

Wooster, Warren Somers

Age: 20

Nationality: Canadian

Rank: Pilot/Officer

Unit: No. 122

Occupation: Pilot

Service No: J/9203

Birth: 21 December 1921
New Westminster, BC, Canada

Home Town: New Westminster, BC, Canada

Death: 14 April 1942
Crash of Westland Lysander 461
Piers Island, BC Canada

Burial: Fraser Cemetery, New Westminster, BC, Canada



Biography

Warren Somers Wooster was born in New Westminster, BC on 21 December 1921 to Captain William Somers Wooster, a master mariner, and Alice Anderson Jacques. Alice appears to be known to her family as 'Alvie' and the 'Somers' is sometimes spelled as 'Summers'; there is a record of Warren formally changing his name from 'Summers' to 'Somers' while he was in the RCAF. William and Alice already had three daughters Nancy, Betty and Vera, when Warren was born.

Warren graduated from T. J. Trapp Technical School and went on to a course in forestry that he failed to complete. This was followed by a chain of undemanding jobs lasting from two to eight months each. From 1938 to the outbreak of war, Warren was a private in the BC Militia.

Shortly before his 20th birthday, Warren applied to the RCAF. He seems to have made a reasonable impression, being described as a tall rugged young man, refined, clean and neat. Although immature, he was pleasant, quick, organized and accurate. His overall report was:

'Rather nervy type, somewhat shy – will probably develop under service training. Is keen to serve and seems worthy of trial'

He was judged suitable for the RCAF but not for a commission and was recommended for a pilot or an observer.

Warren went for his initial training to Edmonton, then to Elementary Flying Training School in Vancouver. Here, the only comment on his flying ability was '*should look around more*' but on ground training his conduct was excellent, he was above average in ability, a good type of student who worked hard and should go far.

Warren's Service Flying Training was in Calgary. There is no report on his performance but he was passed, earned his pilot's wings on 5 December 1941 and was commissioned as Pilot/Officer at the same time. The following day he was transferred to No. 122 squadron Patricia Bay to complete his training.

Warren died instantly on 14 April 1942 when his plane crashed near Piers Island BC, Canada.



PILOT DIES IN R.C.A.F. CRASH

P.O. W. S. Wooster, New Westminister, Killed— Passenger Lands Safely

Pilot Officer Warren Somers Wooster, of New Westminister, was killed late yesterday afternoon when a training plane on a routine flight from the Royal Canadian Air Force station at Patricia Bay crashed into the sea near Piers Island, north of Sidney, it was announced last night by Western Air Command.

A passenger, A.C.I. S. W. Baxter, parachuted to safety.

Rescue craft of the R.C.A.F. were continuing dragging operations late last night in an effort to locate the pilot's body. Cause of the accident was obscure.

W. J. Wooster, 216 Queens Avenue, New Westminister, father of the pilot, has been notified of his son's death.



Details of Crash

On 14 April 1942 at 3:30 pm P/O Wooster took off in Westland Lysander 461 for a high dive bombing practice. For reasons not disclosed, he carried a passenger, AC2 S.W. Baxter.

After completing the last of eight dives on the largest of No. 2 Bombing Range, near Piers Island, the pilot levelled off the aircraft at 2,000 feet and set course for the airfield. The engine 'coughed', so the pilot ordered the passenger to bail out which he did, parachuting successfully to safety. P/O Wooster remained in the aircraft, working the throttle without results. The airscrew was barely turning over as the aircraft lost height. The aircraft made a steep left bank, started a vertical side slip and continued until it hit the water and sank, totally damaged.

The Station Diary records the crash

14th April 1942

'At 1621 hours Lysander 461 sustained a category "A" crash and was virtually a complete loss. Pilot Officer W.S. Wooster (J9203) the pilot was missing and presumed killed and the crewman No. R152725, AC2 Baxter, S.W. parachuted to safety in the water close by the crash boat M.197 and was taken aboard. He was returned to the Station Hospital by means of Stranraer 955 and ambulance which awaited him at the seaplane base. The accident occurred just South of a point midway between Pym and Piers Islands. Dragging operations were commenced immediately facilities were available and the aircraft was found and moored, but later broke loose.'

15th April 1942

'At 2015 hours the body of Pilot Officer Wooster was brought to the surface from the wreck of Lysander 461 and was brought back to base by the Curlew and dispatched to the undertakers, Messrs. Curry and Sons of Victoria. The engine and part of the fuselage was later recovered but the balance of the aircraft which was widely scattered was given up as a total loss.'



