

Aucoin, Whitney Philip

Age: 22

Nationality: American

Rank: Flight/Sergeant

Unit: No. 135 Squadron

Occupation: Pilot

Service No: R/126834

Birth: 31 October 1920
Baton Rouge, LA
USA

Home Town: Baton Rouge, LA, USA

Death: 26 April 1943

Hawker Hurricane 5410
went into the sea near
Galiano Island, B.C., Canada

Burial: Commemorated, Ottawa Memorial, Canada and
Resthaven Gardens of Memory, Baton Rouge, LA, USA



Biography

Flight Sergeant Whitney Philip Aucoin was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA, on 31 Oct 1920. He worked as a switch man on the railway, but his ambition was to become an airline pilot and to this end he embarked on a civilian flying course, completing about eight hours on dual controls. Staying at the YMCA in Windsor, Ontario, Whitney had travelled 1600 miles in order to join the RCAF, which he did on 5 September 1941. When asked why he came to Canada, his reply was:

“I came because I knew sooner or later the U.S. would join the war but did not wish to wait that long before getting overseas”.

He wanted to be a fighter pilot:

“..because you are more or less on your own and, besides that, it is the closest thing a man can get to wings of his own”.



Whitney P. Aucoin, Jr., 20-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Aucoin of 514 University Walk, has volunteered for service with the Royal Canadian Air force "for the duration" and will leave Monday for Memphis, Tenn., where he must first pass a final physical examination before proceeding to Windsor, Canada.

Aucoin is a Catholic High graduate and has attended L. S. U. He left school to accept a position with the Y. & M. V. He has been taking flying lessons at the old parish airport. Aucoin expects to be sent by the Canadian government to some training point in the United States.

Another local youth who is leaving for service in the Royal Canadian Air force is Leo (Bud) Fleniken, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Fleniken of Wistaria street.

Whitney had completed high school and one year of University in 1940. He took a year out of school from 1935-1936 in order to help his father, who was going blind.

On 12 December 1941, when he enlisted, Whitney was recommended for training as a pilot and considered suitable to receive a commission. At Initial Training, he showed himself to be cool, methodical, diligent and dependable, all valuable characteristics for a pilot. His spirit was excellent as would be expected with his enthusiasm for flying, and he was well liked.

Baton Rouge State Times Advocate 30/8/41

At both Elementary and Service Flying Training, Whitney performed above average and he received his pilot's wings on 14 August 1942. A little less than two months later he was posted to No. 135 (F) 'Bulldog' squadron, at Patricia Bay, B.C., Canada.

He was promoted to Flight/Sergeant in February 1943, a rank he held when his Hawker Hurricane went into the sea, probably north of Galiano Island, B.C., on April 26th. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated at the Ottawa Memorial and also at Resthaven Gardens of Memory in Baton Rouge, LA, USA.



Whitney was born on 31 October 1920 in Baton Rouge to Philip Aucoin, a steamboat captain, and Marie Adele Duhon. He had a younger sister, Claire, born 1922. Both parents were born in Louisiana and the family were of French origin.

<p>Whitney Aucoin Is Missing in Patrol Action</p>	<p>being unable to enter the United States Air Force.</p>
<p>Reporting that he failed to return from a patrol last Tuesday, the Royal Canadian Air Force has notified the parents of Whitey P. Aucoin, Jr., that the youth is missing in action.</p>	<p>Well known here where he spent most of his life, he was graduated from Catholic High school, where he served as drum major for three years. Prior to the time he left Baton Rouge he was life guard at the City Park swimming pool.</p>
<p>The parents are Mr. and Mrs. Whitney P. Aucoin.</p>	<p>DIDN'T IT FIT?</p>
<p>Young Aucoin, a flight sergeant, in the Royal Canadian Air Force, has been in service since September, 1941, having volunteered after</p>	<p>Hot Springs, Mont., May 3 (AP) —The Red Cross gave Virgil L. Pitts a sweater when he went overseas in World War I. Yesterday he donated the same sweater to the Red Cross—to be given to a World War II doughboy.</p>

*Baton Rouge
State Times
Advocate*



“Queenie” the mascot of bulldog squadron #135

Details of Crash

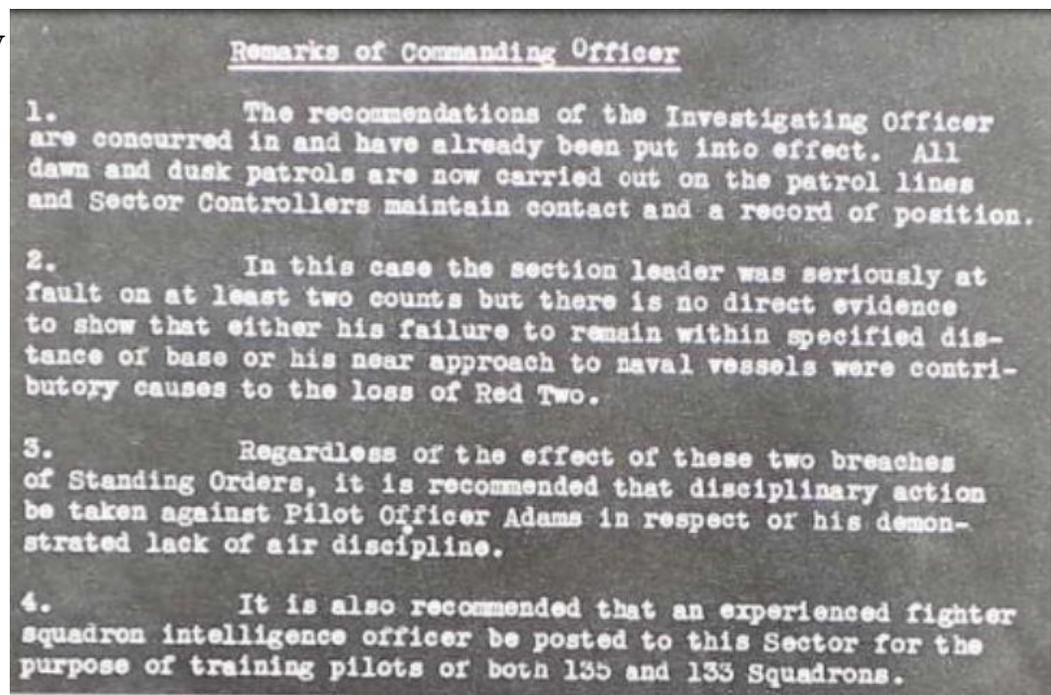
Flight/Sergeant Whitney Aucoin was on dusk patrol in Hawker Hurricane 5410 when it was reported overdue on 26 April 1943. The aircraft had last been seen at 50° 07" north and 123° 32" west. All air/sea rescue personnel were instructed to stand by and an air/sea rescue Supermarine Stranraer, on navigation exercise, was instructed to go to the area north of Galiano Island to search for an aircraft in distress going north-west.

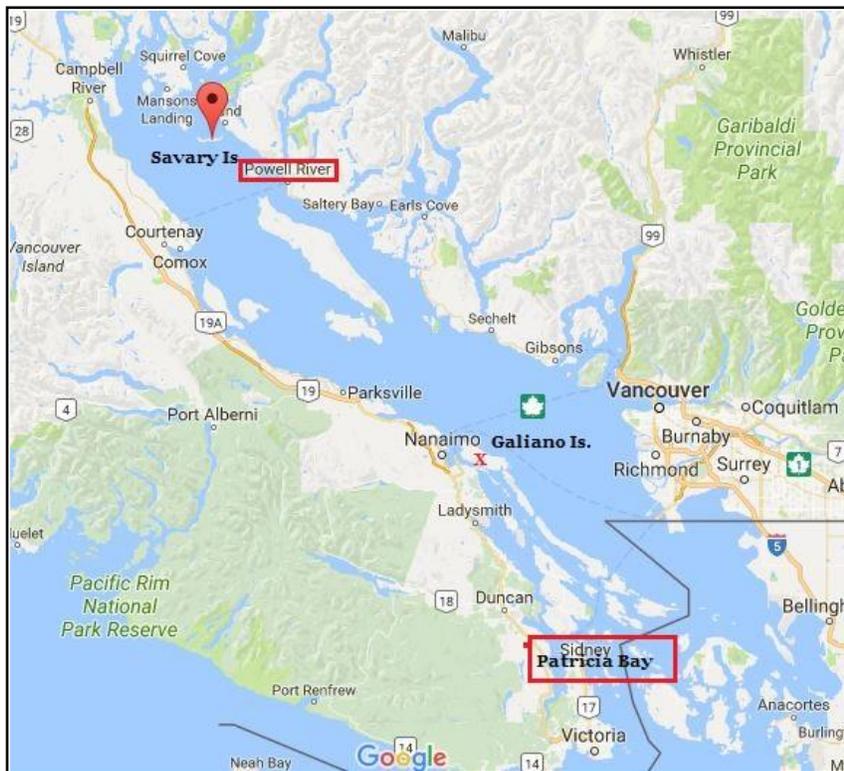
The following day the search was continued. Just before 5 am the captain of a Stranraer phoned "*at 1:30 received S.O.S. from a fishing boat at SE tip of Savary Island also a message 'have pilot on board'*" The daily diary of the station records that this was followed up but no information could be obtained of a pilot being picked up. It does not record whether or not the fishing boat was identified. Two Stranraers and six Westland Lysanders covered the area around Savary Island making an intensive search without success.

Fourteen more searches were made by Lysanders on April 28th, and a further 13 on the 29th flying as low as possible over the land and adjacent waters, again with no success.

A final search around Powell River was made on April 30th by a Bristol Beaufort. When this also failed to find any clues, the search was abandoned and Flight/Sergeant Aucoin was reported missing, assumed dead.

A Court of Inquiry was convened on very sparse evidence. The conclusion was:





~~1022-W-71~~

514 University Walk
Baton Rouge 8 La.
U. S. A. 54
October 25, 1943

NOV 1

Post

1022-A-1071

The Secretary,
Department of National Defense for Air,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter of October 19, 1943, and would like to have you accept this letter as confirmation that we have received no further information concerning our son, Flight Sergeant, Whitney Philip Aucoin, Jr., other than that disclosed by the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Because there has been such a lapse of time since the accident, Mrs. Aucoin and I would appreciate it if you would give us as many details concerning the accident as you possibly can. We know absolutely nothing and the suspense and anxiety has been almost unbearable at times. Anything at all that you can tell us regarding Whitney's accident would, I'm sure, be a contributing factor towards putting our minds more at ease.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the consideration and kindness that you have extended to my family and me over the loss of our son.

Sincerely yours,

W. P. Aucoin

Capt. W. P. Aucoin

*Answer
to
inquiry*

M. T.



