

# Dishman, William Ronald

**Age:** 27  
**Nationality:** English  
**Rank:** Pilot Officer  
**Unit:** No. 32 OTU  
**Occupation:** Navigator  
**Service No:** 154274 (RAFVR)



**Birth:** 10 September 1916  
Spilsby, Lincolnshire,  
England

**Home Town:** Burgh le Marsh, Lincolnshire, England

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

**Burial:** Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial,  
Ontario, Canada

**Others:** Sgt. Edward Quigley, WAG, RCAF; Sgt. Ronald Watson, Pilot,  
RAFVR

## **Biography**

William Ronald Dishman was the oldest child of William Andrew Dishman, a hay and straw pressman, and Sylvia (née Stainton). He had two brothers, George Frederick, b. 1925, and Ernest Alan, b. 1933, and two sisters, Lilian Mary, b. 1921 and Daisy Joyce, b. 1930. William was born the last quarter of 1916 in Burgh le Marsh in rural Lincolnshire.

On 28 January 1944, William was training with No. 32 Operational Training Unit in Patricia Bay, British Columbia, Canada, part of the Commonwealth Training Scheme. He was navigator on Handley Page Hampden P1200, piloted by a fellow Englishman, Sergeant Ronald Watson, conducting navigational exercises along the Vancouver Island and Washington coast. As the aircraft headed south it encountered cloud and probable icing conditions. The pilot, who had limited experience flying Hampdens, did not return to base, as instructed, and the aircraft disappeared off the coast of Washington. No trace was found of the aircraft or the three men aboard.



Ottawa Memorial

## Details of Crash

Hampden P1200 was the fourth Handley Page Hampden to crash due to poor weather conditions near the Washington coast. On 28 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 4 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 aircraft 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 along both shores from Victoria, BC, to Cape Flattery. Other stations also participated in the search which was continued until January 30<sup>th</sup>. 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.

