

PO Chester Owen Powell J/90765 RCAF

Chester was born on 13 January 1911 in Brantford, Ontario, Canada, the son of Thomas Julius Powell and Mary Elizabeth Powell nee Williams. In August 1937 he married Margaret Mary Goodall in Brantford, Ontario. They had one daughter.

Educated at Ryerson School and Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School, Ontario, Chester was employed as a salesman by the Jackson Bread Company when, in October 1942, he applied for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in November 1942, Chester completed his training in Canada in September 1943 with the award of his Air Gunner badge, and embarked for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at 30 OTU RAF Hixon, Staffordshire and conversion to the Lancaster at RAF Lindholme, Yorkshire, in May 1944 Chester was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire. On 14 August 1944 Chester was granted a commission.

On 25/26 August 1944 Bomber Command was tasked with three major raids to Russelsheim, Rhein-Main, Germany, Darmstadt, near Frankfurt, Germany and Brest, France. A combined total of 1311 sorties was achieved, a new record for Bomber Command. Ten 101 Sqn crews were allocated to the op, with two crews failing to return.

At 20:35 on 25 August Chester, operating as the Mid Upper Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Ludford Magna in Lancaster I ME857 (SR-C), tasked with ABC duties to Russelsheim.

Chester's aircraft was intercepted by Lt Josef Forster of 8./NJG 2 flying a JU88 from Volkel Airfield, Netherlands, and crashed in a marsh 1 mile from Boulton, 20 miles NW of Verdun, killing seven of the nine man crew. The Rear Gunner baled out and evaded, the Air Bomber baled out and was taken as POW.

Also killed: Flt Lt John Edward Porter RCAF (Pilot); FO David Richard Jones RCAF (Nav); FO Basil Laird Purkis (Pilot); Sgt Rowland Theodore Hill (WOp/AG/SDO); Sgt John Spencer Kinsey (FE); Sgt William George Nisbett (WOp)

Chester is buried in Boulton-Aux-Bois Communal Cemetery, Ardennes, France

Chester is commemorated on Wall Panel 86

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

