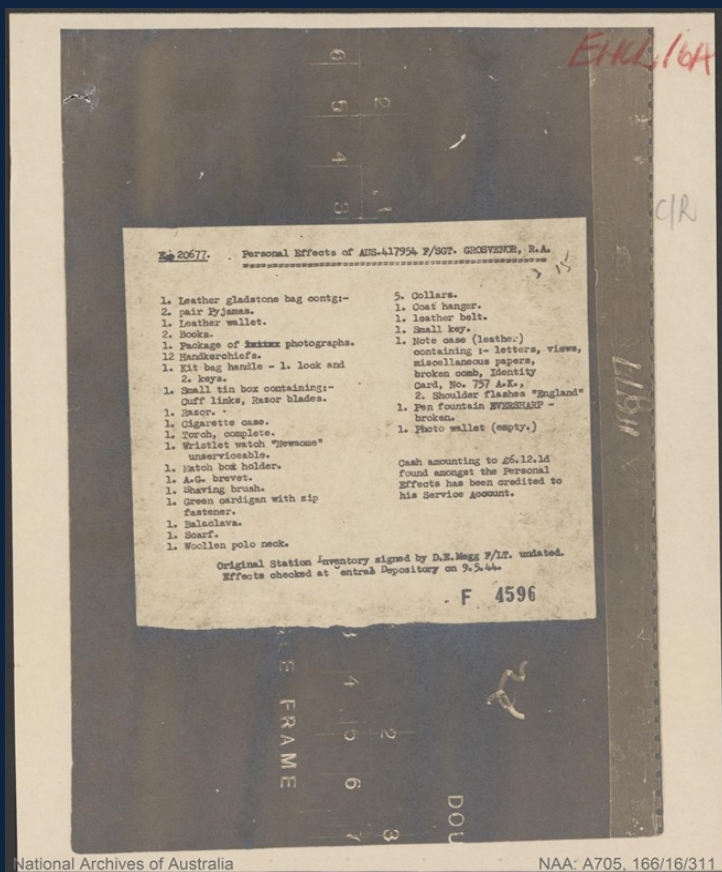


Image 8 © naa.gov.au
Bob's Personal effects list

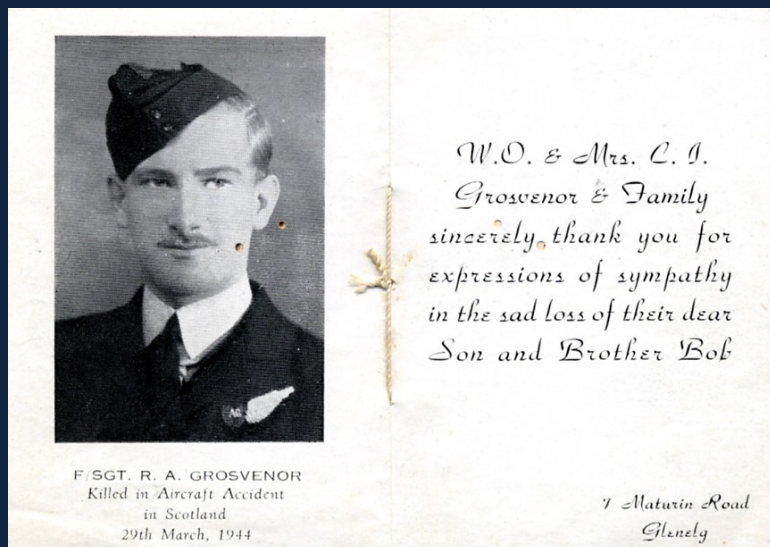


Image 9: © B. Grosvenor family collection 2010
The Return Thanks card printed by the Grosvenor family following the memorial service held in Adelaide

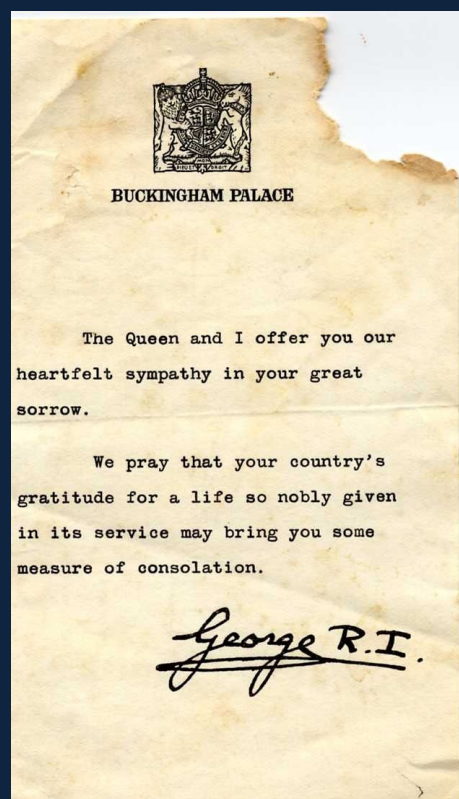


Image 10 © B. Grosvenor family collection 2010
The letter of condolence received by Bob's parents from King George VI

Location on the Roll of Honour

Robert Archer Grosvenor's name is located at panel **123** in the [Commemorative Area](#) at the Australian War Memorial (as indicated by the poppy on the plan).

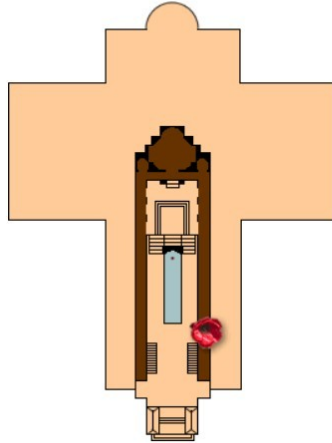


Image 13 & 14 © awm.gov.au 2025

Roll of honour Location and display dates at the Australian War memorial Canberra

Roll of Honour name projection

Robert Archer Grosvenor's name will be projected onto the exterior of the Hall of Memory on:

Thursday, 12 March 2026 at 11.18 pm

Sunday, 17 May 2026 at 5.07 am

Saturday, 1 August 2026 at 10.18 pm

Tuesday, 3 November 2026 at 2.58 am

For more information view the [Roll of Honour name projections page](#).

Please note: These dates and times are estimates. The actual time of projection could also change as a result of weather and other factors, so it is advisable to check closer to the date. In the rare event of a temporary loss of electrical power, the names scheduled for display in that period will not appear until the next time listed.