



**In Memory of**

**Flight Lieutenant Navigator  
CLIFTON FRANCIS BENEFIELD DFC  
402463**

**Royal New Zealand Air Force  
who died aged 25  
on Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1944**

**Flight Lieutenant BENEFIELD, son of  
Robert John and Caroline Winifred Benefield,  
of Wanganui, Wellington, New Zealand.**

**Flight Lieutenant Benefield was a navigator  
of Manchester and Lancaster Bombers  
with the  
RAF 9 Squadron**

## BY SUCH DEEDS

### HONOUR & AWARDS IN THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIRFORCE

1923 - 1999

**BENEFIELD**, Flight Lieutenant Clifton Francis, **DFC**.

NZ402463; Born Wanganui, 21 June 1918; RNZAF 9 July 1940 to (Kao) 25 April 1944; Navigator.

**Citation Distinguished Flying Cross** (9 September 1943):

[ 50 Squadron RAF (Lancaster)] **This officer has flown on operations against the principal targets in Germany. His navigation, at all times, has been exceptionally accurate and has been a material factor in the success attained by his crew.**

Flt Lt Benefield joined 50 Squadron in December 1942 completing 34 sorties, they included Berlin, Essen, Dusseldorf, Wilhelmshaven, Bremen, Nuremberg, Cologne, Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart Duisburg, Dortmund, St Nazaire, Lorient, Pilsen, and Spezia. He joined 9 Squadron for his second tour in February 1944, carrying out a further 10 sorties which included - Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, Tours and Paris, Kao Munich, Germany, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1944 with 9 Squadron RAF (Lancaster) on his 44<sup>th</sup> sortie. He was buried at Durnbach War Cemetery, Bavaria, Germany. He crewed with Squadron Leader B. M. Gilmour DFC, RNZAF (qv).

Source:

**By Such Deeds**

Honour and Awards in the Royal New Zealand Air Force  
1923 - 1999

Author, Group Captain C. M. Hanson, OBE, RNZAF (Rtd).



DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

## **Flight Lieutenant Clifton Francis Benefield D.F.C.**

N.Z. 402463

Son of

Robert and Winifred Benefield of Feilding.

Clifton Benefield was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1918, at Wanganui, and received his secondary education at Wanganui Technical College, where he gained his University Entrance and Higher Leaving Certificates. He was actively interested in rowing and was a member of the Aramoho Boating Club. At the time of his making application for a short service commission in the R.N.Z.A.F. on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1940, he was employed by the N.Z. Railways as a clerk.

Flight Lieutenant Benefield was enlisted at Ohakea on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1940, and was employed for several months at this station on ground duties. He was then, on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1941, posted to Levin to commence his initial training. Having satisfactorily completed the course he embarked for Canada on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1941.

Shortly after arrival in Canada, Flight Lieutenant Benefield was posted to No.6 Air Observers' School, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1941, he proceeded to No.3 Bombing and Gunnery School, Dafoe, Saskatchewan, where, on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, he was awarded the Air Observer's Badge and promoted to the rank of sergeant. He was Commissioned in the rank of Pilot Officer on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1941, and promoted to Flying Officer on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1942. On the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1943 he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant. In continuation of his training, he was, on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1941, posted to No.1 Advanced Navigation School, Rivers Manitoba. On completion of the Course he proceeded to No. 31 (R.A.F.) operational Training Unit, Debert, Nova Scotia for a short period and then to Dorval, Montreal. On the 9<sup>th</sup> December he was posted to No.1 "Y" Depot, Halifax, Nova Scotia, for embarkation to the United Kingdom.

On arrival at No.3 Personnel Reception Centre, Bournemouth, Flight Lieutenant Benefield was posted to No.1 (Observer) Advanced Flying Unit, Wigtown, Wigtownshire, and then, on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1942, to No.13 Operational Training Unit, Hinton-in-the-Hedges, Northamptonshire. The following month he continued his Operational Training with the same unit at Bicester, Oxfordshire. In July he proceeded to No.25 Operational Training Unit, Finningley, Yorkshire, where he carried out air exercises as navigator on Anson and Wellington Bomber aircraft. He carried out similar exercises with the same unit at Birootes, also in

Yorkshire. On the 31<sup>st</sup> October he was posted to No. 1654 Conversion Unit, Wigsley, Lincolnshire, where he flew as navigator on Manchester and Lancaster bomber aircraft. In December he proceeded to No.50 Squadron, Skellingthorpe, Lincolnshire, from which base he flew as navigator on 34 operational flights over enemy territory. The targets on these raids included Berlin, Essen, Dusseldorf, Wilhelmshaven, Bremen, Nuremberg, Cologne, Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart, Duisburg, Dortmund in Germany, St. Nazaire, Lorient in France, Pilsen in Czechoslovakia, and Spezia in Italy. On the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1943, he was posted to No.17 Operational Training Unit, Silverstone, Northamptonshire, and then on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1944, to No.26 Operational Training Unit, Wing and Bedfordshire. In February he proceeded to No.9 Squadron, Bardney, Lincolnshire, and from this base carried out an additional ten raids. The targets included Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Berlin and Munich in Germany, Tours and Paris in France.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1943, Flight Lieutenant Benefield, then a Flying Officer, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The citation reads;

“Flying Officer Benefield has flown on operations against principal targets in Germany, and his navigation at all times has been exceptionally accurate and has been a material factor in successes obtained by his crew”

On the night of the 24/25 April 1944, Flight Lieutenant Benefield was navigator of a Lancaster Bomber that took off from Bardney airfield to attack a target in Munich. The aircraft failed to return to its base and all members of the crew, including F/Lt. Benefield, were reported missing. Subsequently the death of F/Lt. Benefield was officially presumed. The other R.N.Z.A.F. member of the crew was A/S/L B.M.Gilmour, D.F.C.

5/2/4118 AS2  
729 hours as Navigator.

Mr. Robert Benefield  
C/o Chainey Bros.  
Feilding.

This data was supplied by Archives New Zealand (Defence Forces), 10 November 2003.

*Clifton Francis Benefield and I are first cousins once removed.  
Compiled by:  
Gerald Thomas Benefield..*

## LANCASTER BOMBER



## PATHFINDERS

"The Finders would be followed by the Illuminators, who would drop sticks of flares directly across the aim point. Then would come the Primary Markers, to put TIs (Target Indicators) on the aim point itself. Backers-Up would continue to drop TIs at intervals, to give the Main Force an aiming point throughout the attack.

This form of visual marking was code-named Newhaven. When, due to poor visibility or broken cloud, the marking was carried out using H2S (H2S, a blind bombing aid which shows a radar picture of the ground), it became Parramatta, while skymarking was dubbed Wanganui".

Source; GREAT AIRCRAFT of WWII. Authors, Alfred Price and Mike Spick.

## LANCASTERS AT WAR

From the article "The Cathedral and I survived" by Fred Smooker.

Fred Smooker describes two types of bomb target identification systems that they used.

"The met. men told us there would be cumulo-nimbus clouds up to 20,000 feet over the target. We would not be worried by fighters, because they would be grounded. It was to be an all-Lancaster effort, 'Wanganui' type, bombing through ten-tenths cloud.

There were two types of bombing those days, 'Paramatta' and 'Wanganui'. For 'Paramatta' the Pathfinders laid coloured markers on the ground; red in the middle, surrounded by green, and bomb aimers aimed at the patchwork of red and green markers on the ground.

The 'Wanganui' type was used when the target was covered by cloud. The Pathfinders dropped first a white parachute flare which we had to track over and alter course for the target area. Next came a green flare, over which we had to track because it was the run-in to the target which was indicated by a final red flare. Using special settings on the bombsight, bomb aimers had to aim at this red flare. This method was said to be more accurate than visual ground bombing, and that we could obliterate one square mile of target area by such concentration. To me, this type of bombing was also more dangerous, because the Germans knew the height of cloud, and they knew the Lancasters' ceiling, hence all flak was concentrated accordingly.

**DURNBACH WAR CEMETERY  
BAVARIA, GERMANY**



<b>Name:</b>	<b>BENEFIELD, CLIFTON FRANCIS</b>
<b>Initials:</b>	<b>C F</b>
<b>Nationality:</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>
<b>Rank:</b>	<b>Flight Lieutenant (Nav.)</b>
<b>Regiment:</b>	<b>Royal New Zealand Air Force</b>
<b>Unit Text:</b>	<b>9 (R.A.F.) Sqdn.</b>
<b>Age:</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Date of Death:</b>	<b>25/04/1944</b>
<b>Service No:</b>	<b>402463</b>
<b>Awards:</b>	<b>DFC</b>
<b>Additional information:</b>	<b>Son of Robert John and Winifred Benefield, of Wanganui, Wellington, New Zealand.</b>
<b>Casualty Type:</b>	<b>Commonwealth War Dead</b>
<b>Grave/Memorial Reference:</b>	<b>9. K. 2.</b>
<b>Cemetery:</b>	<b>DURNBACH WAR CEMETERY</b>

**DURNBACH WAR CEMETERY**

