

FO Edwin Horton Thomas J/18090 DFM RCAF

Edwin was born on 3 June 1915 in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, the son of George Thomas and Louisa Thomas nee Horton.

Educated at Edmonds Street School and Burnaby South High, British Columbia, Edwin was employed as a stenographer and clerk by the Department of Fisheries, New Westminster, British Columbia when, in June 1940, he volunteered for aircrew service in the RCAF.

Called up in February 1941, Edwin completed his aircrew training in Canada in November 1941 with the award of his WOp/AG badge and departed for the UK the following month.

Following advanced training at No. 2 Signal School, RAF Yatesbury, Wiltshire, No. 3 Air Observer School, RAF Halfpenny Green, Staffordshire, 20 OTU RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, Scotland and 1651 HCU, RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, in September 1942 Edwin re-mustered as Air Bomber and was posted to 218 Sqn at RAF Downham Market, Norfolk.



In May 1943 at the end of his tour, Edwin was awarded the DFM and in July was granted a commission and posted to 1678 HCU, RAF Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, for Lancaster conversion training. In November 1943 Edwin was posted to 514 Sqn, also at RAF Waterbeach.

On 14/15 January 1944, Bomber Command was tasked with an operation to Brunswick, the first major raid on this town of the war. A combined force of 498 aircraft was allocated to the op, including 23 squadron aircraft.

At 17:06 on 14 January Edwin, operating as the Bomb Aimer, and the crew departed RAF Waterbeach in Lancaster II LL685 (J1-G2).

The German controller tracked the bomber stream from just off the English coastline and many German fighters entered the stream over Bremen, continuing to claim aircraft until the stream left the Dutch coast on the return leg. On approach to the target, at 19:05 Edwin's aircraft was intercepted by Hptm Walter Barte of the Stab III./NJG3, flying a Bf110 from Stade Airfield. Edwin's aircraft crashed 3 miles South of Celle, and ½ mile West of Bennebstel, Lower Saxony, Germany, killing all on board.

Also Killed: S/L Ernest Frank Sly DFC AM (Pilot); FO Philip Pullyn Boulter (FE); FO William Leonard Harvey DFM RNZAF (WOp/AG); FO John Livingstone Martin RCAF (Nav); FO Frank George Rosher DFM (AG); FO James Allan Sneddon DFM (AG)

Originally buried in Westercelle Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany, in October 1946 Edwin was moved to Hanover War Cemetery, Niedersachsen, Germany.

Edwin is commemorated on Wall Panel 252

Edwin's only sibling, FO Charles Richard Thomas RCAF was killed in a training accident on 23 June 1943 flying a Beaufighter from 2 (Coastal) OTU RAF Catfoss, Yorkshire.

Photo Source: IBCC