

Seaker, Ronald Arthur

Age: 22

Nationality: Canadian

Rank: W/O I

Unit: No. 122 Squadron

Occupation: Observer

Service No: R/61681



Birth: 28 February 1921
Regina, SK,
Canada

Home Town: Calgary, Alberta,
Canada

Death: 16 March 1943

Crash of Bristol Bolingbroke 9084
Mill Bay B.C., Canada

Burial: Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial

Others: F/ S W.L. Dion, Pilot; F/S S.A. Switzer, Wireless Operator

Biography

Ron Seaker applied to join the RCAF in February 1940 and was attested the following June. He had graduated from grade 12 with senior matriculation and was working as a clerk at the Imperial Bank of Canada. He had served as a Sapper in the Non Permanent Active Militia from 1938 – 1939 and in the Canadian Active Service Force from 1939 until he was discharged to join the RCAF. Ron's hobbies were photography, drafting and art. He skated frequently and swam occasionally.

Ron's recruiting officer clearly approved of him as a candidate commenting:

“This boy makes a very good impression. He is young and well developed physically. Now serving with the Engineers and very well recommended. Good background. Should develop well.”

Ron applied for flying duties and was recommended as a pilot, which was his first choice, but was subsequently recommended as an Observer. After the Initial Training he passed 53/126 with an average of 85% and was rated as average Observer material.

Ron was at Air Training School from September to December 1940. He was a little weak in map reading and his calculations were slow. At Ground School, he was found to be slow to grasp new work but conscientious and he passed the course. He was viewed as unsuitable for a commission or to be an instructor but with more speed should make a capable observer and a good NCO.

In his Armament Training Ron's performance was average in all aspects.

At Advanced Observer Training School, from January to July 1941, Ron frequently suffered from ill health, with no specifics as to what caused it. He was held over from Class 7 in Air Training but completed with Class 16 with above average results. He initially failed his Ground Training due to his health but again was placed with Class 16 and passed his exams with them.

“Generally due to his prolonged stay at this school, he has a sound knowledge of the observer's astro course. He is an above average air observer”

Ron's final assessment was:

“His illness made him aloof and despondent but with convalescence he regained his spirits and is keen to do a good job as an observer.”

Ron was promoted to Sergeant in December 1941, followed by WO 2 in June 1942 and WO 1 in December 1942.

Ron was posted to No. 120 (BR) at Patricia Bay in November 1941. On 10 January 1942 he was posted to No.122 squadron, also at Patricia Bay. On 16 March 1943, Ron, was Observer on Bolingbroke 9084 when it crashed into the sea at Mill Bay. His body was never recovered.

**Calgary Flier
Presumed Dead**

Flt. Sgt. Ronald Arthur Seaker, 22, son of Flt. Sgt. and Mrs. D. A. Seaker, 222 9th Ave. N.E., formerly reported missing on active service in Canada, is now officially presumed dead, according to an R.C.A.F. casualty list.

Flt. Sgt. Seaker lost his life when a Bolingbroke bomber crashed into Mill Bay, Vancouver Island, on an operational flight in March.

Flt. Sgt. Seaker was navigator on board the craft.

JOINED ENGINEERS

He enlisted with the Royal Canadian Engineers in Regina when war broke out and transferred to the R.C.A.F. in June, 1940.

Flt. Sgt. Seaker's father is attached to the administrative staff of No. 4 Training Command, coming here from Regina two years ago. A brother, Wilfred, 14, is a Calgary air cadet.

Ronald Arthur Seaker was born in Regina, SK, on 28 February 1921 to Daniel Arthur Seaker and Winifred Lydia Morgan, both born in England. He was the first of five sons. His brother, Wilfred, was 14 when Ron died and the youngest Gerald was just four. Two other younger brothers had predeceased him: Raymond, aged two in 1926 and Davie, aged five months in 1932. In 1943, Ron's father was a Flight/Sergeant at No.4 TC HQ RCAF Calgary, Alberta.

Details of Crash

On 16 March 1943, at 11:35 am, Bristol Bolingbroke Mk IV 9084 took off from Patricia Bay on a test flight with a crew of three:

Flight Sergeant W.L. Dion	Pilot
Flight Sergeant S.A. Switzer	Wireless Operator
WO 1 R.A. Seaker	Observer

F/S Dion had 370 hours of flying time including almost 15 hours on Bolingbroke. He had no instrument flying in the previous six months, but did have 4:30 hours on Link Trainers.

The first part of the test consisted of checking calibration of the station. Four points were selected: Active Pass, Duncan, Otter Point and James Island; all in B.C. The aircraft was to fly at 4,000ft., subject to the pilot's discretion.

The calibration was checked at the first two points, constant R/T contact being maintained. The pilot then set course for Otter Point and 16 minutes later reported that he was running into a snow storm, after which R/T contact was lost. W/T was tried with no success on the same frequency several times. The last R/T communication was at 12:08, the exact message being "In snow storm, looking for clear spot to continue exercise, will you plot us."

The acting Captain of a Torpedo Retriever and the Medical Officer gave the following evidence at the Court of Inquiry.

"On March 16, 1943, I was acting Captain aboard the M-11 Torpedo Retriever, named the Nicola. At 1209 hours I was proceeding to position on torpedo retrieving in position of Mill Bay off Saanich Inlet, and sighted apparent plane crash, the water rising from the surface and falling back. The radio operator immediately advised the station that a crash had occurred. We immediately proceeded to location of the disturbance. Arriving at the scene of disturbance, I found one body and debris floating on the surface and one life raft partly inflated, under-carriage assembly and small wreckage. I took the body aboard and shortly after was transferred to the care of the Medical Officer on board the crash boat.

"I am C4961 Flight Lieutenant Donald Spencer Munroe, employed as Medical Officer, at R.C.A.F. Station, Patricia Bay, B.C.

"On March 16th, 1943, at about 1230 hours I was notified of an accident which occurred in the sea in the vicinity of Mill Bay.

"I was taken to the scene of the accident in a crash boat where I found a body which I identified to be Flight Sergeant S.A. Switzer. The identification was made by means of official identification discs and personal papers found in the clothing.

"The injuries were extensive. He was decapitated and showed multiple fractures. Death beyond any doubt was instantaneous.

The scene of the accident was visited at 3:30 pm on March 17th when oil was still visibility rising to the surface. The depth of water at the site was approximately 60 fathoms and the bodies of the other two crew members were never recovered.

The conclusion of the Court of Inquiry was that the cause of the accident was obscure but there might have been icing conditions. Owing to the nature of the accident it was impossible to make any suggestions as to how it could have been avoided or how future accidents of the same type could be prevented.

The following communication is included in the Court of Inquiry records

① D/A.M.A.S. (Br. Ops.)

Court of Inquiry - Accident to Bolingbroke 9084 from No. 122 Squadron, on 16th March, 1943.

1. There appears to be a serious lack of training in this squadron for which the Squadron Commander should be held responsible. In the C.F.E. there is a regulation that all staff pilots and instructors shall do at least two hours instrument flying per month. It might be desirable to apply this regulation to Home War.

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plus

J.W. Wilson



Bolingbroke Mk IV

