

Flt Lt Norman Henry Shepherd DFM 48980 RAF

Norman was born in 1914 in Plymouth, Devon the son of Samuel Henry Shepherd and Ada May Shepherd nee Knowles.

Educated at Hayle Bodriggy Senior Council School and Penzance County School for Boys, following a short career in the Insurance business, Norman joined the RAF in August 1939 as a Sgt Observer.

Norman was awarded the DFM, presented by H.M. the King at Buckingham Palace, in a joint award with his Pilot for his actions whilst serving with 139 Sqn in Malta. The citation read:

"In May 1941, Flt Lt Sydney-Smith and Sgt Shepherd were pilot and observer respectively of an aircraft which attacked an enemy cargo ship, believed to be carrying ammunition, escorted by a destroyer. Two direct hits were obtained on the vessel which was compelled to seek refuge in Sfax harbour. Four days later, they participated in a low level attack against an enemy ammunition ship lying in Sfax harbour in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire from destroyers and other ships. In June 1941, Flt Lt Sydney-Smith and Sgt Shepherd took part in an attack against a large and heavily escorted enemy convoy. With great skill they obtained direct hits on an 8,000 ton ship carrying ammunition which blew up with terrific force hurling parts of the vessel as high as 1,000 feet. Flt Lt Sydney-Smith has consistently displayed great courage and determination while Sgt Shepherd's navigation and bomb aiming have been of a very high standard".

In January 1942, 107 Sqn returned to RAF Great Massingham, Norfolk from the Mediterranean Theatre and converted to the Boston aircraft. Norman was on the strength of the squadron by March 1942 and received his commission on 1 May 1942.

On 6 December 1942, 107 Sqn were tasked as part of Operation Oyster, a daylight raid on the Philips radio and valve factory in Eindhoven. The 8th Air Force operated a diversionary raid to Lille using Spitfires as escort. A low level raid in clear conditions led to very accurate bombing and the factory was extensively damaged. The raid was deliberately planned for a Sunday when few employees would have been on site. Full production took 6 months to achieve due to the level of damage. This successful raid was the biggest daylight raid of the war so far comprising 36 Bostons, 12 Mosquitos and 48 Venturas.

At 11:22 Norman, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Great Massingham in Boston III AH740 (OM-A). The crew were known to have bombed the target, but on the return were shot down by FW 190 A-4s of 5./JG1 from Schiphol airfield. At 12:59 the aircraft crashed into the sea 6km West of Katwijk aan Zee, killing all on board.

Also killed : Wg Cdr Peter Hiley Dutton IGSM (Pilot); Flt Lt Robert William McCarthy DFM (WOp/AG); PO Louis M Delanchey Free French Air Force (AG)

Norman has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Norman is commemorated on Wall Panel 240