

FS Charles Howard Cobbett R/54295 RCAF

Charles was born on 29 January 1921 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the son of British born Arthur William Cobbett and Catherine Maria Ann Cobbett nee Dunstan.

Educated at Ottawa Technical High School, Charles was employed as an office worker in the Office of the Secretary of Trade and Commerce Department when, in June 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in August 1940, Charles completed his training in Canada, and in May 1941 was awarded his WOp/AG badge.

Embarking for the UK in July 1941, after completing advanced training at 22 OTU RAF Wellesbourne Mountford, Warwickshire, in June 1942 Charles was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Oakington, Cambridgeshire. In early August 1942 the squadron moved to RAF Stradishall, Suffolk.

On 17/18 August 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against Osnabrück, Germany. A combined force of 139 aircraft, including twelve from 101 Sqn were despatched. Two squadron aircraft failed to return.

At 21:48 on 17 August 1942 Charles, operating as the Front Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Stradishall in Wellington III BJ844 (SR).

At 02:35 on 18 August whilst on the homeward leg, Charles's aircraft was intercepted over the North Sea, 10km NW of Vlieland, by Major Alfred Helm flying a Do215 of the II./NJG 2 from Leeuwarden Airfield. Severely damaged, at 02:44 on 18 August a distress signal was sent from the aircraft stating the intention to make a ditching in the North Sea off the English Coast. On impact with the water, the aircraft disintegrated and sank quickly. Air Sea Rescue was immediately despatched to the scene.

Four crew members were rescued and, despite an extensive search, Charles was not found and was later presumed drowned. This was Charles's 23rd op.

Charles has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel 146

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

