

**Flt. Lt. Albert Chambers DFC and Bar
113350 RAFVR**

Wireless operator Albert Chambers was No. 97 (Straits Settlement) Squadron's Signals Leader who was killed along with the other seven members of his highly-decorated Lancaster crew just 86 minutes before the D-Day landings began.

His aircraft was shot down at 0504 hours by a Fw190 near Carentan, 18 miles from their target, (a German gun battery at St Pierre du Mont) close to Omaha beach where American soldiers were to land at 0630 hours on 6 June 1944.

Albert's Lancaster, ND739 OF-Z, and his crew were listed as 'loss without trace' until the wreckage and personal items from the crew were found and recovered by a team of British aviation archaeologists in 2012. The bodies of the crew were never discovered and all are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 201).



97 Squadron played a key part in the plan to nullify German defences as the landing craft arrived on the Normandy beaches. Albert's squadron CO and pilot, W/C 'Jimmy' Carter, chose to lead 97's element, applauding at the briefing and telling aircrew: 'Thank God I'm still on ops and not at an OTU!'

His aircraft took off from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire at 0256 hours on 6 June, flying over the assembling invasion fleet. Just over 2 hours later the controller picked up a signal from his aircraft which suddenly stopped, and it is believed ND739 was attacked by one of a number of Fw190s which had been scrambled.

Albert was the 23-year-old son of Albert and Mary Chambers. He had married his wife, Vera, in October 1943 and lived in the Derby suburb of Chaddesden. He flew his first tour of operations on Stirlings with No. 7 Squadron at Oakington in Cambridgeshire, being awarded his DFC in September 1942. After a period spent instructing, he returned to operations with 97 Squadron and was appointed Signals Leader. The Bar to his DFC was awarded shortly before his death. He was killed after completing some 58 operations.

The others who died were W/C Edward Carter DFC, navigator Flt. Lt. Ronald Conley DFC RAAF, flight engineer P/O Guy Dunning DFM, bomb-aimer Flt. Lt. Herbert Rieger RCAF, second bomb-aimer F/O Henry Jeffery DFM, mid-upper gunner P/O Frank Watson DFM and rear gunner and squadron Gunnery Leader Sqn. Ldr. Martin Bryan-Smith DFC and Bar MiD.

Albert's name can be found on panel 018.

Sources: RAF Pathfinders Archive/97 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1944 by Bill Chorley.