

Sergeant Robert Anthony Billington 1169761 RAFVR

Robert Billington was born on 6 March 1922, the son of Robert and Dorothy Theresa Billington, of Beckenham in Kent.

He was a navigator serving with No. 455 (Australian) Squadron, based at RAF Swinderby in Lincolnshire. The squadron had the distinction of being 'the first Australian squadron to bomb Germany'.

His Handley Page Hampden I (AE308 UB-L) took off from RAF Swinderby airfield at 1205 hours, on 6 February 1942, on a mine-laying operation off the Frisian Islands. It was one of 33 Hampdens and 13 Avro Manchesters. Four of the eight Swinderby aircraft turned back due to insufficient cloud cover, the remainder pressed on and completed the operation. AE308 was shot down at 1510 hours, 70 miles west of Terschelling, by Luftwaffe night fighter ace Hauptmann Helmut Lent - his 30th victory.



Robert's body was never recovered, and he is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey (panel 78). He was just 20 years old.

His name is also included on his parents' headstone at Beckenham Cemetery, London.

The other members of his crew lost with him were:

Sgt Eric Bland RAFVR

Sgt Bernard Edward Brown RAFVR

Sgt David Michael Pickersgill RAFVR

Robert is commemorated on IBCC Panel 9.

Photo courtesy of www.wikipedia.org