

Wortley, Douglas Buchanan

Age: 23

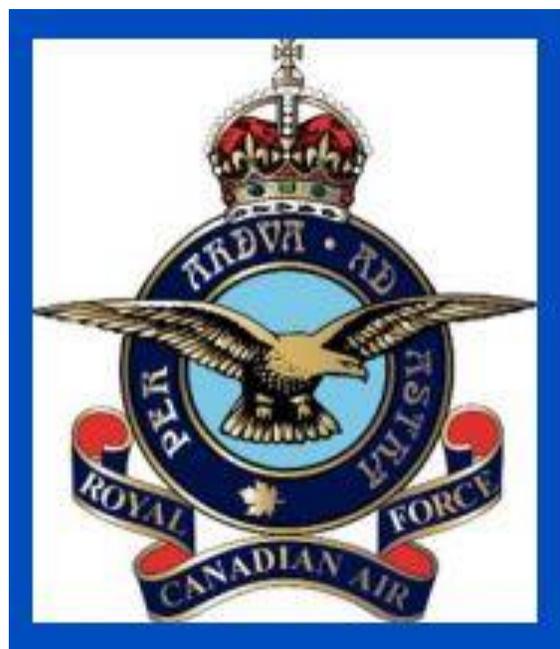
Nationality: Canadian

Rank: AC2

Unit: No. 7 SFTS

Occupation: Motor Mechanic

Service No: R118313



Birth: 10 August 1918

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Home Town: Vancouver, BC, Canada

Death: 21 September 1941

Crash of Avro Anson N9818
Mountain Top, NW of Yale BC, Canada

Burial: Cremated and ashes buried in cairn at site of crash.

Others: RCAF: F/O Brooks, pilot; Sgt Lionel Posten Britland, WAG.

Biography

Douglas Buchanan Wortley, registered at birth as Dugald Buchanan, left school in Vancouver when he was 15. He worked for two years at a soda fountain until it closed, and for two or three summers in a seasonal job in construction with Yukon Gold Co. From 1939 until he joined the RCAF in 1941, he worked as a truck driver and egg grader.

Douglas first applied to the RCAF in October 1939, but was refused on the grounds that he had insufficient education. His mother was Scottish and in June 1940 he joined the Seaforth Highlanders as a drummer and bugler. This was a Reserve regiment based in Vancouver. When he applied to the RCAF he wished to enlist for ground duties and as a bandsman.

In 1941, Douglas applied a second time in Vancouver to join the RCAF and this time, perhaps because he now had experience in driving a truck and a tractor, his lack of education was no barrier and he enlisted as AC2. His occupation was standard motor mechanic. On his enlistment he was discharged from the Seaforth Highlanders.

Douglas was sent to Penfold, Alberta on 29 July 1941 and a month later to McLeod, Alberta. On 21 September 1941 he was on leave and found a ride home to Vancouver on Avro Anson N-9818 being ferried to Patricia Bay, a short distance from Vancouver. The aircraft crashed near Yale, BC, killing all the occupants.

Douglas was born 10 August 1918, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, to James Buchanan, an immigrant from Yorkshire, England, and Jessie Buchanan, also an immigrant but from Greenoch in Scotland. He had a twin brother, Christopher, who died April 1919, an older brother, James Buchanan, and a younger sister, Eileen Elizabeth. The family moved to British Columbia when Douglas was two. He married Irene Cecilia Stevenson in Vancouver on 14 June 1940. They had no children and Irene subsequently remarried and became Irene Palmer.

Details of Crash

Avro Anson N9818 crashed on the top of a mountain in the Lillooet Range, about eight miles NW of Yale, BC, while being ferried from Edmonton, Alberta to No. 32 OTU Patricia Bay. It was 5,800ft above sea level at 49° 33" N. 121° 30" W. There were three men aboard: F/O Brooks (pilot), Sergeant Lionel Posten Britland (wireless operator and gunner), and Corporal Douglas Buchanan Wortley, on leave from McLeod Alberta. The date was 21 September 1941.

On 21 September, the plane was reported three hours overdue at Patricia Bay. A search party was sent out but returned at 19:30, having found nothing. On September 22nd the search resumed at 7:00 and the wreckage was located. A rescue party set out on foot. The next day a message was received at 16:00 that all of the occupants were dead. For the next two days supplies were dropped for the rescue party. On September 26th, a message was received advising of the impossibility of bringing the bodies out and permission was sought from the next of kin to cremate the bodies on the mountain and erect a stone cairn over the ashes. A suitable burial service was read by one of the rescue party, Pilot Officer Black.

The court of inquiry concluded that the primary cause of the crash was that the aircraft was forced down by icing conditions encountered in cloud, and the secondary cause was the failure of flying instruments due to ice formation.

The propeller blades were bent backwards, without being twisted, indicating both engines stopped, possibly due to icing. The recommendation of the court was that planes not fly in cloud or on instruments when icing conditions are reported to exist.



WDB4