

Fox, Charles George

Age: 31

Nationality: British

Rank: Pilot/Officer

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Navigator

Service No: 129395

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

Hometown: London, 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 A. Lawrence (2nd Navigator);
Sgt. R. Luckock (Pilot).



Biography

Charles George Fox was a member of the RAFVR posted to No. 32 Operational Training Unit in Patricia Bay, BC, Canada.

He was born on 25 February 1911 to George Charles and Rhoda Fox in the City of London. He had two younger sisters; Ada and Helen. In 1937 Charles married Marion Hickman and they had two young children.



Charles Fox and Marion Hickman

On 30 October 1942 Charles was the Navigator on Avro Anson L7056 when it was engaged in joint naval exercises over Vancouver Island, BC. The aircraft disappeared in heavy fog and its final location was unknown for over 70 years. In 2013 the crashed Anson and the bodies of its four crew members were discovered and the crew finally buried at Royal Oak Burial Park with full military honours on 10 November 2014. Charles'

sons, Peter and Chris, and their wives, attended the funeral of the father they barely knew.



Mr Fox's lighter, left, and watch, right, were found in the debris from the crash

Below is an article from the Daily Mail relating to an interview with Peter Fox when he heard his father's body had been found:

Now a grandfather living in Hoo on the Isle of Grain near Rochester, Kent, Peter said he was stunned when he was told the remains of his long-lost father had been found.

'I had mixed feelings when I was told - surprise and sadness,' he said. 'It stirred up a lot of memories.

'My mother, Marion, didn't cope very well when he went missing.

'I was only four at the time so I have few memories of what happened. I don't remember being told he was missing, he just disappeared from my life and never returned.'

Peter said the recovery of his father's plane has given them an insight into his final moments. It is now thought an engine failure caused the plane to crash.

Peter and his family have been able to fly to Canada to visit the crash site and a memorial to his father and he said this has helped him feel closer to the parent he barely knew.

His mother died in 1998 and Peter believes it a blessing she never knew what happened to her first husband.



© Peter Fox
Peter, second from left, and his wife Shirley, right, and his brother Chris and his wife Pat went to Canada to visit the grave of his father Charles

Details of Crash

Avro 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 Luckcock	Pilot	RAFVR

Sergeant Luckcock, 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 briefing the crews taking part were warned about a front which 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, 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, which 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.

On Oct. 25, 2013, loggers working in a remote area near Lake Cowichan came across the wreckage of a crashed Second World War plane.

A forensic anthropologist with National Defence visited the site and determined through remnants of personal belongings that this was the missing Avro Anson from 1942.

The crew included wireless operator Sgt. William Baird from Brooks, Alta., 25, and three Britons, pilot officers Charlie George Fox, 31, and Anthony William Lawrence, 21, and pilot Sgt. Robert Ernest Luckock, 21.

The families of Baird and Luckock were located and notified of the discovery. Baird is survived by two siblings and an extended family, who said they found peace knowing their loved one would be laid to rest with the honour and dignity he deserved.

“My understanding is that this is only the second time in 60 years that this type of ceremony has occurred, with multiple interments at once,” said Olson.

The four men will be interred in a single grave, with a marker bearing their names. He noted the Commonwealth War Graves area at the burial park includes mostly men who died around Vancouver Island from 1940 to 1945.

“A number of the fellas interred in that section died in training exercises. It’s a given they [the airmen] would have known the other guys,” said Olson, adding this is the burial park’s first interment of missing servicemen.

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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.



