Scott Grover CLEVELAND (1922 – 1943)







R174455 Sergeant

S.G.CLEVELAND

Air Gunner

Royal Canadian Air Force

218 Squadron, RAF

14th May 1943 Age 21

COMRADE, SLEEP ON,

EARTH'S BATTLES FOUGHT,

WE LEAVE THEE NOW TO GOD.

I.Thess. 4.16





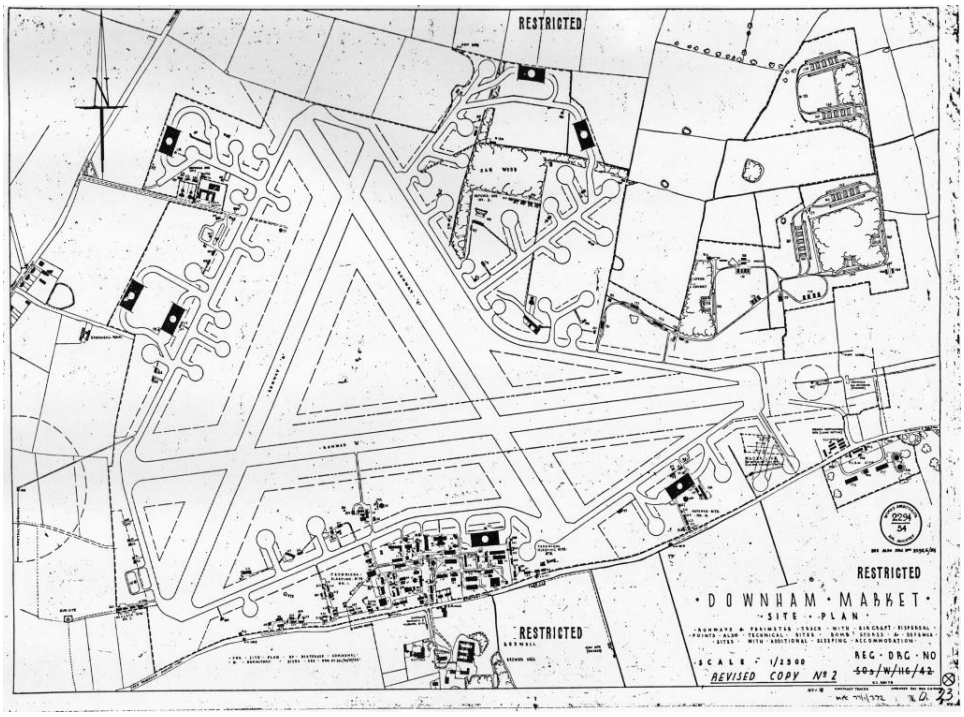
Born in 1922, Scott Grover Cleveland was the son of Grover Harrison Cleveland and Millie Pearl Cleveland. He and his younger brother Theodore were born in Chester, Nova Scotia but in 1927, when he was just 5 years old, the family moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts. It was here that his sister Virginia was born.

In the US 1930 census the family were living in Stoneham Town, Middlesex, Massachusetts and Grover Cleveland was working as a machinist in a fibre washer factory. By 1940 the family had moved to Sydney

Centre, Delaware, New York and Scott's father was a dye press at the Scintilla works which produced parts used in aircraft propulsion.

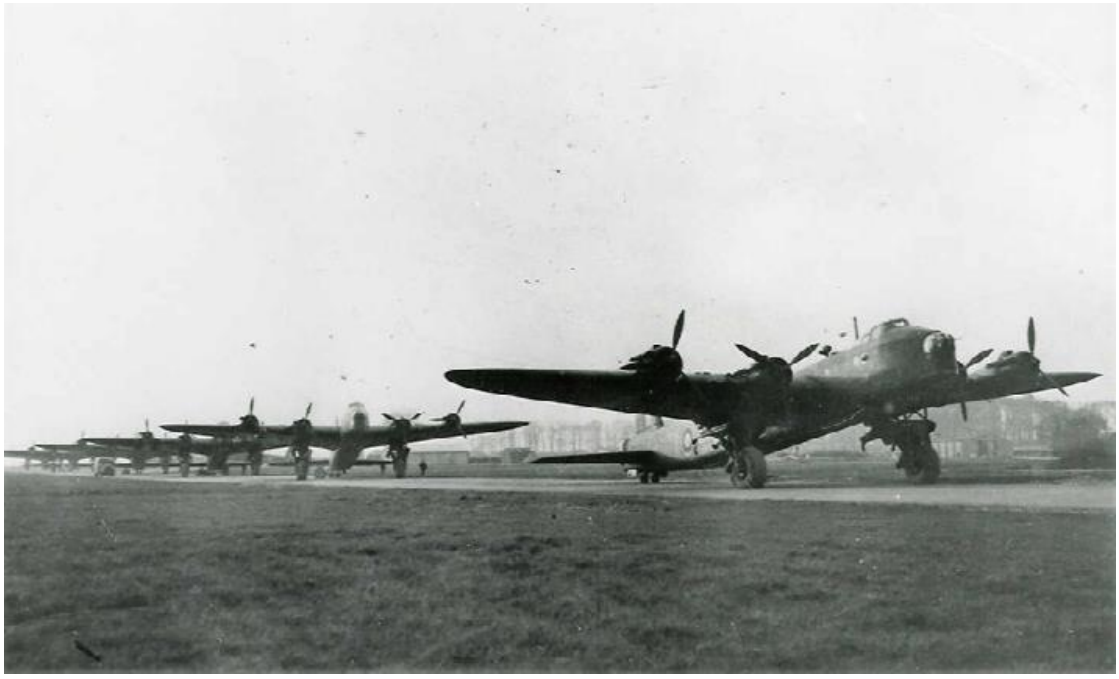
As a twenty one year old Scott Grover Cleveland arrived in England on 23 April 1943 as a Sergeant Air Gunner, serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force. He joined No 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron equipped with Short Stirling aircraft based at RAF Downham Market.

Opened in the summer of 1942 this station was built to a class A specification as a satellite to RAF Marham. The main contractors were Messrs W & C French. The squadron was the first to operate from this airfield arriving on July 8th 1942.





Scott joined the crew of Sgt T Nicholls along with Sgt Hargest, Sgt Jamieson, Sgt Wurr, Sgt Howard, and Pilot Officer Pierce. Their first operation aboard Short Stirling BF405 HA-P was a mine laying operation on 4 May when they went to the Frisian Islands that stretch from the northwest of the Netherlands to the west of Denmark.



Short Stirlings at RAF Downham 1943

Their next operation was as part of a mixed force of over four hundred aircraft taking part in a raid on Bochum on May 13th 1943. Barely three weeks after joining 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron, this was Scott's second operation and would be his last. While crossing the Belgian-German border en-route to their target, their aircraft was damaged by a night fighter and rear gunner Sergeant John Howard was killed.

Although badly damaged by cannon fire, the crew managed to evade the fighter and jettison the bomb load before turning for home. Sgt Nicholls managed to bring the Stirling back to East Anglia but with fuel desperately low due to damaged fuel tanks, he decided to divert to RAF Chedburgh which was nearer than their home base at Downham Market.

With extensive damage to both flaps and undercarriage he made an approach for a belly landing. According to the accident report all four Hercules engines suddenly cut out, starved of fuel. The Stirling hit a tree and crashed on the edge of the airfield at 0400hrs.

As the Stirling disintegrated five of the crew who had taken up crash positions were flung clear of the wreckage. The pilot was pulled out from amongst the burning wreckage suffering a broken left femur, numerous lacerations and severe shock. He was admitted to West Suffolk Hospital, Bury St Edmunds.

Sergeant Hargest, Sergeant Cleveland and Sergeant Jamieson all received multiple injuries and died on impact. Sergeant D. Wurr, flight engineer received multiple wounds in the crash and died soon after being admitted to hospital.

The final crew member, navigator Pilot Officer Edward Pierce, RNZAF, sustained a sprained left ankle and shock. Their aircraft, Short Stirling Mk.I EF367 HA-G was almost new having only flown a total of 3 hours 35 minutes.

Scott Grover Cleveland was buried at Haverhill cemetery, Suffolk, England, grave 247, section U.



Could this be Cleveland 2nd from right? https://218squadron.wordpress.com/photograph-help/

