

Luckock, Robert Ernest

Age: 21

Nationality: British

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Pilot

Service No: 1332144 RAFVR



Birth: May 1921
Romford, Essex, U.K.

Hometown: Brentwood, Essex, U.K.

Death: 30 October 1942

Crash of Avro Anson L7056
Port Renfrew, BC, Canada

Burial: Royal Oak Burial Park, Victoria, BC, Canada

Others: Sgt. W. Baird (WAG); P/O C.G. Fox (1st Navigator);
P/O Anthony Lawrence (2nd Navigator)

Biography

Robert Luckock was working as a clerk in Brentwood, Essex, when he enlisted in the the RAFVR on 17 January 1941. He was recommended for training as a pilot and received his pilot's wings on 19 June 1942. By October 1942, Robert was in No. 32 Operational Training Unit in Patricia Bay, BC, Canada. On 30 October 1942, with over 300 hours flying experience, Robert was piloting Avro Anson L7056 on joint naval exercises when the aircraft disappeared in bad weather. The crash site was not found and the four crew members were posted first as missing and later presumed lost at sea.

Robert was born May 1921 in Romford, Essex, UK, to Edmund John Luckock and Edith Grace Pindard. He had a brother and sister. He was educated at Brentwood School, at that time an independent boys' day and boarding school. Robert was athletic, involved in soccer, cricket, tennis and cross country running, and he was an enthusiastic hobby fisherman. Robert's father died in 1946, and his mother in 1965; both long before his crash site and body were discovered.



Details of Crash

Anson Aircraft L7056 was delivered to Western Air Command on 5 November 1941 for use at No. 32 OTU in Patricia Bay. On 10 October 1942, the aircraft took part in joint navigational exercises with the navy, over Vancouver Island. It carried a crew of four:

Sergeant William Baird	Wireless Operator	RCAF
P/O Charles George Fox	First Navigator	RAFVR
P/O Anthony Lawrence	Second Navigator	RAFVR
Sergeant Robert Luckock	Pilot	RAFVR

Sergeant Luckock, the pilot, had 80 hours experience flying single engine aircraft and 238 hours experience on multi engine.

The forecast was for cloudy weather, 80% to 100% strato-cumulus at 3,000 feet, decreasing to 30% to 50% later in the day. During the briefing the crews taking part were warned about a front that was off the coast, but far enough away not to be expected to affect the exercise. However the front turned out to be considerably closer to the coast than thought and, instead of the expected clearing during the afternoon, the weather became considerably worse. The crews had been instructed to return to base if bad weather was encountered.

Anson L7056 took off at 9:09 am. The route of the exercise was Base to Port San Juan (now Port Renfrew) to 48° N 126°W to Pachena Point and back to Base, a distance of 300 miles to be completed in 3 hours. No W/T contact was received from L7056 after the 'go' signal had been received one minute after take off. Several attempts were made to contact it by means of the usual W/T procedures with no success. A second aircraft engaged in the same exercise, which took off about 20 minutes after L7056, ran into bad weather at about 10:50 am and chose not to fly into the weather. It flew up and down the coast for about an hour and 50 minutes, when the call was received to return to base.

An hour after L7056 was due at base a search was initiated involving many aircraft and continuing until November 3rd. No trace of the aircraft or its occupants could be found. A patch of oil that was found by a flying boat along the planned route was picked up by a rescue boat and sent for analysis to determine whether it contained aero engine oil. No results of the analysis were available to the inquiry into the aircraft's disappearance.

With no wreckage and no witnesses it was impossible for the Court of Inquiry to come to any conclusions or make any recommendations. It was assumed that the cause of the accident was bad weather coupled with the pilot's inexperience on instruments.



71 years later, on 23 October 2013, the Anson and her crew were discovered by forestry engineers in a remote forested area near Port Renfrew, British Columbia. The recovery of the aircraft and crew and the military funeral that followed have been extensively covered, including in the documentary 'Seventy One Years'.

The following article is from the Victoria Times Colonist October 17th 2014

The remains of four young air force men will be laid to rest in the Royal Oak Burial Park in November, more than 70 years after their plane disappeared on a training flight out of Victoria.

"It will be a full military honours [ceremony]," said Stephen Olson, executive director of the Royal Oak Burial Park.

The ceremony will take place Nov. 10 at 10 a.m. at the park's Commonwealth War Graves area. Family and members from the Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force will attend. The public is also welcome.

The four airmen — one Canadian and three British — took off in an Avro Anson from the Royal Canadian Air Force Base, Patricia Bay on the morning of Oct. 30, 1942.

They were called back with other training planes in the area after a heavy fog rolled in, but never returned to base. A search party was sent out, but within a few days the men were presumed dead and their families notified.



Aircraft debris at the site of the Avro Anson aircraft crash on May 6, 2014. The Avro Anson L7056, a war-time training aircraft, crashed and went missing 30 Oct 1942.

Image by: Brandon O'Connell, MARPAC Imaging Services.



