

## Hilton Chapple



**Charles Hilton Chapple**

23 March 1922 - 25 November 1943

421967 Flying Officer

Hilton was born at Grenfell and was educated at Greenethorpe Primary and Grenfell High Schools. After finishing school he worked on the family farm until 24 April, 1942 when he enlisted in the RAAF. He trained at Sale, Victoria, as well as Wagga Wagga, Cootamundra and Parkes. On completion of his training he was assigned to the Number 30 Beaufighter Squadron, and posted to Kiriwini Island, New Guinea.

At first light on 25 November, 1943, Flying Officer Chapple, Navigator/ Wireless Operator and Flying Officer Coats were attacking Japanese supply barges when their port motor was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Their plane was unable to gain sufficient altitude and crashed into the mountain where it lay for 52 years until 3 October, 1995 when the wreckage of the plane, the two airmen and their personal belongings were discovered in the jungle.

The Department of Defence did a wonderful job gathering the remains and organising the burial of Hilton and Percy together in one coffin with full Military Honours in the beautiful Bita Paka War Cemetery, Rabaul, 52 years to the day after they lost their lives.

Sadly both of Hilton's parents died not knowing if their son was killed in the crash, lost in the jungle, or taken prisoner.