Flt Lt Charles Bindon Carter DFC DFM 132348 RAFVR



Charles was born on 3 September 1919 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the eldest son of Charles Stafford Carter and Frances Grace Stanley Carter nee Price, husband of Helena Herdman nee Johnston. Charles joined the RAF in 1940 and served with 88 Sqn and 107 Sqn as an Air Gunner. On 14 August 1942 whilst serving with 88 Sqn, Charles was awarded the DFM. His citation read:

"In July 1942, Sgt Carter was the AG of an aircraft detailed to attack a target near Lille..... During the run up, Sgt Carter silenced one enemy gun position but the aircraft was repeatedly hit by light anti-aircraft fire. A cannon shell entered the gunner's cockpit, wounded Sgt Carter in the right hand and arm, exploded a verey cartridge and set some ammunition on fire. Despite his wounds, Sgt Carter continued to engage the enemy, delivering effective fire at the enemy's gun positions. When the aircraft flew clear of the fire zone, Sgt Carter extinguished the fire in the well of the aircraft and continued to man his guns. By his skilful gunnery this airman contributed materially to the success of the operation. He has completed numerous sorties and has always set a high standard of efficiency. "

Commissioned in September 1942, Charles was posted the following year to 107 Sqn. On 25 January 1944 whilst serving with 107 Sqn, Charles was awarded the DFC. His citation read:

"His formation was attacked by enemy fighters on crossing the coast into occupied territory. These attacks persisted along the whole route to the target. FO Carter's direction of evasive action negated the enemy attacks so that his aircraft was undamaged and the bombing carried-out satisfactorily. At other times, when leading aircraft of formations his fire control and directions have been largely responsible for the subsequent safety of his aircraft as well as those of other crews taking part. FO Carter has set a standard in his squadron which has been the greatest asset to the development of morale, as well as in maintaining gunnery on a high level of skill. I consider him, by his coolness, courage and efficiency to merit the award of the DFC."

In September 1944 Charles was posted to 98 Sqn at RAF Dunsfold, Surrey. On 25 September 1944 twelve 98 Sqn aircraft, escorted by six Spitfires, were detailed to bomb a bridge in Schaarsbergen, north of Arnhem, known as "The Bridge Too Far", which had been occupied by enemy forces with Flak equipment. This op was in support of the withdrawal of the British paratroop brigade from "Operation Market Garden". At 15:15 on 25 September Charles, standing in for the crew's regular Rear Gunner, and the crew departed RAF Dunsfold in Mitchell II FW194 (VO-N). Close to their destination, the Mitchell formation was attacked by a flight of 20 FW190s of the IV./JG 54. An air battle ensued; however, the overwhelming odds led to a loss of the majority of the fighter protection. At 17:00 Charles's aircraft was intercepted from below by Mjr Wolfgang Späte, killing the Navigator in the attack. The damaged rear hatch was jammed, and Charles was unable to escape. The WOp found his hatch jammed partway open and he could not escape with his chute on. He pushed his parachute out through the opening and, while gripping the harness, put his head and shoulders through the opening and pulled the cord. He sustained some injuries being pulled through the hatch, but escaped and drifted to the ground where German troops took him prisoner. The plane continued on towards Arnhem where the pilot baled out, only to be killed by German machine gunners as he drifted over the bridge. The Mitchell crashed into a dyke near the bridge with the Navigator and Charles still inside. This was the last day of the battle of Arnhem.

Also Killed: FO Thomas John Lennie RAAF (Nav); FS Bruce Llewellyn Williams RAAF (Pilot)

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

Charles is commemorated on Wall Panel - Not Yet Erected