



INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
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Ministry of Justice
BC Coroners Service

Solving a 72-year-old mystery

VICTORIA – A collaborative operation between the BC Coroners Service and the federal Department of National Defence (DND) has resulted in the recovery and identification of an airplane and its crew that disappeared more than 70 years ago.

The operation this month resulted in the recovery of remains and associated artefacts of the four airmen who had been on the Second World War training aircraft when it went missing on October 30, 1942.

Sergeant William Baird was from the Royal Canadian Air Force. The other three were all members of the British Royal Air Force. They have been identified as: Pilot Officer Charles Fox, Pilot Officer Anthony William Lawrence, and Sergeant Robert Ernest Luckock.

The four airmen had left the air force base at Patricia Bay in Sidney on a navigational training flight in the Avro Anson, but the aircraft failed to return to base as planned. Searches immediately following the disappearance did not locate the plane or any wreckage.

In October 2013, a crew from a logging company that was working on a mountainside near Port Renfrew on southwestern Vancouver Island came upon the wreckage and immediately reported it to authorities. DND surveyed the site and discovered human remains and consulted with the BC Coroners Service. It was determined that environmental conditions were not suitable for a recovery operation at that time.

On May 5, 2014, specialists from the BC Coroners Service, including its Identification and Disaster Response Unit, returned to the site with National Defence specialists and over a period of several days worked together to recover, analyse and identify the remains recovered.

Canada's Department of National Defence and Britain's Ministry of Defense have contacted surviving family members of the deceased to inform them of the find and recovery.

NOTE TO MEDIA:

A photo of the recovery operation is available at:

<http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners/images/72-year-old-mystery.jpg>

The caption for the photo is:

On the right, Ms. Courtney Brown, Coroner, British Columbia Coroners Service; on the left, Ms. Laurel Clegg, Casualty Identification, Department of National Defence. Conducting an initial survey and recovery of remains near the cockpit. May 5, 2014.

The photo credit should go to:

Corporal Brandon O'Connell
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