

**Pilot Officer Arthur
Herbert Benson 43131
RAF**

Arthur Benson was a Hampden pilot killed in the first British bomber to be shot down at night by a Luftwaffe fighter.



He was the captain of a No. 49 Squadron Hampden which was one of three from the squadron lost in a single night in April 1940 during a mining operation.

Two aircraft are believed to have crashed during the operation, which took place in very bad weather on the night of 24/25 April. However Arthur's aircraft, Hampden P1319 EA-E, was shot down by an Me109 flown by Oberfeldwebel (Sgt.) Hermann Forster off the North Sea coast of the island of Sylt. His aircraft was one of eight which took off from RAF Scampton, the others all landing eventually on Scottish airfields.

Arthur came from Grays in Essex and was the 29-year-old son of Herbert and Eva Benson. Only the body of the P1319's observer, Sgt Robert MacKenzie, was ever recovered. The three other occupants, including Arthur, are remembered on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 7).

The other crew members were Australian second pilot P/O Alfred Hordern and wireless operator/air gunner LAC John Openshaw.

Arthur is remembered on IBCC panel 008.

Sources: 48 Squadron Association/Bomber Command Losses 1939/40 by Bill Chorley.