

Sqn Ldr Herbert Pilling 29178 RAF

Herbert was born in 1907 in Rochdale, Lancashire, the son of George Herbert Pilling and Alice Pilling nee Williamson. In December 1935, whilst he was stationed at RAF Sealand, he married Vera Marvin.

Herbert was commissioned in the RAF as a pilot in October 1930, finally attaining the rank of Sqn Ldr in December 1938. In September 1938 he was posted to 24 Sqn at RAF Hendon as "A" Flt Commander. The Sqn was a VIP and communications unit which was heavily involved in diplomatic and military flying, including transportation of the Supreme Allied War Council, between the UK and France in 1939 and 1940.

In May 1940 Herbert was posted out of 24 Sqn, originally to Staff College, but by June 1940 he had arrived on 107 Sqn.

His AFC, awarded posthumously in the 1941 New Year's list, was linked to his service with 24 Sqn.



On the 30 June 1940, 12 aircraft from 107 Sqn were tasked to carry out an attack on Merville Aerodrome. Herbert, on his 3rd operational flight with the squadron, and his crew departed RAF Wattisham at 10:10 in Blenheim IV R3870 (OM). As the aircraft crossed the Channel near Calais, three Blenheims became separated from the main force and came under attack from the air and the ground. Herbert's aircraft was hit by flak and, although the crew managed to bale out of the blazing aircraft, only the Observer's parachute opened.

Also killed: Sgt Holman Thomas Denison (WOp/AG)

Herbert is buried in Ecques Churchyard, Pas de Calais, France

Herbert is commemorated on Wall Panel 226

Photo Source: <https://www.ww2cemeteries.com/ecques-churchyard.html>