

## **Sgt Robert Anthony Bowman 580756 RAF**

Robert was born in Devon in 1918, the son of William Calvert Bowman and Clara Mildred Bowman nee Colman. In 1939 he married Gwendoline Dwyer.

The 5 June 1940 marked the commencement of Operation Red by the German land forces, the offensive destined to overwhelm the remaining Allied forces in France. Over the next couple of weeks, the remnants of the French air force and the RAF flying from bases in England and France were thrown into a desperate battle to stem the German advance.

On 9 June 1940 18 aircraft from RAF Wattisham, 12 from 107 Sqn, together with 6 from 110 Sqn, were tasked to attack enemy columns and transport in the Forêt de Boray, near Poix-de-Picardie. At 1055 Robert and his crew departed in Blenheim IV L9323 (OM).

On their way to the target they were hit by anti aircraft fire but continued on and dropped their bombs. Shortly afterwards they received a direct hit on the tail section and crash landed at 1130 on a hillside near the village of Torcy-le-Petit, killing Charles and his Observer. The WOp/AG, although injured, escaped from the aircraft and later made his way safely back to the UK. Robert's aircraft was one of three 107 Sqn aircraft forced down.

Despite the losses, the action was successful and bombs were observed to burst amongst enemy columns and transport, many of which were completely destroyed.

Also killed was : FO Charles Powell Bomford (Pilot)

Robert is buried in Torcy-Le-Petit Communal Cemetery, Seine-Maritime, France in a joint grave with FO Bomford

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 134