FO Charles Curtis Merril McCann J/9780 R



Charles was born on 4 February 1910 in Wallace, Nova Scotia, Canada, the son of Arthur Wellesley McCann and Mary Jane McCann nee Stewart.

Educated at Wallace Public School, Cumberland County Academy and Acadia University, Nova Scotia where he gained a B.A., Charles was employed as a high school teacher by Pugwash Education Board, Nova Scotia when, in August 1940, he applied for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in February 1941, Charles completed his training in Canada in December 1941 with the award of his Observer badge. Following advanced navigational training at RCAF Pennfield Ridge, New Brunswick, in January 1942 Charles was granted a commission and embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 23 OTU RAF Pershore, Worcestershire where he converted to multi crew/ multi engine ops, in July 1942 Charles was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Marham, Norfolk where he converted to the Stirling, and the squadron moved to RAF Downham Market, Norfolk the same month.

On 17/18 December 1942 Bomber Command was tasked with a minor op against Fallersleben, Lower Saxony, Germany, home of the Opel Works. A combined force of 22 aircraft, including ten 218 Sqn crews, were allocated to the op. This type of limited op proved to be a costly failure. Eight crews were lost, and only three aircraft successfully bombed the target.

At 17:32 on 17 December 1942 Charles, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Downham Market, Norfolk, in Stirling I W7614 (HA-J)

At 20:36 Charles's aircraft was coned by searchlights and hit by flak of the 1.-3./schwere Flak-Abteilung 801 (o), schwere Flak-Abteilung 619 and Alarmzug Langenhagen airfield. The aircraft crashed West of Kaltenweide, Langenhagen, Niedersachsen, Germany, killing Charles and two other crew members. Four of the crew managed to bale out.

Also killed: WO2 Joseph B Nault RCAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Michael William Lavelle (FE)

Originally buried in Limmer Civil Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany, in December 1946 Charles was moved to the Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel 207

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca