

RAAF FATALITIES IN SECOND WORLD WAR AMONG  
RAAF PERSONNEL SERVING ON ATTACHMENT  
IN ROYAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS AND SUPPORT UNITS

**420393 Flying Officer LESLIE, Ernest Thorburn**

**Source:**

AWM 237 (65) NAA : A 705, 166/24/528      Micro Film No 463.  
Commonwealth War Graves records

<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Halifax
<b>Serial number:</b>	JP 164
<b>Radio call sign:</b>	
<b>Unit:</b>	503 Sqn RAF

**Summary:**

On the night of 29/30<sup>th</sup> August 1944, Halifax JP164 took off at 1923 hours, detailed to carry out an anti-sub U boat patrol. At 0014 hours on the 30<sup>th</sup> August a faint SOS signal was heard by RAF Station Bealieu. The call sign was partially received, the figures 59 being heard. This was the only aircraft of Headquarters No 19 Group airborne that night and the sortie had been authorised by the Group. Nothing further was heard from the aircraft and it failed to return to base.

**Crew:**

RAF      Flt Lt Eccles, G B Captain (Pilot)  
RAF      Flt Lt Lawson, H (2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot)  
RAF      Sgt K Kay, (Flight Engineer)  
RAAF     420393 FO Leslie, E T (Navigator)  
RCAF     Flt Lt Motz, R B (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RAF      WO D A Denton, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RAF      WO J R Hill, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RAF      Flt Sgt R F Wardle, (Wireless Air Gunner)  
RAF      PO Robertson, V R (Air Gunner)

The aircraft crashed into the sea off St Nazaire, France, and all the crew were killed. Flt Lt Lawson and WO Denton are buried in the Dornic War Cemetery, France. FO Leslie and Flt Lt Motz are buried in the Escoublac-la-Baule War Cemetery, France. Escoublac-la-Baule is 13kms west of St Nazaire and the cemetery is west of Escoublac and east of la Baule. FO Robertson is buried in the La Bernerie-en-Retz Communal Cemetery, France.

The other four have no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing Runnymede, UK.