

WO2 Robert Ernest Tod DFM R/91742 RCAF

Robert (on the left) was born on 19 February 1920 in St Vital, Manitoba, Canada, the twin son of Alexander Tod and Mary Edith Tod nee Hulton. Educated at Norberry Public School and Glenlawn Collegiate, Robert was employed as a gold miner when, in July 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RCAF. Called up in January 1941, Robert completed his aircrew training in Canada in January 1942 with the award of his Air Gunner badge and embarked for the UK. Robert completed his trade training in the UK in March 1942 with the award of his WOp/AG badge and he progressed to advanced aircraft training. Following training at 14 OTU RAF Cottesmore, Rutland, in November 1942 Robert was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk. When the



squadron changed from the Wellington to the Stirling, Robert moved with the squadron to 1657 HCU RAF Stradishall, Suffolk for conversion training, before returning to RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire.

On 10 April whilst on an op to Frankfurt, Richard's aircraft was hit over the target by flak and further engaged in running battles with fighters whilst on return. This additional flight time caused the aircraft to run short of fuel over the English Channel and the aircraft had to ditch 3 miles off Shoreham-by-the-Sea, Sussex. The wireless procedure had been perfect, and Spitfires escorted it over the French coast, and a Walrus Flying Boat was waiting for it to crash land. The crew completed the dingy drill perfectly after an immaculate ditching. Unfortunately, the Walrus collided with the dinghy knocking all the crew in the water; however, all were subsequently rescued safely and were soon back on ops. For his actions, on 7 May 1943 Robert was awarded the DFM. His citation read:

"This airman was the Wireless Operator of an aircraft which was damaged by anti-aircraft fire during an operational flight over enemy territory. The aircraft gradually lost height and the pilot was eventually compelled to bring it down on the sea. Meanwhile Sgt Tod coolly worked his apparatus, maintaining contact with base. His excellent work enabled the aircraft to be continuously plotted from the ground and plans for rescue to be made. The entire crew of the aircraft were picked up within 15 minutes of coming down on the sea. This airman displayed great coolness and unswerving devotion to duty throughout".

On 22/23 June 1943 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Mulheim, a major centre of manufacturing in the Ruhr industrial region. A combined force of 557 aircraft were allocated to the task, including fifteen 75(NZ) Sqn crews. Four crews failed to return. At 23:48 on the 22 June 1943 Robert, operating as the Wireless Operator, and the crew departed RAF Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, in Stirling III EH889 (AA-Z). At 02:26 on 23 June, Robert's aircraft was intercepted by FW Heinz Vinke flying a Bf110 of II./NJG 1. The aircraft crashed into the IJsselmeer, 5 miles E of Oosterland, Zeeland, killing all on board. Post war analysis confirmed this was a very successful attack, with 64% of the town reported as destroyed.

Also killed: Flt Lt Thomas Fraser McCrorie (Pilot); PO William Stuckey MiD (Nav); WO2 Richard Douglas Tod RCAF (WOp/AG); FS James Leonard Richards RNZAF (AB); Sgt Eric Grainger (FE); Sgt Raymond Anthony Kennedy (AG)

On 6 July Robert was washed ashore near Medemblik, and is buried in Medemblik General Cemetery, Noord-Holland, Netherlands.

Robert is commemorated, together with his twin brother, on Wall Panel 254

In 1947 Tod Lake, East of Reindeer Lake, Manitoba, was named after the twins.

Photo Source: IBCC