

*No Picture  
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*Royal Air Force*



**Chesley Herbert Sparkes**

**RAF Royal Air force**

**Service No. 339849**

**World War II**

**Born:** 03 Mar 1916

**Died:** 14 May 1957

**Place of Birth:** Shearstown, Conception Bay, Newfoundland

**Parents:** Herbert and Caroline (nee Mercer) Sparkes

According to the handwritten 1921 Newfoundland general census entries, The Sparkes family was living in Shearstown. Herbert and Caroline are both 41 and their

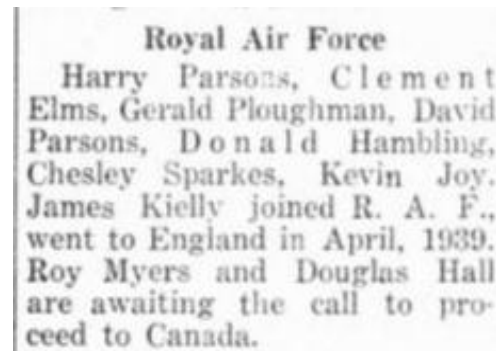
children are: Clara 21, Pearl 18, Nora 13, Reuben 8 and Chesley age 5.

This record also shows Herbert working as a butcher. Daughter Clara is teaching school.

By the next census in 1935, both Herbert and Caroline are now 51. Herbert is farming. Chesley is 19 and working as a labourer on the farm.

Available military records show Chesley was not part of the first draft of RAF ground staff on June 14, 1940, but it appears that service numbers beginning at 339801 and going forward indicate them to be a member of ground staff.

Here's a newspaper clipping from the Local Paper "The Guardian" dated 1940-11-09.



An entry dated November 1940 lists Chesley as one of the Ardingly recruits (Ardingly is a village in the District of West Sussex, England) on board the SS Nerissa destined for Liverpool, England via Boston, St. John's and Halifax. He was 24 years old at the time.



### SS Nerissa

*A passenger and cargo steamer of 5,583 tons gross, the Nerissa was the final ship to be built for the old-established Red Cross Line service between New York, Halifax, and St. John's, Newfoundland. Her registered owners were the New York, Newfoundland Steamship Co. Ltd., the managers of which were C.T. Bowring & Co. Ltd., of Liverpool.*

*On 30 April 1941, she was torpedoed and sent to the bottom by German submarine U-552.*

Back in Newfoundland following the war, Chesley and wife Vera (nee Butler) are found in the 1945 census living in Shearstown. They are both 26.

Chesley passed away in May 1957 of cardiac failure. He was only 46. He is buried in Trinity United Churchyard at Shearstown.

Some more clippings from The Guardian in no particular order:

### 21 September 1940

Chesley Sparkes, of Shearstown, son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Sparkes, left here on Tuesday to proceed overseas where he will serve on the Royal Air Force Ground Staff.

### 15 August 1942

Chesley H. Sparkes of the R.A.F. Ground Staff, is here this week from Canada and is visiting his father, Mr. Herbert Sparkes of Shearstown.

### 21 March 1942

Chesley Sparkes, son of Mr. Herbert Sparkes, Shearstown, who for the past year has been serving with the Royal Air Force Ground Staff in England, has been transferred to Canada. He arrived here last Saturday to spend a few days' leave before proceeding to his new post.

A reception in honor of Chesley Sparkes, R.A.F. Ground Staff, was held in the Orange hall, Shearstown, on Tuesday night.

14 December 1940

## "There's Nothing Like The R. A. F." Says Ches Sparkes

The Editor,  
The Bay Roberts Guardian,  
Dear Sir:—

Having always received The Guardian while at home, I am now writing to have The Guardian sent to me here in England. There is no other paper that would give me so much pleasure as the Bay Roberts Guardian.

I would like to be remembered to all my good friends and relatives, and hope they are as well as I am, not forgetting the old brigade, James Snow (the barber). I would like to say that there is none better than him over here in England.

To the boys who still want to join up I say, Come along and join the R.A.F. There is nothing like it. Plenty of good clean fun and a good trade for life. You can do as well as I am doing. You all know the experience I had. There is nothing to it. Come along and see some real life, especially you boys who were turned down at Hr. Grace. They will give you the training. You have nothing to worry about. I would like to say a whole lot more but one can understand the circumstances. If I get anything of any importance I will send it to The Guardian. . . . .

Yours truly,

**CHESLEY H. SPARKES,**

Address.

Chesley H. Sparkes, AC 2,  
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c/o Nfld. Trade Commissioner,  
58 Victoria Street,  
London W 1, England.