

Flt Lt Robert Leonard Harman J/8438 RCAF

Robert, known as Len, was born on 26 October 1915 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, the son of George Harman and Margaret Mary Harman nee Davis. In December 1943 he married Laura Vera Witherington in Toronto, Ontario.

Educated at William Public School and Montreal West High School, Robert was employed as a Stores Clerk and Timekeeper by Jenkins Bros. Ltd, Montreal when, in July 1940, he volunteered for service in the RCAF.

Called up in October 1940, Robert commenced pilot training; however, when his training was suspended in April 1941, he re-mustered as Observer.

Robert completed his flying training in Canada in September 1941 with the award of his Navigator badge and was granted a commission in October. Following additional training at 31 OTU RCAF Debart, Nova Scotia, in December 1941 Robert embarked for the UK.

On arrival, Robert was posted to 53 Sqn at RAF Limavady, Derry, Northern Ireland, moving with the squadron the next month to RAF St Eval, Cornwall. In April 1943 Robert was posted to instructor duties with 6 (Coastal) OTU RAF Silloth, Cumbria. At the end of his tour, Robert returned to Canada for a month's special leave, returning to the UK in January 1944, and in February was posted to 415 Sqn at RAF Bircham Newton, Norfolk. By July the squadron was based in RAF Docking, Norfolk.

On 13 July 1944 three 415 Sqn crews were tasked with an anti-shipping patrol of the Frisians, Dutch Coast and Dunkirk. The squadron had transferred to Bomber Command the day before; however, this was essentially a Coastal Command task.

At 00:46 Robert, operating as the Navigator, and the crew departed RAF Docking, Norfolk in Wellington MF494 (NH-G). The crew were due on patrol at 02:20 and off patrol at 02:47 just south of Heligoland. Nothing further was heard from the crew, although the two other aircraft on the patrol reported a sighting of a night-fighter.

Post war investigations revealed that Robert's aircraft was shot down 20 miles North of Ameland, Friesland, at 02:03 by Uffz Rudolf Wilsch, flying a BF110 of 7./NJG1 from Leeuwarden Airfield.

Also Killed: FO Robert Jordan Sheen RCAF (Pilot); PO Edward George Crawley RCAF (WOp/AG); PO Lloyd Eby Findlay RCAF (WOp/AG); PO Gordon Keith Huish RCAF (WOp/AG); PO Joseph Jacques Rodolphe Vannier RCAF (WOp/AG); FS John Hands (FE)

Robert has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel - 177

Photo Source: findagrave

