

Pringle, Terence Alexander

Age: 29

Nationality: Irish

Rank: Squadron Leader

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Pilot

Service No: 78022 (RAFVR)

Birth: 8 October 1914,
Augher, Tyrone,
N. Ireland

Home Town: Augher, Tyrone,
N.Ireland

Death: 16 January 1944

Crash of Beechcraft Expeditor HB100
South of Vancouver

Burial: Commemorated on Ottawa Memorial,
Ontario, Canada

Others: P/O Harry W. Donkersley DFC and Bar, Pilot;
S/L James G. Flaherty, Navigator; P/O Ernest Sowerby; WAG.



Biography

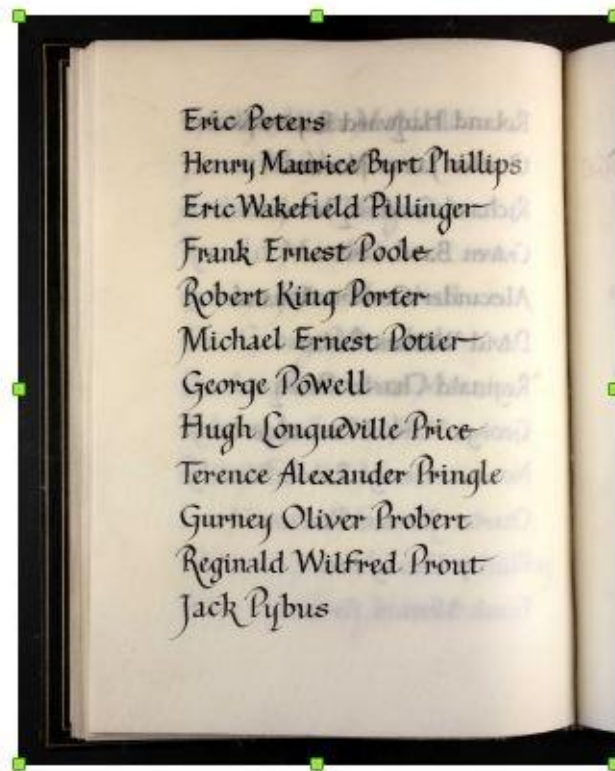
Terence Alexander Pringle, known as Tim, was born on 8 October 1914 in Augher, Tyrone, Northern Ireland, the oldest child of Dr. George Alexander Pringle and Amy Josephine Stack. He had two younger brothers, George Morgan Pringle, who became a doctor, and Arthur.

Tim was educated at the Royal School Dungannon, a public school dating from 1608.

He qualified as an Electrical Engineer before he joined the RAF.



Terence Alexander Pringle (Tim)
with his mother



Page from the Roll of Honor, Electrical Engineers

On 16 January 1944, Tim was a passenger on Beechcraft Expeditor HB100 when it was being ferried from Rockcliffe, Ontario to Patricia Bay, BC. The aircraft disappeared close to Vancouver in very poor weather. The wreckage and the bodies of Tim and the crew have never been located.



Pringle Family tombstone St. John's Church of Ireland, Tyrone.

Details of Crash

On 16 January 1944, Beechcraft Expeditor HB100 went missing while being ferried from Rockcliffe, Ontario to Patricia Bay, BC. The aircraft carried a crew of three and one passenger:

P/O Harry W. Donkersley DFC and Bar	Pilot
S/L James G. Flaherty	Navigator
S/L Terence A. Pringle	Passenger (RAFVR)
P/O Ernest Sowerby	WAG

The aircraft departed from Rockcliffe at 11:06 am on 15 January 1944 and stopped over at Winnipeg. It was given a daily inspection at Winnipeg on the morning of January 16th and departed for Lethbridge, where it arrived at 1:30 pm. The aircraft was serviced and given a between-flight inspection while at Lethbridge by a mechanic of No. 124 squadron. About 1:55 pm the pilot, or some other member of the crew, telephoned the Meteorologist for a weather report and forecast. The information was supplied and was unfavourable.

There were strong gusts of wind on the route with very poor conditions over the Western part including solid overcast up to 20,000' and icing conditions with a ceiling of 700' at Patricia Bay. Penticton was closed to both contact (visual) and instrument flying and Kimberly just on the limits. These were the only two airports that could be used as alternates. The intermediate range stations were closed to contact. Prediction for Vancouver from 17:30-19:00 hours was solid overcast with cloud 3,000' to 6,000' with tops up to 16,000', from Vancouver to the Cascades, strong winds, freezing level 7,000' with moderate icing above. Ceiling at Vancouver 900' in rain. Solid overcast dissipated a short distance east of the Cascades.

About an hour later the pilot and the navigator went to the meteorology office and went over the weather reports and forecast. They were supplied with all of the information available but, despite its adverse nature, decided that they could make the trip to Vancouver on instruments. About 2:55 pm the pilot went to the Department of Transport Tower to file a flight plan. The D of T Traffic Officer asked the pilot if he had checked the weather and, when the pilot replied he had, and said that it was satisfactory, referred him to the "N" operator, who entered the details of the flight on the traffic record sheet.

A flight plan form was not filled out and the particulars entered in the traffic record sheet did not include the alternate aerodrome, airspeed, fuel endurance and name of pilot. Information on the flight was transmitted as a flight plan to

Edmonton Airway Traffic Control Centre for traffic clearance.

The pilot left the tower after filing his flight plan and went to the aircraft. It is to be noted that he did not consult the radio range operator at Lethbridge. The latter was in a position, had he been contacted, to advise that the Vancouver radio range was unreliable.

The aircraft applied for and received clearance and took off at 15:15 hrs. It reported over Penticton at 17:17 hrs, estimated arrival at Vancouver 18:00 hrs, and requested Patricia Bay weather. At 17:50 hrs, Bellingham heard the aircraft calling Vancouver and giving its position as over Maple Ridge at 12,000' and descending to 6,000'. Vancouver did not receive this message.

The aircraft was not heard from by any station thereafter, but base continued to call every three to five minutes. When the aircraft was finally considered overdue, search action was instituted. Air search was convened on January 17th and continued daily to January 30th. No sign of the aircraft or the airmen aboard was ever found.

The pilot was considered responsible for the accident since it was his decision to fly the plane in what were obviously adverse conditions in which he had limited experience.

However, there were discussions and concerns about the control of RCAF flights from civilian airports, and among the recommendations on which action was taken was the staffing of control towers by RCAF personnel.

No evidence appears to have been given as to

why an experienced pilot would make such a decision, risking his own and other lives, or what, if any, the urgency of the flight caused him to do so.

