

PO Richard Stockdale Barker 421345 R

Richard, known as Dick, was born on 27 October 1915 in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, the son of Arthur Barker and Rebecca Barker nee Bailey. The family moved to New Zealand when Richard was a child and they settled in Auckland.

Educated at Blockhouse Bay School, Auckland and Seddon Memorial Technical College, Richard was employed as a bricklayer in his father's business when, in June 1941 he volunteered for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in February 1942, Richard was employed on ground duties until September when he commenced his aircrew training. In March 1943 Richard was awarded his Wings and he embarked for the UK in May.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire where he converted to multi engine/multi crew ops, 1651 HCU RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire for conversion to the Stirling, in May 1944 Richard completed Lancaster conversion at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk before he was posted the same month to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire.



On 25/26 August 1944 Bomber Command was tasked with a raid on the Opel Motor Factory, Russelsheim which was manufacturing airplane parts. A combined force of 412 aircraft, including twenty eight 75 (NZ) crews, were allocated to the op.

At 20:23 on 25 August Richard and his crew departed RAF Mepal in Lancaster I LL866 (AA-S "Swingtime").

When beginning the bombing run, it is believed Richard's aircraft was involved in a mid-air collision with 419 Sqn Lancaster KB775 (VR-Y) and his Lancaster crashed West of Untereisesheim, about 1 mile North of Heilbronn, Baden-Württemberg, killing all on board. This was Richard's 23rd op.

Also killed: WO Raymond Firth RNZAF (WOp); FS John Farnworth (Nav); FS William George Norton RNZAF (AB); Sgt Henry George Baker (AG); Sgt Gordon Baden Jones (FE); Sgt Clifford George Nash (AG)

Originally buried in Untereisesheim Civilian Cemetery Baden-Württemberg, in October 1947 Richard was moved to Durnbach War Cemetery, Bayern, Germany

Richard is commemorated on Wall Panel 127

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com