

Sgt Robert Tennant Plant 1291941 RAFVR

Robert was born on 1 April 1922 in Richmond, Surrey, the son of Robert Alfonso Plant and Doris Annie Plant nee Locker. In December 1938, Robert entered the Civil Service as a telegraphist, working in the Richmond Sorting Office. This occupation made him a perfect entrant into the RAF as a Wireless Operator.

Although 13 Squadron was an army support unit, it was co-opted to Bomber Command throughout the period for which the "Thousand Bomber" raids were taking place. The squadron mainly flew intruder raids to key German aerodromes in an effort to neutralise the German night-fighter effort; however, on 25/26 June 1942 13 Squadron did fly as part of the main force in attack against Bremen.

On 25 June 1942, 13 Sqn were attached to 2 Group for bomber operations. Of the 9 aircraft flown, 5 were flown with the main "1000 Bomber" raid to Bremen, and 4 continued the "Intruder Operations". Robert and his crew were tasked with an attack on the Nachtjagd base at Sint-Truiden airfield, Belgium.

At 23:50 Robert, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Wattisham in Blenheim IV Z6084. Whilst approaching the target, the aircraft was attacked in Sector 6B by the night fighter crew of Oberleutnant Eckart-Wilhelm von Bonin & Feldwebel Friedrich Johrden of the 6./NJG 1 based at Fliegerhorst Sint-Truiden, flying an Me 110.

The 19 year old pilot managed to fend off the attack for a long time, but thanks to radar guidance, the German night fighter Maintained contact. On 26 June 1942 at 01:38, following an eight-minute radar chase, the battle was settled above the village of Houwaart, where the Blenheim exploded.

Two squadron aircraft failed to return - both from the intruder attacks.

Also killed were: PO Peter George Frith (Pilot); Sgt Henry Herbert William Vinter (Observer)

Robert is buried with his crew in a collective grave in Houwaart Churchyard, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium.

Robert is commemorated on Wall Panel 226