

" Moustique " Gonay Henry (RAF n° 81635)

Distinguished Flying Cross, Belgian Croix de Guerre 1940 with Palm,
French Croix de Guerre with Bronze Palm, ...



(André Bar Collection)

Henry Gonay was born at Theux, 21 July 1913. He engaged the Aéronautique Militaire Belge in 1931. Accepted to the 67° promotion, he's promoted corporal on 24 Mai 1933 and posted to the 2nd Regiment de Chasse at Schaffen (Diest) The unit is equipped with the Fairey Firefly. Exceptional pilot, he's transferred as instructor to the Flying School at Wevelghem in November 1938. Gonay was transferred as Adjudant at the 3rd escadrille Deurne (Antwerp), when the Germans invaded Belgium. His unit left the country three days later and went to Tours (France) and later on to Bordeaux. After the capitulation of France, Gonay, Phillipart, Dieu and Buchin deserted and went on board the "Queen Emma", direction UK, where they arrived on 23 June 1940. He engaged the RAF Volunteer Reserve and he is commissioned P/O. Converted on Blenheim at the 5 OTU, he's posted to 235 Sqn, Coastal Command, at Bircham Newton. Flying on Blenheim IVF, he obtained a victory on 8 October 1940, shooting down a He-60. On 23 October, he's transferred to the French-Belgian Flying School at Odiham, as instructor. At the closure of this school, he converted on Spitfire at the 58 OTU. Promoted F/O, he's posted to 123 Sqn at Drem. He then went to 64 Sqn and 131 Sqn, where he became commander of Flight "B". He's transferred to the newly formed 350 Sqn, to take command of the "A" - Flight. He joined 232 Sqn on April 17, 1942. Promoted S/L on August 31, 1942, he took command of 129 Sqn. After having joined the Central Gunnery School, he converted on Hawker Typhoon and took command of 263 Sqn on February 24, 1944. On June 14, 1944, leading a formation of 8 Typhoon's, his plane was hit by flack whilst attacking 2 armed coastel vessels in the near of Jersey Island. Gonay was killed whilst trying to force land on the northern part of the Island. A DFC was posthumly awarded on July 2, 1944.

"Squadron Leader H. Gonay has completed 138 operational sorties and has displayed outstanding ability, courage and determination which have contributed largely to the successes achieved by his squadron. Squadron Leader Gonay has destroyed one enemy aircraft and damaged further three. He has also sunk a 100 ton support vessel".

His claims are :

08/10/1940	1 He-60	Whilst flying with 235Sqn on Blenheim IVF
05/04/1943	1 Fw-190 Damaged	(129 Sqn) North of Brest
04/09/1943	1 Me-109 Damaged	(129 Sqn) North East St-Pol
?	1 e/a Damaged	?