

**Flt. Sgt. John Norman  
Barker 406341 RAAF**



John Barker was an Australian Wellington pilot who was killed along with the rest of his crew when their bomber crashed in the sea during a mining operation off the French Atlantic coast.

He was the pilot of Wellington BJ777, of No. 12 Squadron, one of 43 aircraft dropping mines off the French coast and the Frisian Islands on the night of 7/8 September 1942. Their aircraft was the only loss on the night; the cause was not established. They had taken off from RAF Binbrook at 1920 hours and were later reported to have been lost off the French port of La Rochelle in the Bay of Biscay.

John was born in Northcote, Melbourne, the 25-year-old son of Dr Gilbert Barker and Emma Barker of Perth. He had served in the Australian militia before the war, enlisting in the RAAF in November 1940. His flying training was undertaken in Western Australia before he was posted to England and eventually to 12 Squadron.

The others who died with him were the observer P/O Philip Hewitt, bomb-aimer P/O Stanley Howlett, wireless operator/air gunner Flt. Sgt. William McAlwane and rear gunner Sgt. Joseph Coyne. All five bodies were later recovered from the sea and are now buried in Pornic War Cemetery, near La Rochelle (grave ref. 1. AB. 12).

John's name can be found on IBCC panel 005.

Sources: Australian War Memorial/Aviation Safety Network/Bomber Command Losses 1942 by Bill Chorley.