

PO Joseph Walter Slater 158716 RAFVR

Joseph, known as Joe, was born in 1921 in Clapton, London, the son of Joseph Walter Slater and Maud May Slater nee Davis.

Joseph qualified as a pilot and crewed up at 1656 HCU. He was posted to 101 Sqn at RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire and was granted his commission in September 1943.

On the night of the 14 January 1944, 498 aircraft, with twenty provided by 101 Sqn, were dispatched for the first major raid to Brunswick, Germany, of the war. Brunswick was a smaller than usual target for Bomber Command and the raid was not a success. The Luftwaffe tracked the force when it was still only 40 miles from the Lincolnshire coast and fell among the bomber stream with deadly effect downing 38 Lancasters, three of which were from 101 Sqn with the loss of 24 men.

Between 16:30 and 17:10 the 101 Sqn Lancasters departed RAF Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire en-route to Brunswick. Joseph and his crew were flying Lancaster III DV287 (SR-N).

At 18:30, whilst outbound, Joseph's aircraft was intercepted at 19,500 ft by Oblt Martin Drewes of the 11./NJG 1 flying a Lichtenstein-equipped Bf 110 from Leeuwarden airfield. Using the deadly 20mm "Schrage Muzik" upward firing cannon to deadly effect, the Lancaster's port wing and fuselage was set alight. Joseph's aircraft was seen to descend and explode just above the ground near the Dutch border village of Klazienaveen, killing 8 of the 9 man crew. The navigator managed to bale out and evade capture with the assistance of the Dutch resistance.

Also Killed: PO Stanley Ernest Watchorn (AB); FS John Francis Stafford (AG/SDO); FS Maxwell Chambers Patterson (Pilot); Sgt Peter Mitchell (WOp/AG); Sgt George Thomas McLatchie (AG); Sgt Leonard Easdon (AG); Sgt Arthur William Louis Schneider (FE)

Joseph is buried in Emmen (Nieuw Dordrecht) General Cemetery, Drenthe, Netherlands

Joseph is commemorated on Wall Panel 98

Photo Source: Findagrave

