

Raes Maurice (RAF n° 1299915)

(Philippe Deman Collection)

Maurice Raes was born on 17 June 1921 at Mons. He signed a 3 year engagement in the Belgian Aéronautique Militaire in September 1939. Receiving his basic military education at Zellik, he then joined the 82nd promotion at Wevelghem. When Belgium was invaded on 10 May 1940 the Flying School was evacuated to Oujda, Morocco. After the capitulation of France, most of the trainees evaded to Great Britain, where they arrived on 5 August. Sent to Tenby first, he joined the Flying School at Odiham in November 1940. He made his first flying sortie in a Magister, with his instructor G. Dieu, on 23 November, and his first solo flight was on 19 December. He joined 53 OTU in November 1941. Mentioned as "Above Average" after conversion to the Spitfire, he was posted to 350 (Belgian) Squadron in March 1942. On his first flight in a Spitfire Vb, on 20 March 1942, he severely damaged his aircraft whilst landing. After several training flights he was finally declared "Combat Ready". On 4 June 1942, he executed his first operational sortie flying as "Blue 2" in MN-U (P8545). On 13 June 1942, flying his second convoy patrol, in MN-R (W3446), an unfortunate fatal accident occurred when the last section left the convoy, Sergeant Raes had lost his No. 1 and was given a Vector back to base. He came over Norwich very low and crashed into the ground at 120 Sprowston Road, Norwich killing himself. Unfortunately his aircraft, which had lost touch with convoy, was plotted as an enemy aircraft, and with a cloud base of 200 feet, the Barrage balloons were stood to. The Barrage balloon people saw him heading S.E. very low and the police and air raid wardens said an explosion occurred in the air. Therefore, it can be presumed that the Norwich Balloon barrage was sadly effective on this occasion. He was buried with full military honours at Brookwood Cemetery on 18 June 1942, and S/L Guillaume, P/O Deltour and Sgt Ester attended as representatives of the Squadron. After the war his body was re-interred at Pelouse d'Evere..

(source: Guy Destrebecq)

His claims are :-

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