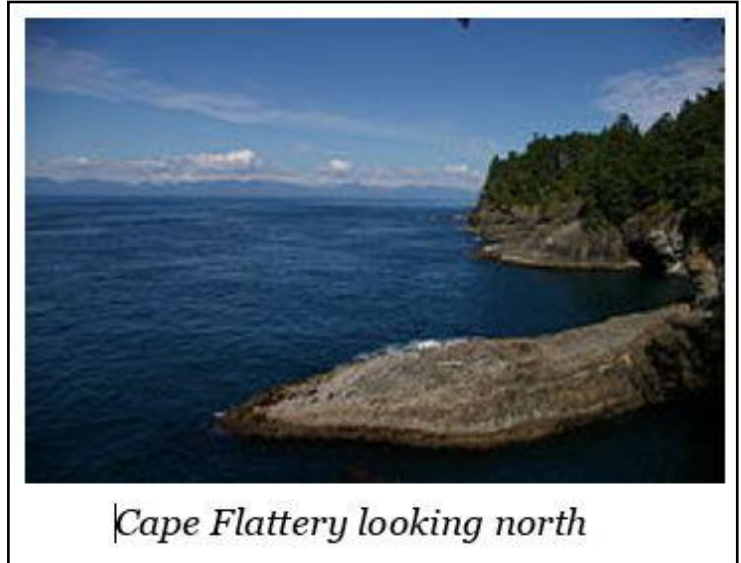


# FROST, Harry Haig

**Age:** 25  
**Nationality:** Canadian  
**Rank:** Pilot Officer  
**Unit:** No. 32 OTU  
**Occupation:** Pilot  
**Service No:** J/24373



**Birth:** 31 March 1918,  
New Westminster, BC,  
Canada

**Home Town:** Victoria, BC,  
Canada

**Death:** 19 September 1943  
  
Crash of Handley Page Hampden AJ993,  
Cape Flattery, WA, USA

**Burial:** Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial,  
Ontario, Canada

**Others:** F/S John Haythorthwaite Bateman, WAG, RCAF;  
Sgt. Albert Sidney Dobie, Navigator, RAFVR;  
F/S Albert France, WAG, RCAF.

## **Biography**

Harry Frost applied to join the permanent Canadian Air Force in 1937, as soon as he earned his Junior Matriculation and left school. Between his application and his enlistment he worked briefly as a steward for Canadian Steamship Lines and hoped to work in the shipyards after he left the RCAF.

When Harry was interviewed he gave a favourable impression. A slender 140 lbs at 6'1", he was described as well above average, "*clean-cut*", and was "*strongly recommended for enlistment*". He initially signed on for three years but subsequent world events would change that plan.

Harry's father, born in England, had been a soldier for 36 years and had served in France with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. By 1937, he was a part time volunteer reserve and was teaching Physical Education in a Vancouver School.

For the first four years in the Air Force, Harry was with Motor Transport. He was a good driver and mechanic. He had a few minor transgressions in the early years, several incidents of drunkenness, seven days confined to barracks for failing to get out of bed when told to, and a similar punishment for driving in the fog when not authorized to do so. However, his conduct and deportment were generally good and he performed well in his trade. He was promoted steadily reaching corporal in September 1939 and sergeant in August 1940.

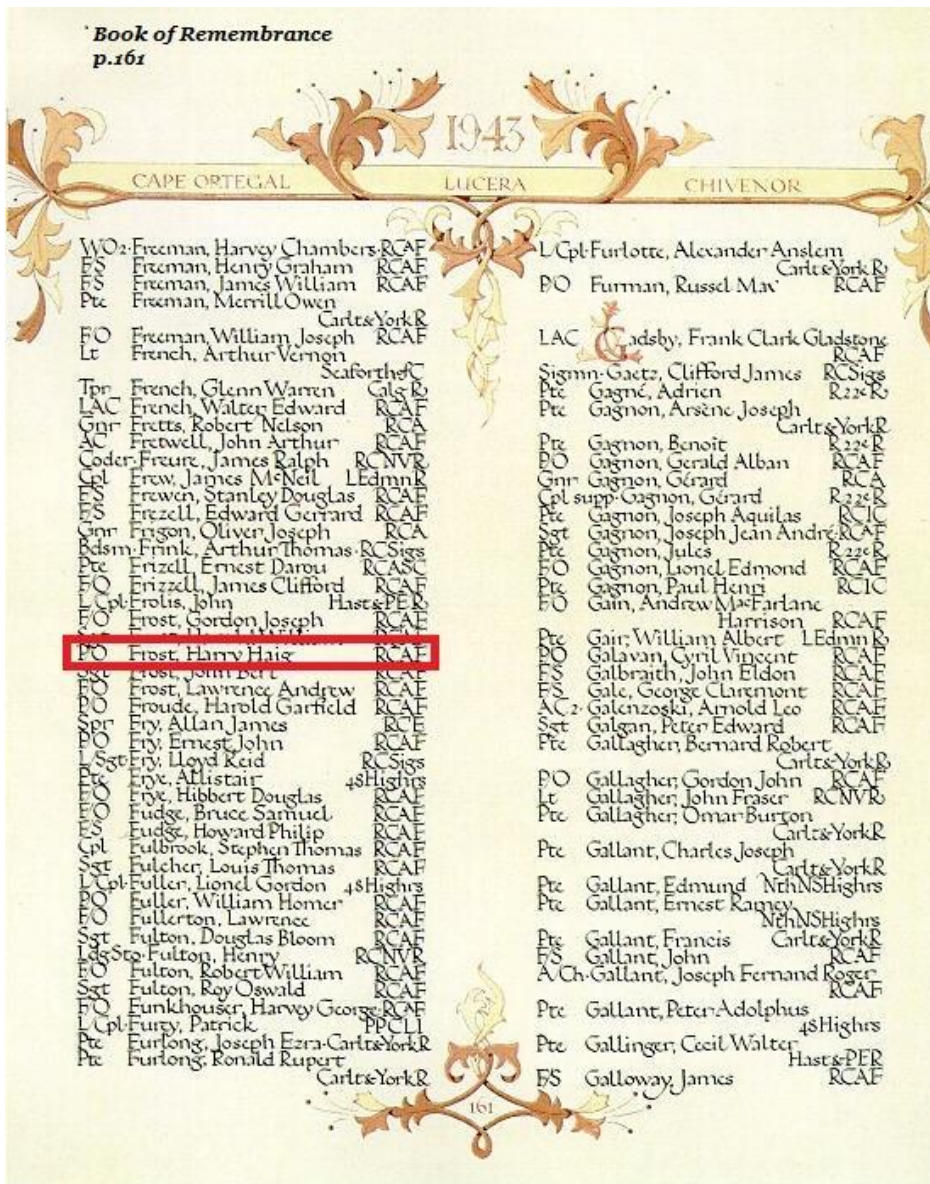
Harry was recognized as a very good N.C.O. with an excellent knowledge of drill and, in 1941, was recommended as a drill instructor. In July of that year he was promoted to Flight Sergeant and later was considered for flying duties. He was mature, of very good attitude and spirit and thought to be good solid aircrew material. For reasons not stated (probably his height), he was deemed unfit for Wireless Operator/AirGunner, and was recommended for training as a pilot or alternatively, a bomb-aimer.

Harry attended Initial Training School from June to July 1942 and Elementary Training School from September to November. After elementary training he was reported as above average in ground school, hard working and studious, but low average in flying ability and only fair in airmanship. He improved in Service Flying Training, which he attended November 42 to March 43, and was reportedly a high average pilot, of pleasing personality and hard working. He did not like aerobatics and was never air sick. Harry earned his pilot's badge 5

March 1943 and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer.

On 19 March 1943, Harry joined No. 32 OTU in Patricia Bay. He spent May to July in Air Reconnaissance School where his performance was above average and he was reported as a hard working, steady officer with considerable service experience. He had been in the RCAF about six years at this point.

On 19 September 1943, Harry Frost was pilot of Handley Page Hampden AJ993 when it crashed into the sea near Cape Flattery. His body was never found and remains in the ocean off Cape Flattery. This was the third Hampden to be lost on navigational exercises in this area.



Harry was born 31 March 1918, in New Westminster, BC, to William Frost and Isabella Carter, who had married in England. He had two older brothers, William, born around 1907, was a stoker and a petty officer on HMCS Red Deer, and Samuel, born about 1912. His sister Maisie was born about 1909 and was single and living with his parents when Harry was killed. In 1941 Harry took a week's leave and married Bertha McKibbin. They had no children.

## Details of Crash

On 19 September 1943 the pilots and crew of six Handley Page Hampdens were briefed for a navigational exercise taking them across Vancouver Island and down the coast to Washington. They were advised that they were flying toward bad weather but it was probable that they would have completed the exercise before the weather deteriorated. They were told not to fly in cloud, and that in the event of encountering bad weather, they should return to base.

By 7:25 am the aircraft were taxiing out for take-off. The Meteorological Office called to warn that the bad weather was expected sooner than had been originally thought, but it would still probably be after the exercise was completed. Given that the pilots had been warned to turn back if there was a problem, it was decided that the exercise could continue.

At 8:45, it was reported that a Hampden was down in the sea. Information from Hampden AN131 indicated that Hampden AJ993 had crashed at 8:12 am at 48° 27'N 124° 48' W. A Westland Lysander and a Supermarine Stranraer were immediately dispatched to the scene. No. 2 Group HQ were called and told the position so that they could contact Naval Patrol boats and effect a sea rescue. The search failed to find any sign of the four crew members. A dinghy and one wheel were recovered by an American Patrol boat.

Five Hampdens turned back at the first sign of bad weather and returned safely to base. The Navigator of Hampden AN131 had witnessed the crash of AN993. At the time 131 decided to turn back, 993 was about one mile ahead and had also turned back. 993 turned steeply to starboard, levelled out and began a shallow dive down from about 1,000 feet. The pilot tried to pull out of the dive, the nose came up steeply, the port wing dropped and the aircraft turned over onto its back and made a steep dive, about five degrees to the vertical, into the sea. Hampden 131 circled the spot but saw no wreckage.

The previous day, a pilot flying AN993 had reported the gyro artificial horizon instrument in the aircraft had an intermittent fault. This was referred to the Instrument Section who could find no error and the inspection of 993 before the fatal flight found no problems.

The officer in charge of the Instrument Section stated that in his opinion the pilot making the complaint had not waited sufficient time for the gyro horizon to



completely erect itself after completion of a normal turn. The Sperry Gyroscope Company, makers of the instrument, warned that a turn error exists during and immediately after a manoeuvre involving turn and that the gyro horizon corrects its error within two minutes of the turn. In a period of less than 24 hours, five gyro horizons had been reported as unserviceable by pupil pilots. On examination and testing by staff pilots, they were found to be in working order.

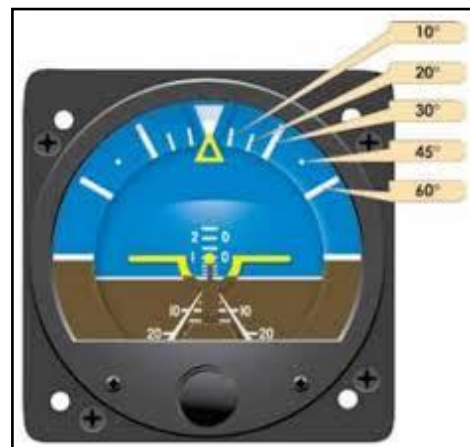
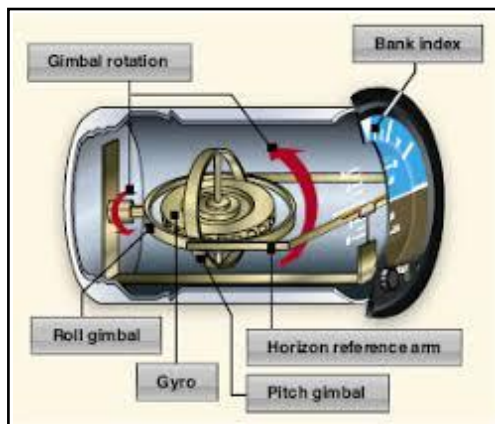
Hampden AN993 crew members were:

|                                |           |       |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| F/S John Haythorhwaite Bateman | WAG       | RCAF  |
| Sgt. Albert Sidney Dobie       | Navigator | RAFVR |
| F/S Albert France              | WAG       | RCAF  |
| P/O Harry Haig Frost           | Pilot     | RCAF  |

Pilot Officer Frost was deemed to be fully competent to fly this aircraft under the weather conditions encountered. Had the Meteorological Forecast predicted the bad weather reaching the route during the course of the exercise, the flight would have been cancelled.

All four crew members were killed in the accident and no bodies were ever recovered.





*Artificial Horizon Instrument*