Second World War - Pilot Officer J R J Laidlay, Sergeant R J Whiffen, Aircraftman D Campbell: killed; aircraft accident, Dyce, Blenheim N3608, 254 Squadron, 3 September 1940

The following is from the National Archives: AIR 81/308
BURIAL RETURN.

To be rendered in respect of all burials (including enemy dead) whether or not due to war operations.

(Date) 3rd October 1919

Place of Burial...Abdie (Fife)...
Map Reference...

(and name of Cemetery)...

Abdie Old Church.

Grave No. No. Number...Personal or Official No...7870...

Unit...
No. 254 Squadron...

Name: (Surname) LAIRD...
(Initials) J...

Rank...
Pilot Officer...

Religion...

Date of Death...

3.9.19...

Date of Burial...

6.9.19...

Means of Identification...

To be answered by Home Units and Units in the Field.

Have effects (if any) been forwarded to the (i) Base Personnel Staff Officer?

(ii) Standing Committee of Adjustment?

To be answered by Units in the Field.

CROSSES. (Strike out all but one line.)

1. No Cross required, as an adequate cross with durable inscription is already in position.

2. Cross required: (a) Will be called for at G.R.U. Office at...

(b) To be forwarded by G.R.U. to...

(c) To be erected by G.R.U. as soon as possible.

When a Chaplain, Burial Officer or Commanding Officer, renders a Burial Return and is not in a position personally to verify the particulars shown thereon, he must invariably state on the form the authority responsible for supplying the details of identity, and (if possible) how these were obtained.

(Signed)...

Chaplain, O. i/e Burials, or O.C. Unit...

Distribution:--Units in the Field...

Home Units and Overseas...

Units not in the Field...

* Extent of damage

† Extent of damage to be indicated as--

W = Write off unrepairable or lost.
R = Repairable but beyond unit's capacity to repair.
M = Repairable at unit.
U = No damage.

8. Did fire occur—(i) In air? Yes...

(ii) On ground? Continued...

9. Was Accidents Branch notified? Yes...
REPORT ON FLYING ACCIDENT OR
FORCED LANDING NOT ATTRIBUTABLE TO ENEMY ACTION


2. Serial No. of Form. 13

3. Date of Incident. 6.9.40.

4. Site of Incident—
   (A) Aerodrome, name of
   (B) Landing ground, name of
   (C) Place, if not (A) or (B) Kinoodie.

   (i) Operational
   (ii) Non-operational
   See footnote A
   (a) Solo ab initio
   (b) Dual ab initio
   (c) Other non-operational
   Quote "Yes" in appropriate space.

6. Pilot.
   Name Laidley.
   Rank 7/L.
   Number 7070.

   Hours flown solo on type quoted in Part 7
   Hours flown solo on all types
   Hours flown by instruments
   Hours on Link Trainer

7. TYPE OF AIRFRAME AND ENGINE and extent of damage (see footnotes to this section).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of airframe and engine</th>
<th>Airframe</th>
<th>Engine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Ellenham</td>
<td>S.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark or series</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.F. No.</td>
<td>R.2266</td>
<td>XV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total hours run
*Date last installed in airframe
*Extent of damage

* To be quoted only for incidents involving defect or failure of airframe or engine.
† Extent of damage to be indicated as—
W = Write off unrepairable or lost.
R = Repairable but beyond unit’s capacity to repair.
M = Repairable at unit.
U = No damage.


9. Was Accidents Branch notified? Yes.

10. Was Salvage Organisation notified? Yes.

11. Is a Court of Inquiry or Investigation being held? Not yet known.

12 (a). Number of occupants killed Three.

12 (b). Number of other occupants, who received injuries necessitating admission to sick quarters or hospital None.

13. This flight is being included in this unit’s flying hour summary on Form 768A:

Notes—A (Part 5)—Applicable only to elementary or intermediate training at flying training schools.
B (Part 6)—Night flying hours required only if incident occurred at night.
C (Part 6)—Instrument and Link Trainer hours required only if loss of control at night or in bad visibility or during low flying.
D (Part 6)—By day was the sole or a contributory cause of the accident.
14. Summary of pilot's report (to be given in every case). In addition, in cases of engine failure, information should be given of the behaviour of engine and details of throttle movement immediately before failure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height at which engine failure occurred.</th>
<th>Not applicable.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During take-off run. A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before reaching 500 ft. B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After reaching 500 ft. C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quote A, B, or C as appropriate........</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Technical report by unit's specialist officer.

(i) Remarks.

The aircraft collided with H.3529 in the air, caught fire and dived into the ground vertically when it is presumed the petrol tanks exploded as parts of the aircraft were scattered over a radius of 50 yards. The main part of the fuselage and engines are buried about 8 feet deep, and it continued to burn until extinguished by a spring of water burst by the aircraft. Nothing left to salvage, except scrap.

(ii) Is Form 1022 being rendered? No.

16. Remarks by Unit Commander and notes of any action taken as a result of this incident (other than action noted 10, 11, and 15 (ii)).

(i) Diagnosis of primary cause of accident or forced landing.

Aircraft collided with Blenheim H.3529 in the air at 2000 - 3000 feet.

(ii) Diagnosis of secondary cause of accident or forced landing.

Aircraft dived into the ground.

(iii) General remarks (including any recommendations with regard to personnel, training, airframes, engines or a

There was apparently no attempt to use parachutes and all occupants were killed.

Signature (Sig.) H.V. Paillier. Commanding No. 254 Squadron.

Date: 30.10.
Flying Accident on 30th April, involving Blenheim aircraft Nos. N.3908 and N.3909.

Sir,

I have the honour to report on the above accident notified by signals A.366 and A.397, 30th April.

The flying training programme for the flight concerned was formation attacks on another flight. This programme was cancelled but two aircraft took off without the formation leader. These had the following crews:

- N.3908
  - Pilot: W/Cdr. P/O H. H. T. Macdonald
  - Air Gunner: Sg. H. W. Whiffen
  - Passenger: A/Cpl. A. C. Chapman

- N.3904
  - Pilot: Sg. J. A. J. Hanna
  - Air Gunner: A/Cpl. A. G. Lewis

From eyewitness accounts the aircraft were practising attacks approximately 2 miles North of Dyce Aerodrome and collided at 2,000 - 3,000 feet.

The wing fell off one machine and the other aircraft caught fire.

The aircraft crashed in positions 1 mile apart and both were completely burnt out, all occupants being killed. There were no parachute descents.

The pilots concerned were recent arrivals at this Squadron and were being trained for operational duties. They had previously carried out attacks both single and in formation.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

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Additional notes and comments appear on the bottom of the page, which are not transcribed here for clarity.
The flying experience of the pilots is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>1st Pilot</th>
<th>2nd Pilot</th>
<th>Total Flying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P/O. Laidley</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>20.15</td>
<td>261.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt. Hanna</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>202.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgt.) H.V. Hocking, S/Ldr.

Commanding, No. 254 Squadron.

Copies to:- Headquarters, 18 Group.

The Under Sec. of State, - P.O.W. & Displaced Persons Dept., P.O.W. & C.I.A. Records.

Airplanes dived into the ground.

General remarks (including any recommendations with regard to personnel, training, airframes, engines or accessories):
5 September, 1940.

Sir,

I am commanded by the Air Council to inform you that they have with great regret to confirm the telegram in which you were notified that your son, Pilot Officer John Reginald James Laidlay, Royal Air Force, was reported on the 3rd September, 1940, to have lost his life as the result of an aircraft accident near Dyce, Aberdeenshire.

The Air Council desire me to express their profound sympathy with you in your bereavement.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(89d) Charles Evans.

I.C. Laidlay, Esq.,
Lindores,
Pife.
TO:  I. C. LAIDLAY Esq.
     LINDORES, FIFE.

Airmail Ministry

Date 4-9-40

... ... ... ... ... Despaly. Regret to inform you that

your son Pilot Officer JOHN REGINALD JAMES LAIDLAY

on Sept 3rd 1940

is reported as having lost his life in the result of an aircraft accident. 

Letter follows. The Air Council extend their 

profound sympathy. 

Under-Secretary of State, Air Ministry.

This message is for use by W/T and dress signature.

 junto.

Sign.

Originator's Number 87. Case

M. H. 

This message must be sent in code and dress

signature. 

The Air Council in inserting "NOT" if message is not to be sent by W/T ever part of the rete.

(T.O.R.

Below this line is for Signals use only.

T.M.I.

Section.

* The Signal Department is responsible that these details are transmitted to the appropriate section of the message form and that all possibility of compromise is avoided.

Below defiles of the message these details to be re-inserted

19339 W.I. 5706 19402 040 Pads with T.S. 790
Received A.M.C.S. 2120 hours 3/9/40.


P.A. (A) Blenheim Mk IV N3808 (B) No. 254 Squadron R.A.F. Dyce (C) 8 miles north of Dyce (D) P/O Laidlay J. 7972 killed T/ Sgt. W.O. NA Whitten R. 747997 killed A.C.I. ACH Campbell D. 638834 killed (E) R.A.F. Dyce (F) S.A.A. (G) Collision in mid-air. Inquiry not necessary (H) Cat. 3. Aircraft completely burned out. No assistance required (J) N.A.

Time of Origin: 1830

Advance copies sent to P.4.Cas., D.R.M. Passed to Records. Advance copy for ZA (87)

RECEIVED
4 SEP 1940
A.M.
CASUALTY SECTION.

Crash Circulation.

S.L. TELS.

RECEIVED
3 SEP 1940
P.M.
CASUALTY SECTION.

C WA ADDRESSED TO (C1 ACCIDENTS)
CC WA Laidlay J.
WH B4++++
Wright 2058 KK