

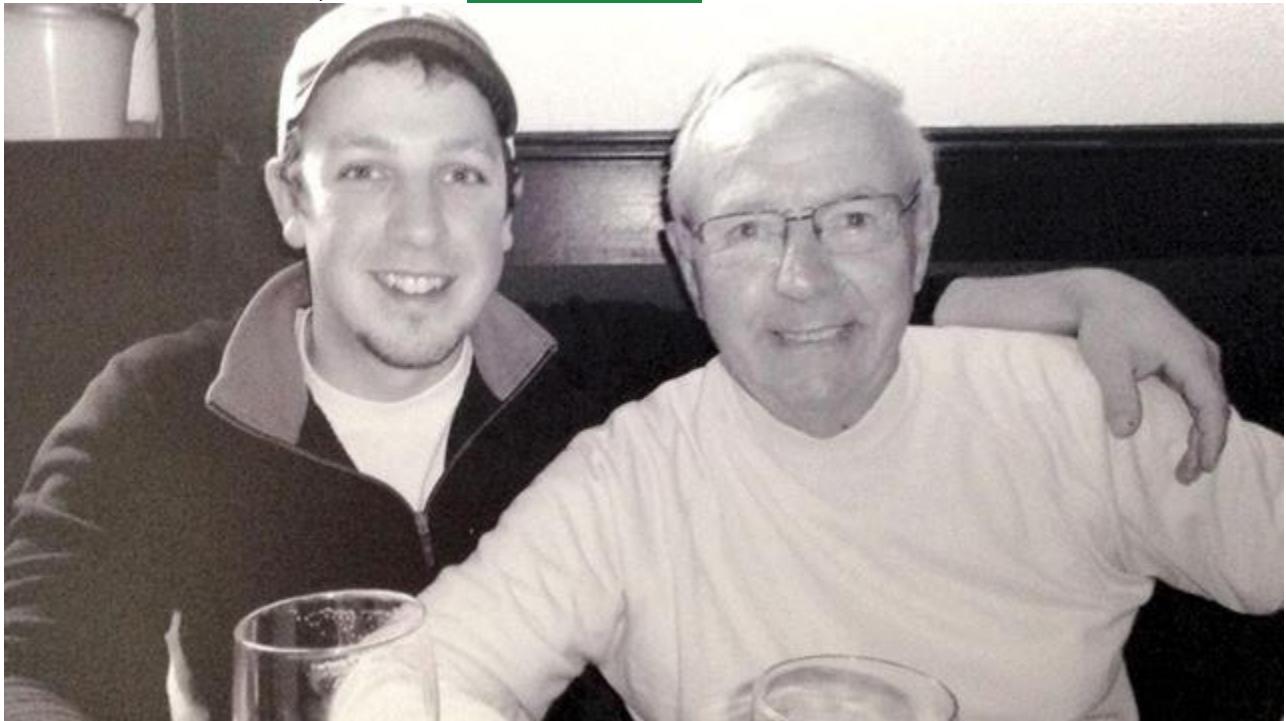
2534 Peter Noel Saunders

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LIFE STORIES - A celebration of lives well lived and people well loved

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*Peter Sanders, with grandson Mark King, loved airplane museums and James Bond movies.
Submitted photo - Submitted photo*

Peter Noel Sanders didn't have the eyesight to land him in a pilot's seat, but saved many pilots and passengers' lives as an airplane inspector.

He also had the honour of working on the Avro Arrow project as an engineer.

Born July 12, 1925 in London, England, he lied about his age at 17 to enlist with the Fleet Air Arm.

After the war, he continued with Skyways Service as an engineer on flights from the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bombay, Baghdad and the Bahamas.

"After working in Saudi Arabia, he was told he could have any job he wanted," said son Gregg Sanders. He picked one in Nassau, Bahamas.

Little did he know, future wife Francis and four of her friends were waitresses at a local resort.

Daughter Paula King said her mom had to cross a deserted airfield to take a phone call one day. "This chap came along in a Jeep and asked her if she wanted a ride. That was the end of that."

The couple later married and moved to Concord, where Peter continued in aviation, working at Toronto's Pearson International Airport. In his free time, he also worked on the Lancaster Bomber restoration for a decade.

As an airplane inspector, it was Peter's job to perform safety audits. One time, his target was the Avro Arrow, which was ready for a test flight.

"He got this feeling something wasn't right," King said. "My dad started crawling down towards the back where the wires were. What did he find but a huge piece of steel that had been left behind and would've cut the wires."

Another time, while inside a plane, he used a paperclip he had picked up off the ground, to pierce the skin of the plane's roof, Gregg recalled.

Every piece of advice Peter gave his son was about safety.

His dad was articulate, had a good work ethic and loved airplane museums and James Bond movies.

Peter loved his family, especially his brother in England and his five grandchildren.

On one of his last visits to England, Peter's brother died in his arms while they were waiting for the bus to take the return trip to the airport.

Like his brother, Peter suffered from chronic heart disease. He died at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre April 18.