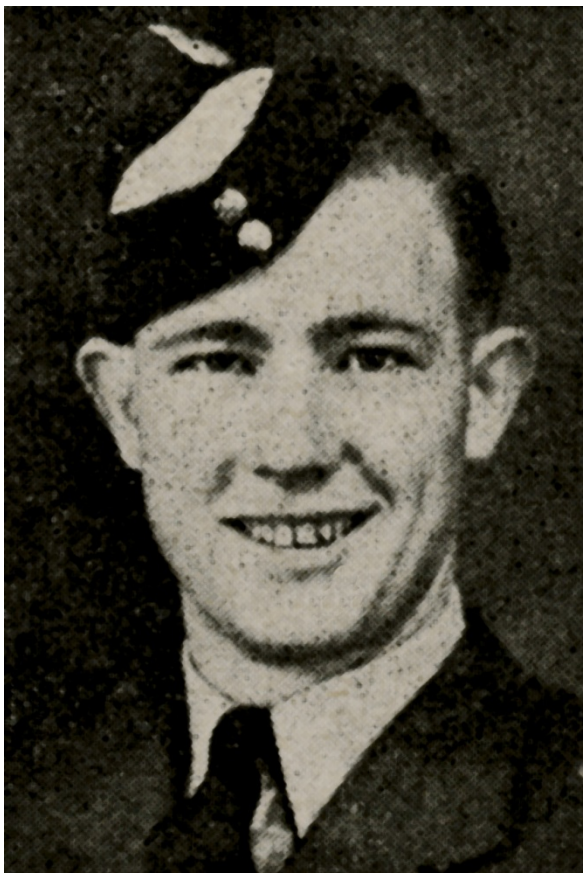
Sgt Stanley Winston Riddler 424999 RNZAF



Stanley was born on 25 January 1921 in Wanganui, New Zealand, the son of Richard Samuel Riddler and Doris Florence Riddler nee Gurney.

Educated at Hutt Valley Technical College, Stanley was employed as a carrier by George King & Co., Petone when, in June 1941, he volunteered for aircrew duties in the RNZAF.

Called up in May 1942, following basic training in New Zealand, in June Stanley was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In April 1943 Stanley was awarded his Air Gunner badge and immediately embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire where he qualified on the Wellington, and 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk for conversion to the Stirling, in September 1943 Stanley was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire.

On 3/4 October 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Kassel, Hasse, Germany, an industrial and communications centre home to vital war industries including the the Henschel & Sohn factory building tanks, and the Gerhard Fieseler Werke, producing Bf109 and Bf190 aircraft. A combined force of 547 aircraft, including fifteen 75(NZ) Sqn crews, were allocated to the op.

At 19:05 on 3 October Stanley, operating as the Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire, in Stirling III LK378 (JN-O).

Whilst in the target area, Stanley's aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire, damaging the starboard elevator and tailplane, and part of the rear turret was shot away. The aircraft returned to the UK without Stanley, and made a successful emergency landing at RAF Wing, Buckinghamshire. It is unknown whether Stanley was able to bale out as the escape hatch was found to be open, or whether he fell from the aircraft. Stanley's body was found on 19 October 1943. This was Stanley's 3rd op.

Originally buried in Germerode Civil Cemetery, Hesse, Germany, in May 1947 Stanley was moved to the Hanover War Cemetery, Neidersachsen, Germany.

Stanley is commemorated on Wall Panel 232

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum.com