

Anderson, Peter Gordon
Flying Officer
50 (Royal Air Force) Squadron
Royal Canadian Air Force
J/36360



Sic fidem servamus – (Thus we keep faith)



Peter Gordon Anderson was born on April 4, 1923 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. He was the son of John Colborne Anderson and Lillian Christobel "Betty" Gordon-Anderson. They were married on April 23, 1921 in Montreal, the largest city in the province of Quebec and the second largest city in Canada after Toronto. Father John, who was a banker, had three children from a previous marriage with his first wife Gladys: Wynyard Powell, Robert Wynyard Anderson and John Colborne Anderson. The latter was killed on May 8, 1935, aged 21, in an accident in Halifax, Nova Scotia, while serving with the Royal Canadian Artillery. Elisabeth Mary, the daughter of Father John and Gladys, married John Gilmour "Jack" Stothart, who was a Major with the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders. On April 15, 1926, at the age of 50, Father John died of a cerebral infarction in Oshawa, Durham Regional Municipality, Ontario, Canada. By religion, the family belonged to the United Church and they resided at 203 Fifth Avenue in Canada's capital Ottawa, Ontario.



203 Fifth Avenue in Ottawa

Peter with his dog



Peter with his mother{center} and two of his sisters

Source both photos Holly Ann Stewart.

Peter Gordon received his primary education at Hopewell Public School from 1928 to 1936 and four years of High School at Glebe Collegiate Institute in Ottawa.

Glebe Collegiate Institute



After school and in the summer, Peter Gordon already worked as an office clerk and salesman at Plant's Hardware.

When he dropped out of school in the 4th year of High School, he started working there on a permanent basis. After working there for six years, Peter Gordon changed employer and in 1941 joined the Bell Telephone Company as an office clerk.

Peter Gordon Anderson had brown eyes and blond hair, was 5 ft.12 tall and weighed 142 lbs. In 1934 he had bronchitis, a year later a fracture in his left elbow and in 1936 he broke his nose. Also, in the same year 1936, he had an appendectomy. Furthermore Peter was a healthy young man. As a hobby he liked to hunt and read a lot about combustion engines, and he did a lot of sports, football, skiing, basketball, tennis, badminton, swimming and baseball. He smoked eight cigarettes a day and drank a few beers a week.

In March 1942 Peter volunteered with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps in Ottawa as a Private. But two months later, on May 26, 1942, he



reported to #12 Recruiting Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, with the Royal Canadian Air Force, wanting to become an observer or pilot. He was selected for training and was given the rank of Aircraftman Second Class. On February 6, 1943 Peter began a four-week academic training for candidates for the Pilot, Air Observer and Navigator training at the No 6 Initial Training School (ITS) in Toronto, this as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia signed the agreement on December 17, 1939 with the aim of rapidly increasing the number of pilots, navigators, bomb aimers, wireless operators, gunners and flight engineers who could fight in the war. More

than 90 training schools were opened under the BCATP across Canada, where more than one hundred and thirty thousand people graduated between 1940 and 1945. In addition, more than one hundred thousand men and women worked as ground support at BCATP facilities.

On April 18, 1943, Peter entered the No 12 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) in Goderich, Ontario, for further training as a Pilot. In June 1940, the decision was made to establish an Elementary Flying Training School at Sky Harbor Airport, just north of Goderich. The school was operated by the Kitchener-Waterloo Flying Club as part of the BCATP.

In October 1940 the first group of 35 students arrived. For many, it was their first time to be on an airplane. As the war progressed, the school continued to expand with over 240 students, and more than 500 staff members. The EFTS courses lasted eight weeks. Students attended 126 hours of ground lectures and recorded 50 hours of combined flight time under day and night conditions.

After flying for eight hours with an instructor, the students would fly solo, usually in de Havilland Tiger Moth, Fleet Finch or Fairchild Cornell. Graduates of the Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) "learn-to-fly" program underwent sixteen weeks of training at a Service Flying Training School (SFTS). For the first eight weeks the student was part of a secondary education squadron, for the next six weeks part of advanced training and for the last two weeks the training was completed at a Bombing & Gunnery School. Peter followed this training at the No 2 Service Flying Training School Uplands in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. On October 1, 1943, Peter received his 'Wings' then Peter went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to go to England by sea on November 1, 1943. There he set foot on November 9, 1943. He underwent further training and was among other things assigned to the Royal Air Force base at Borrás, on the outskirts of Wrexham, Wales on 20 March 1944.



RAF Wrexham.

On 30 May 1944, further training followed at the Operational Training Unit No 14 RAF (14 OTU) at a Royal Air Force base near the town of Market Harborough, Leicestershire. There was training for both day and night flights and the Vickers Wellington was frequently used for this. Finally to further training, Peter was assigned to No 50 Squadron Royal Air Force on 4 November 1944 at Skellingthorpe, close to Lincoln, Lincolnshire, England.

Peter Gordon Anderson became a pilot on an Avro Lancaster. His crew was posted to No 50 Squadron Royal Air Force from No 5 Lancaster Finishing School on 2 November 1944.

On December 8, 1944, Peter Gordon Anderson wrote a letter to his mother, in which he told about a flight and about his crew:

Letter from Peter Anderson to his mother.

Officers' Mess,
Royal Air Force Station,
Skellingthorpe, Lincoln.

Dec. 8:44

Hello again darling:

This is my second today - good isn't it! What I want to do is set you straight on this ops business. You probably have quite a wrong impression from the glamour trips in movies and magazines. I think I can set you straight and show you that it is quite routine and normal, without breaking censorship regulations, by incorporating you into me and taking you right through one - O.K.? Good - well we'll start when we get into the Flight "captain's room" after breakfast.

About ten o'clock a battle order comes out. I see that I'm on it - flying R/Roger. I go around to the different sections gathering my crew together. We take our helmets and go out to the kite. Everyone pitches in to help the ground crew to remove the tarpaulin covers and after I've looked her over from the outside and found everything satisfactory we all get in and do a thorough check. Each man of course takes care of his particular equipment. My main thing is the engines but I check with everyone on theirs - when all seems O.K. I shut down and ask what needs attention. Fred, the rear gunner, reports that one gun heater is U/S (unserviceable) and the bomb aimer says he isn't getting oxygen. Knowing him to be a bit hasty if not checked I test it myself and find it O.K. - bewildered look from him and the usual brief lecture by me on being sure of things. Its an old story - but I don't mind too much - He's a damn good B.A. and we work well together. Everything else is bang on - maintenance is good on the squadron. I go over to the flight shack. The Flight Sargeant in charge ducks with elaborate show and big grin. He knows I'm apt to be a bit too particular about the aircraft I fly. Today however I reassure him - only one snag. The gun heater will be

They heard that the planes were full and wondered how long they had to fly and to which city. In the mess they were given bacon and eggs and said "Lucky again." Once they had taken off for their mission, Peter described the following:

more planes surround us, as we are meeting other stations - warnings of other kites come from the crew more often. I adjust the throttles a fraction myself and add a shade of elevator trim. She's heavy to handle because of the load, but she's flying beautifully. I take off my mask to space the crew and bellow out "Passengers will please refrain etc - to Humoresque - I can't even hear myself but I feel wonderful. Taffy sees the motions and grins - at least I guess he's grinning, his eyes crinkle over the edge of his mask. A slight alteration of course from the nav., then a large one as we go onto a new course. We are slightly late - can I speed up - Yes, how much - 20 m.p.h. I'd rather not - would 15 do, it will make a big difference in the fuel consumption. Yes, we are only 3 minutes late. Around us the other kites have also turned. We are at height (censored) today and I throttle back and add the 15 m.p.h. A hole in the cloud and the coast of England slips by. The B.A. map reads a pin point and gives it to the nav. - he doesn't need it but doesn't say so - some day he might and there's no need to discourage Mac. Kinobby wants to know can he reel his trailing aerial out - yes he can - its almost dark and I can see the nav. lights of the other kites. There are 230 of us tonight - lots to look out for. Mac reports his bombs ready to drop. "Dive port skip" from the rear gunner - I do and a dark shape passes 100 feet above. I swear to myself about the blind ox, but I've probably done the same to someone else. No cloud below now - the coast of France - its funny to see the lights, thousands of them - there is no blackout right up to the line. We have made up our time - I slow down - occasionally I call up the rear gunner - its lonely and cold back there; he always answers the same, "Hello skip - O.K. back here" but he sounds cheerful. I think I've impressed him with how much we all depend on him. Occasionally we change course - we never (censored) We cross the front line and can see the flashes, Jerry land now. No need to tell the gunners to smarten up - for some time we have had all our lights out and they have been straining their eyes searching - not for Germany's but for our own Lancasters - I know they are there. Every once

On Wednesday 21 February 1944 at 5:02 pm the Avro Lancaster MK I, LL741 VN-X took off with its crew for the sixteenth mission from Royal Air Force base Skellingthorpe. Peter Gordon Anderson was the pilot and along with his crew they joined about 165 other Avro Lancasters and twelve Mosquitos of the No 5 Group, this for a mission to bomb the Mittelland Canal in Germany, Gravenhorst in North Rhine-Westphalia. The night before another operation had to be stopped because the weather had

become too bad. At approximately 8:37 pm, the Avro Lancaster MK I, LL741, VN-X 14, dropped 1000 pounders over German territory. Soon after, they were likely to be hit by FLAK (Flugabwehrkanone or Fliegerabwehrkanone).



The plane started the return journey with all engines still working properly. At about 9.12 pm, near Deurne at 7000 feet, the Avro Lancaster was fired upon by Hauptmann Heinz Rokker of Nachtjagdgeschwader 2 (NJG 2), firing on the cockpit on both sides. Flames developed on both sides of the cockpit and height was lost.

Peter Gordon Anderson ordered his crew to abandon the Avro Lancaster. Flight Engineer Denys William Lewis went to the forward escape hatch where he saw Air Bomber Denis Alphonsus McCauley getting ready to exit the plane. Both crew members exited the plane and it appeared that Denis Alphonsus McCauley's parachute was on fire, giving him no chance of surviving the fall. Denys William Lewis lost his gloves and aviator boots on the jump and strained a muscle in his right leg while landing on the ground. He did not know his position and tried to get some sleep in his parachute. In the morning he noticed two soldiers approaching him and tried to get their attention by waving and blowing his whistle. One of the soldiers spoke English (they turned out to be two Dutch soldiers) and after identifying the identity they took Denys William Lewis to Helmond. It later turned out that Lewis was the sole survivor of the crash. From Helmond he managed to return to England safely and in April 1945 he again participated in Royal Air Force operations.

Around 9.15 pm the Avro Lancaster MKI, LL741, VN-X crashed between Griendtsveen and Helenaveen. The other crew members were found and Peter Gordon Anderson, Navigator Roy Campbell, Wireless Operator Ward Rex Southcott were buried on February 23 at the General Cemetery in Woensel, Eindhoven. On February 24, the body of Mid Upper Gunner Donald Alexander McFayden was recovered and buried there. The same was true for Rear Gunner Sergeant Fred Seddon Langton and Flight Sergeant Denis Alphonsus McCauley, the British crew members killed in action.

The crew of Avro Lancaster MKI, LL741, VN-X:

- Pilot Officer Roy Campbell, J/94275, Royal Canadian Air Force, Navigator, 21 years old.
- Pilot Officer Ward Rex Southcott, J/94334, Royal Canadian Air Force, Wireless Operator, 21 years old.
- Pilot Officer Donald Alexander McFayden, J/94252, Royal Canadian Air Force, Air Gunner, 21 years old.
- Sergeant Fred Seddon Langton, 1043747, Royal Air Force, Air Gunner, 23 years old.
- Flight Sergeant Denis Alphonsus McCauley, 1394837, Royal Air Force, Air Bomber, 22 years old.

Sergeant Denys William Lewis, 1836806, Royal Air Force, Flight Engineer. Coming from England. He was the sole survivor of the crash and rejoined his squadron on February 25, 1945 and resumed participation in the war. He survived the war and was an important witness to what happened on February 21, 1945. He passed away in 2012 in Pontypool, South Wales.

FO. P. G. Anderson Killed in Action

Word has now been received that Flying Officer Peter Gordon Anderson, previously reported missing, was killed in action on February 22.

FO. Anderson was born in Oshawa 21 years ago and was the son of Mrs. J. C. Anderson, and the late Mr. Anderson, 203 Fifth avenue, Ottawa. He formerly attended Glebe Collegiate and was with the Bell Telephone Company in Ottawa for a short time, before joining the R.C.A.F.

In October, 1943, he was presented with his wings and commission at Uplands, proceeding overseas at once. He was pilot officer of a Lancaster bomber and was shot down over Holland.

Surviving, besides his mother, is a sister, Mrs. Stothart (Betty), wife of Major J. G. Stothart, D.S.O., overseas. It was learned that FO. Anderson was buried at Helenezee in Holland on Feb. 23.



Flying Officer Peter Gordon Anderson, J/36360, Royal Canadian Air Force, Pilot, 21 years old. Son of John Colborne Anderson and Lillian Christobel "Betty" Gordon-Anderson, of Ottawa, Ontario. Buried at the General Cemetery in Woensel, Eindhoven on February 23, 1945. Reburied on 12 November 1945 at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **XV. D. 8.**

Campbell, Southcott, McFayden were also reburied in Groesbeek in the same section XV, row D.

Langton and McCauley, the British soldiers were re-buried side by side at the Overloon War Cemetery, grave references II. B. 1. and II. B. 2.

The text on Anderson's tombstone:

PEACE, PERFECT PEACE
WITH LOVED ONES FAR AWAY?



Source : <http://lestweforget1945.org/>



FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Life Story: Gijs Krist - Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves

Library and Archives Canada

www.aircreweremembered.com

Ann Holly Stewart

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl

CAPE FINISTERRE		1945	WUNSTORF		
MILLINGEN					
F/L	Anderson, Arthur Erick Franklin	RCAF	F/O	Angelini, Samuel	RCAF
Cpl	Anderson, Basil Donald	A&S	Pte	Anger, Carl Leslie	H/Lt/PC
F/L	Anderson, Cecil William	RCAF	Sgt	Anningson, James Grant	NB Rang
Pte	Anderson, Frederick Lewis	RAF	Pte	Anthony, Edmond McLellan	
P/O	Anderson, George	RAF			
Lt	Anderson, Gerald Arthur	RCAF	Tpr	Anton, Lee	A4H
LF	Anderson, Hugh Henry	H/Lt	Cmnr	Antonyshyn, Elie	RCA
Sgt	Anderson, John Leonard	H/Lt/PC	Tpr	Apostle, Apostle George	12 D
P/S	Anderson, John William	RCAF	Bn	Appley, Lloyd Allen	RAF
Pte	Anderson, Lawrence	RCAF	F/O	Appleyard, Richard Henry	RCAF
Pte	Anderson, Lloyd Merle	RCAF	F/L	Apps, Geoffrey Frank Ross	RCAF
			Pte	Aubin, Gerard	RCAF
			Ldg Wren	Arbeau, Cora	WRCNS
Pte	Anderson, Lloyd Oscar	RCAF	Pte	Arbuckle, Robert Eugene	
LAC	Anderson, Mahing Harold	RCAF			
P/O	Anderson, Mark Sylvester Harold	RCAF	OP	Arcand, Joseph Jules Rodrigue	SD & G Highrs
Pte	Anderson, Norman Wilfred	RCAF	Capt	Archambault, Jean-Paul, M	RCAF
F/O	Anderson, Peter Gordon	RCAF	Rfn	Archer, Burgess Douglas Eaves	RCIC
F/L	Anderson, Peter Murray	RCAF			
Pte	Anderson, Randall Cameron	RCAF	Col	Archen, James Frederick	RAF
Pte	Anderson, Richard Henry	RCAF	P/O	Archer, William Edward	RCAF
Tpr	Anderson, Ritchie	RCAF	LAC	Archibald, Arthur Campbell	RCAF
F/O	Anderson, Robert William	RCAF	Col	Archibald, Edward William	RCAF
Lt	Anderson, Truman William	RCAF	WO	Archibald, Vivian Gordon	RCAF
F/O	Anderson, William Albert	RCAF	F/O	ArLette, Sidney George	RCAF
Tpr	Anderson, William Charles	RCAF	Pte	Armishaw, James Edgar	4 PLDG
Sgt	Anderson, William George	RCAF	Pte	Armitage, Jasper Leathley	
F/O	Anderson, William James	RCAF	F/L	Armitt, John	A&S
F/O	Anderson, William Smith	RCAF	Sgt	Armour, Jack Karl	RCAF
Sgt	Andre, Albert Guy	RCAF	Sgt	Armstrong, Arthur Ronald	RCAF
Pte	Andrew, Elmer Roy	RCAF	P/O	Armstrong, Curwood Neville	RCAF
L/Cpl	Andrew, Gordon Eugene	RCAF	F/O	Armstrong, David Malcolm	RCAF
Lt	Andrew, Robert Murray	RCAF	Brig	Armstrong, Francis Leslie	RCAF
Sgt	Andrews, Edward Alexander	RCAF			
P/S	Andrews, Harry Henry	RCAF	Spr	Armstrong, Frank Guy	RCAF
F/O	Andrews, John Ken	RCAF	Cpl	Armstrong, George Reginald	RCAF
Ldg Svc	Andrews, Joseph Charles	RCAF	Pte	Armstrong, George Stewart	RCAF
Pte	Angelini, Emile	RCAF			



Left behind by a Canadian Student at the grave of Peter on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands

Photos : Alice van Bekkum

F.O. Peter Gordon Anderson

Dear Peter,

My name is Liam. I live in Carp, which until recently was just outside of Ottawa, which is four times larger than when you left in 1941. I am writing this letter to you because I am on a school trip for the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and we were assigned soldiers that fought and died in the battles. You were assigned to me. After I got the package of records from the Canadian archives, I was very interested in your story. I learned about where you had lived in Oshawa and your home in Ottawa, which is still there. You and I both have hazel eyes. I also learned where you went to school and how you played rugby, which is my favorite sport. I learned about your pilot training and your last flight. I was very moved about your last minutes when you went down.

I think you are the definition of a hero. You did so much for others in such a short life. Trying to save your crew was a very honorable thing to do. I can't even begin to imagine the pain your mother went through after you died. I learned through your records that you were a talented pilot and how you were a hard worker but like me you worked a little slower than others. You were a very sharp young man. I wish that I would have gotten a chance to meet you in person. I am excited to come see you and all the Canadians who served in the war.

I also learned that you were an avid shooter and hunter. Again we both share this very fun hobby. We both share interests in working on cars and building model airplanes. When I read all the files I received on you I was very surprised on how much like each other we were and how we both like similar hobbies as each other. Maybe one day, when my time comes we can meet and share stories of our lives. I would like to express my greatest gratitude to you and your mother for your honorable service in the line of duty. Our great country was lucky to have you serve in our forces.

