

AIR COMMODORE NARENDRA

(BRIEF SERVICE CAREER)

Air Commodore Narendra, who was holding the appointment of Air Officer in-charge, Technical and Equipment Services in Air HQ, was one of the pioneers of the Indian Air Force, being amongst the first few who volunteered and were selected from India to be trained as Service pilots in England in the early 30s.

Born at Fatehpur (U.P) on November 1, 1912, Narendra received his "A" Flying licence from the Karachi Flying Club when only 18 and still a university student at Allahabad. Graduating from the Royal Air Force flying training establishment at Cranwell, England, he was Commissioned in December 1933, and was sent to Old Sarum where he completed the Army Co-operational Course. On his return to India, he saw service with the then newly formed No.1 Indian Air Force Squadron, in the North-West frontier.

After several years of operational flying duties and holding important staff appointments in various parts of India, Narendra was posted to the Initial Training Centre at Walton, near Lahore, in September 1941. Two months later, he volunteered to join an active Parachute Brigade, thus becoming the first Regular Air Force officer to qualify as a paratrooper with several 'jumps' to his credit. After serving on the Air Staff of 224 Group, RAF, at Calcutta and later at Chittagong, he was posted to the Bengal Command for airdrome inspection duties, and was responsible for the building and construction of forward landing grounds in Assam and East Bengal. In October 1943, he became the Air Force representative on the Directorate of Selection of personnel, and a year later, appointed the officer in-charge, flying training and frontier air operations, soon afterwards taking over command of the Air Force Station, Kohat. During the latter part of the war, he was appointed commandant of the Indian Air

Training

Training Corps and at the cessation of hostilities, became the head of the newly set up IAF Depot at Arkonam. Soon after partition, he was given command of No. 2 IAF Group and promoted to the rank of Air Commodore. A year later he was appointed one of the three Principal Staff Officers, as the head of the newly formed Technical and Equipment Services Branch of the completely re-organised Air HQ.

The third senior-most officer in the Indian Air Force, and highly respected by all ranks in the Service for his vast experience, inspiring leadership and for his personal charms, Air Commodore Narendra leaves behind a widow, (daughter of His Highness the Maharaja of Jind) and a three-year old daughter.

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