

Hall, Grant Leroy

Age: 21

Nationality: Canadian

Rank: Pilot/Officer

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Wireless Operator/
Air Gunner

Service No: J/22085

Birth: 12 December 1921
Townsend, Norfolk County,
Ontario, Canada

Home Town: Waterford, Ontario, Canada

Death: 14 March 1943

Crash of Handley Page Hampden P5433
Saanich Inlet B.C., Canada

Burial: Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial

Others: P/O Allan William Hunt, Pilot, RAAF;
P/O Reginald Keith Manttan, Navigator, RAAF;
Sgt Howard Shurwin Piercy, WAG, RCAF.



Biography

Grant Hall was a first year medical student at Western University, London, Ontario, when he applied to join the RCAF in 1941. In the period between his application and enlistment he worked for his father who was a Dairy Farmer.

Grant applied for Flying Duties and hoped to become a pilot. In excellent physical condition and with his above average education record, he made a very good impression at his first interview, being described as:

“A Canadian lad, intelligent, of good appearance, who should make a satisfactory pilot with training. Officer material in due course”

He was recommended as best fitted for a pilot or observer.

Grant completed his Initial Training with no problems. He was reported to be a quiet type, somewhat retiring, serious, methodical and responsible, and again was recommended as a pilot and began Flying School.

At Flying School, Grant discovered he did not have the aptitude to be the pilot he had hoped for. He failed Elementary Flying School, and was recommended for training as an air observer.

Name of Flying Instructor: T/Sgt. A.R. Pinder

Brief extract from Flying Instructor's Report:-

This student tried hard but seems to lack initiative. He went solo at 10:45 and since then hasn't made any improvement. On landings he failed to level out sufficiently, the aeroplane ~~would~~ would bounce, then he was too slow to react and bring the control column back as a result the tail would continue to bounce. His judgement was erratic and his circuits got worse rather than better.

Brief extract from Chief Flying Instructor's Report:-

This student tries hard but is quite nervous. He had 10 hours and 5 minutes instruction before going solo and had shown very little improvement since. His landings were uncertain and at times, it was impossible to send him solo. Towards the last, he did not seem to be able to fly without constant supervision from the instructor.

Report of Ground Instructor:-

Slow thinking, conscientious student. Has educational background to be an observer but it will require application. Has to work hard. Second choice is Wireless Air Gunner.

Grant had further difficulties at Air Observer School, where he was judged to have no navigational ability and to be generally weak in the air.

In May 1942, Grant's training switched to wireless operator and air gunner. He passed both courses, earning his wireless operator's badge in November 1942 and his air gunner's badge in December 1942. Along with the air gunner's badge, Grant earned his commission and became pilot/officer.

Grant was posted to No. 32 OTU at Patricia Bay, B.C., on 9 January 1943. On 14 March 1943, he was wireless operator/air gunner on Hampden P5433 for a night flying test over the sea. The aircraft crashed into Saanich Inlet, B.C. and he was reported missing, presumed killed.

Grant Leroy Hall was born 12 December 1921 to Roy Nelson Hall and Violet Elinore Robinson in Townsend township, Ontario. He had one younger sister.



HGL3

Details of Crash

On 14 March 1943, Handley Page Hampden P5433 carried a crew of four; two Canadians and two Australians:

Allan William Hunt	P/O RAAF	Pilot
Reginald Keith Manttan	P/O RAAF	Navigator
Grant Leroy Hall	P/O RCAF	Wireless Operator/Air Gunner
Howard Shurwin Piercy	Sgt RCAF	“ “

The purpose of the flight was to practice low flying over water at night.

The aircraft was seen to crash into the water in Saanich Inlet. The cause of the crash was not apparent. It was suggested an earlier accident with this Hampden could have had some bearing on it, but this was dismissed. The only body recovered was that of the pilot.

