

Sgt. Charles Derek Brown 1581033 RAFVR

Charles was born on 23 August 1922 in Warwick, Warwickshire, the eldest son of Charles Harry and Agatha Gertrude Brown (née Roberts). In October 1942 he married Doris Ellen Walsby in London.

Educated at Leamington College, Charles was employed as a process clerk with Messrs Lockheed Hydraulic Brake Company before enlisting in the RAF in June 1942.

Trained as a wireless operator/air gunner, Charles was posted to 101 Squadron at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire, from No. 10 OTU at the beginning of November 1943.

On the night of 2/3 January 1944, 383 aircraft were dispatched for a second consecutive night attack on Berlin, with twelve 101 Squadron Lancasters participating in the raid. The force flew outbound via Holland and South of Bremen and, with no diversionary force to split their task, the German night fighters were flying in considerable numbers around Berlin.

Shortly before midnight on 2 January Charles, operating as the special duties operator, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster III DV269 (SR-M). They successfully reached and bombed the target, although the raid was subsequently considered ineffectual, and they headed for home.

At 0258 hours the aircraft was engaged by a night fighter flown by Oblt. Albert Walter of I./NJG6, flying a Bf110 from Mainz-Finthen an air base 320 miles SW of Berlin. The bomber crashed at Michendorff, 5 miles S of Potsdam, Brandenburg, Germany, killing 4 of the 8 crew, the survivors being taken as POWs.

Also killed were the pilot F/L Alan Lazenby DFC, mid-upper gunner Sgt. Gerald Beckett RCAF and rear gunner Sgt. Donald Stephens. The survivors were the flight engineer Sgt. Charles Lindsay, navigator F/O Weston Craig, air bomber F/O James McClure RCAF and wireless operator Sgt. Albert Walton.

Originally buried in the Deutch Bork Friedhof Cemetery, Luckenwalde, Germany, in April 1947 Charles was moved to the Berlin 1939-45 War Cemetery, Germany.

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel 13.

Photo Source: Leamington Spa Courier

