

ICELANDIC PILOT

Now flying with a 2nd T.A.F. fighter wing is the R.A.F.'s only fighter pilot from Iceland - Flying Officer Thorsteinn Elton Jonsson, aged 22, of Reykjavik.

He joined the R.A.F. in June, 1940, and since then has shot down three German aircraft. He was awarded the D.F.M. in March, 1943, and commissioned in May that year.

During an argument at school with some classmates, the fighting qualities of the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe were being discussed when someone said to Jonsson: "Well, if you think so much of the R.A.F., why don't you join it?"

Jonsson said: "I will", and crossed to England in April, 1940. This was after he had applied by letter to join the R.A.F., and been told it was "impossible".

He was accepted, however, shortly after his arrival in this country. His mother was English. His father is a well-known bookseller and linguist in Reykjavik.

After getting his wings, Jonsson was a sergeant pilot. He did nothing eventful operationally till October, 1942, when he went to Algiers. The first day he was there, he took off on a patrol and spotted a Ju88 flying Eastwards. He pursued it through mountains and valleys, in and out of clouds, finally to shoot it down.

His next victim, too, was a Ju88, which he destroyed after becoming involved in a scrap with a formation of 12 enemy aircraft over the Tunisian-Algerian frontier.

His third, a Me109, he shot down at Pont du Fahs, while a big battle was going on between the armies on the ground below. The German fighter was one of an escort to some Ju87s. Six German aircraft were lost to one of ours.

Flying Officer Jonsson joined his present squadron early this year, and has on several occasions escorted American Fortresses and Liberators.

"My belief in the superiority of the R.A.F. is being proved every day", he says.

The wing in which Flying Officer Jonsson flies has over 200 air victories to its credit.

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NOTE: Picture available at B.I.P.P.A.