

# Hayes, Roland

**Age:** 19

**Nationality:** English

**Rank:** Sergeant

**Unit:** No. #32 OTU

**Occupation:** Pilot

**Service No:** 160240 (RAFVR)



**Birth:** 25 January 1924  
Bradfield, Berkshire,  
England

**Home Town:** Three Mile Cross,  
Near Reading,  
Berkshire, England

**Death:** 13<sup>th</sup> January 1944  
  
Crash of Handley Page Hampden AD767,  
Mayne Island, BC, Canada

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

## Biography

Roland Hayes was the youngest of six children of James Norman Hayes and Helen Rawle. There were five boys, Walter born 1914, Frederick born 1915, George born 1920, Leonard born 1922 and Roland, born in Bradfield 25<sup>th</sup> January 1924, and one girl Mary, born 1915.

Roland joined the RAFVR and trained as a pilot. He arrived at Patricia Bay and joined No. 32 OTU on 14 December 1943. He was thought to be slightly overconfident and tended to be a little careless. He was involved in two taxiing accidents and had his log book endorsed for carelessness by the Chief Instructor on 5 January 1944.

A month after arriving at Patricia Bay, on 13 January 1944, Roland was briefed for a solo practice flight. He was originally supposed to be flying Handley Page Hampden 2133, but that aircraft proved not to be serviceable and he was switched to AD767. The change meant that instead of taking off at 2:00 pm, he took off at 2:54 pm. Roland failed to return to the base and on January 16<sup>th</sup> his aircraft was located on nearby Mayne Island, BC. He had died instantly, two weeks short of his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.



## Details of Crash

On 13 January 1944, Pilot Roland Hayes, flying alone in Handley Page Hampden AD767, was practising precautionary landings, steep turns, glide approach landings and forced landings. He was instructed to practise steep turns at a minimum of 4,000 feet and not to try them if the weather prevented him reaching that altitude. He took off at 2:54 pm and never returned to base. A search was instituted but the aircraft was not located until news of a crash came from a civilian witness on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

At the court of inquiry into the accident this witness reported that at about 3:40 pm, standing on a beach near the wharf at Miners Bay, Mayne Island, he saw a Hampden aircraft about two miles to the south, flying from east to west. He judged that the aircraft was at over 2,000 feet. Hampdens flew continuously in the area and he was familiar with their appearance and the sound of the engines. In his opinion, the engines sounded to be running in perfect order.

When the aircraft was approximately over Dinner Point, it made a flat turn to the left. At the beginning of the turn, the nose dropped, the pilot continued with the turn and the nose dropped further so the aircraft was diving to the ground almost vertical. It disappeared from view, but the sound of the engines stopped and although he did not see it crash, he was certain that that was what had happened. He saw nothing fall from the aircraft, nor did he see any smoke or fire from where he assessed the crash had taken place.

From the evidence of the pilot of another Hampden flying in the vicinity of Dinner Point, the ceiling was about 6,000 feet, visibility 10 miles, and wind 15 to 20 miles an hour from the south.

An officer from the repair squadron visited the site and found the aircraft totally destroyed in thickly wooded country. There was nothing to suggest the aircraft was in any way faulty. It was impractical to attempt any salvage. The medical officer who examined the body found it had multiple fractures and was severely impacted. Death was instantaneous.

The Investigating Officer concluded:

*“one of those Hampden spiral crashes which the pupil did not spot in time to correct”*





