

416956 Leading Aircraftman Norman Dudley HAINES

Photo source – Waikerie RSL website.

From www.rafcommands.com:

Killed in the crash of Anson R3542 4/8/42 age 25 following a collision with Anson W2165. Also killed:

416929 Leading Aircraftman Leslie CADD

413187 Sergeant Gordon COOPER

2366 Flying Officer Lawrence Vivian WOTZKO

Aircraft and crew were part of 6 Service Flying Training School, Mallalla.

From the AWM website – Haines is 4th from the left in the centre row.



Norman Dudley Haines's name is located at panel 116 in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial.

The crash is noted on the ADF Serials website listings for R3542 and W2615. Mentions that the collision occurred while changing formation at low level.

The RAAF official report on the accident is held by the [National Archives of Australia](#). Its number is A705, 32/12/308. It can be accessed by typing in either R3542 or W2615 into the Records Search function on the NAA home page.

Local author and SA Aviation Museum History Group Chair Peter Ingman described the accident in his book *The RAAF in SA during WWII*:

While Anson accidents of all kinds were relatively common, some ten aircraft were lost in accidents involving fatalities during 1941-42. These losses, and the 26 airmen killed, are detailed in Appendix 1. Most serious were three accidents involving mid-air collisions that occurred due to the need to practice formation flying. These resulted in the loss of six aircraft and 16 of the fatalities. A strange coincidence occurred on 3 June 1942 with two unrelated accidents involving aircraft crashing into water (off Kangaroo Island and at Lake Albert near the Coorong).

One of the mid-air collisions occurred at 1000 over Monteith, near Murray Bridge, on the morning of 4 August 1942. The aircraft, R3542 and W2165, crashed into the Murray River; the four airmen in each aircraft were killed. A detailed accident report is available and will be discussed in some detail as it provides valuable information on not only the accident, but also on the crew and operations of 6SFTS at the time.

The pilot of R3542, Flying Officer Lawrence Vivian Wotzko, was 31 years of age and had 1,377 hours in his logbook, including 278 hours on Ansons. He had flown Ansons with No. 2 Squadron at Laverton in 1939 before doing a flying instructor's course. He then spent two and a half years at No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School, Parafield, as an instructor, where he was rated as "average". After a conversion course on Oxfords, he had only just arrived at 6SFTS when the accident occurred. Overall, Wotzko was regarded by the Chief Flying Instructor as "a careful, capable and conscientious instructor".

The pilot of W2165, Sergeant Hugh Godfrey Phillips, was 20 years old and had 603 hours of flying experience, of which 449 were on Ansons. He had trained in Western Australia, at No. 9 Elementary Flying Training School, Cunderdin, and at No. 4 Service Flying Training School, Geraldton, where he was rated as "average". He then did a flying instructor's course and spent a short time at 3SFTS, Amberley, before being part of the transfer of half that unit to 6SFTS in April 1942. He was regarded as a sound and capable pilot and instructor.

Maintenance records on both airframes and all engines were up to date and investigators did not believe the accident was due to any defect or fault.

W2165 crashed into about ten feet of water near the banks of the river which were covered with willow trees. The aircraft struck the water inverted, at an angle, and both mainplanes broke off on impact. The fuselage broke just aft of the gun turret.

R3542, in the centre of the river and under 40 feet of water, was about 80 yards away from W2165. The wreckage was marked by buoys and barges were used to undertake a salvage operation starting on 6 August (the bodies of the crew were not initially recovered and only two bodies were eventually found). Portions of a wing were found in a paddock 400 yards from the main wreckage.

On the morning of 4 August, six Ansons had departed Mallala at 0815 for a cross-country flight that would take them via Eudunda, Karoonda and Taillem Bend before returning to Mallala. During the flight, formation flying would be practised; none of the trainee pilots involved (two in each aircraft) had previously flown formation.

Each aircraft also carried a fourth crewman. These were air observers who were not trainees but were serving with No. 67 (R) Squadron. It was common practice for them to fly on such sorties to give navigational assistance and for their own experience.

The aircraft arrived over Taillem Bend at an altitude of around 2,000 feet, just below some low cloud. They were flying in two three-aircraft echelon formations, the Ansons each separated by one wingspan. The formation had begun a gentle left-hand turn in order to head back to Mallala. During the turn, the port wing of the No. 2 aircraft (W2165) in one of the echelons made contact with the tail of the No. 1 aircraft (R3542), causing both machines to dive into the river. It was assessed the accident was caused by the pilot of W2165 making an error of judgement.

From the Waikerie RSL website:

Leading Aircraftsman Norman Dudley HAINES

1 Jul 1917 – 4 Aug 1942

Norman Dudley HAINES was born at Swan Reach on the 1st of July 1917 the son of William Walter and Anna Maria HAINES. He had a brother Ray. Norman was working in Swan Reach at the outbreak of the war. In 1941 he had already married Jessica Mildred Haines and they were living at Swan Reach, on the 8th of November 1941, Norman completed his attestation in ADELAIDE and at 24 years of age joined the Royal Australian Air Force.

Norman completed his initial training and was in the process of pilot officer training in 1942, when he returned home to visit Jessie in the first week of July 1942. Jessie was heavily pregnant with their first child, and due to his training being conducted in South Australia at that time Norman was expected to be able to attend the birth.

On the 4th of August 1942, Norm was in a crew during training in Avro Anson bomber training aircraft R3542 over Montieth near Murray Bridge. Flight Officer Lawrence WOTZKO (pilot), Sgt Gordon COOPER (observer) and Leading Aircraftsmen Leslie CADD and Norman HAINES were in the crew. They had been flying for a number of hours and were training in low level formation flying when at about 10am a collision occurred with another Anson aircraft W2165. The crew of W2165 were Sgt Mervyn NICHOLLS, Sgt Hugh PHILLIPS, and Leading Aircraftsmen James RICHARDSON and Colin SAY.

The aircraft R3542 crashed into the Murray River in about 90 feet of water. Aircraft W2615 crashed nearby into ground on the bank of the river. All aboard both aircraft were believed killed instantly. The fuselage of aircraft R3542 was recovered but Leading Aircraftsman HAINES and Flight Officer Lawrence WOTZKO's bodies were never recovered despite long and methodical searches over six days.

One week after his death, Norm and Jessie's daughter, Patricia Kathleen HAINES, was born in Swan Reach. In 1947 Jessie HAINES married Arnold HORSTMANN in Swan Reach. A memorial service was held at Swan Reach Lutheran Church which was so well attended it was unable to hold all the mourners in attendance.

Norm is remembered at the family burial plot in the Swan Reach cemetery and is commemorated on the RAAF memorial in the Rookwood War Cemetery in NSW. He is commemorated on the Centennial Park War Cemetery Memorial, the Montieth Memorial and on the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour.

Norman is also commemorated with a tree and plaque here in the WAIKERIE War Memorial Gardens.

His service records are held by the National Archives but do not appear to have been digitised.