

Doherty, Andrew Joseph

Age: 20

Nationality: New Zealand

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Navigator/Observer

Service No: 414549 (RNZAF)

Birth: 19 May 1922
Taumarunui,
New Zealand

Home Town: Lower Hutt, Wellington,
New Zealand

Death: 16 December 1942

Crash of Avro Anson N9560
West of Nanoose Bay, BC

Burial: Royal Oak Burial Park, Victoria, BC

Others: P/O Percival Frederick Biggs, WAG; P/O William Ward Harris;
(All RCAF) Navigator; P/O David Jack Robertson, Pilot; P/O James
Roderick Vosburgh, WAG.



Biography

Andrew Joseph Doherty was born on 19 May 1922 in Taumarunui, New Zealand, the youngest child of James Doherty, an immigrant from Scotland, and Janet Shields.

On 24 June 1941, Andrew, who was working as a clerk in a film distributing company, was called up in the war ballot. He left New Zealand on 12 February 1942 on MV Bloemfontein to arrive in San Francisco on March 4th. He was one of a group of 30 members of the New Zealand Air Corps bound for Ottawa in Canada for training under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Andrew trained in Manitoba at No. 7 Air Observer School, Portage le Prairie, followed by No. 3 B & G, MacDonald, and No. 1 Navigator School, Rivers.

By December 1942, Andrew was with No. 32 Operation Training Unit at Patricia Bay in British Columbia, a sergeant and trained as a Navigator/Air Observer. On December 16th, he was one of a crew of five on Avro Anson N560 when it flew into a stand of trees west of Nanoose Bay, Vancouver Island. Andrew was killed in the crash and is buried at the Royal Oak Burial Park in Victoria, BC. He was one of 91 New Zealanders who died in Canada while training.





SÈRGT. OBSERVER DOHERTY

Sergeant Observer Andrew Joseph Doherty, who has been reported missing, believed killed, was the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. James Doherty, of Ngaio. He was born in Taumarunui in 1922, and was educated at the John-

sonville Convent, Marist Brothers, Thorndon, and St. Patrick's College, Wellington. At the time of his enlistment in the Air Force he was employed by a film distributing company in Wellington.

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SERGT OBSERVER DOHERTY

EVENING POST, VOLUME CXXXV, ISSUE 33, 9 FEBRUARY 1943

Details of Crash

Avro Anson N9560 was transferred to Western Air Command in September 1941. On 16 December 1942 it took off at 9:30 am on reconnaissance exercises with a crew of five:

P/O Percival Frederick Biggs	J/21175	RCAF	WAG
Sgt. Andrew Joseph Doherty	414549	RNZAF	Navigator
P/O William Ward Harris	J/14661	RCAF	Navigator (US citizen)
P/O David Jack Robertson	J/13019	RCAF	Pilot
P/O James Roderick Vosburgh	J/20163	RCAF	WAG

The route of the flight was Patricia Bay to Cassidy, to Powell River, to Jervis Inlet and back to Patricia Bay. Signal section received a wireless transmission “go” five minutes after take-off that was the last message from the aircraft. The aircraft never returned to base.

There were six aircraft in total authorized to carry out the exercise and all the pilots and crew were briefed prior to the flight as follows:

“Instructed to map read along the coast between each target until they reached Parksville. From that point the navigators were to initiate courses until the square search was completed and Blubber Bay was found. Instructions were to map read from Blubber Bay to Stillwater. On the final leg from Stillwater to base, the instructions were to fly on a course as directed by the navigator.”

Blubber Bay is on Texada Island while Stillwater is on the North shore of Jervis Inlet.

The crew were specifically warned not to fly in or above clouds and were cautioned regarding the heights of land in this area. Instructions were to fly at about 1,000 ft. and not to fly below 500 ft. with the exception of the leg from Stillwater to base, which was to be flown at 500 ft.

In addition, the wireless operators were told to maintain contact with base at least once an hour and to return to base immediately if contact was lost. The other five aircraft were unable to complete the reconnaissance due to bad weather conditions at Cassidy and returned as instructed.

Pilot/Officer Robertson had flown this course before. His total flying time to this date was:

de Havilland Tiger Moth	82:25 hrs	Airspeed Oxford	7:05 hrs
Avro Anson	146:50 hrs	Handley Page Hampden	4:55 hrs

He had been with No. 32 OTU as a staff pilot for almost a month. His Flight Commander remarked on his flying ability as follows:

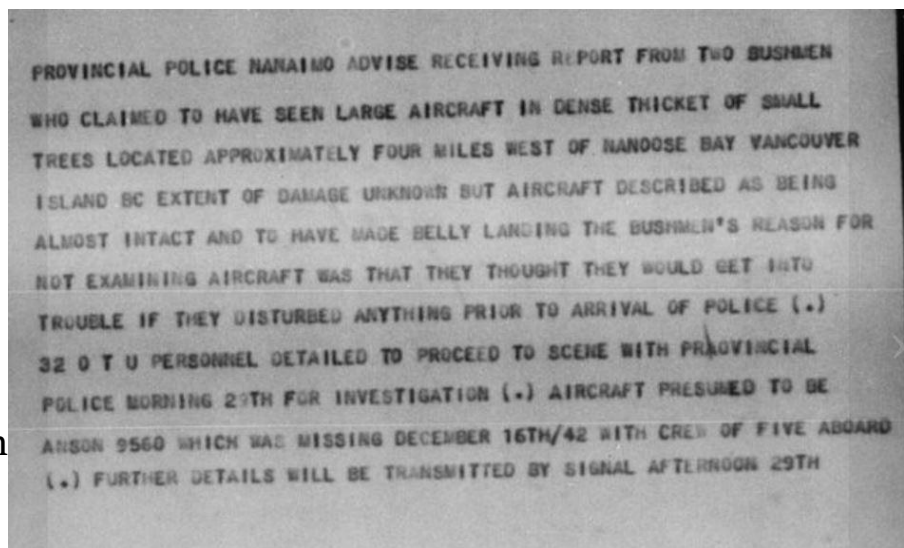
“He was very inexperienced with a poor background. He was posted to this Flight as a Staff Pilot after having been rejected from the Hampden Operational Training Course for poor airmanship.”

The Flight Commander did, however, state that Robertson’s flying ability on Anson was found to be satisfactory.

He also gave the opinion that, in general, pilots sent to Patricia Bay were of limited experience and lacked the ability to cope with the flying conditions peculiar to the location. There had been complaints from time to time on the calibre of pilots arriving at Patricia Bay and these had been noted at other Courts of Inquiry.

A search for the crashed aircraft was undertaken for several days following its disappearance, including one made by Anson R3431, which flew into the sea North of Salt Spring Island while searching.

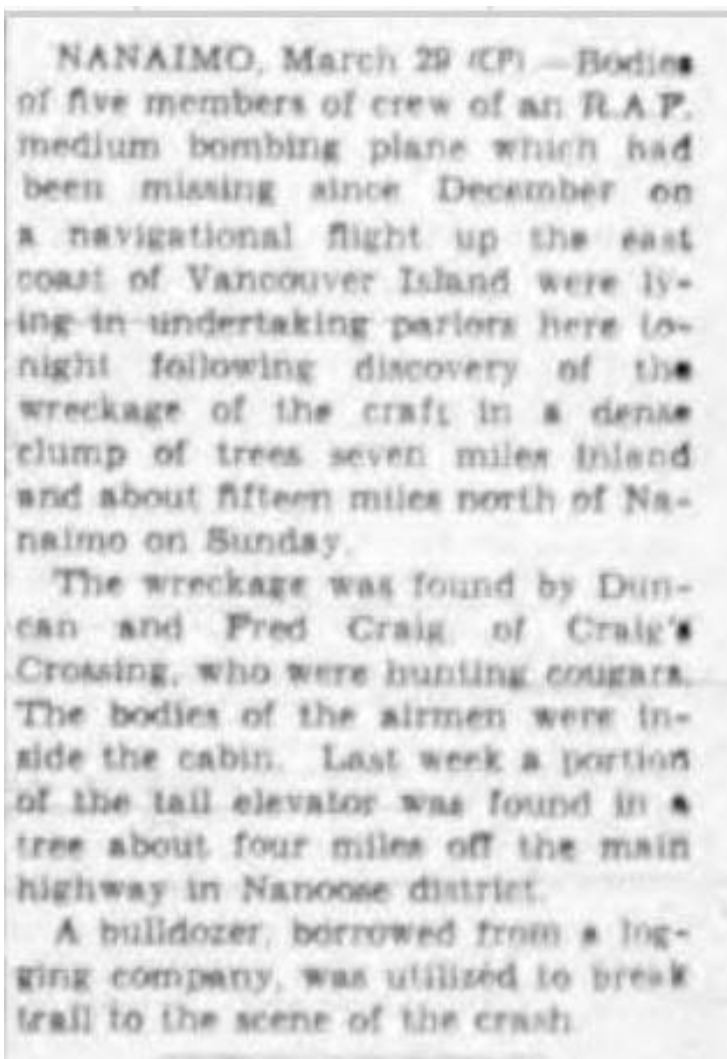
In March 1943, two civilians out cougar hunting, Fred and Duncan Craig, found a large aircraft in heavy bush near Craig’s Crossing in the Nanaimo District. Patricia Bay station received the following communication



PROVINCIAL POLICE NANAIMO ADVISE RECEIVING REPORT FROM TWO BUSHMEN WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN LARGE AIRCRAFT IN DENSE THICKET OF SMALL TREES LOCATED APPROXIMATELY FOUR MILES WEST OF NANOOSE BAY VANCOUVER ISLAND BC EXTENT OF DAMAGE UNKNOWN BUT AIRCRAFT DESCRIBED AS BEING ALMOST INTACT AND TO HAVE MADE BELLY LANDING THE BUSHMEN'S REASON FOR NOT EXAMINING AIRCRAFT WAS THAT THEY THOUGHT THEY WOULD GET INTO TROUBLE IF THEY DISTURBED ANYTHING PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF POLICE (.) 32 O T U PERSONNEL DETAILED TO PROCEED TO SCENE WITH PROVINCIAL POLICE MORNING 20TH FOR INVESTIGATION (.) AIRCRAFT PRESUMED TO BE ANSON 9560 WHICH WAS MISSING DECEMBER 16TH/42 WITH CREW OF FIVE ABOARD (.) FURTHER DETAILS WILL BE TRANSMITTED BY SIGNAL AFTERNOON 25TH

With the assistance of the Craigs, a search party located the site and confirmed that it was indeed N9560. The members of the party identified and recovered the bodies of the five airmen.

A letter was sent to the Governor General of Canada containing a recommendation from the Provincial Police, strongly supported by Western Air Command, that the two civilians who had devoted two days to assisting in the recovery should be compensated for their time and effort with a payment each of \$10.



From the Victoria Times Colonist
March 30 1943.

