Flt Lt Richard Joseph Audet J/20136 DFC* RCAF



Richard, known as Dick, was born on 13 March 1922 in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, the youngest child of Paul Audet and Ediwisca Audet nee Marcoux. In July 1944 he married Iris Christina Gibbins in Northampton, Northamptonshire, UK.

Educated at Coutts, Alberta, Richard was employed as a stenographer and bookkeeper for High River Flying Training School when, in August 1941, he enlisted in the RCAF. In October 1942 Richard completed his pilot training in Canada with the award of his Wings, was granted a commission and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 17 (P) Advanced Flying Unit RAF Calveley, Cheshire and 53 OTU RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincolnshire, in July 1943 Richard was posted to 421 Sqn at RAF Kenley, London. Postings to 1601 and 1623 Anti-Aircraft Cooperation Flight, and 691 Sqn followed, until Richard was posted for additional training at No.1 Tactical Evaluation Unit, and 53 OTU, RAF Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincolnshire in July. In September 1944 Richard was posted to 411 Sqn at B68 Le Culot, Belgium. By December 1944 the squadron was operating from B88 Heesch, North Brabant, Netherlands.

On 16 February 1945 Richard was awarded the DFC. His citation read:

"*This officer has proved himself to be a highly skilled and courageous fighter. In December 1944, the squadron was involved in an engagement against 12 enemy fighters in the Rheine/Osnabruck area. In a most spirited action, FO Audet achieved outstanding success by destroying 5 enemy aircraft. This feat is a splendid tribute to his brilliant shooting, great gallantry and tenacity".*

On 3 March 1945 411 Sqn was tasked to carry out an armed reconnaissance and fighter sweep in the Coesfeld area, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. At 15:55 in a section of 12, Richard departed B88 in Spitfire LF IXe MK950 (DB-G).

At 16:55 Richard, leading a section of three, carried out a strafing attack against railway trains near Munster, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. During the attack Richard's Spitfire was hit by flak, poured glycol, burst into flames and was seen to crash into woods from 500 feet. Richard was not seen to bale out and no R/T message was heard.

On 9 March 1945 Richard was posthumously awarded a Bar to his DFC. His citation read:

"This officer is an outstanding fighter. Since his first engagement, towards the end of December 1944, he has completed numerous sorties during which he has destroyed a further 6 enemy aircraft, bring his total victories to 11; Flt Lt Audet has also most effectively attacked numerous locomotives and mechanical vehicles. His skill and daring have won the greatest praise".

Richard has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede memorial, Surrey

Richard is commemorated on Wall Panel – Not Yet Erected

Audet Lake in Wood Buffalo, 67 miles NNE of Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada is named in his honour.

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca