

Cpl Charles P Kramarewicz 11019157 Purple Heart USAAF

Charles was born in 1920 in Norwich, New London, Connecticut, USA, the son of Paul Kramarewicz and Stefania Kramarewicz nee Wroblewska. Both of his parents were born in Poland.

Charles was employed as a Loom Fixer in a textile factory before he enlisted in the Air Corps in January 1941 in New London, Connecticut. He trained as an Air Gunner before transferring to England in May 1942.

On 28 June 1942, orders came from the USA that the USAAF would begin combat operations on 4 July 1942, Independence Day. Crews from the 15th Bomb Squadron, that had arrived in the UK earlier in the year and were attached to 226 Sqn for training, were chosen for this joint mission. The importance of this first mission was evident with the visit of General Eisenhower to RAF Swanton Morley two days before the attack.

On 4 July 1942, a mixed force of 12 Bostons, in four three-plane formations, were tasked with an attack against four airfields in German-occupied Holland - De Kooy, Bergen, Valkenburg and Haamstede. At 07:14, Charles, the Dorsal Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Swanton Morley, Norfolk in Boston III AL741 (MQ-V), heading for Bergen.

At 08:02 the Bostons arrived at the airfield. They had difficulties in identifying the proper objective, causing the formation to attack at 100ft in line astern, starting fires in hangars located on the north side of the airfield. Charles's plane was hit by flak right after bombing and crashed on the airfield, killing all on board.

American and British reporters gave the mission a lot of attention, but the low-level, daylight raid was not a success. German anti-aircraft gunners, apparently warned of the approaching attackers by a ship off the coast, mounted a vicious opposition. The experienced crews of 226 Sqn agreed the flak was the worst they had ever seen.

Also Killed: Lt William George Lynn (Pilot); Lt Boyd Sutcliffe Grant (Observer); Sgt William Ennis Murphy (Air Gunner)

Charles is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial, Margraten, Holland

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel 195