

PETER BROOK SENTANCE – ROYAL AIR FORCE PILOT 1937 TO 1945 S/N 39903

Peter was born in the United Kingdom on 23 April 1916 in Carshalton, Surrey, United Kingdom.

His early schooling is unknown but the University of London granted him his School Certificate after attending Whitgift School in South Croydon for five years ending July 1933. Following that he worked as a motor mechanic at Armstrong Siddeley until he applied to join the Royal Air Force (RAF). Subsequently he commenced his flying training at Air Service Training (A.S.T.) Hamble UK on 15 May 1937.

A.S.T Hamble

He made his first flight on 13 May 1937 in the Avro Cadet G-ACCJ with his instructor F/O Greenstead for fifteen minutes covering 'air experience' and 'straight and level flying'. After seven hours and twenty minutes training, Peter did his first solo flight (5 minutes) in the Avro Cadet G-ACCJ.

Training flights included exercises as follows: effect of controls, taxiing and handling of engine, stalling, climbing, gliding, taking off into wind, medium turns with/without engine, approaches and landings, spinning and a solo test. Training continued with exercises including sideslipping, steep turns, climbing turns, forced landings, low flying, air navigation including instruments, cross country flying, and aerobatics.

Flying training finished on 1 July 1937 after flight time of sixty-two hours and ten minutes, all completed on Avro Cadet aircraft.

Uxbridge

He was posted to Uxbridge from 4 July to 17 July 1937 on a short-term transfer.

NO. 7 F.T.S Peterborough

Peter's next section of his flight training was at No. 7 Flight Training School which was an 'Intermediate Training Squadron' flying Hawker Hart aircraft. He commenced flying there on 20 July 1937 using Hawker Hart and Hawker Audax aircraft types.

Flying training at Peterborough involved similar flying exercises as Hamble but on more advanced, faster aircraft. It also included formation flying, night flying, instrument navigation, landing without an engine, direction finding, cross-wind landings etc.

RAF Gosport

19 February to 3 March 1938

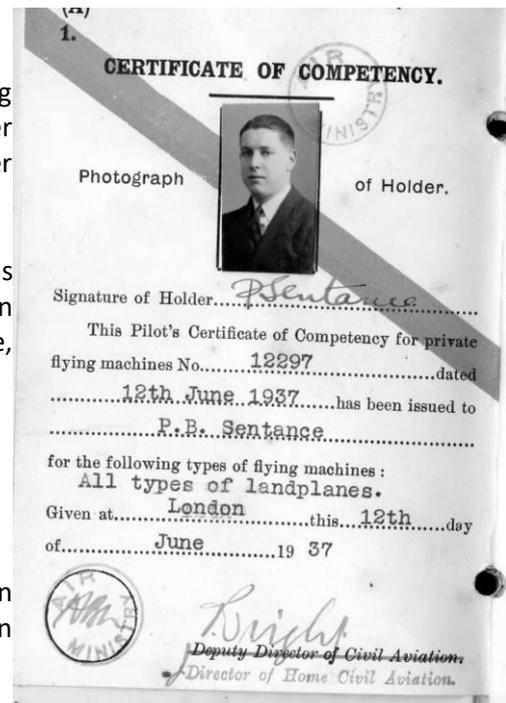
No. 1 Air Observers School, North Coates

He transferred to this school on 3 March 1938 for further training on Westland Wallace aircraft which were two seaters. Other aircraft flown were Avro Tutor and Fairey Gordon.

Exercises undertaken were bombing, low bombing pattern, high bombing pattern (various exercises), target towing and navigation. He finished at this base on 30 January 1939

RAF Manston – School of Air Navigation

Peter transferred to this school on 31 January 1939 flying as a second pilot on Avro Anson aircraft. He completed this course on 11 April 1939 after flying forty-five hours and forty minutes (including eight hours and twenty-five minutes night flying. At that stage his total flying time was four hundred and four hours and fifty-five minutes.



RAF 105(B) Squadron Harwell

This was a significant posting as it involved flying Fairey Battle aircraft from 12 April 1939, when a check ride was taken with Flt. Lieut. Mace for one hour and twenty minutes. Solo was soon followed with exercises progressively undertaken such as forced landings, circuits & landings, group tactical exercise, war load climbing, sealed map cross country, stereo pairs, line overlap, camera bombing, washout/cloud, high dive bombing. These also included a trip to Dieppe France on the Newhaven Steamer. Other exercises included formation flying, night experience, forced landings, dusk landings, cross country flying and tactical exercises. This training was a build-up to transfer to France.

Effective from 20 September 1939 he was based at Villeneuve, France. On this day a formation of Fairey Battles did a reconnoitre to the frontier with Germany with a flying time of one hour and fifty minutes. He was promoted to Flying Officer on 10 November 1939. As it was felt that war was coming, the flying involved 'dive & low bombing attacks on aerodrome, live bombing at Moronvilliers, evasive tactics, low level attacks and landing at satellite aerodrome Pocancy, cross country flying' with a final flight on 9 December 1939. Total time on Fairey Battles was seventy-six hours. Peter finished with this squadron on 31 December 1939.

In France he was billeted in a local champagne winery and enjoyed the pleasures of the winery when not on flying duties.

School of Air Navigation – St. Athan

Peter was posted here effective from 1 January 1940 to undergo special navigation training as a pilot, finishing the course on 13 April 1940 when he became an instructor. He remained until 20 October 1940. Aircraft flown were Avro Anson and Miles Magister.

School of Air Navigation Cranage

This next posting was from 21 October 1940 where Avro Anson aircraft were flown. Not much flying was undertaken so it is assumed that Peter undertook the role as a ground instructor on navigation. He left that squadron on 18 December 1941.

No. 3 Air Observers School Bobbington

This posting started on 19 December 1941 and involved being a staff pilot on Avro Ansons with second pilots and students undergoing navigation training. Flying with this station finished on 30 June 1942.



In RAAF uniform 1940

Headquarters No. 25 Group, Market Drayton

His task with this group was as a communication pilot flying Gloster Gladiator, Avro Anson, Percival Proctor, DH94 Moth Minor. He was promoted to Squadron Leader on 25 January 1943. 25 Group was his posting from 1 July 1942 until 20 September 1943.

No. 9 (O) AFU Llandwrog

Peter was posted here on 20 September 1943 as a communication pilot on Avro Anson aircraft. During this time he attended the No. 1 Senior Commanders' Course at O.A.T.S, Cranwell from 19 April to 16 May 1944. He left this base on 13 June 1944.

No. 11 (P) AFU Calverley

He was posted to this group from 13 June to 18 June 1944 for a short training course.

No. 11 (P) AFU (Sat) Wrexham

He was posted here on 18 June 1944 for further training on Airspeed Oxford aircraft undertaking instrument flying. For a brief five days 12 to 17 July 1944 he was part of No. 531 BAT Squadron using Airspeed Oxfords on special training. From 19 July to 20 August 1944 he undertook further day and night airborne training. His reports stated 'Proficient pilot'. He was then ready for posting to bombers.

No. 83 O.T.U. Peplow

He was posted to this Operational Training Unit on 30 August 1944 to be endorsed on Vickers Wellington bombers with a full crew of four other airmen. The flying involved exercises - 'High Level Bombing, fighter affiliation and formation co-operation'. He successfully passed the course.



Peter at the controls of a Wellington

No. 30 O.T.U. Hixon

He was posted to Hixon on 28 October 1944 until 12 February 1945 where he undertook minimal flying on Vickers Wellington aircraft.

No. 20 O.T.U. Lossiemouth

He was posted to this OTU on 13 February 1945 until 30 March 1945 where he flew Vickers Wellington aircraft on various exercises. Training also included dinghy and parachute drill.

No. 1651 C.U. Woolfox Lodge

The posting to this conversion unit was from 30 March to 20 June 1945 to be endorsed on the Avro Lancaster and he undertook various tasks such as 'Exercises one to twelve including fighter affiliation'. Bombing and air tests were also undertaken. In total, forty hours were flown during this time. He was certified 'B' Bombing Category after the conversion course was finished.

No. 635 Squadron Downham Market

The posting to this squadron was from 20 June to 25 September 1945 flying Avro Lancaster aircraft, all on cross-country exercises.

RAF Wyton

He was posted here from 25 September to 3 November 1945, undertaking no flying.

No. 100 Personnel Despatch Centre (P.D.C.) Uxbridge

He was posted here on 3 November 1945 and his last day of RAF service was on 29 December 1945 when he was demobbed.

RAF Aircraft Types Flown

Airspeed Oxford

Avro Tutor

Gloster Gladiator

Percival Proctor

Avro Anson

Fairey Battle

Hawker Audax

Vickers Wellington III & X

Avro Cadet

Dh 94 Moth Minor

Hawker Hart

Avro Lancaster I & III

Fairey Gordon

Miles Magister

Westland Wallace

POST-WAR

After returning to civilian life, Peter managed the Luton Flying Club and whilst there remained in the RAF Reserve and was promoted to the rank of Wing Commander.



Peter third from left



Peter on the left with Luton Flying Club

In 1947 he emigrated to New Zealand with his family. In that country he undertook duties in a clay pit, as a house painter, sales representative. He also operated a paint and wallpaper Shop. After that he was paymaster at a large clothing manufacturing plant in Auckland until retirement.



50th wedding anniversary 1989



His son Chris emigrated to Australia in 1976. It was at the behest of the latter that his father's log books were donated to the South Australian Aviation Museum Inc. This is how Nigel Daw came to write this biography.