MARLOW, Alan Robert

Age: 21

Nationality: English

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Navigator

Service No: 1577871 (RAFVR)

Birth: 27 February 1922
Kettering, Northamptonshire
England

Home Town: Kettering, Northamptonshire,
England

Death: 23, May, 1943

Crash of Handley Page Hampden AN142
on landing at Patricia Bay

Burial: Royal Oak Burial Park, Victoria, B.C., Canada

Others: Sgt. Colin L. Bishop, WAG, RAAF; P/O Charles J. Davis, Pilot, RAAF; Sgt. Reginald J. Hughes, WAG, RAAF.

Biography

In 1939 Alan Marlow was living at 23 Southgate Drive, Kettering, Northamptonshire, with his parents, James Alfred Marlow, an insurance agent, and Winifred A. Marlow (née Scammer), and one sibling. On the 1939 registration he is reported as being a draughtsman, though the transcription of this is questioned.

Alan would have been 17 in 1939 and either volunteered or was called up to join the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserves some time later. After aircrew training in England, he was sent to Canada for further training and in 1943 he was training in No. 32 Operational Training Unit in Patricia Bay, British Columbia, as either a pilot or a navigator.

On 23 May 1943, Alan was navigator on Handley Page Hampden AN142 on navigational exercises when the starboard engine failed. The aircraft managed to return to base and crashed and burned on landing. All four crew members died.

Royal Oak Burial Park contains 89 graves from World War 2. Most graves are of airmen. These are located in a plot. The other graves are scattered throughout the cemetery.

Details of Crash

On 23 May 1943, Handley Page Hampden AN142 took off from Patricia Bay station at 1:00 pm to carry out an authorized navigation exercise. It carried a crew of four airmen:

Sgt. Colin L. Bishop	RAAF	WAG
P/O Charles J. Davis	RAAF	Pilot
Sgt. Reginald J. Hughes	RAAF	WAG
Sgt. Alan R. Marlow	RAFVR	Navigator

The duration of the flight was to be 4 hours and 15 minutes. Routine messages were passed by R/T until 4:30 pm when a message was received stating that the starboard engine was no longer serviceable and that the aircraft was returning to base.

At 5:10 pm the following message was received from the pilot and passed to Operational Room:

"Approaching Sidney, land at 400, unable to climb, runway to use, want to land immediately."

The control tower told him to come in on runway No. 26, which was nearest to him. It was observed through binoculars that his wheels came partially down and then almost immediately the aircraft yawed to the right, stalled, crashed, and caught fire at approximately 5:12 pm. One WAG was seriously injured, and died four days later, the other three crew were killed outright.

An examination of the wreckage disclosed that the aircraft crashed and burned on soft grassy land adjacent to the aerodrome. The nose of the aircraft, the pilot's cockpit ,and port engine and wing were destroyed by fire. Bending and marking of the propeller blades indicated that the port propeller had been under power when the aircraft struck. Complete examination of all controls not destroyed during the crash was made determining that the fuel valves to the outboard tanks for the starboard engine were closed. These tanks contained fuel at the time of the crash but the other tanks and fuel lines were dry, causing the engine to fail.

The Court of Inquiry into the accident concluded that the pilot allowed the

aircraft to stall when attempting to carry out a single engine landing after failure of the starboard engine. It was considered that the pilot's attention was distracted from his flying when the undercarriage did not lower when he selected the "down" position.

The Court recommended that all members of Hampden crews be thoroughly drilled, and competent, in the manipulation of the main fuel valves in the rear portion of the fuselage so that on engine failure these can be checked as directed by the pilot. Also, that pilots be given more drill in single engine forced landing.

The A.C.C. concurred in the findings of the court and in his covering letter stated:

"The evidence definitely establishes that the accident was caused by failure to turn the starboard main fuel cocks to the outboard tank to the 'on' position."