

## Johnston Peak, Mt Richmond Forest Park

### WILD FILE

**Access** 5km north of Renwick, take Northbank Rd for 33km. Drive up Top Valley Rd. A 4WD can ford the stream onto Jacksons Creek Road to the trackhead, saving an hour's walk

**Grade** Moderate

**Time** Car park to Richmond Saddle Hut, 4hr; Hut to Mt Richmond, 1hr; Mt Richmond to Johnston Peak, 1.5hr

**Distance** 9.26km to Johnston Peak

**Accommodation** Richmond Saddle Hut (\$5, 8 bunks)

**Total ascent** 1534m

**Map** BQ26

### DESCRIPTION

In the New Zealand backcountry there have been several notorious plane crashes. Sometimes the wreckage was removed; sometimes it is still there waiting for an adventurous trampler to discover and then reflect on how the aircraft came to grief. Such is the case on Johnston Peak (1647m), where the remains of ZK-AFE, the *Kereru*, lie.

The trip begins by fording Top Valley Stream and then an ascent of the logging road for an hour to reach the top car park. Next, tackle the unforgivingly steep spur, the track passing through beech forest and eventually evening out along a knife-edge ridgeline towards Richmond Saddle Hut.

From the hut, the bushline is reached in short order. Make your way across the shattered scree and teetering boulders. You may spot vegetable sheep and penwiper plants. From the hut it takes about an hour to reach the summit of Mt Richmond (1760m).

On a clear day, Mt Richmond provides a spectacular platform to gaze at the world below. To the north, Taranaki can be seen, while to the south, is Tapuae-o-Uenuku.

Descend the rocky jumble on the east side of Mt Richmond, weaving through rocky ramparts to the prominent saddle between Mt Richmond and Johnston Peak.

From here, strike out towards Johnston Peak. To attain the summit will mean leaving the poled route, and scrambling around a number of rocky tors.

From the summit, you can begin your search for the remains for the *Kereru*. They can be found about 700m from the summit and between the 1500m contour and the bushline (the exact coordinates are: 41°28.340'S, 173°24.549'E).

There is a plaque cemented into a rock wall, right at the point of impact. Tiny fragments of the nose-cone are still embedded into the rock. Several metres below are the pilot's foot pedals; below this is a propeller; then the landing gear; then a section of the fuselage, contorted and melted by the fire caused by the crash.

The *Kereru* crashed on May 7, 1942, killing five people.

### Elevation Profile



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**Disclaimer:** While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, *Wilderness* does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. The GPX file in these cases are a 'best guess' of the route only. Users should use a combination of GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find the best possible route. Memory Map shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts. Red or blue routes are those drawn by Wilderness.

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