

# Bateman, John Haythornthwaite

**Age:** 20

**Nationality:** Canadian

**Rank:** WO II

**Unit:** No. 32 OTU

**Occupation:** WAG

**Service No:** R/103889

**Birth:** 23 May 1923,  
Badur, Manitoba  
Canada

**Home Town:** Inisfail, Alberta,  
Canada

**Death:** 19 September 1943  
  
Crash of Handley Page Hampden AJ993,  
Cape Flattery, WA, USA

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

**Others:** Sgt. Albert Sidney Dobie, Navigator, RAFVR, F/S Albert  
France, WAG, RCAF; P/O Harry Haig Frost, Pilot, RCAF.



*Plaque from Ottawa Memorial*

## **Biography**

John (Jack) Haythorntwaite Bateman was a peppy 17 year old school boy with grade 10 education when he applied for the RCAF. He had been a trooper for a year in No. 15 Alberta Light Horse, and was enlisted in the RCAF, in Calgary, Alberta, a month after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, as a potential wireless operator/air gunner (WAG). The only work experience John had before enlistment was seasonal farm work in the school holiday.

Jack attended No. 2 Wireless School in Calgary. His performance was below average but he passed with 65% standing 84<sup>th</sup> out of a class of 120 and was awarded his wireless operators badge on 27 April 1942. From here, he was sent to No. 4 Gunnery School in Lethbridge, Alberta. Again, his performance was only fair. He passed standing 25<sup>th</sup> out of 26 students. However, during this part of his training he failed on the final signalling check and had to return to No. 2 Wireless School for a month, after which he passed the test and was awarded his WAG badge on 20 June 1942, a year after his enlistment.

After gunnery school, Jack was posted to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. While there the RCAF received a letter asking that he be released to assist his father in the harvest. Jack had taken 14 days special leave in June/July and took his 14 days annual leave in September, but there is no recorded reply to the request and no special leave was granted after it was made. From Prince Albert he was posted to Rivers, Manitoba and finally to No. 32 OTU Patricia Bay in July 1943.

On 19 September 1943, Jack was one of two WAG's on Handley Page Hampden AN993 when it crashed into the ocean while on navigational exercise. No bodies were ever found.

Jack Bateman was born on 23 May 1923, in Baldur, Manitoba, to Sydney Bateman and Margaret Luella Patterson. His mother was over 40 and his father close to 40 when he was born, and he was their only child. Haythorntwaite was Sydney's mother's maiden name. When he was six years old, the family moved to Inisfail, Alberta, where his parents lived the remainder of their lives.

## Details of Crash

On 19 September 1943, the pilots and crew of six Handley Page Hampdens were briefed for a navigational exercise taking them across Vancouver Island and down the coast to Washington. They were advised that they were flying toward bad weather but it was probable that they would have completed the exercise before the weather deteriorated. They were told not to fly in cloud, and that in the event of encountering bad weather they should return to base.

By 7:25 am the aircraft were taxiing out for take-off. The Meteorological Office called to warn that the bad weather was expected sooner than had been originally thought, but it would still probably be after the exercise was completed. Given that the pilots had been warned to turn back if there was a problem, it was decided that the exercise could continue.

At 8:45, it was reported that a Hampden was down in the sea. Information from Hampden AN131 indicated that Hampden AJ993 had crashed at 8:12 am at 48° 27' N 124° 48' W. A Westland Lysander and a Supermarine Stranraer were immediately dispatched to the scene. Number 2 Group HQ were called and told the position so that they could contact Naval Patrol boats and effect a sea rescue. The search failed to find any sign of the four crew members. A dinghy and one wheel were recovered by an American Patrol boat.

Five Hampdens turned back at the first sign of bad weather and returned safely to base. The Navigator of Hampden AN131 had witnessed the crash of AN993. At the time AN131 decided to turn back, AN993 was about one mile ahead and had also turned back. AN993 turned steeply to starboard, levelled out and began a shallow dive down from about 1,000 feet. The pilot tried to pull out of the dive, the nose came up steeply, the port wing dropped and the aircraft turned over onto its back and made a steep dive into the sea, about 5° to the vertical. Hampden AN131 circled the spot but saw no wreckage.

The previous day a pilot flying AN993 had reported the gyro artificial horizon instrument in the aircraft had an intermittent fault. This was referred to the Instrument Section who could find no error and the normal inspection of AN993 before the fatal flight also found no problems.

The officer in charge of the Instrument Section stated that in his opinion the pilot making the complaint had not waited sufficient time for the gyro horizon to

completely correct itself after completion of a normal turn. The Sperry Gyroscope Company, makers of the instrument, warned that a turn error exists during and immediately after a manoeuvre involving turn and that the gyro horizon corrects its error within two minutes of the turn. In a period of less than 24 hours, five gyro horizons had been reported as unserviceable by pupil pilots. On examination and testing by staff pilots they were all found to be in working order.

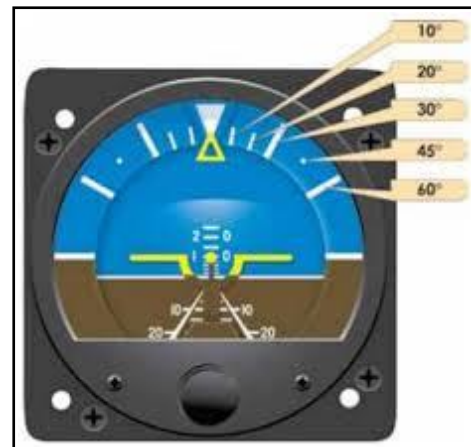
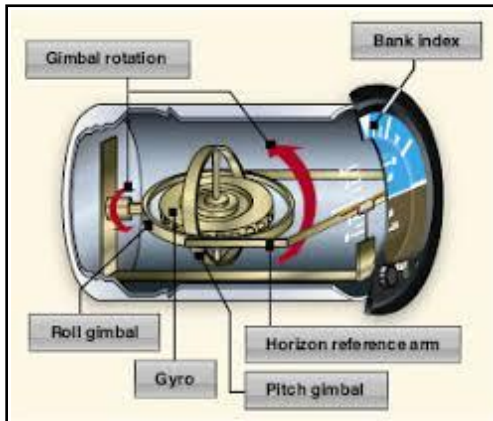
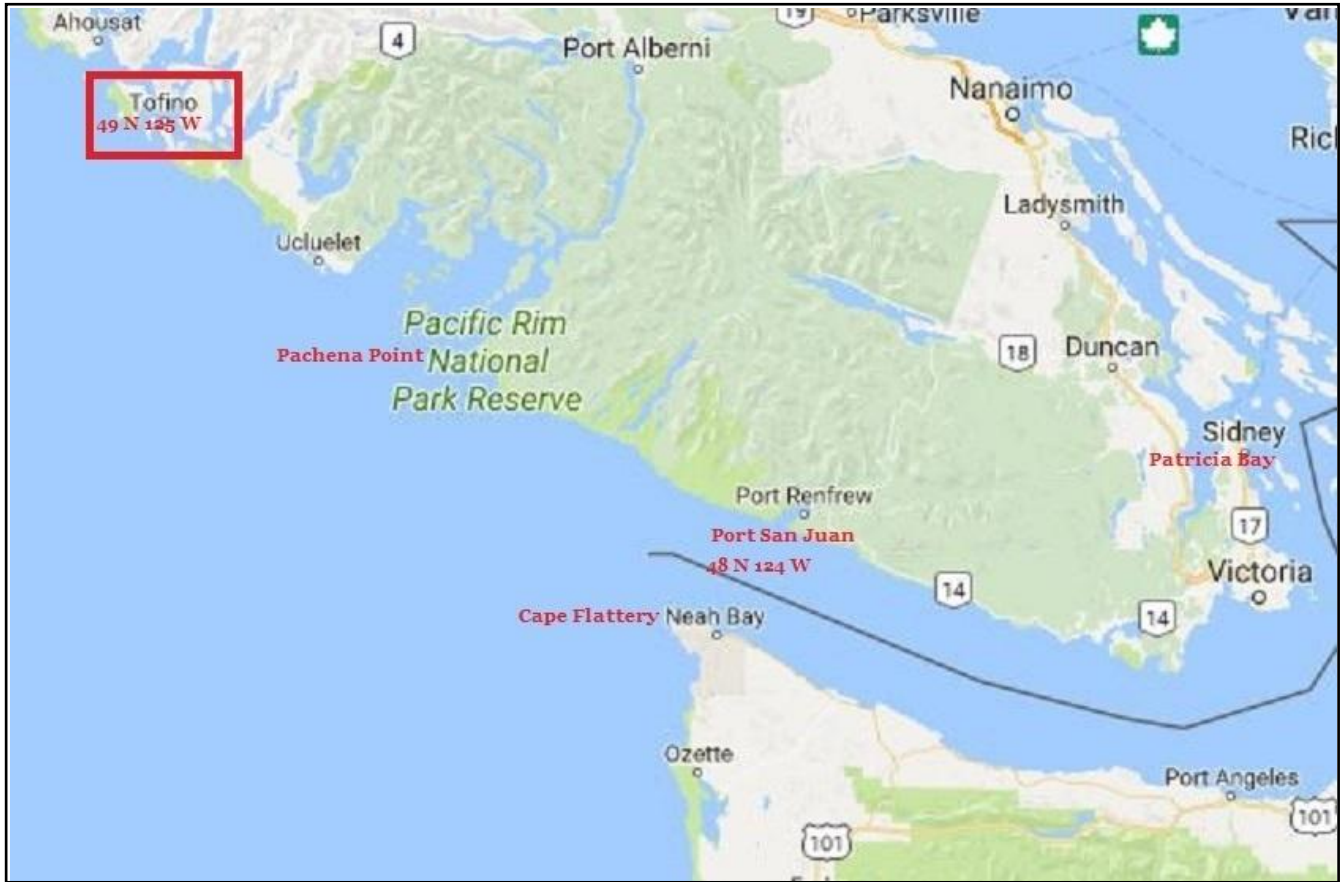
Hampden AN993 crew members were:

F/S John Hythorthwaite Bateman	WAG	RCAF
Sgt. Albert Sidney Dobie	Navigator	RAFVR
F/S Albert France	WAG	RCAF
P/O Harry Haig Frost	Pilot	RCAF

Pilot Officer Frost was deemed to be fully competent to fly this aircraft under the weather conditions encountered. Had the Meteorological Forecast predicted the bad weather reaching the route during the course of the exercise the flight would have been cancelled.

All four crew members were killed in the accident and no bodies were ever recovered.





*Artificial Horizon Instrument*

