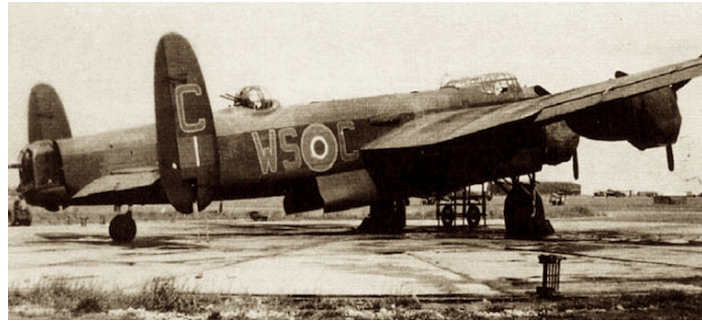


**Sgt. John Marcel
Charlier 1457348
RAFVR**

John Charlier was a Lancaster navigator who was killed along with his crew on their first operation.



His aircraft was one of 33 Bomber Command aircraft lost in an attack on the southern German city of Schweinfurt on the night of 24/25 February 1944, part of the RAF/USAAF 'Big Week' assault on Nazi targets.

John and his crew had only been with 9 Squadron at Bardney for a few days, after leaving No. 1654 Heavy Conversion Unit, before their name came on the Battle Order for the attack.

They were to be part of Bomber Command's first wave of attackers, the second wave to take off two hours later. It was the first wave that suffered the highest casualties and John's aircraft, Lancaster LM433 WS-H, was believed to have been shot down by a Do217 night fighter, crashing in the small town of Tiefenbronn, a few miles south-east of Pforzheim. The wreckage landed close to houses and a number of people from the town, including a few children, were later believed to have been killed by delayed action bombs exploding.

John was the adopted son of Lena Jennings and came from the village of Ben Rhydding, near Ilkley in West Yorkshire. He is remembered on the Ilkley War Memorial.

The crew were all initially buried in Tiefenbronn Churchyard and later reinterred in Durnbach War Cemetery. The others who died were the pilot P/O George Denson, flight engineer Sgt. Colin Todd, bomb-aimer Sgt. David Marshall, wireless operator/air gunner Sgt. Herbert Masters, mid-upper gunner P/O Stephan Loftson RCAF and rear gunner Sgt. Leonard Parker.

John's name can be found on panel 019.

Sources: Bombers First and Last by Gordon Thorburn/9 Squadron/Bomber Command War Diaries by Martin Middlebrook.