

FS Frederick William Thorstensen 414529 RNZAF

Frederick was born on 2 February 1917 in Dannevirke, Taranaki, New Zealand, the son of Frederick William Thorstensen and Annie Thorstensen nee Laurie.

Educated at Dannevirke High School, Frederick was employed as a truck driver in Dannevirke when, in July 1940, he volunteered for service in the RNZAF.

Called up in August 1941, following basic training in New Zealand, in October 1941 Frederick was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme. In October 1942 Frederick was awarded his WOp/AG badge and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at No 1(O) Advanced Flying Unit, RAF Wigtown, Dumfries, Scotland, 11 OTU RAF Westcott, Buckinghamshire and Stirling conversion at 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk, in June 1943 Frederick was posted to 75 (NZ) Sqn at RAF Newmarket, Suffolk, moving to RAF Mepal, Cambridgeshire later in the month.

On 23/24 August 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Berlin, Germany. A combined force of 727 aircraft was allocated to the op, including twenty-three 75(NZ) crews.

At 21:04 on 23 August Frederick, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Mepal in Stirling III BF465 (JN-K).

In the early hours of 24 August, Frederick's aircraft crashed 3 miles south of Lanke, near Bernau, Germany, 4 miles SW Biesenthal, Brandenburg, NNE of Berlin, killing six of the seven-man crew. The Mid Upper Gunner was able to bale out and was taken as a POW. This was Frederick's 7th op.

Also killed: PO Mervin Arthur Ericksen RNZAF (Nav); PO Andrew Rankin (Pilot); PO James Third RNZAF (AB); Sgt Frank Morris Freeman (FE); Sgt George Ogden (AG)

Originally buried in Friedhof Biesenthal, Brandenburg, Germany, in November 1946 Frederick was moved to the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery, Germany.

Frederick is commemorated on Wall Panel 254

Photo Source: aucklandmuseum

