



**Gordon Thomas Manners Mitchell**, Cambridge University and Wimbledon, 9 caps, cap number 149

Gordon Thomas Manners Mitchell was born in Ceylon on 24th September 1910, the son of Thomas and his wife Sarah (nee Manners), of Letchworth. In the 1911 census Gordon and his mother were staying with his maternal grandmother at 31 Melrose Gardens, New Malden.

He was educated at Leys School, Cambridge and Queen's College, Cambridge where he read Law and Economics. He was a member of the University Air Squadron from 1930 to 1932 and obtained his 'A' License.

Gordon appears to have started playing hockey at Leys. He was awarded his Cambridge Blue in February 1931, therefore gaining a cap (1930) before his Blue, an unusual but not unprecedented occurrence.

Gordon won nine caps for Scotland while playing at Cambridge University and Wimbledon. His first cap came as a late call up to replace A.C. Anderson (Western) in the game against Ireland at Aberdeen on 8th March 1930. Anderson's return to fitness saw him return as Captain for the game against England. While Gordon was not originally selected for the England game, I E Brooks (Edinburgh Uni) called off and Gordon gained his second cap playing out of position at Left wing. His last cap was against Wales on 8th April 1933 at St Andrews. In March 1932 Gordon was described as "fast and a keen tackler, and his accurate passes to his forwards are usually of great value in attack".

Later that year Gordon took a job in Sarawak and his international career finished at the young age of 22. He worked in Sarawak for four years, returning to Bradford to work in the Export Credits Guarantee Department. Gordon joined the Auxiliary Air Force on 11th November 1938 and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in 609 Squadron.

On the 24th August 1939 with war looming the pilots of the Auxiliary Air Force were called up for active service. On 7th October 1939 Gordon went to No 6 Flying Training School at Little Rissington, Gloucestershire. After completing the course at

No 6 FTS, Gordon rejoined 609 Squadron who were then based at Drem, East Lothian.

The Squadron moved South to join No 11 Group. Mitchell's first active mission was on the 1st June 1940 over the Dunkirk evacuation beaches. On the 11th July the squadron were in combat off Portland Bill with German Stukas and fighters attacking a convoy. Gordon flying Spitfire L1095 was reported missing, his body later found near Newport on the Isle of Wight. Gordon is buried in All Saints churchyard, Willian, near Letchworth.

The Battle of Britain started on 10th July 1940 and G. T. M. Mitchell is remembered as one of the first of "The Few" to lose their life.

Sources:

British Newspaper Archive

Edinburgh Evening News - Wednesday 23 March 1932

Ancestry

Scottish Hockey Records

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Links to further information regarding Gordon's war service:

<https://inthefrontline.com/2020/07/09/the-first-of-the-few-pilot-officer-gordon-thomas-manners-mitchell-rafa/>

<https://rauxaf.org/mitchell-gordon-609/>

<https://www.bbm.org.uk/airmen/MitchellGTM.htm>

<https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/topics/world-war-two/battle-of-britain-exhibition/pilots-and-planes>