

Sgt. Thomas Johnston Anderson RAFVR

Whether someone is lost on active service due to enemy action or accidentally killed during wartime military service, the impact on the family and friends in a small village such as Burnmouth, is no less severe. Sgt. Thomas Johnston Anderson RAFVR who died in an aircraft accident in Leicestershire on 17th. February 1943 was in the latter category.

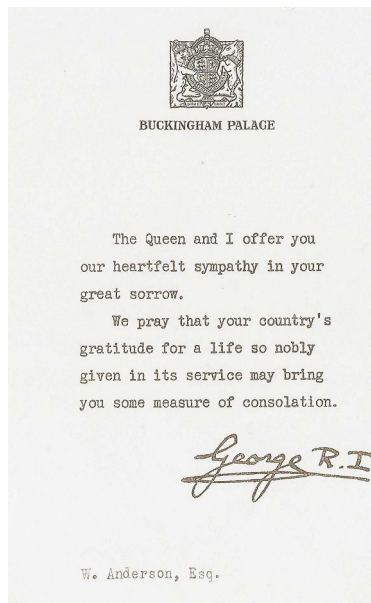
Until writing this Memorial note, I had no photo of Tom, I carried one in my 'minds eye' because I knew him when I was a small boy.



However, the initial viewing of this tribute brought to light several pictures of him and his father, together with letters of condolence to his family. My recollection of him was that he was a very jovial and likeable older boy, some eight years my senior. I knew his father William ("Squirrel") Anderson better (shown here on



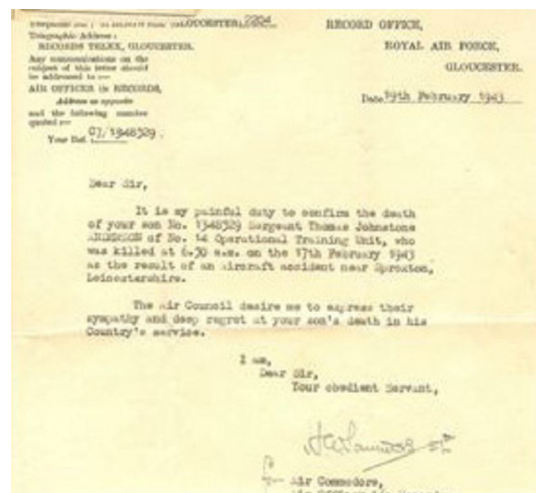
right) because he worked as a salmon fisherman with my grandfather. I would often be the pest of a young lad wanting to ride in the salmon boat carrying dried and repaired nets from Partin hall shore to the harbour at high tide. "Squirrel" became well known to me in later years, when he lived near my grandparents at the Stonefaulds.



The picture I show of Tom above, depicts him as an Officer Cadet although several references to him give rank of Sergeant. He was obviously destined for higher things, so his tragic death, which occurred some six months before I joined the Royal Air Force, brought greater sadness to all who knew him. I have to admit, I knew not of his death until years later in 1998, when in correspondence with his sister Jean Dixon who lived in Spittal. His loss was recognised by HM King George VI and the Queen as shown here in the letter written to his father shortly after the accident. No words can express the sorrow to his family better.

A letter of condolence from The Air Ministry Record Office to his father, is also shown here.

One of the other stories about Tom came to light with his picture. It would appear that he was travelling South by train on one occasion and passing through Burnmouth without stopping. Always thinking about his family and home, he wrote a pencilled note and threw it out as the train sped past, hoping it would be found intact and delivered to his sister Jean. It was and along with other tributes to him, it has been preserved and still

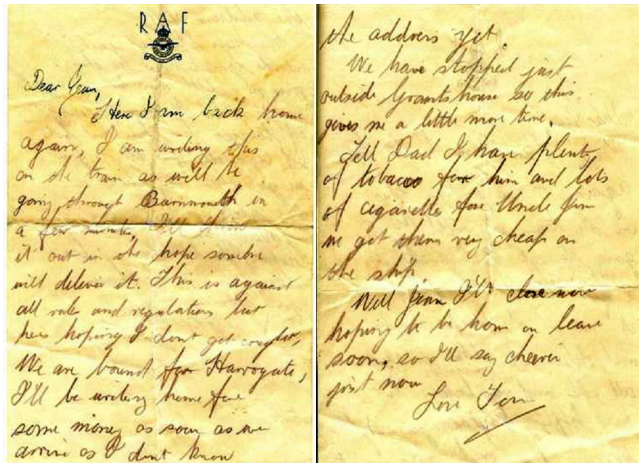


available for people of Burnmouth to read. I include it at the end of this article.

In this 90th. Anniversary of the World War 1 Armistice, there is no finer way to way to recognise Tom's sacrifice along with the many others who lost their lives in similar circumstances, than to add this tribute to him on the Burnmouth Community Site.

THEY WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED

Contributed by Walter V. Holden



Tom's "high speed" letter to his sister Jean.