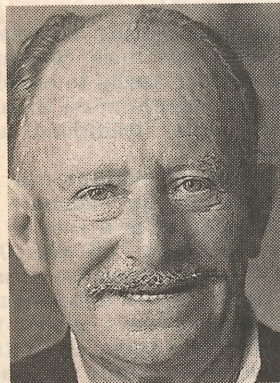


Death of man who was a wartime escaper from Holland

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By MARK BIRCH



CYRIL MORA

A MAN who parachuted from a stricken bomber into occupied Holland during World War II and was spirited to England by the Dutch Resistance died at Lepperton on Monday.

Cyril Michael Mora was 79.

On the night of April 26, 1943, Sergeant Mora was a radio navigator on a Stirling bomber of the RAF when the plane was over Holland on its 28th mission.

The aircraft was raked by machinegun fire from an enemy night-fighter and tipped, out of control, from the skies between Amsterdam and Zurich. The

Stirling, "C" for Charlie, crashed on to a farm paddock near the small town of Sassenheim.

Meanwhile, six of the crew of seven had parachuted from the plane; but Mr Mora was the only one who escaped. On landing, he crashed through a market-garden greenhouse and knocked at the door of a nearby house.

The Dutch family took him in, and the next day — dressed in civilian clothes — he cycled to Utrecht and was delivered to the Dutch underground and Anton Schrader, who was known as the Orange Pimpernel for his work in the Dutch Resistance.

Mr Mora and 10 other escapers

eventually crammed into a launch which, with only 15cm of freeboard, carried them down an inlet south of Rotterdam, past armed trawlers, over a minefield and out into the North Sea for a 16-hour journey to England.

At the war's end, back in New Zealand, Mr Mora married and moved from Christchurch to New Plymouth, where he worked as a watersider at Port Taranaki. He also ran the billiard parlour on Currie St.

The farm in Holland where the bomber had crashed was bought by Willem van Ryn, who dug up the wreckage. He travelled to New Zealand in 1988 and handed the plane's serial plate back to Mr

Mora, 45 years after the plane went down.

In 1989 Mr Mora returned to Holland for a reunion, and was given VIP treatment wherever he went. Among those who greeted him was Anton Schrader, then aged 72.

In 1992 Mr Schrader visited New Zealand and renewed his friendship with Mr Mora.

Mr Mora leaves his wife Margaret (Peg), sons Anton (New Plymouth), Graham (New Plymouth), David (Auckland), Paul (Auckland) and Gerard (Auckland), and daughters Margaret (New Plymouth), Mary (New Plymouth) and Bernadette (Lepperton).