

Sgt Charles Clinton Topping R/10199 RCAF

Charles was born on 10 January 1919 in Marysville, Ontario, Canada, the son of James Topping and Edith Grace Topping nee Campbell.

Educated at Marysville Public School and Deseronto High, Ontario, Charles was employed as a farm labourer before he volunteered for service in the RCAF in July 1939. Originally serving as a General Duties airmen, in August 1940 Charles re-mustered as aircrew and commenced WOp/AG training in Canada.

Charles received his Wireless Operator badge in December 1940 and, following Air Gunner training he qualified for his WOp/AG badge in January 1941. Travelling to the UK in March 1941, after advanced training Charles was posted in July 1941 to 226 Sqn at RAF Wattisham, Suffolk.

On 26 August 1941 six crews from 226 Sqn were tasked with anti-shipping ops in BEATS 9 & 10.

At 11:54 Charles, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Wattisham in Blenheim IV Z7305 (MQ-T). When half a mile west of Ijmuiden on the Dutch coast, flying at 50 feet, they attacked a convoy of 12 M/Vs with an escort of 6 Flak ships. Intense light Flak was encountered from the ships and intermittent heavy anti-aircraft fire from the Shore Batteries. After completing their bombing run, Charles's Blenheim was hit by flak from Hafenschutzboot 859 and at 14:27 was seen to belly flop in the sea, 15km WSW of Den Helder with the right engine on fire. There were no survivors.

Also killed : Sgt Stanley Burdon (Observer); Sgt Gilbert Vincent Smith (Pilot)

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

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel 255

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca

