

# Briggs, Jack Hanson

**Age:** 22

**Nationality:** English

**Rank:** Pilot/Officer

**Unit:** No. 32 OTU

**Occupation:** Pilot

**Service No:** 151722 (RAFVR)

**Birth:** 25 April 1921  
Yorkshire,  
England

**Home Town:** Heaton, Bradford,  
Yorkshire, England

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

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

**Others:** P/O Gordon Hugh Gould, Observer?, RAFVR;  
F/S Kenneth Charles Huard, Pilot, RAFVR;  
P/O John Hubert Schwab, WAG, RCAF.



## Biography

Jack Briggs was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, England, on 25 April 1921 to Harold Douglas Briggs, a mechanical engineer, and Ethel Beatrice Hanson. They already had a daughter, Kathleen, born in 1917. In the British 1939 register Jack is listed as a Junior Works Chemist and Kathleen as a Shorthand Typist. Eighteen years of age in April 1939, Jack would have joined the RAF not long after the register was completed.

By 1943, Jack was trained as a pilot, had been commissioned as a Pilot/Officer, and was on Operational training with No. 32 OTU in Patricia Bay, B.C., Canada.

On 4 June 1943, Jack was one of three RAFVR men who, along with one RCAF airman, were crew on Avro Anson 6974 when it crashed and burned at Qualicum Beach, B.C. All four airmen were killed in the accident.

Like other British airmen who were killed while serving at Patricia Bay, Jack was buried in the War Graves plot at Royal Oak Burial Park in Victoria, B.C., Canada.



*War Graves plot at Royal Oaks Burial Park*

## 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, which was 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.

According to the subsequent inquiry the cause of the accident 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*

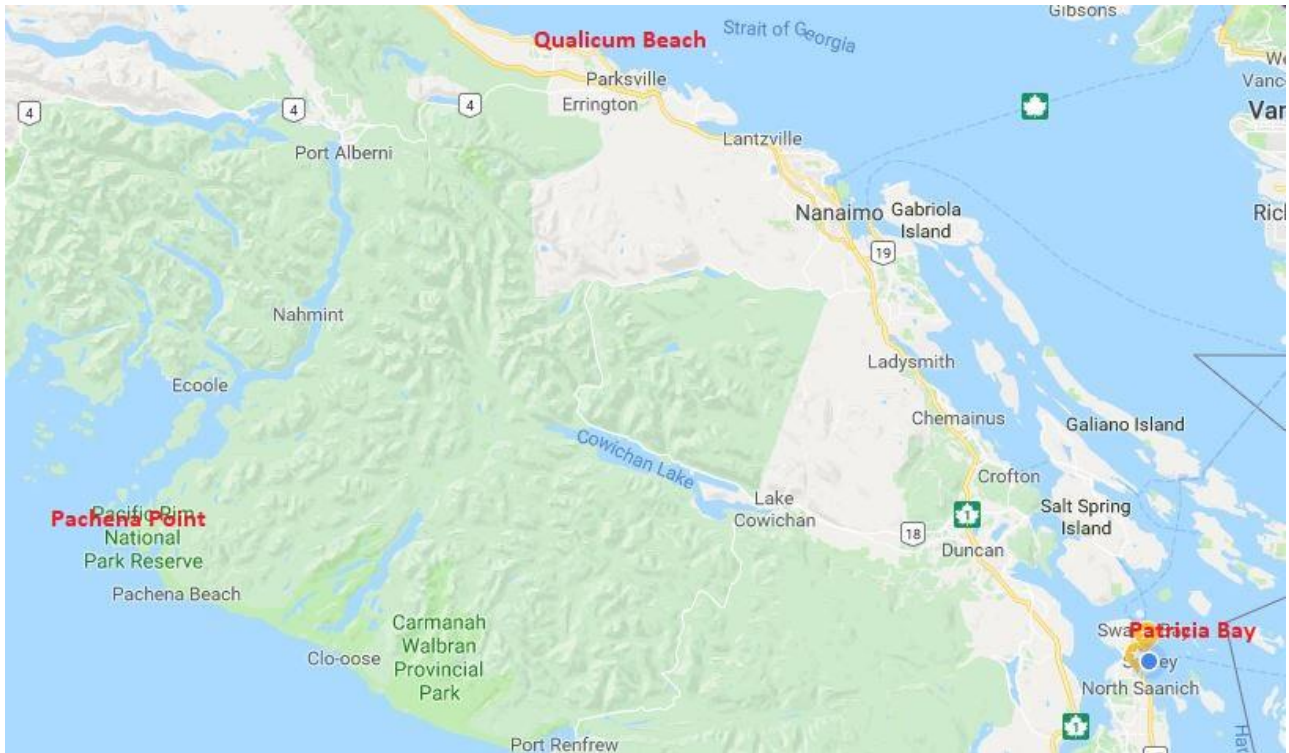
**Qualicum Crash  
Kills Four Men**

QUALICUM BEACH, June 4 (CP).  
—Four men were killed today when an R.A.F. aircraft crashed on Qualicum Beach, setting fire to the house of H. Cook, of Courtenay, B.C.

No one in the house was injured and the flames were put out after causing several hundred dollars damage.

Names will be released following notification of next-of-kin.

Royal Air Force officials at a West Coast air station, when approached last night refused to confirm or deny this report.



AVRO ANSON

HKC

BJH6