

FO Thomas Henry William Baker 107286 RA

Thomas was born on 10 December 1915 in Stretford, Manchester, Lancashire, the son of Matthew Botham Baker and Edith May Baker nee Williams. In 1937 he married Elizabeth Montgomery Thomson in Manchester, Lancashire.

A butcher in civilian life, Thomas volunteered for aircrew duties and trained as a pilot. Commissioned in September 1941 on the award of his wings, Thomas arrived on 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk at the end of July 1942.

On 11 August 1942 Bomber Command were tasked with an op against Mainz, Rhineland-Palatinate Germany. This raid followed the Area Bombing Directive of 5 February 1942 which ordered RAF bombers to attack the German industrial workforce and the morale of the German populace through bombing German cities and their civilian inhabitants.

A combined force of 154 aircraft, with nine 75(NZ) Wellingtons, was allocated to the op. Three squadron crews failed to return.



Thomas, operating as the 2nd pilot, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell, Norfolk in Wellington III X3646 (AA). Whilst flying over Köln, Germany, Thomas's aircraft was hit by flak, severely wounding the aircraft Captain in the abdomen. Able to keep the aircraft on a westerly course, once they were over the Dutch Coast a descent to 2000ft was made and the order to bale out given.

Only the Rear Gunner was able to bale out before the aircraft crashed into the North Sea, killing the rest of the crew. He was rescued and became a PoW for the remainder of the war.

This was Thomas's 4th op and the first with this crew. Thomas had been on the squadron for less than two weeks.

Also Killed: Sqn Ldr Ronald Ernest Kimber IGSM (WOp/AG); PO George Edward Francis Bradey RNZAF (Pilot); FS Arden Ivan Ellis RCAF (Obs/BA); FS Cyril Vincent Green RNZAF (WOp/AG)

Thomas was the only crew member to be recovered from the sea, and is buried in Wilmslow Cemetery, Cheshire

Thomas is commemorated on Wall Panel 126

Photo Source: 75nzsquadron.wordpress.com