

Watson, Ronald Frederick L'Anson

Age: Unknown

Nationality: English

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Pilot

Service No: 1604441(RAFVR)

Birth: Date and place unknown

Home Town: Redhill, Surrey
England

Death: 28 January 1944
Crash of Handley Page Hampden P1200,
Washington Coast, USA

Burial: Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial,
Ontario, Canada

Others: P/O William Dishman, Navigator, RAFVR;
Sgt. Edward Quigley, WAG, RCAF.



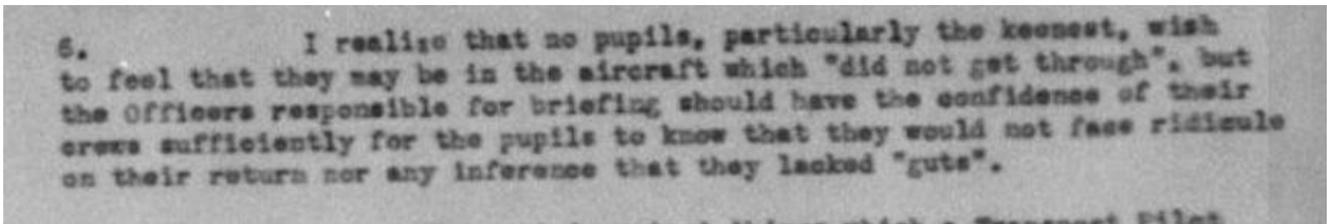
Biography

Ronald Frederick l'Anson Watson was born, probably in Surrey, England, to Frederick l'Anson and Louise Maud Watson. In the last quarter of 1942, in Surrey, England, he married Barbara Violet Wright and a daughter, Josephine, was born to them in the second quarter of 1943.

Ronald was a member of the RAFVR sent for training in Canada. At the time of his death he was with No. 32 OTU at Patricia Bay, BC, and was the pilot of Handley Page Hampden P1200 when it disappeared off the coast of Washington, USA.

The military records of Sergeant Watson are only available to family members. The only information specific to him in the accident report is his experience as a pilot, which shows him to have had 27.5 hours of experience on a Hampden during the last six months, never as first pilot.

Also of interest from the inquiry into the accident which killed Sergeant Watson:



And the critical comments of the Conclusion:

"This accident was undoubtedly due to the aircraft running into severe icing conditions.

Note: Sergeant Watson could hardly have been considered to be a qualified first pilot on type within the provisions of C.A.P. 100, Section B."

"In view of the weather conditions it is doubtful whether this exercise should have been authorized."

Details of Crash

Handley Page Hampden P1200 was the fourth Hampden to crash due to poor weather conditions near the Washington coast. On 28th January 1944 it carried a crew of three:

P/O	William Dishman	Navigator	RAFVR
Sgt.	Edward Quigley	WAG	RCAF
Sgt.	Ronald Watson	Pilot	RAFVR

Nine Hampdens took off that evening. The object of the exercise was night familiarization, crew co-operation and astro navigation. The meteorological representative sanctioned the trip to be carried out at 6,000 ft. The route was Base to 48° 10N 130° 00W to Tofino to Base. The duration of the trip was estimated to be four hours during which the crews were to make maximum use of wireless aids and navigational aids. The crews were instructed not to enter cloud due to the risk of icing conditions, and to return to base if bad weather was encountered.

After take off, none of the crews were able to complete their exercises owing to the weather conditions. Contact with P1200 was lost after 7:15 pm and crews of 139 and 114 entered cloud, in direct disobedience of their briefing, and got into serious trouble.

P1200 was the only aircraft that failed to return to base and a search was instituted the following morning. The search was focused on the area between Cape Flattery and Gray's Harbour, both in Washington, USA. Six Beechcraft C-45 Expeditors covered the area to a depth of ten miles landward and seaward for about three hours. A Douglas C-47 Dakota searched the straits of Juan de Fuca from Victoria, BC, to Cape Flattery along both shores. Other stations also participated in the search which was continued until 30th January. No trace of the aircraft was found.

In the findings of the subsequent investigation, the cause of the accident was deemed obscure, and was presumed to be that the aircraft encountered icing conditions with which the pilot was unable to cope, either due to inexperience, or to the severity of the icing. It was stated that the Hampden was unsuited to icing conditions.

