

24 Sergeant (Pilot) Stanley Chadwick RAFVR 1658 C.U. & Sergt.-Observer Noel Chadwick RAFVR 105 Sqdn.



Service No: 1453551

Date of Death: 23/11/1943

Age: 21

Cemetery: WALNEY ISLAND (ST. MARY) CHURCHYARD Sec. C. Grave 105.

Additional Information: Son of Thomas and Agnes Chadwick, of Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness. His brother Thomas Noel also died on service. (CWGC)

Sergeant Thomas Noel Chadwick Navigator RAFVR 105 Sqdn

Service No: 1537059

Date of Death: 28/03/1943

Age: 31

Cemetery: LILLE SOUTHERN CEMETERY Plot 5. Row A. Grave 32.

Additional Information: Son of Thomas and Alice Chadwick, of Walney Island, Barrow on Furness. Lancashire. His brother Stanley also died on Service. (CWGC)



The *Barrow News* 27 November 1943 reported:

KILLED IN ACCIDENT

A well-known Vickerstown family of Mr. and Mrs. T. Chadwick, 32, Buller-street, has suffered a second grievous loss by the death of Sergt. Stanley Chadwick, R.A.F., in a recent accident. He was 21 years of age and joined the R.A.F. about two years ago, taking his training in flying abroad. At the time of joining up he was employed in Barrow Corporation Highways Department.

Like his brother, Sergt.-Observer Noel Chadwick, who was reported killed earlier this year, he was a playing member of Vickerstown C.C.

There is an account of the funeral in the Barrow News 4 December 1943.

The following comes from the website mentioned, as does the photograph. The 'I' is Richard Allenby, who has created the website.

Halifax DT578 on Great Whernside. (from <http://yorkshire-aircraft.co.uk/aircraft/planes/dales/dt578.html>)



On the night of 23rd / 24th November 1943 the crews of six Halifax aircraft belonging to 1658 Heavy Conversion Unit were tasked with flying night cross country training exercises. The weather on this night was forecast to be extremely bad but for some reason the Commanding Officer of the training unit based at Riccall allowed the exercise to

continue and these six aircraft were the only six aircraft in the whole of 4 Group to carry out training flights on this night. Of these six aircraft, two returned early with icing problems; one of which crashed near base, another aircraft broke up in the air and crashed near Masham (detailed on this website). Only two of the six completed the exercise, though one of these is thought to have suffered had engine problems caused by the effects of icing.

At 23.27hrs on 23rd November 1943 the crew of Halifax JB926 took off from their base at Riccall near Selby, Yorkshire for the exercise and headed towards St.Beas Head on the north-west coast, from there the turning points of the exercise were to have been St.Abbs Head, Hexham, Sleaford and Northampton, then return to base. The major problems occurred for the aircraft because of the severe weather over the Pennines. The weather conditions consisted of severe turbulence, poor visibility, up to gale Force 8 winds with torrential rain and icing conditions occurring at 4000 feet above the ground. At around midnight an aircraft was plotted by the Royal Observer Corps near Kettlewell, in Upper Wharfedale, to be flying low and heading in a southerly direction, it was then heard circling and possibly trying to gain height. Soon after an aircraft was heard in a dive from which it did not recover. It was later found that Halifax DT578 had crashed into Great Whernside, killing all on board. The RAF's AM Form 1180 suggested that both DT578 and JB926 could have collided causing both aircraft to have crashed but this was later

ruled out in the full AIB investigation as the crew of Halifax JB926 had transmitted their position to have been near St. Bees Head at the time Halifax DT578 crashed and therefore neither could have been involved a collision over Yorkshire, and neither were the aircraft involved in collisions with the other 1658 HCU aircraft in the air.

I have yet to find any information stating why any of these aircraft were ever in the air when the whole of No.4 Group were aware of the severe weather forecast on this night. The Commanding Officer of 1658 HCU, W/CO Francis William Thompson DFC RAFVR (60758), was replaced soon after the events of this night having been awarded the Air Force Cross for his long term work as an instructor at 1658 HCU (Gazetted on 1st January 1944). He was replaced by W/Co Henry Howard Drummond DFM RAFVR (112544), who was himself was the Senior Flight Commander at the time of the accidents and who was also awarded the Air Force Cross for his work as an instructor at 1658 HCU (Gazetted on the same date). I strongly suspect W/Co Thompson was moved on from his role as the commanding officer following the investigation.

Pilot - Sgt Stanley Chadwick RAFVR (1453551), aged 21, of Walney Island. Buried Walney Island Churchyard, Lancashire.

Navigator - Sgt Frank Weldon Robson RAFVR (1451671), aged 30, of Hull. Buried Hull Northern Cemetery, Yorkshire.

Flight Engineer - Sgt Frank James Robinson RAF (538137), aged 25?, of Chesterton. Buried Chesterton Churchyard, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire.

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt Norman Sebright Martin RAF (1600285), aged 19, of ? Buried East Finchley Cemetery, Middlesex.

Bomb Aimer - Sgt Donald Paget Aitken RAFVR (1322354), aged 21, of Bognor Regis. Buried Bognor Regis Cemetery, Sussex.

Air Gunner - Sgt Ernest Stabler RAFVR (1784108), aged 20, of Distington. Buried Distington Churchyard, Cumbria.

Air Gunner - Sgt Kenneth Vincent RAFVR (1819902), aged 19, of Wednesfield. Buried Wednesfield Churchyard, Staffordshire.



This photograph shows the crew of Halifax DT578 when it struck Great Whernside. The original copy of this owned by the son of the navigator Mr David Robson, it shows signatures of the crew at the foot of the page and these are now very faded. I believe those pictured to be are (left to right)... Martin, Stabler, Vincent, Chadwick, Aitken, Robson & Robinson. My thanks to Mr David Robson for the photograph.



Sergeant Thomas Noel Chadwick was approx. 10 years older than his brother. He died on a mission to Liege on 28 March 1943 while navigating a Mosquito IV (DZ522; GB-W) from Marham, Norfolk.

<http://www.aircrewremembered.com/BomberCommandDatabaseSearch/?q=Chadwick>

The *Barrow News* 2 October 1943 headlined its report:

Barrow Cricketer Killed

Mrs. Chadwick, 7, Stafford-street, Barrow, wife of Mr. Noel Chadwick who was reported missing on 28 March, has received official confirmation that her husband has been killed and was buried at Lille, in France. Mr. Chadwick was a Sergt.-Observer in the R.A.F. Prior to joining up he was employed with Messrs. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co., chartered accountants, at their Barrow office. He was a well-known and popular figure in local

cricket, of which he was an able exponent, being a member of the Vickerstown club. He leaves a widow and baby son. His father resides at 32, Buller-street, Vickerstown.