

Hope, Donald William

Age: 26
Nationality: Canadian
Rank: Flight Sergeant
Unit: No. 11 Squadron
Occupation: Air Gunner
Service No: R/59081
Birth: 23 January 1918,
Chater, Manitoba,
Canada
Home Town: Chater, Manitoba,
Canada



Death: 13 July 1945

Consolidated Liberator 11121,
hit mountain seven miles from
Bamfield, BC, NCanada

Burial: Commemorated Ottawa Memorial
Buried near Bamfield, BC.

Others: All members of RCAF: F/O Robert Joseph Martello,
2nd Pilot; F/O Nicholas Maxwell Popovitch, Navigator;
WO 1 Victor Gilbert Crosson, WAG;
F/O Harry Alexander Lowe, WO;
WO 2 Joseph Bertrand Presse, WAG.

Biography

Donald Hope left school in 1934 with a Grade 8/9 education. He took some correspondence courses in engineering with the Chicago Institute, but his only employment between 1935 and 1940 was as a farm labourer and occasional tractor driver, probably seasonal since his reason for leaving each job was 'time expired'. A strong, husky young man, of neat appearance, he enlisted in the RCAF in Brandon, Manitoba, in June 1940. Showing good motivation and perseverance he was recommended as suitable for training as an aero-engine mechanic though the medical officer warned that he would have difficulty with ground (academic) subjects

Donald was at ITS in St. Thomas from July to November 1940 and from there went to No. 4 Bombing and Gunnery School. Other than that, there is no clear record of what he was doing between 1941 and 1943, except that he married Margaret Jean Ellen Kelly, in London, Ontario, on 25 February 1941, when he took a week's leave. Enlisted as a standard AEM, he became AEM "B" on 1 December 1940, was promoted to LAC on 24 January 1941 and became AEM "A" on 1 February 1942.

From July to September 1943, Donald was at No. 9 B & G S in Mont Joli, PQ, where he came 15 out of 15 students and was reportedly:

"Neat appearance, co-operative. A practical man. Requires more than ordinary explanation, makes some mistakes. Needs to be checked up occasionally."

Following this, Donald went to the School of Aero Engineering and on 1 February 1944 became a Flight Engineer and was promoted to Sergeant. In August 1944, he was posted to No. 11 Squadron in Nova Scotia and promoted to Flight Sergeant in February 1945. In May 1945, Donald was posted to No. 11 Squadron in Patricia Bay, BC.

On 13 July 1945, Donald was Flight Engineer on Consolidated Liberator 11121 when it flew into a mountain near Bamfield, BC, killing all occupants. He was buried in a common grave by the wreckage.

Donald was born on 23 January 1918, in Chater, Manitoba; the first child of Hector Percival Hope, a farmer, and Minnie Edmonson. Both parents were born

in England and arrived in Canada in 1907. Three more children were born: a son Raymond, born 1920 and died 1931, a daughter Lucy born 1928 and died 2005, and a son born about 1928. Donald's wife remarried some time before 1955 and became Mrs. Fries.

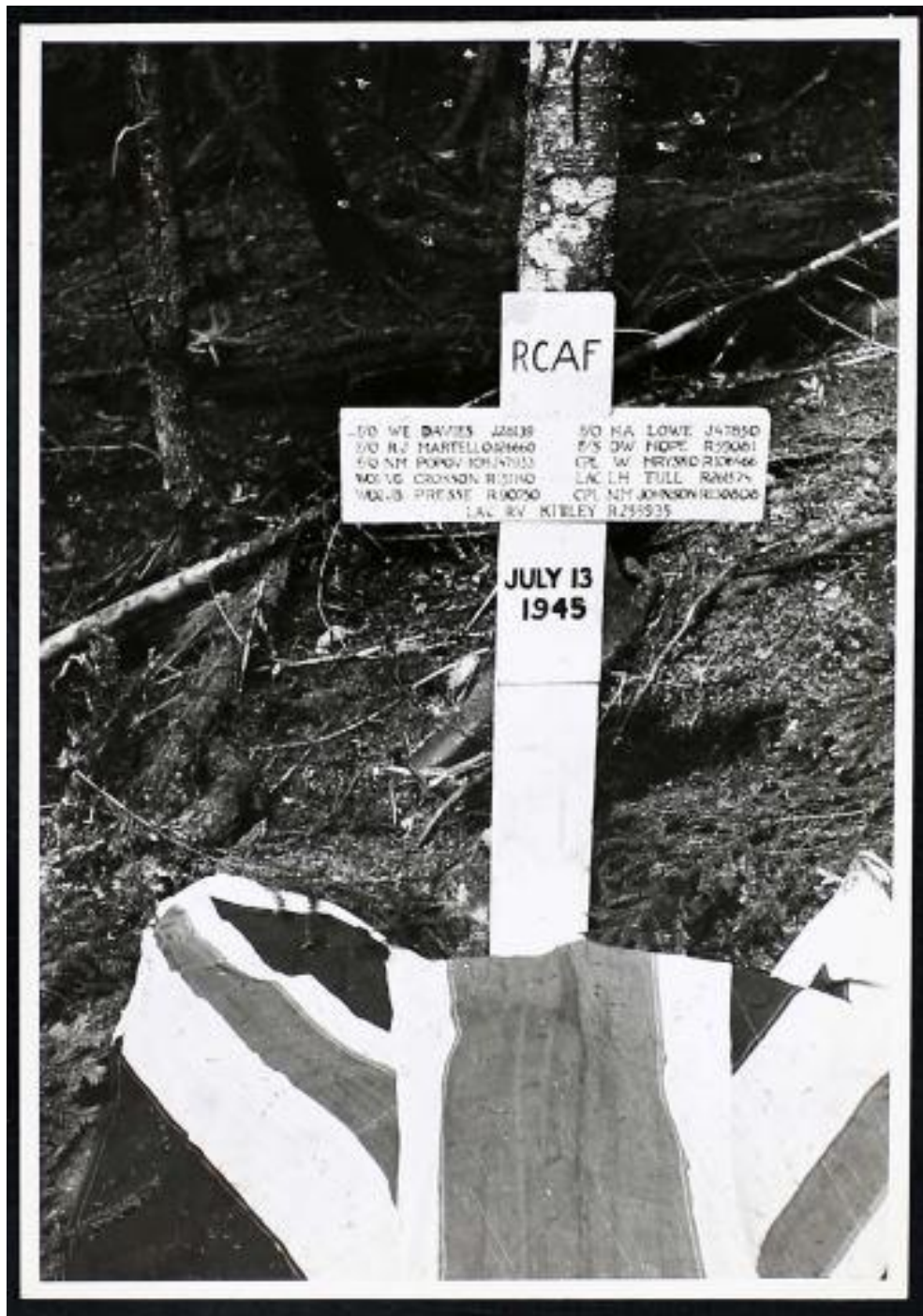


Hope, Flight Sergeant Donald W. of Chater (R 59081). No. 11 Squadron. He died 13 July 1945 at the age of 27 and is commemorated at the Ottawa Memorial. His brother recalls (23 March 1998):

My memory of Donald was that of a younger brother. Donald was 10 years older and due to the Depression was away a great deal of the later years of his life. Donald was born in Brandon; ... we lived in the Chater area east of Brandon and he went to school there, completing Grade 9 and then he had to work. Don enlisted I believe in 1940 and was killed in a plane crash on Victoria Island.

He was survived by his wife Jean Hope of Ontario. *Hope Bay* (64 I/6) in Paragon Lake was named after him in 1995.

Excerpt from "A Place of Honour - Manitoba's War Dead Commemorated in its Geography", National Library of Canada (page 189).



Details of Crash

On Friday, 13 July 1945, F/O William Edward Davies took off from Patricia Bay station at 08:51 on a standard exercise. He was flying Consolidated Liberator 11121 with a crew of six; all members of RCAF No. 11 Squadron in Patricia Bay:

F/O Robert Joseph Martello	2 nd Pilot
F/O Nicholas Maxwell Popovitch	Navigator
WO 1 Victor Gilbert Crosson	WAG
F/S Donald William Hope	F/E
F/O Harry Alexander Lowe	WO
WO 2 Joseph Bertrand Presse	WAG

Davies had flown this exercise once as second pilot but this was his first time as first pilot. He was a qualified first pilot both day and night on Liberators. He had been trained at USAAF Field, Smyrna, Tennessee, been with No. 11 squadron about a year, and was fully certified for instrument flight. The second pilot and remaining crew members were also fully qualified.

The exercise was an ordinary cross country flight used to familiarize pilots with the aerodromes in the immediate area, as well as giving Navigators a chance to familiarize themselves with the coast of Vancouver Island. The route was from Patricia Bay to Comox, via Abbotsford and Boundary Bay, followed by Comox to Tofino via Port Hardy, and ending with Tofino to Patricia Bay. Before leaving Patricia Bay the pilot filed a flight plan to Comox. There were no passengers on this leg of the trip.

At Comox, three passengers were approved for the flight: Sergeant Pamela Bennett, Corporal Nora Johnson and LAC Margaret Mann. A fourth passenger, LAC Lloyd Tull, was reported to have boarded the flight just before departure. Before leaving Comox the pilot filed the flight plan to Tofino.

At Tofino it was arranged that three more passengers would be taken on board: Corporal Norman Johnson, LAC Raymond Kitely and Corporal William Hrysko. The weather report at Tofino showed extensive fog banks to the south and west. The aircraft took off at 4:43 pm and the pilot planned to be at 10,000 feet at Ucluelet, which indicated that he planned to cross the island at high altitude rather than follow the coast where the fog lay. At 4:46 pm the aircraft made contact reporting to be at 49°05N 125°45 W, still, after 13 minutes, within the

vicinity of Tofino airfield.

This was the last contact made with 11121 and when it failed to arrive at Patricia Bay at its ETA, search procedures were instigated.

The wreckage of the aircraft was found four days later, on 17 July 1945, about seven miles east south east of Bamfield, BC. It took ground searchers four days to reach the crash site, where they confirmed there were no survivors.

At the inquiry into the crash, F/O W.G. Skerik, Air Search Rescue Officer at Tofino, gave the following information:

“I was on the first rescue party to reach the crash of Liberator 11121. The position of same was 48°48N, 124°58.30W. I estimated the track of Liberator 11121 prior to the crash to be 77°T.

I identified the body of Cpl. N.M Johnson by a wallet on his clothing, Cpl. Hrysko by his wallet, F/O Martello by his wallet, F/O Popovitch by his identity bracelet, F/O Davies by a belt buckle, initial ‘D’ and by a ring initialled ‘W.E.D.’, and an RCAF watch serial No. 1165702, F/S Hope by his identity discs. Seven bodies were found which could not be identified, one of which was definitely a woman and one probably a woman. The other five were definitely identified as men.

I searched the slope for about 300 yards below the point of impact for evidence of anyone jumping etc. But nothing was found.”

Due to the difficulty in locating the crash site, the bodies could not be brought out for burial and two graves were dug by the wreckage, one for men and one for women. The chaplain, accompanying the search party, conducted a funeral service and crosses were erected over the graves. Coinciding as closely as possible with the funeral service, a memorial service was held at Patricia Bay in front of a Station Liberator, conducted by the Station Chaplain and attended by all available officers and airmen of No. 11 Squadron.

In 1982, airmen from Comox Base erected a more permanent cairn and bronze plaque, which were dedicated in an official ceremony in 1983.

The conclusion of the inquiry into the crash blames the pilot, in that, contrary to

orders, he flew into cloud instead of finding a route through the breaks in the overcast to reach his planned altitude. While in the cloud he flew into the side of a mountain ESE of Bamfield. The Tofino Base was also found at fault for allowing the pilot to take off for Patricia Bay in the weather conditions that afternoon.

