

Pilot Officer Dougal Turner, Royal Canadian Air Force

died 16 January 1945, over Hessen, Germany, aged 26



Dougal Turner

Dougal Turner was born on 15 September 1918 in the settlement of Dawn, Lambton County a rural area of South Western Ontario, Canada, close to the border with the United States. Dougal was the second son of John Gilchrist Turner, a farmer, and his wife Eva Lilian Pearl nee Turner [there appear to be a large number of Turners living in that part of Canada at that time] who were married in 1915. Dougal had one elder brother and one younger sister.

John was born in Elgin County, Ontario, not far from Lambton, where his father was a farmer. After his marriage John was farming his own property in Dawn. Eva was born in Kent County, Southwest Ontario where her father worked as a farm labourer. By the time of the 1911 census the family had moved to Lambton which is presumably how she met John.

Dougal attended a local school from 1925 to 1931 until he was 13. When he first applied for the Canadian Air Force in 1940, he was rejected due to 'insufficient education for flying'. Before his war time service, he worked on his father's farm. In 1940 he served briefly as a private in the Kent Regiment of the Canadian Reserves, and then early in 1941 joined the Royal Canadian Army's 55th Field Battery based in London, Ontario. He finally joined the Canadian Air Force in May 1941 signing up for general duties.

The next record we have of Dougal is his marriage on 22 December 1943 to Margaret Kathleen Violet Jarrett in Bournemouth. Margaret was born in All Stretton where her father's family were from. Her father Fred married a woman from Dorset in 1915 and moved there where Margaret was brought up. She was serving in the RAF at the time of her marriage and then transferred to the Canadian Air Force. Dougal and Margaret had a daughter born in early 1945.

At the time of his death Dougal had the rank of Pilot Officer and was a Flight Engineer. He was part of 434 Squadron based at RAF Croft in Durham which had been taken over by

the Canadian Air Force in 1942. By 1945 the Squadron flew Lancaster bombers which had a crew of seven. The night raid on 16/17 January 1945 was on a Braunkohle-Benzin synthetic-oil plant at Zeitz, in Eastern Germany. Dougal's plane was lost on the raid and appears to have crashed near Pfaffenhausen, in the Main-Kinzig-Kreis district, Hessen. All of the crew were killed.

Dougal is buried at Durnbach War Cemetery near Munich along with his crew mates. Almost 3,000 casualties are buried there, many were air crew brought together from different parts of Germany after the war.

Dougal is commemorated on Canadian Air Force memorials in Canada and on the Church Stretton War Memorial.

Dougal's father died before him in 1942, and his mother Eva died in 1980. Dougal is also commemorated on their gravestone in Dresden Cemetery in Ontario. Margaret continued to live in the Bournemouth area until her death in Poole in 1985. Dougal is also commemorated on her gravestone in Bournemouth Cemetery. She never remarried.



Dougal's gravestone, Germany



Margaret's gravestone, Bournemouth