Sgt Joseph William Howell Phelps 751054 RAFVR



Joseph was born in 1920 in Abertillery, Monmouthshire, the son of Herbert Howell Phelps and Olive May Phelps nee LLewellyn. In 1941 he married Winifred Ellen Sayer in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

Trained as a WOp/AG, in February 1941 Joseph and his crew were posted to 21 Sqn at RAF Watton, Norfolk.

In April 1941 Joseph's crew was one of 5 squadron crews detached to Malta, returning the following month. A detachment to RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland followed at the beginning of June. Their next flight from RAF Watton would be their last.

On 16 June 1941, 6 Blenheims from 21 Sqn were allocated to carry out a daylight attack on shipping off the East Frisian Islands. At 13:19 Joseph, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Watton, Norfolk in Blenheim IV V6034 (YH-D) as number 2 in a three ship. The formation flew out over the North Sea and after one hour's search, a small patrol vessel was spotted and they prepared to attack. This vessel was a "Squealer", a small patrol vessels with radio transmitters used as an early warning screen to spot the Blenheims well before the convoys were reached.

Flying in as the second attack aircraft, the crew bombed the vessel, but the wing tip struck the mast of the ship and the aircraft cartwheeled into the sea, killing all on board.

Also Killed: FS Evered Arthur Reginald Rex Leavers DFM (Pilot); Sgt Ian Overheu DFM RNZAF (Observer)

Originally buried in the Lutheran Cemetery, Borkum, Frisian Islands in May 1947 he was transferred to the Sage War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany

Joseph is commemorated on Wall Panel 225

Photo Source: www.rafwatton.info