

Sergeant Ernest Simion, F Squadron, the Glider Pilot Regiment

Sergeant Ernest Simion of 16 Flight, 2 Wing, F Squadron was killed during the Battle of Arnhem on 20th September 1940. He had recently turned 24 years old. Sgt Simion was a Jewish refugee who had been born in Berlin and he began work as a mechanic in Co. Down Northern Ireland in 1939. He was interned as an enemy alien in 1940 before being freed and joining the Pioneer Corps and later the REME. He joined the GPR and was co-pilot to Staff Sergeant Ronald Gibson on Operation Market Garden. SSgt Gibson describes Sgt Simion in his diary of the event,

“Sim’ was my co-pilot. He was a German Jew from Berlin, a refugee who had arrived in England a few months before the declaration of war. I had only known him a few weeks. He was small and dark and very thin ... I knew very little about him. While we were waiting on the tow path a few minutes before, he had recalled the first incidents of his life I had heard him mention: a drift from post to post; a brief engagement to a girl, broken by his flight from Germany.”

SSgt Gibson and Sgt Simion took off from RAF Tarrant Rushton on 17th September. In their Horsa they carried a six-pounder gun and the jeep that would tow it into action. They also carried two men of the Border Regiment, the driver and the gun layer.

Early on the morning of the 20th September, Sgt Simion was killed during an assault by German SS troops.

Sgt Ernest Simion is buried at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Arnhem Oosterbeek cemetery in grave 3.B.4.