

Fields of Honor Memorial

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Fields of Honor
Foundation



Personal info

Full name

PRIEST, Charles McKinley

Date of birth

14 November 1919

Age

24

Place of birth

Starke, Bradford County, Florida

Hometown

Starke, Bradford County, Florida

Military service

Service number

34784464

Rank

Staff Sergeant

Unit

**569th Bombardment Squadron,
390th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Distinguished Flying Cross,
Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

15 October 1944

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Henri-Chapelle

Plot	Row	Grave
G	14	36

Immediate family

Members

Charles H. Priest (father)

Myrtle Priest (mother)

Lorraine S. Priest (wife)

Plane data

Serial number

43-37513

Data

Type: B-17G

Nickname: Anna

Destination: Framlingham, Germany

MACR: 9483

More information

S/Sgt Charles M. Priest graduated from Bradford County High school in 1939 and was employed as clerk at Florida State Prison.

His final mission started at 5:34 AM, 15 October 1944, the take-off went according to schedule. This was to be a relatively short mission to Cologne, Germany. Charles' flight was to fly the lead position, high element of "B" squadron. Pilot Doug Johnson recalls that they thought it was going to be "a piece of cake." There were no enemy fighters, and it looked like flak was going to be light and inaccurate. Just before "bombs away," flak became more accurate and #3 and #4 engines were out due to direct hits or fire. They dropped their bombs over their drop zone, notified the Squadron leader, and pulled away from the formation. Later, when Captain Johnson was using the intercom to inform the crew, he got no reply. Only the co-pilot, the engineer and himself were onboard. The rest of the crew bailed out already. After the fire continued, the co-pilot and the engineer bailed out as well. Just as Doug Johnson was getting ready to bail out himself, he looked at #3 engine one more time ... the fire had gone out, and he decided to try to reach a friendly base. He finally contacted a P-47 fighter pilot who guided him safely to St. Trond in Belgium. Shortly after this, he noticed that Charles was still at his post. The Tail Gunner had been killed by a burst of flak.

Photos



Photo source: Peter Schouteten, Michel Beckers / Doug Johnson 390thBG Museum, Bradford County Telegraph - 10 November 1944