

## Flying Officer J. W. Bancroft (RAF Volunteer Reserve)

Joe Bancroft spent his early years in India, where his father was manager of a textile mill. When the family returned to England, Joe attended Keighley Grammar School and his two younger brothers, Gordon and Malcolm, attended Kildwick school<sup>1,2</sup>.

Joe joined the RAF in February 1941 and was sent for training to Canada. He later became an instructor at No. 38 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) based at Estevan.

No. 38 SFTS was opened by the RAF on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1942, as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, to train pilots for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF)<sup>3,4,5</sup>.



Avro Anson training aircraft<sup>6</sup> on the Estevan flight line

The Estevan training school was closed after less than two years. The site is now used as a commercial airport.

Being an SFTS flight instructor was by no means an easy option. Accidents were commonplace and training officers were required to show a great deal of skill and courage<sup>7</sup>.



**The wreck dump at No. 38 SFTS Estevan**

Flying Officer Bancroft was killed in an air accident on July 29<sup>th</sup> 1943. He was buried in the cemetery at Estevan<sup>8</sup>.

His death was reported in the Craven Herald<sup>1</sup>.

## DEATH IN CANADA

### Cross Hills Man's R.A.F. Service

On Saturday morning Mrs Alfred Bancroft, of Chota Bagn, Cross Hills, received a cablegram from the Air Authorities in Canada informing her that her eldest son, Flying Officer Joseph Wallace Bancroft, had been killed in an air accident in Canada. Flying-Officer Bancroft was born in Sutton and went out with his parents to India, where his father was engaged in the textile trade and eventually became manager of the Cawnpore Woolen Mills. He stayed in India until 10 years of age and on his return to England sat for and obtained a scholarship tenable at the Keighley Boys' Grammar School. On leaving school he became articled to Mr. A. A. Reeves, incorporated accountant, of Tyrrel Street, Bradford. When he volunteered for service in the R.A.F. in February, 1941, he had passed the intermediate examination as an accountant. He was 22 years of age in June last. F.O. Bancroft was sent out to Canada to train for the R.A.F. and when he ultimately got his wings he very shortly afterwards was granted a commission in the Air Force and was retained in Canada as an instructional officer. F.O. Bancroft was closely identified with the Kildwick Parish Church, and particularly interested in the Kildwick Church Brotherhood. His father died at Cawnpore about five and a-half years ago.



F.-O. Bancroft.

## References

1 Craven Herald, August 1943

2 Personal conversation with Miss Kathleen Auty

3

<http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/379/language/en-CA/Ghosts-of-Saskatchewan.aspx>

4 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Commonwealth\\_Air\\_Training\\_Plan#Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Commonwealth_Air_Training_Plan#Canada)

5

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_British\\_Commonwealth\\_Air\\_Training\\_Plan\\_facilities\\_in\\_Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_British_Commonwealth_Air_Training_Plan_facilities_in_Canada)

6 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avro\\_Anson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avro_Anson)

7 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp478Tgm5gg>

8 <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2850444/BANCROFT,%20JOSEPH%20WALLACE>