

Sgt Charles Septimus Aliband Graves 1817484 RAFVR

Charles was born on 26 September 1913 in Wilverton, Warwickshire, the only son of Charles Thomas Graves and Florence Annie Graves nee Aliband. In 1939 he married Doreen P Crane in Warwick, Warwickshire.

Educated at Leamington College, Warwickshire, before joining the RAF and training as a WOp/AG, Charles was employed as a Costing Clerk in the local Motor Works, and volunteered as an ARP Ambulance Driver.

In April 1944 Charles was posted from RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire, designated for Special Duties when required, but also as a WOp/AG.

On 24 June 1944, twenty 101 Sqn Lancasters joined a force of 321 aircraft targeting the flying bomb sites. The squadron target was the V1 site near Les Hayons, Northern France.

At 15:44 Charles, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire in Lancaster I LL772 (SR-R).

Near Dieppe, soon after crossing the French Coast whilst en route to the target, the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft flak and Charles was mortally wounded by shrapnel. Unaware that Charles had been hit, the crew continued to bomb its objective and commenced the return to base.

On learning of Charles's condition, the Captain diverted to the first available airfield in England - RAF Selsey, Sussex. At 18:12 the aircraft landed, but unfortunately it was too late, and the body of Charles was removed before the crew returned to RAF Ludford Magna. Despite the flak damage, the aircraft was repaired and operational in 3 days.

Charles was the only casualty of the op.

Charles is buried in St James Churchyard, Southam, Warwickshire

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel 42