



# SHARK 517

## Crashed

*July 27, 1940*

## Flight Crew

F/O ROBERT M HALPENNY, Pilot C1296 Vancouver, BC

F/L ALLAN SIMPSON, Signals Officer, C1127, Vancouver, BC

LAC ROBERT L RICHARDSON, Wireless Tech, P4056, Vancouver

On 27 July 1940 F/L A. Simpson, the Signals Officer for #6 (B.R.) Squadron in Alliford Bay, requested a flight test for a new wireless set and the modified crate (rack) for the Shark. That afternoon, after Shark 517 aircraft was modified, F/O Halpenny requested that he be tasked to fly it. He was briefed to carry out diving tests and tight turns as the crate had to be tested under dive bombing conditions. He was instructed to get plenty of height and put some stress on the new gear. F/L Simpson the Signals Officer and LAC Richardson a wireless tech went with him to operate the equipment. The weather was clear with some scattered to broken cloud at 5,000', winds were westerly at 10-12 mph. The aircraft took off at 1555 and climbed to altitude over Skidigate and did one dive then climbed back up to 5,000' and started another dive over Bush Island. This one was steeper than normal and the pitch increased to nearly vertical and the power was at max. When he tried to pull out at 1,000' parts of the aircraft fell off and the aircraft plunged into the water and burst into flames. All occupants were killed instantly. Witnesses were unanimous in stating the dive was much steeper and the speed much higher than normal and the engine was at or near full power all the way down. The starboard aileron and elevator were found some distance from the crash and there was a tear on the left wing fabric with indications that the left wing broke off before the crash. The stabilizer was set to full nose down, the throttle was wide open and the airspeed indicator had broken at 300 kts when the aircraft crashed at 1620. It had been airborne 25 minutes.

Following the accident dive bombing was no longer authorized, the maximum speed permitted for the Shark was restricted to 150 mph and the wings were strengthened.

# REQIESCAT EN PACE FRATRES



September 2013