

Maun, Robert Alfred

Age: 19

Nationality: British

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: No. 32 OTU
(RAFVR)

Occupation: Navigator

Service No: 1336919

Birth: 1st quarter 1923
Farnham, Surrey, UK.

Home Town: Brantford, Middlesex, UK

Death: 17 December 1942

Crash of Avro Anson R3431
North East of Salt Spring Island, BC

Burial: Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial

Others: Sgt. N. A. A. Bastick, Pilot, RAFVR; Sgt. A. M. Bellotti,
2nd WAG, RCAF; Sgt. K. J. Bowler, 1st Navigator, RAFVR;
Sgt. S.J.Conlon, 1st WAG, RCAF; Sgt. R. A. Maun,
2nd Navigator, RAFVR.



Biography

Robert Alfred Maun was born in Farnham, Surrey, England, in the first quarter of 1923 to Alfred Wale Maun and Dorothy Elizabeth Blake. His parents were married in Brantford, Middlesex, England in August 1921, so it can be assumed he was the oldest son.

Robert served in the RAFVR and service records for the British forces are not available to the general public. At the time of his death, he was training with No. 32 OTU in Patricia Bay, BC, Canada. Nothing more is known of him.

Robert was Second Navigator on Avro Anson R3431 when it joined a search for Anson N9560 on December 17th 1942. The aircraft flew into the sea near Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada at about 10:00 am. Robert was one of the three crew members who sank with the aircraft. His body has never been recovered and remains in the Strait of Georgia.



Details of Crash

Avro Anson R3431 was one of several aircraft detailed to search for Anson N9560, which was reported missing during a reconnaissance exercise on 16 December 1942.

The aircraft carried a crew of five:

Sgt. N. A. A. Bastick	Pilot	RAFVR	English
Sgt. A. M. Bellotti	2 nd WAG	RCAF	American
Sgt. K. J. Bowler	1 st Navigator	RAFVR	English
Sgt. S.J.Conlon	1 st WAG	RCAF	Canadian
Sgt. R. A. Maun	2 nd Navigator	RAFVR	English

The Aircraft took off at 9:30 am on 17 December 1942 after sending a W/T “go” at 9:25 am. Nothing further was heard until word was received of the crash.

At about 10:00 am, two men fishing off Montague Harbour, Galiano Island saw the aircraft about a mile away, flying at about 300 ft., just below the clouds. According to one man it was slowly descending; the other man thought it remained level. They heard it crash and saw it sink about three minutes after the crash. The fishermen recovered two bodies from the water, those of Sgt. Bastick and Sgt. Bowler. The bodies of the other occupants were not located. The medical officer who examined the bodies was of the opinion that they died instantaneously and that their condition indicated that the aircraft struck the water with considerable violence. After first seeing the aircraft the fishermen were occupied with their fishing lines, and neither saw it enter the water. Nor did they notice any change in the sound of the engines during the period.

The crews were all briefed prior to the search. They were given a route: Base – Cassidy – Parksville – Blubber Bay – Powell River - Stillwater – Base. The same route as that given to the missing aircraft. They were told emphatically that they must not, under any circumstances, fly in cloud or at any height below 500ft. It was repeatedly stressed that it was the pilot’s responsibility to return to base if the weather was unfit or if the wireless operator was unable to maintain W/T contact with base, and they must report position to base every 30 minutes.

The commanding officer stated that similar types of accidents had occurred in

the past and that in his opinion contributing factors were: the inferior types of pilots posted for staff duties; the changeable weather in the area with liability to fog and low cloud; high hills; poor meteorological forecasts; and the lack of navigational aids. The conclusions of the court of inquiry were that a staff pilot on a reconnaissance and search flight encountered bad weather, probably misjudged his height over the calm water surface, and crashed into the sea.

