

# Britland, Lionel Poston

**Age:** 21

**Nationality:** Canadian

**Rank:** Sergeant

**Unit:** No. 3 OTU

**Occupation:** Wireless Operator/  
Gunner

**Service No:** 2341A

**Birth:** 9 January 1920  
Birkenhead, Cheshire,  
England

**Home Town:** Vancouver, BC, Canada

**Death:** 21 September 1941

Crash of Avro Anson N9818  
Mountain Top, NW of Yale BC, Canada

**Burial:** Cremated and ashes buried in cairn at site of crash.

**Others:** F/O Brooks (pilot); Corporal Douglas Buchanan Wortley  
(passenger)



## Biography

Lionel Britland came to Canada in 1930 when he was 10 years old, and his family settled in Vancouver, BC. He joined the Auxiliary (AAAF) No. 111 (CAC) on 27 September 1938 as a batman. Having completed two years at wireless school prior to this and being an amateur wireless enthusiast, he was re-graded as a wireless operator on 21 March 1939. He was reported as '*keen and studies hard*'. He was to have further training as an air gunner. Lionel enlisted in the Permanent RCAF on 29 September 1939.

On 17 August 1940 Lionel had one black mark against his name. He was confined to barracks for three days for '*failing to show up at his post for 3 minutes after the fire truck siren had sounded although ordered to be there.*'

Lionel was trained as an Air Gunner and as a Bomb Aimer. He also took courses in message picking up, supply dropping, and air photography. He completed a signals course on buzzer, semaphore and lamp.

He was transferred from the Mary Hill Battery in Esquimalt to Patricia Bay on 2 December 1940. On 11 February 1941 Lionel was transferred to No. 3 (CAC).

On 1 September 1941 Lionel was appointed sergeant and re-mustered as a Wireless Operator/ Air Gunner.

Three weeks later Lionel was a crew member on Avro Anson 9818 when it crashed on the top of a mountain NW of Yale, BC.

Lionel was born on 9 January 1920 to William Britland and Vera Poston in Birkenhead Cheshire, England. He had two older brothers, George Douglas, who was killed in a training operation on 11 July 1944, and Walter who also served in the RCAF, and a younger brother Gerald.

## Details of Crash

Avro Anson N9818 crashed on the top of a mountain in the Lillooet Range, about eight miles NW of Yale, BC, while being ferried from Edmonton, Alberta to No. 32 OTU Patricia Bay. It was 5,800ft above sea level at 49° 33" N. 121° 30" W. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 1941, there were three men aboard:

F/O Brooks	pilot
Sergeant Lionel Posten Britland	wireless operator/air gunner,
Corporal Douglas Buchanan Wortley	passenger from McLeod Alberta.

At Patricia Bay the plane was reported as three hours overdue. A search party was sent out but returned at 7:30 pm, having found nothing. On September 22<sup>nd</sup> the search resumed at 7:00 am and wreckage was located and a rescue party set out on foot. The next day, a message was received at 4:00 pm that all of the occupants were dead. For the next two days supplies were dropped for the rescue party and on September 26<sup>th</sup> a message was received advising of the impossibility of bringing the bodies out. Permission was sought from the next of kin to cremate the bodies on the mountain and erect a stone cairn over the ashes. A suitable burial service was read by one of the rescue party, Pilot Officer Black.

The court of inquiry concluded that the primary cause of the crash was that the aircraft was forced down by icing conditions encountered in cloud, and the secondary cause was the failure of flying instruments due to ice formation.

The propeller blades were bent backwards without being twisted, indicating that both engines had stopped before landing, possibly due to icing. The recommendation of the court was that planes not fly in cloud or on instruments when icing conditions are reported to exist.

