

# Schwab, John Hubert

**Age:** 23

**Nationality:** Canadian

**Rank:** Pilot/Officer

**Unit:** No. 32 OTU

**Occupation:** Wireless Operator/  
Air Gunner

**Service No:** J/1612

**Birth:** 29 May 1920  
Meyronne, SK,  
Canada

**Home Town:** Regina, SK,  
Canada

**Death:** 4 June 1943  
  
Crash of Avro Anson 6974  
Qualicum Beach, BC, Canada

**Burial:** Regina Cemetery,  
SK, Canada

**Others:** P/O Jack Hanson Briggs, Navigator, RAFVR;  
P/O Gordon Hugh Gould, Observer, RAFVR;  
F/S Kenneth Charles Huard, Pilot, RAFVR.



## Biography

John Hubert's father was German, born in Iowa, USA, and his mother was French, born in Rheims, France. They came to Canada in 1910. In the 1921 census they had three sons, of which John was the youngest, and were living in Saskatchewan. The boys' nationality is "Canadian" and their racial origin is "German". They all spoke some German.

John applied to the RCAF in May 1940. By this time he had three younger sisters, one deceased, and he reports his mother as being deceased. John was working as a gas station attendant, although he had graduated with grade 12 and spent five months at Moose Jaw technical school, where he was studying air frame mechanics. He applied to be aircrew and his preference was to be an air gunner.

In July 1940, John enlisted in Regina, SK, and went for Initial Training. His performance and deportment were exemplary and he was reportedly fully qualified to be a pilot, but he still preferred air gunner because "*he thought he would contribute more to winning the war*". Throughout his training, he was considered suitable for a commission.

In Gunnery training, John passed fifth out of 61 students. He was well above average, personable, ambitious and had a good knowledge of armament. He received his air gunner's badge and was promoted to sergeant in February 1941. In December 1941, he lost seniority and was severely reprimanded for smoking while acting as wireless operator in a Wellington. With the loss of seniority it was not until August 1942 that he was commissioned and became Pilot/Officer.

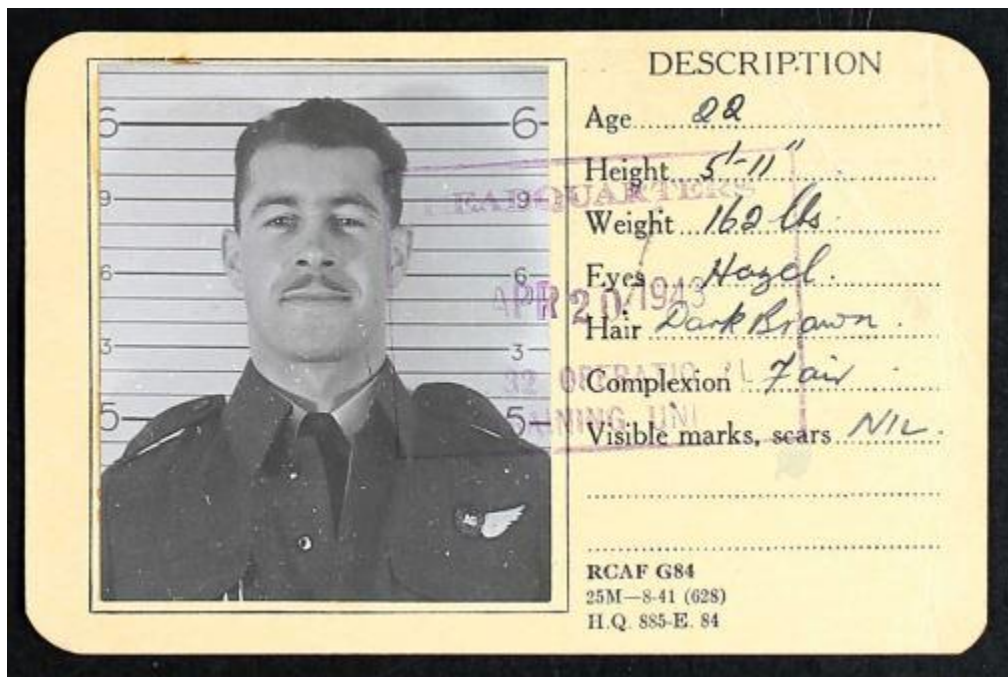
From April 1941 to November 1942 John was with the RAF in England. For a month he was at radio school and then with No. 15 OTU. In August 1941 he joined Mid-East Command. He returned to Canada in November 1942, and was posted to No. 32 OTU, Patricia Bay, BC, the following month.

On 4 June 1943, John was one of a crew of four on Avro Anson 6974, piloted by F/S Kenneth Huard, when it crashed in Qualicum Beach, BC. He and the rest of the crew died on impact.

John Hubert Schwab was born 29 May 1920, in Meyronne, SK, to Carl Henry Schwab, a grain elevator agent, and Bertha Dumois. He had two older brothers

Lloyd, and Carlton, who served in the Canadian Army, and two younger sisters, Iris and Ailene. A third sister, Bernice, had died in 1928.

Although John had stated in his application that his mother had died, when his father applied as beneficiary after John's death, he reported his wife as being in a mental hospital, having been unbalanced for the previous nine years.



## Details of Crash

Avro Anson 6974, previously RAF, AW789, was taken on by the RCAF in October 1941, when it was sent to No. 10 Repair Depot in Calgary. It was delivered to Western Command in March 1943.

At 9:15 on the morning of 4 June 1943, the Anson, piloted by F/S Huard, took off on a three hour W/T familiarization exercise with a crew of four:

P/O Jack Hanson Briggs	Navigator?	RAFVR
P/O Gordon Hugh Gould	Observer?	RAFVR
F/S Kenneth Charles Huard	Pilot	RAFVR
P/O John Hubert Schwab	WAG	RCAF

F/S Huard, the pilot, had 716:45 hours in service flight, 518 on Ansons. The route to be taken was Base to Pachena Point, to local flying area.

Approximately 45 minutes after the W/T “Go” was given, a W/T communication was received with the position of the aircraft. This was the last communication until 11:10 am when a report was received from Aircraft Detection Corps that an aircraft had crashed into a house in Qualicum Beach. This aircraft was identified as Anson 6974. It was subsequently ascertained that the aircraft had burst into flames and completely burnt out.

Eyewitnesses of the accident saw the aircraft travelling east; one witness stated at 2,000 ft., another at 500 – 900 ft. The witnesses agreed that when the aircraft made a left hand turn, the angle of the bank increased continually until the bank was vertical, the aircraft was slipping and lost about 200 ft. The aircraft suddenly ‘snapped’ in such a way that it was again flying level and heading east and, according to the witnesses, parts of the aircraft were flying off.

The aircraft entered into a dive, rolled over on its back, disappeared behind the trees, crashed and caught fire. They saw no smoke or flame coming from the aircraft while it was in the air and before they heard the crash, the engines sounded normal to them. The port portion of the mainplane had broken away and landed about 300 yards from the wreckage; just outside a row of cottages at Qualicum Beach. Some property damage was done leading to a claim from one owner of \$116.00. All four occupants of the Anson were killed outright.

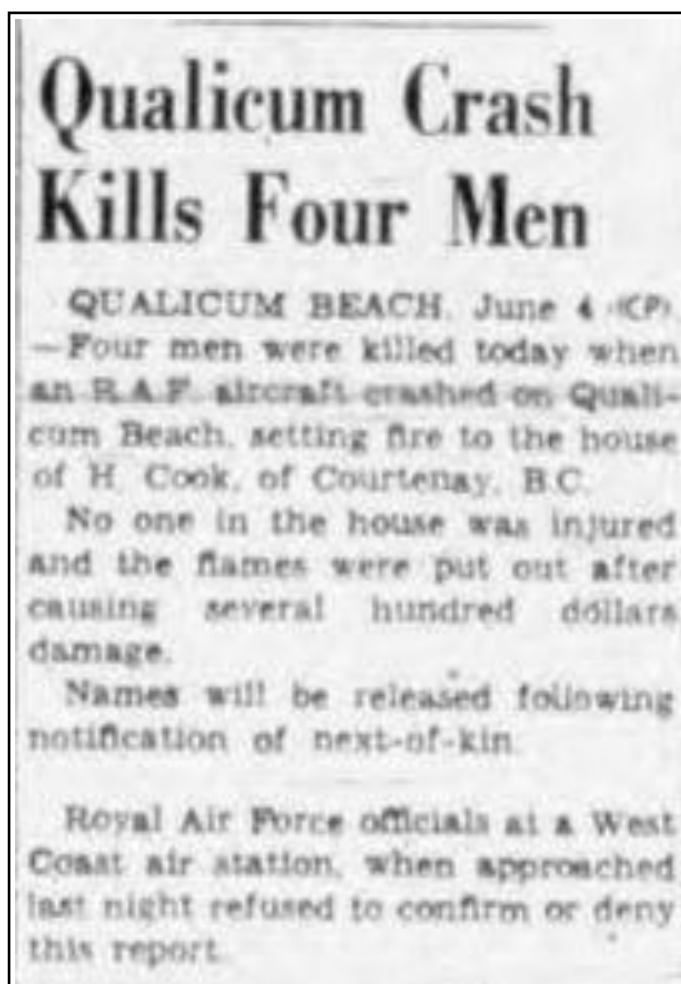


The cause of the accident according to the subsequent inquiry was structural failure of the port wing. A contributing factor could have been strain imposed during the near vertical banking.

The recommendation given was that all pilots be warned not to impose unnecessary strain on Anson aircraft and that said aircraft should only be flown level.

The C.I Accidents wrote:

*“I discussed this accident with the S.A.N.C. Western Air Command during my recent visit and he is quite convinced that the failure originated in the lower boom of the front spar, a contributory cause of the failure being the gluing at this point. There have been several structural failures in Ansons recently which have occurred during high speed dives but for which no satisfactory answer has been found. I have cabled the Accident Investigation Branch at the Air Ministry to see if they have any information which would help us.”*



*From Victoria Times Colonist June 5<sup>th</sup> 1943*

