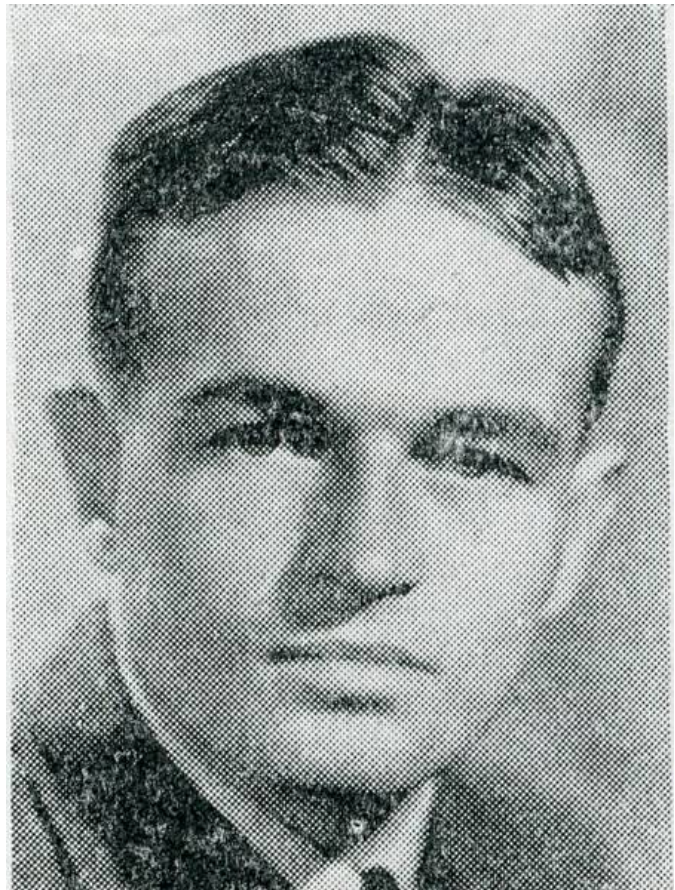


Flt Lt Richard Trevor Blewett 403118 RNZAF

Richard was born on 28 April 1917 in Hawke's Bay, Napier, New Zealand, the son of Ernest Richard Blewett and Lilian May Blewett nee Ryder.

Educated at Nelson College, Richard passed his University Entrance Examination in 1933 and was completing his Accountancy professional examinations whilst working in the clerical department of Auckland Customs when he applied for a Short Service Commission in the RNZAF in July 1939.

Richard was called up in September 1940 and completed his flying training in New Plymouth and Ohakea, North Island. Richard received his pilot wings in January 1941 and was commissioned in March 1941, travelling to the UK that month. After further training, in August 1941 Richard joined 110 Sqn at RAF Wattisham, Suffolk.



In December 1941 110 Sqn was detached from RAF Wattisham to RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, Scotland in preparation for "Operation Archery", a large combined land, sea and air attack by British and Norwegian forces on the German bases on the islands of Vaagso and Maaloy off the Norwegian coast.

On 27 December 1941, six squadron aircraft were tasked with attacking enemy shipping off the Norwegian Coast between Obrestad and Flekke Fjord with the intention of drawing off German fighters from the Commando raid.

At 09:35 Richard and his crew departed RAF Lossiemouth in Blenheim IV Z7317 (VE). A convoy was found and 4 of the 6 aircraft broke away from the leader near Eigeroe to attack the ships 4 miles south. Only 2 Blenheims were seen to leave the convoy and of those, one made a bad landing in the sea after being attacked by an enemy fighter and the other made a good landing in the sea with its port engine on fire. Richard and his crew were posted as missing and the Red Cross confirmed his death when his body was recovered for burial in Norway.

The outcome of the operation at the time was regarded as a success with the destruction of facilities for manufacture of explosives, coastal defences, power station, nine merchant ships and four Heinkel aircraft. Although overall Allied casualties were considered relatively light, for Bomber and Coastal Commands it proved a costly exercise with the loss of eleven aircraft and thirty-one airmen killed. 110 Sqn lost 4 aircraft and crews.

Also killed : PO Matthew Murphy (Observer); Sgt James Logan Bell (WOp/AG)

Richard is buried in Sola Churchyard, Norway

Richard is commemorated on Wall Panel 132

Photo Source: www.aucklandmuseum.com