World War II Casualties

5-24-1945

Richard Strand

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Richard Strand Believed Dead; Long Missing

The war department has informed Mr. and Mrs. James H. Strand, Houston, Tex., formerly of Kearney, that their son, Tech. Sgt. Richard J. Strand, who has been missing in action over Tokyo since May 24, 1945, must now be presumed to be dead.

Sergeant Strand was born at St. Thomas, N. D., and lived there during his boyhood. He graduated from A. O. Thomas high school and attended K. S.-T.C. one year. He completed his sophomore year at Northern Illinois college at Chicago.

In July, 1942 he enlisted at Atlanta, Ga., and received his training at Scott Field, Missouri, and Morris field, Florida, after which he was assigned to the 417th bomber squadron as radar operator. In September, 1942, he left Mitchell field, New York, for the Caribbean where he served 18 months with that squadron on air patrol of the shipping lanes in that area.

Returning to the United States in April, 1944, he was given specialized training at Alamogordo, N. M. and Great Bend, Kas. In October, 1944 he was assigned to the 486th bomb group of the 373rd squadron under the 21st bomber command at Kearney. From there he flew to Saipan and this group became the first land based squadron to raid Tokyo. Sergeant Strand was a crew member of the famed B-29, Lasie Come Home, which on her last mission was airbourne nearly 19 hours and returned so badly damaged that she was condemned to salvage.

From information released by the war department, 25 major missions over the Japanese mainland were completed by Sergeant Strand. On his 26th, which was a night mission, which was a night mission, this plane was the pathfinder for other aircraft to follow and it was thought the bomber was hit while over the target as enemy opposition was heavy and the bomber failed to return.

When the American flag was raised over the American embassy in Tokyo it was observed that part of the building had been burned by the incendiary raid of May 24 in which Sergeant Strand's bomber was lost.

He was awarded the distinguished flying cross, air medal and four oak leaf clusters.