FO Richard Kay Oliver 429124 RAAF



Richard was born on 31 December 1923 in Marrickville, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Claude Oliver and Ethel May Oliver nee Stewart.

Educated at Dulwich Hill Primary School and Canterbury Boys' High, Richard was employed as a clerk by W.D. & W.O. Wills Tobacco Company until he enlisted in the 1. Aust. Motor Division where he served for ten months until October 1942 when he transferred to the RAAF.

Richard was employed as a guard until March 1943 when he re-mustered as aircrew. Following basic aircrew training in Australia, in June 1943 Richard was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. Completing his flying training in October 1943 with the award of his Wings, Richard embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 14 (P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, 27 OTU RAF Lichfield, Staffordshire where, in September 1944, he was awarded his commission, 1654 HCU RAF Wigsley Nottinghamshire and 5 Lancaster Finishing School RAF Syerston, Newark, Nottinghamshire, in January 1945 Richard was posted to 463 Sqn at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire.

On 2/3 February 1945 Bomber Command was tasked with attacks on Karlsruhe, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, part of Bomber Command's final winter offensive against German transport and urban-industrial targets. The attack belonged to the same period as heavy raids on Ludwigshafen, Mainz and other Rhine cities, when the bomber force was supporting the wider collapse of German communications behind the front; however, night fighters were still active over south-western Germany.

A combined force of 261 aircraft, including seventeen 463 Sqn crews, was allocated to the op.

At 20:07 on the 2 February Richard and his crew departed RAF Waddington in Lancaster I ME298 (JO-B).

Whilst over the target at 14,000ft, Richard's aircraft was attacked by a night fighter, setting the port inner and wing on fire. Richard ordered the crew to bale out which was acknowledged by the whole crew; however, only the Navigator and Flight Engineer escaped and were taken as POW. The aircraft crashed in a wooded area 14 miles SE of Karlsruhe, killing five of the crew.

Also killed: WO John Johnson RAAF (AB); FS Allen Bernard Barrett RAAF (AG) FS Robert John Lyons RAAF (AG); FS William Albert Taylor RAAF (WOp)

Originally buried in Unterowisheim Civil Cemetery Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany, in October 1947 Richard was moved to Durnbach War Cemetery, Bayern, Germany.

Richard is commemorated on Wall Panel 80

Photo Source: naa.gov.au