Douglas Menzies THOMSON (1916 – 1943)





Observer, 910599
Douglas Menzies
THOMSON

RAF
620 Squadron

2nd July 1943

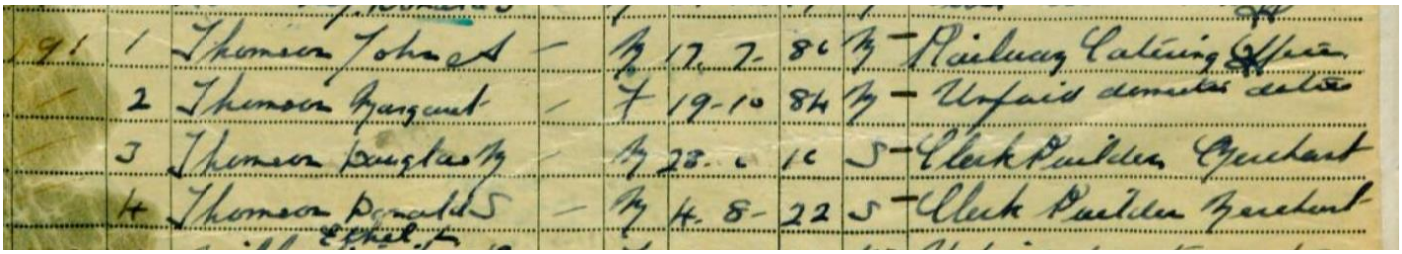
Age 27

HIS DUTY WELL DONE.
THOUGH LOST TO SIGHT
TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

No photo



Douglas Menzies Thomson was the son of John Arthur, a Railway Catering Officer and Margaret Thomson, of Watford, Hertfordshire. He was born on 28th June 1916. In 1939 he and a brother, Donald who was six years his junior, were living with their parents at 113 Woodland Drive Watford. Douglas was working as a Clerk in a Builder's Merchants.



During WW1 his father had served with the newly formed RAF so it is not surprising that Douglas opted to join the RAF too. It is not known when he enlisted but in May 1943 he was an Observer with 620 Squadron. This Squadron was formed on 17th June 1943 and based at RAF Chedburgh. It was comprised of 10 Stirlings from each of 149 and 214 Squadrons, and two days later on 19/20th

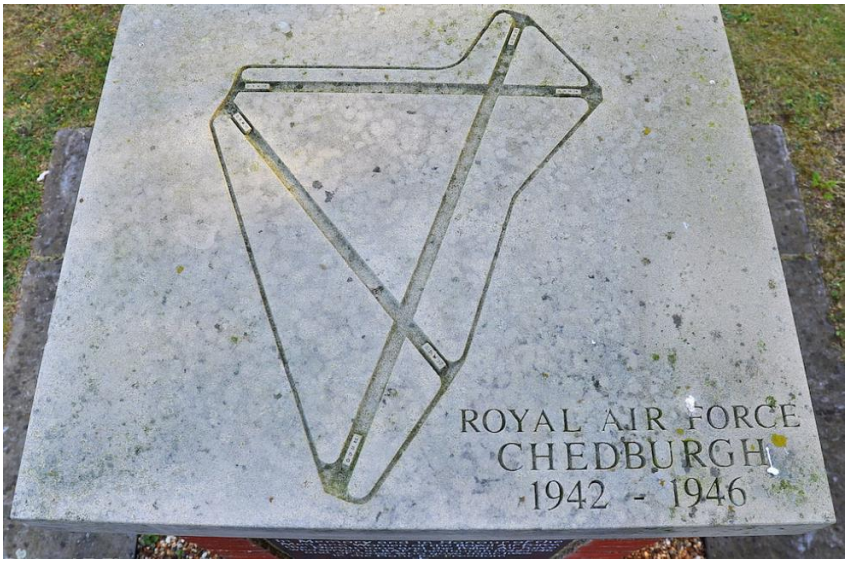
June, as a part of No. 3 Group of RAF Bomber Command, it began operations with an attack by eight Stirlings on the Schneider armament works at Le Creusot in France.

They lost their first aircraft with the loss of all crew. On 2nd July 1943 two Stirling aircraft, EF394 (V) and BK724 (Y), collided over the airfield whist flying in formation during an air affiliation exercise. One came down near to the local pub The Marquis Cornwallis and the other in Stansfield. Only the rear gunner of the Stansfield crash survived with horrific burns. The two crews included five ground staff who were along for experience. Charles, aged 21 years, was one of the men who lost his life.

Douglas was buried at Haverhill cemetery, Suffolk, England, grave 147, section U. Others who perished in the same accident are also buried in Haverhill Cemetery. They are Sgt R G Lancelott, RAF, from Birmingham, Sgt R C Young, RAF, from Enfield and Leading Aircraftman C S Forster, RAF, from Cleethorpes and Sgt Robert Elmer Atkinson of the RCAF.

The memorial to those who lost their lives at RAF Chedburgh.

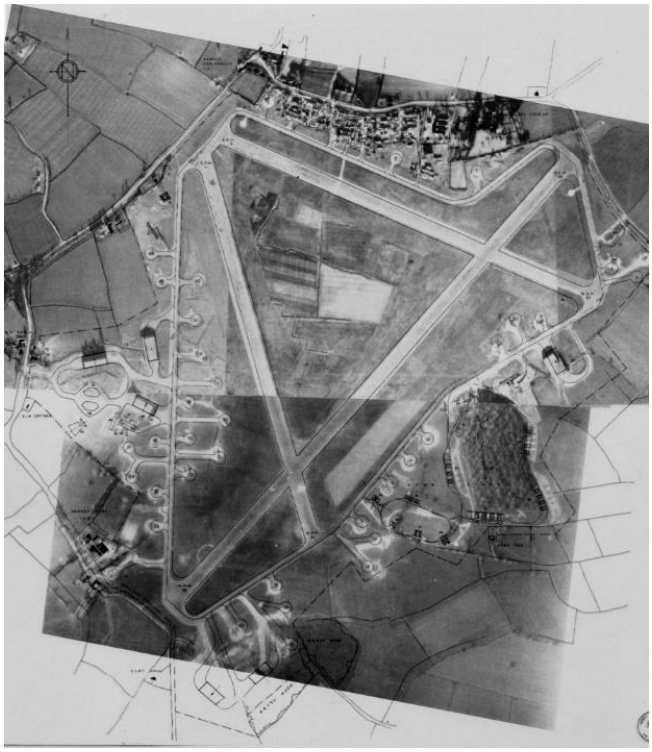




Chedburgh was one of the earliest operational wartime airfields in Suffolk. Built by John Laing and Co., it was a satellite bomber station for nearby RAF Stradishall.







Others who lost their lives were

Sgt Thomas Corless *who was buried in Burnley Cemetery,*

AC 1St Class Arthur Haight *who was buried in Sand Hutton,*

L/A James Alexander Macdonald *who was buried in Urray Churchyard,*

Sgt William Shearer *who was buried in Inverurie Cemetery,*

Sgt Leslie Gordon Turville *who was buried in Hoddesdon Cemetery,*

Sgt Wilfred Coopey *who was buried in Barnwood (St. Lawrence) Churchyard,*

Sgt Richard Hewitt *who was buried in Plymouth (Ford Park) Cemetery,*

A/C1 Thomas Mcloughlin *who was buried in Dean's Grange Cemetery, Ireland,*

Sgt Roderick Richard*s who was buried in Portsmouth (Kingston) Cemetery*

LAC Hugh Rooney *who was buried in Dundee Eastern Necropolis.*