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Second World War Discovery Box

Personal Stories

George Joseph Chequer

Royal Canadian Air Force

When his plane caught fire during a bombing raid, most of George's crew got out safely. Sadly, 22-year-old George and another man died when their parachutes didn't open.



Flight Lieutenant George Joseph Chequer.
George Metcalf Archival Collection
Canadian War Museum 19910181-010 (cropped)

Early Years

George was born on 17 February 1921, in Ottawa, Ontario.

While still in high school, he was active with the militia, serving with the 1st Corps Field Survey Company of the Royal Canadian Engineers.

He completed one year at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario before enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Flying Lancaster Bombers

George wanted to be a pilot. Although his first job was as a pay clerk, he clearly had potential. In a letter, his Sergeant Major in the Royal Canadian Engineers described George as "keen, with an excellent sense of discipline" and "quite a good rifle shot," while also noting that he had "an excellent character."

While George was eager, quick and bright, he was considered too quiet and shy to become an officer. Instead, he was recommended for pilot training, which he successfully completed in December 1942. He was posted to England early in 1943 where he trained to fly Lancaster bombers. Like many members of the RCAF, George served in a squadron of Britain's Royal Air Force. In December 1943, he began flying missions as part of Bomber Command,

the Allied campaign targeting strategic locations in Germany.

By the end of January 1944 George had completed eight missions with Bomber Command. His ninth mission was a large bombing run over Berlin, Germany, on the night of 30 January 1944.

George and his crew were near the target area when their plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire and set ablaze. George instructed his crew to bail out. Although they landed safely, all were taken prisoner.

George and his Flight Sergeant John O'Brien bailed out too late for their parachutes to open. Their bodies were found near their downed aircraft.

Recognition and Remembrance

George's fate was not immediately known. His parents only received word that his plane had gone down, and that he was missing.

It was months before they learned that his status had changed to "Presumed Dead." After the war, George's remains were located and transferred to the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery.