

Wg Cdr Joseph Henry Hargroves IGSM 7128 RAF

Joseph was born on 16 November 1900 in Hampstead, London the son of Joseph Henry Hargroves and Amy Maud Hargroves nee Cooper.

Joseph lied about his age when he joined the RFC as a flight cadet on 2 March 1916 aged 15, was commissioned in August 1917, receiving his wings as a 2nd Lt aged 16.

By 1921, Joseph was in Baghdad working in the HQ of the Mesopotamia Group and for his service on the North West Frontier was awarded the IGSM. Service at 2FTS RAF Digby, 214 Sqn and 37 Sqn followed and by the beginning of 1939 he was promoted to Wg Cdr and appointed Commanding Officer of 101 Sqn. The squadron was brought to operational status after the fall of France.

On 5 July 1940, three 101 Sqn aircraft were tasked with attacks against oil targets in Northern Germany. The aircraft departed individually, with Joseph and his crew departing last.

At 15:15 the crew departed RAF West Raynham, Norfolk, in Blenheim IV N6140 (SR). The first 2 aircraft turned back due to a lack of cloud cover, Joseph's aircraft was believed shot down by flak/ground fire and crashed into the sea off Sylt, North Frisian Islands, Germany, killing all on board.

Joseph was 101 Sqn's first wartime Commanding Officer, and this was 101 Sqn's first operational loss of the war.

Also killed : Sgt Robert Mark Livermore MiD (WOp/AG); Sgt Ewart William Smith MiD IGSM (Observer)

Originally buried in the List (Sylt) Cemetery, Germany, in July 1947 Joseph was transferred to the Kiel War Cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.

Joseph is commemorated on Wall Panel 177

Photo Source: livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk

