

Sgt Joseph Harold Campbell Roberts R/5491

Joseph, known as Joe, was born on 21 December 1916 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, the son of Ernest James Roberts and Catherine McKay Roberts nee Ward.

Educated at Montreal West High School and Montreal Technical School, Joseph was employed as a clerk when, in November 1939, he applied for aircrew duties with the RCAF.

Called up in April 1940, Joseph completed his training in Canada and, in September 1940, he was awarded his Observer badge. In November Joseph embarked for the UK.

Following advanced training at 20 OTU, RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland, in March 1941 Joseph was posted to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Feltwell, Norfolk.

On 15/16 July 1941 Bomber Command was tasked with an op against individual targets in Duisburg, Germany, a major logistical centre in the Ruhr Area and location of chemical, steel and iron industries. A combined force of 38 Wellingtons, including nine 75(NZ) crews, were allocated to the op.



At 23:00 on 15 July 1941 Joseph, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Feltwell in Wellington IC R3171 (AA).

At 03:00 on 16 July Joseph's aircraft was hit by flak, setting the port engine on fire, and the captain attempted a ditching in the North Sea off the Dutch coast. All crew were killed, and Joseph was one of only two crew members who were recovered for burial.

Also killed: Sgt Sydney Allan Dyer RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Robert Ewen Ernest Fotheringham RNZAF (Pilot); Sgt Phillip Edgar Hare RNZAF (WOp/AG); Sgt Eric Vincent Keiran Higgins RAAF (Pilot); Sgt Douglas Malcolm MacKinnon RNZAF (AG)

Joseph was washed ashore on the Dutch coast, and is buried in the Amsterdam New Eastern Cemetery, Noord-Holland, Netherlands

Joseph is commemorated on Wall Panel 233

Photo Source: www.veterans.gc.ca