

## David George West.

Nationality: New Zealand  
Rank: Pilot Officer  
Regiment: Royal New Zealand Air Force  
Unit: RAF O.T.U. 41 Old Sarum  
Service No: 412772  
Date of Death: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1942  
Cemetery: Salisbury (London Road) Cemetery



Pilot Officer D G West

David (Darby) test flew a home built Lincoln Sports biplane at the youthful age of eighteen before joining the RNZAF in 1941. The first entry in his military logbook shows the types and time in aircraft he flew dual and solo while at Middle Districts Aero Club, 1936 to May 1941. The J3 Piper Cub mentioned was owned new by the family from 1937 to 1960.

DH Gypsy Moth	24hrs 20min
DH 82 Tiger Moth	34hrs
Porterfield 35W	11 hrs 20min
Rearwin Sportster	4 hrs 10min
Wiko GM1	1 hr 25min
J 3 Piper Cub	52 hrs 30min
Pietenpol	50min
Lincoln Sports	16 hrs 25min
Piper Cub	40min.

His RNZAF basic training was conducted at RNZAF E.T.S.F. Harewood Christchurch and he entered a further 46 hours and 45 minutes in his log on DH 82's with the comment from O/C "B" Flight that he "does not look around enough". Posted to RNZAF I.T.S. Woodburne, Blenheim (a current RNZAF base) he flew 46hours in North American Harvard advanced trainers and was noted as "average". At A.T.S. Omaka Blenheim a further 51 hours 25 minutes were flown and he qualified as a "service pilot on Harvard aircraft, W.E.F" with a proficiency rating of "above average". He was then posted overseas to the RAF base Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire that operated Westland Lysanders. His first flight there was on January 1942 completing 24½ hours on the type before a fatal training accident flying a Miles Magister cut short his military service.



Darby and the Lincoln Sports

The accident report indicates that the aircraft went into an unrecoverable spin following a stalling maneuver. It is rumoured that the second pilot was having some concerns about flying and that Pilot Officer West volunteered to conduct a test flight with him. The aeroplane stalled after buzzing the second pilot's girlfriend's cottage and both pilots were killed.

Peter, Darby's elder brother stationed in England at the time wrote to his father saying that he "didn't get to visit his brother before the accident".

Pilot Officer D G West was 22.