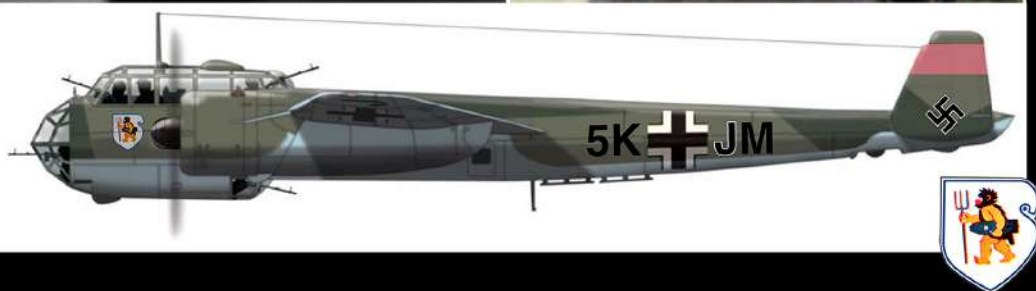


AIR BATTLES OVER BEXLEY BOROUGH



NIGEL STANIFORTH

*Dedicated to those young men who
answered the call, fought for what they believed in
and made the ultimate sacrifice.*

Acknowledgements

Over the years there have been many people who have helped in the search for information. Sadly I have lost their names in the passage of time which I apologise for.

But I would like to thank the following people:

My wife Helen for her love and encouragement as at times this research became a bit of an obsession. My sons for the general mikey taking in what their father was doing which spurred me in the search.

The late Peter Cooke, an eyewitness to the Barnehurst Bomber, who helped me in the beginning who I sadly lost touch with when I stopped the research.

I would also like to thank the following persons/organisations:

Thank you to the families for kindly allowing their pictures to be shown.

Bexley Archive and Local Studies Centre

Bundsachiv, Germany

National Records Office, Kew

Imperial War Museum, London

US Department of Air Force Historical Research Agency

416th BG Archive, USA

St Paulinus Church, Crayford for helping locate some of the victims of the Barnehurst Bomber within the church grounds

Clare Lodge of Bexley Archaeological Group and Debra Riches for proof reading the Ebook

The numerous readers of the various British/German newspapers who responded to the appeals for help over the years

Lastly my biggest thanks goes to my friend Kathrin Dietze, a genealogist in Germany, who kindly agreed to help me find the 'boys'. Who without her help going through the records and tracing relatives I would have never in a million years been able to reach a conclusion in this research. I can never thank you enough for all your hard work.

Kathrin Dietze

Kathrin Dietze, born in Erfurt in 1963, has been intensively involved in genealogy, family history and historical research since 2007.

Her focus is on Thuringia under the French occupation and the Second World War.

She learned a profession in electronic data processing and later switched to pension insurance.

Since 1998, she has lived in a small mountain village near Marienberg in the Ore Mountains. She is married and has two children. Furthermore, she has been an active member of the Marienberg Association for Family Research and Regional History since 2017.

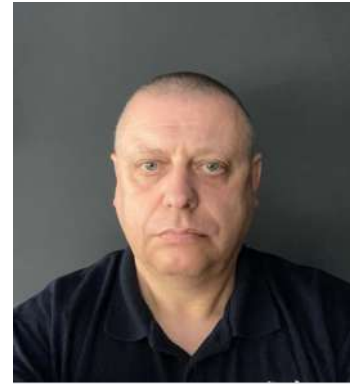
She turned her second passion - gardening and floristry - into a profession in 2023.



Nigel Staniforth

I have always been interested in history since I was young, I would have loved to have had a job involving history but instead went into IT.

What sparked the interest in the four subjects of this Ebook was that my grandfather and uncle witnessed the Barnehurst bomber incident and over the year's have heard the story, so after awhile I decided to research the Barnehurst bomber. As I progressed I added the other three incidents to the list as there was, I think not much information on the events.



During the 90's it was hard to do research as the internet was in its infancy so everything was done by letter to Germany. I hit many brick walls when trying to find information and with a young family I stopped the research as they took priority.

Fast forward to 2020, I found the files in the loft and after reading through them I decided to give it a go once more. With the magic of the internet I made contact with various organisations who put me in touch with Kathrin Diezte who within a short while had information on the German crews. Also the Bundsarchiv in Germany sent me files which they had in their collection. Armed with this information, information on the other German airmen and what Kathrin found the research progressed in leaps and bounds.

I am proud of what we have achieved at present. Out of the twelve German and American crewmen we have managed to find information on eleven of them. Kurt Hausburg is the only German crewman which we have no picture of and have only limited information on.

We plan to continue as best we can in the hope that future information on him will become available. If that is the case I will update the Ebook when this is possible.

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My personal thanks to the relatives of the crews for kindly allowing me to use photographs from their families collections.

Many thanks to the Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre and the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust, Hawkinge for allowing me to use pictures from their collections.

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Introduction

It has been nearly 30 years since I started the research into the Barnehurst bomber incident which was witnessed by my grandfather, who was home on leave, and my uncle (who was very young) on the 15th September 1940.

As a young boy I was fascinated by the story told by my grandparents and uncle, but the story told was sometimes different depending on who was telling me it, so in the 90's I decided once and for all to try and research the story to get to the truth.

At the time progress was slow as the internet was not as it is today, thus many letters went to and fro around the world. As I got into the research I started to look at other incidents occurring in the area of Bexley during WW2 and what I found interested me. Initially I started to broaden my research to include the Bexley German Do17, Welling German Me109 and Erith US Havoc incidents but there was not much information on these events. I decided to concentrate on these four whilst researching. The latter event I found that my great grandfather on my father's side actually witnessed the crash, and that if the plane was slightly further over he would have been killed and I would not now be typing this intro...

After a while Peter Cooke a witness to the Barnehurst bomber incident joined me in helping with the research, as like me he wanted to know the full story. We encountered many difficulties in our attempts. After several years I had to stop the research as with a full time job and a young family at the time, my attentions were else where.

Fast forward to 2020, and I found my research in the loft. After reading it, the spark was reignited to start the investigation again. With the internet now freely available, I started to make progress as more doors opened compared to in the 90's. I made a friend in Germany, Kathrin Dietze, a genealogist who kindly volunteered to help trace the German serviceman. Within months, information

which I thought I would never get started to come in. She had worked wonders and found relatives of the aircrews who kindly volunteered information and pictures of their loved ones!

The 'boys', as they became affectionately known to us became more human and were now not just names and faces staring out of the pages. The determination to have their story heard became an obsession. Great progress was made on the US aircrew with help from the US archive service of the military and the 416th Bomb Group archive.

The research has been a bit of a journey which I did not imagine all those years ago I would still be doing years later. As I recently became a grandfather it made me realise that soon these stories, if not written down, will be forgotten in time and as these events are local they should be recorded so that future generations, if interested in what happened in their area, can read about it.

I hope that I have done the 'boys' justice in what has been written on their behalf. The plan is to publish the full pdf booklet in 2025 which would be the 81st anniversary of the Erith Bomber crash, which I think would be appropriate timing.

I plan to continue updating the booklet if any further new information becomes available. So if anyone out there after reading these stories has any new information that they would like to share with me I would be grateful if you could get in touch with me on the following email address: nstaniforth860@gmail.com

Nigel Staniforth

Chapter One

German Dornier 17 bomber
Barnehurst, Kent 15th September 1940

Do17 5K+JM shot down in Barnehurst on 15/09/40



Sunday 15th September 1940 was a fine but cloudy day and was to become known as Battle of Britain day. It was a make or break point for the Luftwaffe, as so far they had not broken the RAF which had to be done to allow Operation Sealion (Unternehmen Seelöwe), which was the planned invasion of Great Britain, to start.

The Luftwaffe sent over various raids throughout the day, but the incident which was witnessed by my uncle Roy (hence the interest) was to happen in the afternoon of 15th September 1940. After returning from morning raids various bomber and fighter units started to refuel and re-arm as other units got ready to takeoff.

2 and 3 Kampfgeschwader 2 (KG2) from Boissy-Saint-Leger and Cambrai, 2/ Kampfgeschwader 3 (KG3) from Antwerp; 1 and 2/ Kampfgeschwader 53 (KG53) from Lille and 1 and 2/ Kampfgeschwader 26 (KG26) from Wevelghem and Gilze en Rijen took off and assembled in full view of British radar. One hundred Do17's from KG3 flew westwards to pick up their massive fighter cover at Pas de Calais area, before heading towards England. Their targets were the West India Docks and Royal Victoria Docks north of the Thames, as well as the Surrey Commercial Docks to the south.



At 13:45, before the formation reached the English coast, British radar picked up the formations heading towards the Kent coast. One Spitfire from 92Sqn from RAF Hawkinge was scrambled to follow the formation and act as a spotter to report on the direction they were taking. At 14:00 the radar operators monitored the 475 plane formation and more RAF fighters were scrambled. 603Sqn and 257Sqn from Debden sent 20 Hurricanes to patrol Sheerness at 20,000ft; 501Sqn and 605Sqn with 17 Hurricanes were sent from Kenley to patrol Kenley at 5,000ft, followed by 249Sqn and 504Sqn who were ordered by North Weald to cover Hornchurch at 15,000ft.

At 14:05 the German formation began splitting into three groups as it headed towards the coast between Dungeness and Dover at 14,000ft. 43 Dornier 17's from KG2 led the group followed a few miles back by 24 Heinkel He 111's from KG53 then 19 Dornier 17's from KG3 followed several miles back by another 28 Heinkel He 111's from KG26 at the rear. The 114 bombers fought a head wind as they travelled towards their assigned targets. Some of the fighters stayed close to the bomber formations as Air Reich Marshall Hermann Goering had forbidden the fighters from leaving the bombers. This was not popular with the German fighter pilots as they had to fly slowly to stay with the bombers, and made them easy targets for the RAF fighters who would take advantage, attacking the slow moving fighters. Various other fighter units provided top cover for the bomber/fighter formation which came from 5 Gruppen (squadrons) from JG3, JG53, LG2 units. Adolf Galland's JG26 and JG51 flew forward of the formation on fighter swipes to clear the way of any RAF fighters for the bomber formation.

From the plots it was seen that enemy fighters had also split from the group to go on free hunting patrols towards London, further RAF squadrons were scrambled to intercept the enemy Me109's who would have limited fuel supply while over England. A further eight more RAF squadrons were scrambled from No11 group; 41, 92, 1 Canadian, 229, 72, 66, 73 and 253 squadrons were ordered to patrol their assigned areas. and No12 group sent their Big Wing which contained 19, 242, 302, 310 and 311 squadrons. At 14:20 303 Polish, 602 and 609 squadrons were also scrambled to help out. The RAF now had 276 Spitfire and Hurricanes in the air. The Germans outnumbered the British in this raid by two to one, for every two RAF planes, there were three Me109's. The RAF met the formation over Romney Marsh. 41, 92 and 222 squadrons clashed with Me109's from JG26, losing a plane to the Me109's; a second wave of RAF fighters arrived comprising 607 and 213Sqn. They attacked the bomber formation head on resulting in a Hurricane of 607Sqn colliding with a Do17 of KG3 over Tenterden. The Me109's felt helpless as they had to stick with the bomber formation as after chasing the RAF fighters away they had to return to protect the bombers. As the Me109's returned to the bombers the RAF fighters returned to continue their attacks.

As the Dornier's 17's of KG3 fought their way towards their target at 14:31 they encountered heavy anti aircraft fire over Chatham from No166 battery Royal Artillery, using 3.7 and 4.5 inch guns fired at the formation as they flew over. Dornier 17z-2 code number 5K+JM work number 3457 piloted by Lt Herbert Michaelis was hit and the port engine was damaged. Realising that he could not keep up with the formation and the protection it would give him, he decided to return to base and use the cloud cover to help him evade the RAF fighters. This idea worked for a few minutes as he attempted to cloud hop and turn for home. But this plan was dashed when he reached the Gravesend area. RAF fighters once again attacked, this time the right hand German formation of which Lt Michaelis Dornier was part, 63 RAF fighters from 17, 63, 249, 504 & 603 squadrons attacked. Winston Churchill watched the battle unfold from RAF Uxbridge where he famously asked AVM Keith Park *'How many squadrons have we in reserve'* to which Park replied *'None Sir'*

The first RAF fighters out of the group sent to attack were 249 & 504Sqn. As they tore through the enemy formation 3 Dornier's went down, including the formation leader Hauptmann Ernst Puttman, leading 5/KG3. Lt Herbert Michaelis plane, which had been hit numerous times by RAF fighters was badly damaged further. His crew tried to defend themselves against the RAF fighters. It was somewhere at this point that two Hawker Hurricanes from 504Sqn spotted the bomber and went in to attack it.

The Hurricane which was leading the attack was flown by Sqn Ldr John Sample from Morpeth in Northumberland, a land agent in civilian life. He had joined the AuxAF in April 1934 and by 15/09/40 he had six aircraft shot down and shared kills to his name. In May 1940 he was given 504Sqn (County of Nottingham) based at Wick in Northern Scotland to command and on 1st September he was promoted to Squadron Leader. Sqn Ldr Sample's 504Sqn, which was based at RAF Hendon North of London, had been in the thick of the battle most of the day. He had shot down a Do17 in the morning to add to his tally. In this battle Sergeant Roy Holmes famously rammed a Do17 while out of ammunition, which had just bombed Buckingham Palace. The bomber crashed onto Victoria railway station. Sgt Holmes landed on the roof of a block of flats next to Victoria coach station. His parachute caught on the drain pipe and ripped slowly until he was standing in a dustbin next to a block of flats.

In the afternoon the squadron had taken off from Hornchurch after re-arming and refuelling to meet the enemy formations heading towards London. Sqn Ldr Sample was flying Hurricane code letter TM A serial number P3429 commanding Red section, A flight, when he attacked the damaged Dornier of Lt Herbert Michaelis. Michaelis who had fought in the Polish, Norway and French campaigns and who recently had been a teacher at a flying school, was flying his first mission against England. While the pilot concentrated on flying in formation with the rest of his squadron for mutual protection, the rest of his crew kept a watchful eye out for enemy fighters. Morale within the crew was good as the German forces still expected to destroy the RAF as they had done with the other countries airforces they had conquered.

The crew were the following:

Pilot Lt Herbert Michaelis aged 22 from Braunschweig

Observer Unteroffizier Kurt Otto Hausburg aged 30 from Dortmund

Radio Op Unteroffizier Wilhelm Paul Burbulla aged 23 from Liebenberg, East Prussia

Bombardier Flieger Hermann Boermann aged 21 from Gladbeck



©Bundsachiv

Pilot and Bombardier in cockpit and gunner in rear showing how cramped the cockpit was

Lt Michaelis plan to hide in clouds to avoid being attacked failed, as the plane was hit numerous times as he dodged in and out of clouds. He now knew that he had no chance of escaping the pursuing RAF fighters. While the crew of the stricken bomber fought for their lives, Sqn Ldr Sample carried out four attacks on the bomber, opening up at 200yds then closing down to 75yds firing 2 sec bursts which hit the bomber with 320 rounds of .303 bullets. In the cockpit all the crew were wounded, Lt Michaelis ordered the crew to bail out. He pushed Kurt Hausburg's body, as he was either wounded or dead, out of the escape hatch and attempted to pull the rip cord of his parachute. Kurt Hausburg was found dead in a field near Stansted, Kent with a part opened parachute. Unteroffizier Burbulla bailed and was captured, badly wounded. He was taken to the Southern hospital, Gore Road, Dartford where he died from his wounds two days later on the 17th September 1940. Lt Michaelis, speaking to his daughter years later, told her that he bailed out at 6000m (1968ft) and landed in the same area as Boermann, who was also wounded and was captured. Lt Michaelis was also taken to Southern hospital, and Boermann to a hospital in the Maidstone area.



Antwerp to London 196miles (315km)

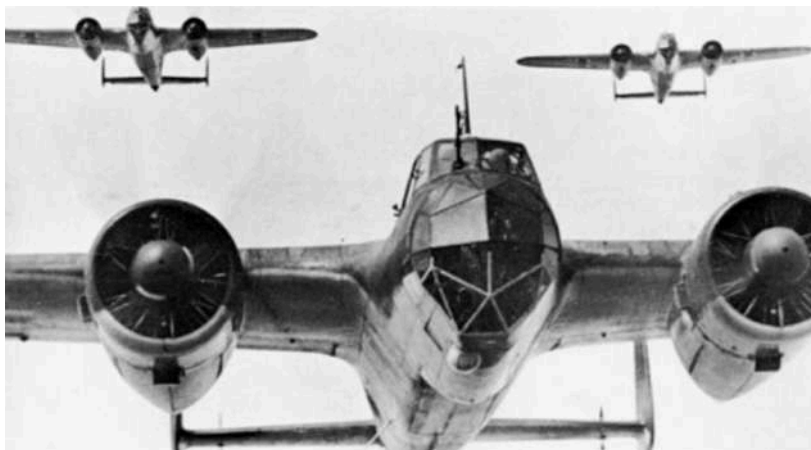
A Do17 would have plenty of fuel for the round trip, unlike its Me109 counterpart which had a limited fuel range of 10 minutes over the target area before returning to base. If they encountered the RAF, the time over the target would be less, leaving the bombers undefended.

At 14:45 the now empty plane came into view over Barnehurst. It was still being chased by the two 504Sqn Hurricanes, pouring fire into the wounded Dornier. Also around this time my grandparents, who lived at 55 Edendale Road, were preparing to sit down for Sunday lunch as the family were all together as my grandfather was home on leave from the army. In the words of my uncle, who was a young boy at the time,

'We were just getting ready to have Sunday dinner, when we heard machine guns firing. We rushed out the front door to see a German bomber with black smoke pouring out of one of its engines being chased by two RAF fighters. It just cleared the electricity pylon which was outside the house (55 Edendale Road). We had black smoke bellowing into the house as myself and my dad ran into the back garden to see the plane crash onto the golf course. My dad and myself later tried to walk down to look at the plane via Perry Street, but we were prevented from getting near by Police, I later found out my friend's father (Samual Sole) had died in hospital due to the explosion'.

Sqn Ldr Sample later described what happened and what he saw as the bomber crashed.

“An hour later we were in the air again, meeting more bombers and fighters coming in. We got three more—our squadron, I mean. I started to chase one Dornier which was flying through the tops of the clouds. Did you see that film ‘Hell’s Angels’? You’ll remember how the Zeppelin came slowly out of the clouds. Well, this Dornier reminded me of this. I attacked him four times altogether . When he first appeared through the cloud—you know how clouds go up and down like foam on water— I fired at him from the left, swung over to the right, turned in towards another hollow in the cloud, where I expected him to reappear, and fired at him again. After my fourth attack he dived down headlong into a clump of trees in front of a house (Barnehurst club house) and I saw one or two cars parked in the gravel drive in front. I wondered whether there was anyone in the doorway watching the bomber crash. Then I climbed up again to look for some more trouble and found it in the shape of a Heinkel He111 which was being attacked by three Hurricanes and a couple of Spitfires. I had a few cracks at the thing before it made a perfect landing on a RAF aerodrome (West Malling). The Heinkel’s undercarriage collapsed and the pilot pulled up, after skidding 50 yards in a cloud of dust. I saw a tall man get out of the right-hand side of the aircraft, and when I turned back he was helping a small man across the airdrome towards a hangar’



© Bundsarchiv

The bomber had crash landed about 100 yards from the clubhouse. Sqn Ldr Sample performed a victory roll over the golf course to the cheers of the crowd of locals rushing to the crash site from the surrounding areas. After he had done this he was to continue helping to attack enemy bombers which were heading towards London. He managed to help shoot down a He111 which crashed onto RAF West Malling. Back at the crash site, crowds were coming towards the plane which had small fires and bombs scattered around it. Several people were attempting to prevent anyone getting near to the wrecked bomber. Of the people who were known to be trying was Special Constable Francis Clarke of the Kent Special Constabulary who was seen to be shouting at people to keep back, but this was ignored by the locals who were excited by what they had witnessed and, possibly wanting a souvenir from the plane, moved towards the bomber. At the time there were reports that Lt Michaelis emerged from the plane slightly wounded and covered in yellow dye from where a bullet hit his dye pouch on his Mae West, warning people to keep back as there were unexploded bombs still onboard the plane. Since I met and spoken to his daughter Petra Ehlers, she has confirmed that her father helped his wounded crew bail out of the plane, so when the plane crashed there was no one onboard. Hermann Boermann was captured and taken wounded to Preston Hall, Aylesford, which was being used as a hospital during WW2. After a short stay he was transferred to The Royal Herbert Hospital in Woolwich and placed in one the Luftwaffe wards. Lt Michaelis was arrested by Police/Home Guard and was taken away. He was first taken to The Southern Hospital, Gore Road, Dartford, before being taken to the Royal Herbert Hospital near Woolwich, where he was placed on the Luftwaffe ward in bed 2 for wounded German officer airman. There were other wards within the hospital for other ranks.

Further information that Petra gave me was that her father was treated by a doctor who promised to write to his parents (which he did). I suspect that the doctor was the doctor who was having lunch at the club house at the golf course, so therefore suspect that Lt Michaelis landed nearby and there maybe some truth in him warning the public about the unexploded bombs.



Preston Hall, Aylesford.



The Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich

© Nigel Staniforth

A young lad called Gordon Bennett, like my uncle witnessed, the plane flying at low level from where he was staying at his grandmother and aunt's house in Eversley Avenue and saw the plane disappear over the hill, then seconds later saw the black plume of smoke rise to indicate that the plane had crashed. Dr Bennett as he became later, wrote his eyewitness account on the BBC website about WW2 in 2005. It is very detailed out of all the accounts and I think that he witnessed how the explosion happened, therefore I would like to quote part of his account.

After his father and himself had walked towards the crash site they made their way across the abandoned orchard, which is now the Orchard allotments in Mayplace Road, as the main entrance to the golf course was clogged with people trying to get in. Gordon Bennett states:

'Seeking an easier entry to the crash site, my father led the way to a wooded track, where a brick wall ran parallel to the pathway, a few yards away. We joined the stream of people clambering through a gap in the wall. A policeman stood nearby, warning everyone that it was dangerous to enter, but his words fell on deaf ears, such was the excitement caused by this unusual event. Tragically, in the course of his duty, that constable was soon to lose his own life. When we had got over the wall, my father told me to stay there, while he went forward to where the wreckage was burning, about 20 yards away. I looked round and saw that I was in a derelict orchard, and I became aware of a low roaring sound, close by.

Peering through the undergrowth, I saw, to my horror, that about 10 feet away, a high explosive bomb was lying on the ground, its nose pointing towards the wall. Its fins were missing, and from the broken rear end a jet of orange-coloured flame was pouring. A small crowd of onlookers had gathered round. Like many boys at that time, I had absorbed a good deal of information about the construction and functioning of weaponry, so it was hardly surprising that the first thought that came into my mind was that when the burning of the bomb's contents reached its detonator, there would be trouble! With that, I flung myself face down into a shallow depression in the ground, intending to crawl away. This action probably saved my life, as the bomb exploded at that moment. There was a deafening bang and I felt an overwhelming pressure on my back. This was followed by a torrent

of earth and debris. I got to my feet and began to run after my father, with the screams of the wounded ringing in my ears. A boy, older than me, was sitting dazed on the ground, where he had been thrown by the explosion; there was a gaping wound in his leg. My father emerged from the smoke; his face was drained of colour, and bore an expression of mixed emotion that I had never seen before. Grabbing my arm, he said "Come on son, we must get away from here".

We made our way back to Eversley Avenue along a track behind the houses on Manor Way. There was relief at our safe return, but I was given strict instructions not to talk about the ghastly events I had witnessed.

Subsequently, on overhearing the conversation of my elders, I learnt how fortunate I had been not to be numbered among the dead and injured. My father also revealed that he had retrieved a souvenir, the barrel of a machine gun, which he had concealed down his trouser leg as we hurried away! That memento remained in our London home for several years, to my mother's disquiet, until it was handed in at the time of a weapons amnesty after the war.

In the course of my life, I have had several narrow escapes from disaster, but none so dramatic as this. The memory of September 15th 1940 remains as clear in my mind as though it were yesterday.

Special Constable Leonard Francis Clarke 532 'R' warrant No 101192 was seriously injured by the explosion and he died on 26 September at Woolwich and District Memorial Hospital, Shooters Hill. He was 28 years years old and worked from Bexleyheath Police Station. He was married, and he lived in Parkside Avenue, Barnehurst with his wife, Hilda.'

Another witness from the day was Douglas Cooper, another young schoolboy, who described what he saw that day:

'Early in 1940 we moved house from Winifred Road, Erith, Kent to 98 Parkside Avenue, Barnehurst, Kent. This was because Winifred Road was quite close to the River Thames and the river was bound to be a good target for air raids with the comings and goings of ships and boats to and from the London docks.

Nearly every house was given an air raid shelter of some sort, of which there were three types.

The Anderson went in the garden in a 3 foot deep trench with sheets of corrugated iron erected to cover it. The earth removed from the trench was used to cover the sheets and one end was left open as the entrance.

The Morrison was made of strong iron angle bars and made like a table which you would have indoors and crawl under when there was a raid. A third type was brick built and erected in back yards.

By September 1940 we were being bombed nearly every day and every night, mostly at night. I would be put to bed and after a while I would be woken up by my Mum or Dad "Come on up you get, there's another air raid" So it was downstairs under the table or down next door's shelter as they had theirs built before we did.

By the 15th September, which was a Sunday, my Dad had dug out the trench in the garden to erect our Anderson shelter. In the morning he started to slide the corrugated iron side sheets into place. They were quite heavy of course. I can't remember if he had any help at this time. I can only remember my Mum and Dad and I being present.

By about 11 o' clock in the morning the shelter was up and all bolted together, but the ends were not in place. So you could walk in one end and out the other. On this particular day Adolf Hitler decided to bomb us into submission. He must have sent every bomber and every fighter plane he had. There seemed like hundreds and hundreds of them. But he did not bargain that we had our Spitfires and Hurricane fighters waiting for them, although very much outnumbered.

About this time the warning sirens sounded and after a little while we could hear the German planes coming. You could always tell a German aircraft, their engines would drone and drone.

Then we could see them coming. I don't think they had started dropping their bombs yet. I think they were saving them for London, perhaps if they had any left they might drop them on us on the way back.

Our anti-aircraft guns had been firing at them as soon as they were in sight. Then the Spitfires and Hurricanes started to attack. You cannot imagine the noise with the aircraft chasing one another, machine guns and anti-aircraft shells all going off at the same time, it went on for what seemed like hours.

At the back of our house were allotments which people used to grow as many vegetables as they could. On most of the allotments were sheds and other lock ups where the gardeners kept their tools.

Beyond the allotments was Barnehurst Golf Course rising up to a low hill and sloping away on the other side. Beyond that was an old Manor House which was used as the golf clubhouse. We could not see the Manor House from our back garden.

The battle raged on in the sky, there were aircraft everywhere, and big puffs of smoke where the anti-aircraft shells were bursting. Some aircraft were on fire, black smoke pouring out behind them, and by this time the bombs were dropping, but luckily none in our direction.

My Mum and Dad and myself, and all of our neighbours were looking upwards and shouting and cheering for our fighters blasting hell out of the Germans. Unfortunately some of ours were being shot down too, but not as many as the Germans.

All of a sudden there was a German bomber flying right towards us. Just skimming the tops of the golf course trees. It was a Dornier, one of their biggest. It was so low we could see the pilot flying it and we could see the gunner in the nose of the bomber pointing his machine gun at us.

My Dad pushed me and my Mum down into the trench of the shelter, it had no ends but was better than nothing. At this point Dad leapt onto the top of the shelter waving his arms at the bomber and shouting "Turn back, turn back" Why they never shot at him or any of us we will never know. The bomber droned over, just skimming the roof of our house and tried to gain height and then turned right round and came back. He looked as if he was going to land on the golf course.

Suddenly a Spitfire was on his tail blasting away with his guns shooting right into the back and top of the bomber which then took a nose dive and crashed into the golf course. There was a tremendous thud, a massive explosion and the ground shook, and there was a big red flash and we saw the tail of the plane go up in the air. We could hear the machine gun ammunition exploding within the burning bomber.

Everyone was excited, cheering and laughing and then to our horror over the low hill of the golf course came three big bombs bouncing straight towards us and quite fast along the short grass. Everyone was dumbstruck and frozen to the spot. Two bombs stopped short of the golf course fence, the third just kept coming, travelling faster than the others and bouncing two or three feet into the air.

I do not know if it bounced over the fence or bashed its way through to the allotments, but it crashed into the shed nearest to us, where it bashed in the back of it and stopped! It seemed like slow motion as the shed's sides collapsed inwards, then the front and then the roof, trapping the bomb inside. All the time no one said a word, everyone stood petrified and then dived to the ground expecting the bombs to explode. But thank God nothing happened and after a few minutes everyone started pulling themselves together and getting up'.



© Bundsarchiv

Unknown crew from 4/KG3 photograph taken during the Battle of Britain

The bomber was still burning and you could still hear the ammunition cooking off. Some men were running across the golf course towards it, I don't know if they had hopes of saving the Germans and taking them prisoner, but we heard afterwards that there were no survivors. There were further explosions and some of the men were injured, one of our neighbours had a piece of an ear blown off.

The Spitfire that had shot it down roared up into the sky, rolled over backwards and came diving down very fast and then turned over into a beautiful victory roll over the golf course and the bomber. We all jumped up cheering and waving to the pilot forgetting all about the unexploded bomb that lay 50 feet away under the collapsed shed. All of the above action took place in about 15 to 20 minutes from the moment the bomber crashed.

Later the bomb disposal squad arrived (they were very brave defusing bombs which now and then exploded as something went wrong, and they lost men). Every household nearby was evacuated until the bombs were made safe and taken away. We were all allowed back to our homes the next day. We had stayed with my Auntie Lil that night, she lived over the road from us. I cannot remember if we had another air raid that night but I think the Germans were licking their wounds after realising how many men and aircraft they had lost that day. It was reported by the BBC that there had been 185 aircraft shot down, I don't suppose they were all German!

As the bomber took a nose dive he had hit a big tree stump and the plane had flipped over, that is when we saw the tail go up in the air. With the explosion of the plane, the pilot's body was blown in to a road near the golf course. His name was Wolf and he was buried in St Paulinus Churchyard, Crayford. His grave was looked after by local people and always had fresh flowers on it. He was there for quite sometime but his body was taken back to Germany after the war. The Manor House was badly damaged but was patched up afterwards. I think it ended up as a single building and is still used today as the golf clubhouse'.

NB: Some of this statement as you are aware is not correct as the fighter involved was a Hurricane, and two of the crew survived. The mention of a German serviceman called Wolf was in fact Wilhelm Wolf of 6/KG4, who had been killed on the 7th September 1940 and was buried at St Paulinus, until he was moved to Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire in 1962.



Wilhelm Wolf's grave at Cannock Chase

Whatever the reason for the explosion, many people from the surrounding area were either wounded or killed. Newspaper reports state around five people were killed and fourteen people injured, but true number was six were killed.

1. Charles William Daniels (Civilian) age 37. 136 Parkside Avenue Barnehurst. Son of Mr D Daniels. Killed at Barnehurst Golf Club 15/09/40. (Crayford Urban District Civilian Records).

2. John Frank O'Connell (Air Raid Warden) age 33. 163 Parkside Avenue, Barnehurst. Son of Edward and Edith O'Connell of Russell Square WC1. Husband of Nellie Elizabeth O'Connell of 163 Parkside Avenue. Injured at Barnehurst Golf Course, died next day at Woolwich & District War Memorial Hospital 16/09/40. (Woolwich Metropolitan Borough Civilian Records).

3. William Taylor (Civilian) age 27. 262 Parkside Avenue, Barnehurst. Husband of K Taylor of 262 Parkside Avenue. Killed at Barnehurst Golf Course 15/09/40. (Crayford Urban District Civilian Records).

4. Constable Leonard Francis Clarke (Kent Special Constabulary) age 28. 156 Parkside Avenue, Barnehurst. Husband of Hilda M Clarke of 156 Parkside Avenue. Injured on 15/09/40 at Barnehurst Golf Course died 16/09/40 at Woolwich District War Memorial Hospital. (Woolwich Metropolitan Borough Civilian Records).

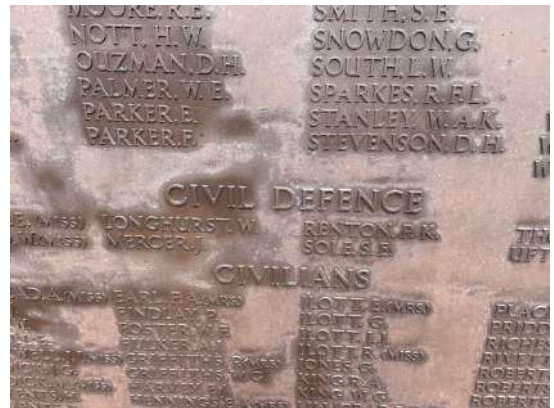
5. Samuel Ernest Sole (Air Raid Warden) age 39. 202 Parkside Avenue, Barnehurst. Husband of M.L.Sole of 202 Parkside Avenue. Injured 15/09/40 at Barnehurst Golf Course died 17/09/40 at Woolwich District Memorial Hospital. Was a Bootmaker/repairer. (Woolwich Metropolitan Borough Civilian Records).

6. Thomas William Read (Civilian) age 31. Injured at Barnehurst Golf Course died at Woolwich District Memorial Hospital on the same day 15/09/40.



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Memorial in Mayplace Road, where some of the victims are remembered



SC Clarke and Samuel Sole remembered on the memorial
 NB: They have misspelt SC Clarke's surname and used his middle name

Pictures of two of the victims

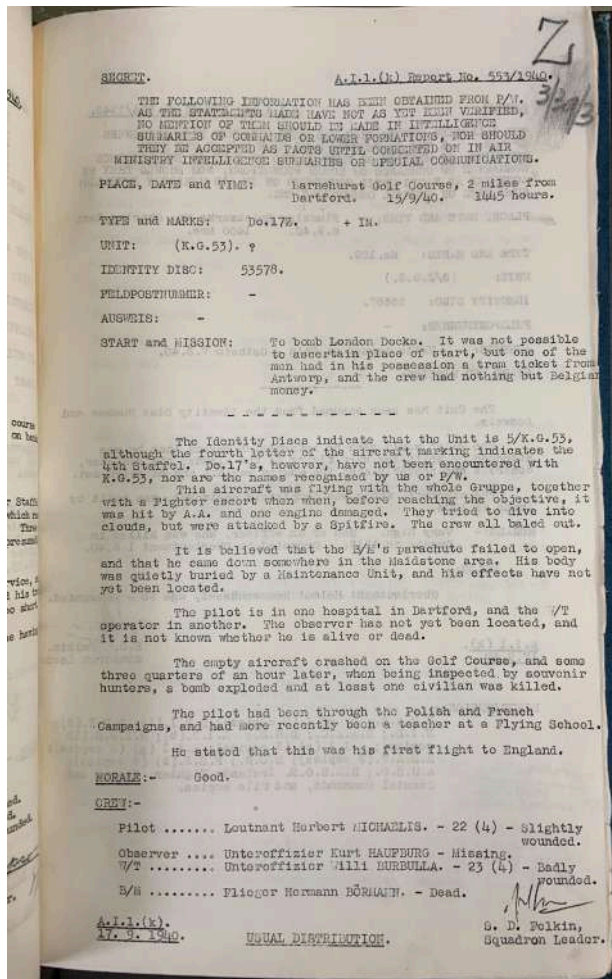


Special Constable Leonard Clarke



Mr Samuel Sole ARP Warden

© Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre and Pat Bellini



A doctor who was playing golf on the golf course at the time of the explosion attended to the wounded who were laid out in front of the clubhouse. SC Clarke and ARP warden John O'Connell and ARP warden Samuel Sole were taken to the Woolwich & District War Memorial Hospital, where John O'Connell died of his wounds on the same day and SC Clarke the next day 16th September 1940. Samuel Sole died on the 17th September 1940. SC Clarke and Samuel Sole are commemorated on the Crayford War Memorial in Mayplace Road.

The plane was soon being guarded by the Local Defence Volunteers and Police and for days after members of the public attempted to see the plane but were prevented from doing so. RAF

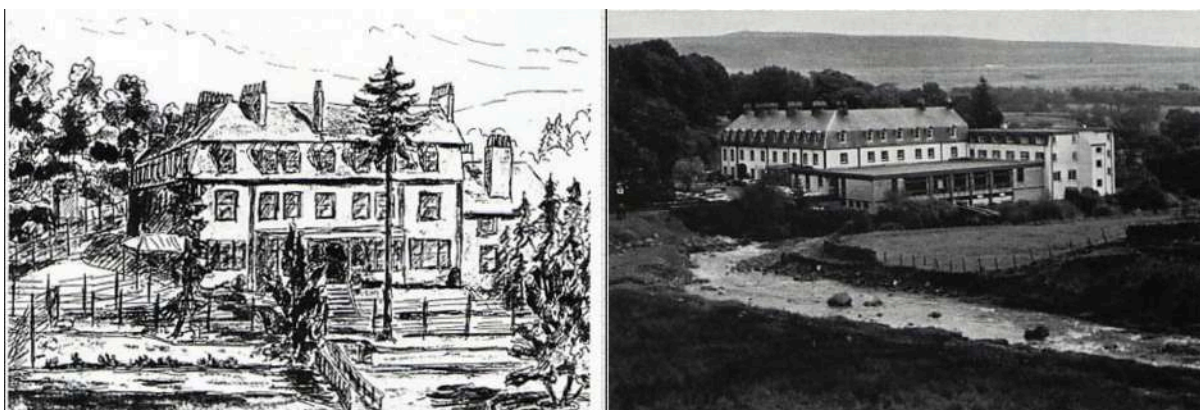
intelligence section combed the plane for anything of interest, as the remaining bombs were defused and taken away. The only intelligence they found of interest was the pink bars found on the wing which were formation bars for other planes to form up when flying.

The plane was eventually dismantled by recovery crews and taken away within 48 hours. The following is the intelligence report A.I.1. (K) Report No 553/1940 which I found at the National Record Office at Kew.

Due to the amount of reports which were being produced mistakes happened. The intel officer made a few mistakes about the unit and which crew members had died on the form. An item of intel to note was that a tram ticket to Antwerp Belgium was found on one of the crew (the squadron was based in that country). It was also noted that it was Lt Michaelis first flight against England. He had fought in the Polish and French campaign and only recently come from a flying school where he was a flying instructor. Morale was described as good within the crew in the report.

After Lt Michaelis had recovered from his wounds he was transferred to Trent Park near Cockfosters London which was a stately home being used to house PoW's. It was bugged with microphones so that the intelligence authorities could listen into the prisoners to try and gain any intelligence which could prove useful to the English in their fight against the enemy.

After they had got all the information they could get he was transferred to PoW camp 13, which was a hotel called Shap Wells in Cumbria. Hermann Boermann was captured with gunshot wounds to the face and thigh. He was first taken to Preston Hall Hospital, Maidstone, before being transferred to the Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich. After he had recovered he was sent to camp 80 at Horbling in Lincolnshire, where unlike officers who were expected not to work, he would have been sent to work locally labouring.



Camp 13 Shap Wells hotel, Penrith, Westmoorland

The government feared that an invasion could still happen and intelligence had advised that there were possible plans for the PoW's to stage mass breakouts if an invasion happened. This would cause problems for the British government as they would be fighting possible battles on two fronts, as the pow's fought their way to reach the invasion force. Therefore it was decided that all PoW's would be transferred to Canada where camps had been built to house them.

In 1941 both were sent to Camp 30 in Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada, where Herbert Michaelis passed the time by learning English to become an interpreter and taking courses provided by the camp to further his education.

After the war ended both Herbert Michaelis and Hermann Boermann were sent back to Germany in 1947. Herbert Michaelis passed away in November 1995. The last record of any information for Hermann Boermann was in 1987 so we must assume that he passed away sometime after.



The field at Stansted where Kurt Hausburg's body was found with a unopened parachute

Shelia Parker, a resident of Stansted, remembers what her father witnessed as Kurt Hausburg bailed out of the bomber as it travelled over the area:

'On Sunday 15th September 1940 I recall my father coming in from the garden and saying a parachute was falling unopened 'candling' in the Rumney farm area. As a member of the Home Guard he hurried there on his bicycle and when he returned, I remember him saying the poor man must have broken every bone in his body.

He was a crew member of a Dornier 17 that crashed on Barnehurst golf course on 15th September. The whole crew lost their lives, the airman was buried in Stansted churchyard, but exhumed in 1963 and together with the rear gunner of a Messerschmitt are now buried in the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire'.

Kurt Hausburg was buried in St Mary's church yard at Stansted, but on 30th November 1962 he was moved to the national Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery at Cannock Chase Staffordshire. He is buried in block 1 row 7 grave 247. Wilhelm Burbulla was at first buried in the Watling Street cemetery, Dartford but was also moved in October 1962 to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery Cannock Chase, Staffordshire and is resting in block 5 row 3 grave 51.



The graves at the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery Cannock, Chase, Staffordshire

Biography

Oberleutnant Herbert Michaelis (Pilot)

S/n 273-53578



Born in Dornitz/Braunschweig in 1918 to parents Heinrich and Elizabeth, he had one brother and three sisters. He volunteered for military service in the Luftwaffe in 1936. He was assigned to KG3 after training in various Luftwaffe aircraft and was blind flying trained.

He fought through the Polish, Norway and French campaigns and aged 22 it was his first flight to England on the 15th September 1940.

After being shot down on that day, and bailing out he was captured and taken wounded to the Southern hospital, Dartford, before being transferred to the Royal Herbert hospital, Woolwich and placed in the Luftwaffe ward in bed 2.

After recovering from his wounds and he was sent to Trent Park near Cockfosters in London, which was a stately home being used to house PoW's. It was bugged with microphones, so that intelligence authorities could listen into the prisoner's speaking to each other, to gain intelligence which could prove useful to the British.

Soon he was transferred to camp 13 at Shap Wells hotel, Kendal in Cumbria, where he stayed until 1941 when all German PoW's were then sent to camp 30 Bowmanville Canada.

While in the camp in Canada he took various exams, one was to become an interpreter. He was promoted to Oberleutnant while in captivity in 1942.

He returned to Germany in 1947 after 6 years and 9 months as a PoW. He studied to become a civil engineer and in 1952 qualified to become a construction engineer for the water extraction and supply at the British headquarters. He lived in Braunschweig with his wife Annemarie where he continued to fly at a local flying club until he passed away in September 1995 aged 77.

Biography

Unteroffizier Wilhelm Paul Burbulla Bordfunker (Radio operator)

S/n 535578/323



Born in Liebenberg on 23/1/1917, aged 23 and single he was the only son out of the four children born to his parents. He was the Bordfunker (radio operator) on the bomber that day.

In the attack by fighters that day Wilhelm was badly wounded, he bailed out in the local area and was captured. He was taken to the Southern Hospital, Dartford where he died two days later on the 17/09/40.

His family was informed that he had been Killed in Action on 23/9/40 and he was buried in Watling Street Cemetery, Dartford.

In the 1960's he was removed like Kurt Hausburg to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery Cannock Chase, Staffordshire where he is resting in Block 5, Row 3, Grave 51.



Biography

Unteroffizier Kurt Otto Hausburg (Observer)

S/n 53578/313



Born on 24/08/1912 in Schelkau, Saxony, to parents Otto and Anna Hausburg, he was the youngest of two sons, his brother Erich was two years older being born on 27/09/10 . At the age of 28 Kurt was married to Else and was living at Bernburg near to the airbase he was stationed at the time before war was declared. Kurt was the oldest of the crew and was classed as the old man. The crew, from the RAF intelligence report, stated that moral was high amongst them on that day as the bombers flew over the English coast. This soon changed when the port engine was damaged by Anti-Aircraft over Rochester and panic settled in once RAF fighters were spotted.

In the ensuing firefight the other engine was damaged by the fighter attacks, with the bomber damaged the crew tried to get back to France but were chased by RAF Hurricanes. As the plane reached Stansted in Kent in its attempt to escape the fighters, either the crew were ordered to bail out or, fearing that the end was near, Kurt Hausburg bailed out. As the plane was too low his parachute failed to open. It was found on his body that he had coins from Poland and France which were the campaigns which he participated in.

Once Kurt's body was found he was buried in St Mary's church yard Stansted on the 19th September 1940. Twenty two years later on 23rd October 1962 at the request of the German Government his body was moved to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.



Kurt Hausburg now lies in Block 1, Row 7, Grave 247.

Biography

Flieger Hermann Boermann (Bombardier)

S/n 53578/285



Hermann Boermann born on 6/3/19 in Gladbeck in the state North Rhine-Wes. He was an only child to parents Johann and Paula Bormann. In civilian life he was a carpenter and was an accomplished runner with awards for it. He was the bombardier onboard the Do17 that day.

During the mission on 15/9/40 he received several gunshot wounds to the face and thigh and after being captured wounded he was sent to Preston Hall hospital, Maidstone before being transferred to the Luftwaffe ward at the Royal Herbert hospital, Woolwich later. The German

government informed his parents on the 20/9/40 that Hermann was a PoW via the Red Cross.

After recovering from his wounds and after RAF intelligence had extracted what intelligence they could from him, he was sent to PoW camp 80 at Horbling, Lincolnshire but on 18/2/41 was sent to a Canadian pow camp in Canada (PoW number 60302) where he stayed until 1947 when he returned to Germany.

After he returned to Germany there is no further information after 10/2/87. I can only assume that he had passed away sometime after.

Biography

Sqn Ldr John Sample DFC



John Sample was born in Longhirst, Northumberland, in February 1913.

He was a land agent in civilian life, working for his uncle as his joint agent.

He joined 607 (County of Durham) Squadron, AuxAF on 27th April 1934 as a Pilot Officer. The Squadron was at the time based at Usworth, near Sunderland.

On 27th October 1935 he was promoted to Flying Officer.

He was appointed Flight Commander of 'B' Flight on 10th January 1939 and was as a Flight Lieutenant called to full time service on 24th August 1939.

On 10th September 607 Squadron moved to Acklington, Northumberland, so that runways could be laid at Usworth.

At 12:45 on 17th October 'Blue' section from 'B' Flight of 607 Squadron was scrambled to seek German seaplanes that had been reported off the coast. Flight Lieutenant Sample (Gladiator K7995/AF-O), Flying Officer Dudley Craig and Pilot Officer William Whitty (Gladiator K8026/AF-L) headed out to sea, where at 13:30 they intercepted a Do 18 flying boat at 1,500 feet some 25 miles of the coast.

Sample led the flight in a diving attack from 8,000 feet and each of the Gladiators carried out three individual attacks from astern. Bits were seen flying off the Do 18 but it continued to fly, trailing smoke and descending out to sea. With ammunition expended and fuel getting low, Sample led his section back to Acklington.

The German aircraft was M7+YK from KüFIGr. 806, which struggled eastwards for about 35 miles before force-landing into the sea alongside the destroyer HMS Juno. The crew were rescued and made prisoner while the aircraft was destroyed with gunfire.



This was 607 Squadron's first victory Dornier Do18 M7+YK of KuFLGR.806 being forced down

On 13th November 1939, the squadron, still with Gladiators, flew from Acklington to Croydon and two days later to France, first to Merville then to Vitry-en-Artois.

The Squadron started to re-equip with Hurricanes in April 1940.

At 05:15 on 10th May, Blue Section of 'B' Flight met three He 111s at 17,000 feet near Le Quesnoy. One of the He 111s was claimed as a shared probable. Flight Lieutenant Sample (Blue 1) (Hurricane P2615) reported:

“While patrolling Douai sighted three aircraft to south-west of base, flying east. Opened to full throttle and climbed up, but was left behind by Blue 3 (Flying Officer Charles Bowen) whose aircraft was faster. Blue 3 carried out one attack, followed by Blue 2 (Flying Officer John Humpherson), during which I climbed above e/a to identify them, as I was not entirely satisfied to their identity. Having satisfied myself they were Heinkel's, I carried out attack from astern on a single aircraft, flying about 500 yards behind and to one side of the other two. I fired two bursts, commencing at 350 yards and broke away at about 50 yards. During my fourth burst the e/a banked over to starboard slowly. After I broke away I could no longer see him. Oil appeared to come from e/a as my windscreen was covered with it.”

This was probably He 111P-2 1G+CC of Stab II/KG 27, which was shot down by fighters during a sortie to attack Lille-Seclin and probably the one claimed by 'B' Flight. The Heinkel crash-landed at 05:15 and burned out at Ormeignies, south-west of Ath.

Leutnant H. W. Hover, Oberfeldwebel E. Lisse, Feldwebel H. Walz and Unteroffizier F. Schlichting were all captured unhurt.

In the afternoon at 14:30 on the same day, 607 squadron scrambled nine Hurricanes on the approach of Heinkel's of III/KG 1. Seven of the bombers were encountered north-west of St Quentin at 12,000 feet and Sample (Blue 1) (Hurricane P2615) led the attack:

“Spotted formation of seven He 111s over Albert, orbiting, with one straggler 300 yards behind others which were in close vic formation. Ordered line astern and proceeded to attack straggler. After the first burst of fire from my guns, I noticed that he was closed up with the rest of his formation. I received crossfire from all the aircraft in the formation. During my second burst of fire I saw my incendiary bullets entering the fuselage and wings of e/a and the port engine gave off light coloured smoke. The e/a began to turn away from his formation. At this moment my engine was hit by several bullets and began pouring out oil, blinding me. I broke away and escaped by parachute, as I could not have seen well enough to land.”

He was shot down at 14:50 and sprained both his ankles severely on landing. Thereafter, until recovery, he was obliged to wear carpet slippers at all times, even when flying.

Sample's sprained ankles, however, kept him grounded during the remaining time in France.

The squadron suffered heavy losses and lost two commanding officers in short time. As senior pilot, Sample was given command of the remains until the squadron was ordered to withdraw from France on 21st May 1940.

Sample was given command of 504 (County of Nottingham) squadron at Wick in Northern Scotland in late May 1940. The squadron was in the process of rest and rebuild of strength and took on the responsibility of providing the air defence of the naval base at Scapa Flow.

Later the squadron moved to Castletown on the Pentand Firth, bringing it closer to its patrol area.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on 4th June 1940 for his action in France. His citation stated that he had been an inspiration to his squadron.

On 1st September he was promoted to Squadron Leader.

On 5th September the squadron moved south to Hendon, north-west of London, to take part in the Battle of Britain.

At 17:35 on 7th September he claimed a damaged Do215 in the Manston area.

On 15th September the squadron took part in a big interception over London when they scrambled at 11:15 to the Maidstone area. Sample spotted a formation of Dornier Do 17s at 15,000 feet and led his squadron in. He attacked a Do 17 at 12:10, which was trailing white smoke after having been attacked by about five fighters. He climbed up above the Dornier and then made a diving attack. As the distance between himself and the bomber narrowed, he noticed a red light in the rear-gunners cockpit, but as he got even closer, he saw that he was looking through the whole length of the inside of the Dornier to the pilot and observers cockpit. The red light that he saw was in fact the red glow of fire. He gave another short burst, and as he turned and went past the aircraft, the inside was nothing but a red-hot furnace inside. He then saw it go into a spin after the tail section broke away, followed by the wing sections beyond the engines. The narrow fuselage with short stubbs of wing roots fell through the cloud to oblivion, he never saw it crash. After Sample's attack, one of his pilots, Sergeant Ray Holmes, rammed it. The Do 17 fell on Victoria railway station. This was Do 17 (2361) of 1./KG 76 flown by Oberleutnant Robert Zehbe.

Oberleutnant Robert Zehbe was badly beaten by a mob when he landed in Kennington. He died following day as a result. Metropolitan Police have nothing to say on the subject.

At 14:00 the 504 squadron was scrambled again once more, this time from Hornchurch. In company with 249 squadron, it attacked a formation of Do 17 near Gravesend. Breaking up the formation, Sample took on a Do 17 at 14:35, which was making a run for home. He made four attacks and firing in two-seconds bursts, the Do 17 crashed onto Barnehurst golf course at 14:45. This was Do 17Z-2 (3457) of 4./KG 3 flown by Leutnant Herbert Michaelis. Sample then joined in a combined attack on a He 111 (2771) II/KG 53 flown by Unteroffizier Lange. This aircraft crashed on West Malling airfield at 15:00.

The squadron was later moved to Filton and then later to Exeter. During this time they were responsible for the air defence of the Bristol and Westland aircraft factories.

When the Battle of Britain ended he led the squadron on offensive sweeps over France.



Sqn Ldr John Sample while serving as CO of 504Sqn

On March 1941 he was posted away from 504 squadron to 10 Group HQ as a controller.

In September 1941 he was given the job of forming 137 squadron flying Westland Whirlwinds at Charny Down.



Westland Whirlwind

On 24th October 137 squadron flew its first operation, a 'Mandolin'. The target, several trains carrying fuel containers in railway sidings at Landernau, near Brest, were not found, but Squadron Leader Sample (Whirlwind P7053) attacked several wagons and Flying Officer Clark (Whirlwind P7050) destroyed a locomotive.

On 28th October, weather was fair, some cloud in the morning with average visibility, improving in the afternoon. Practice flying was carried out all day with a total of 14.20 hours flown. Squadron Leader Sample (P7053) with Sergeant M. J. Peskett (P7058) took off from base at 17:45 to do a formation practice south of Bath, with practice attacks to be carried out by Sergeant J. F. Luing who took off 10 minutes later. All three aircraft carried out turns at about 1000ft for some minutes and Sergeant Luing broke away on Sample's orders to carry out the first attack.

On approaching for the second attack, Sergeant Luing saw Sample's aircraft going down out of control, with part of the tailplane coming off. The machine was in a spin, and when close to the ground, Sergeant Luing observed Sample leave his machine and his parachute open, but his canopy did not open, and Sample landed on the roof of some farm buildings (Manon Farm) near Englishcombe.

The aircraft landed on the same buildings and burst into flames. Sample was killed. Sergeant Peskett reported that his aircraft was bumped but remained under control and he returned immediately to base and landed. His aircraft was found to be damaged but repairable on the unit. He did not see anything of the Sample's crash. After seeing the Sample's crash, Sergeant Luing returned to Base and reported the accident, which occurred at about 18:10.

Examination of Peskett's aircraft suggested that the starboard propeller had hit the tail of Sample's aircraft. Both sets of undercarriage doors and the central bulge of the Fowler flap also showed signs of contact. P7058 was flown, gear down, for repair at Filton where the two squadrons shared Servicing Echelon was based.

Sample was buried in St. Andrews churchyard Bothal, Ashington Northumberland on 3rd November 1941.



The Sample family monument



4/Kampfgeschwader 3 Dornier 17

© Nigel Staniforth

The picture represents the Do17 flown by Lt Herbert Michaelis, the emblem on the nose represents a troll holding a bomb and was the 'Gruppe' (unit) emblem for Kampfgeschwader 4. Within the squadron, each Gruppe would have their own unit emblem. This particular Dornier which Lt Michaelis flew has a pink bar on the tail and also one on the top of the wings which was used as a rallying point for the bombers to gather onto while getting into formation, so he was the formation leader.

The Dornier Do 17 was a twin-engined light bomber powered by two Bramo 323 engines produced by Dornier Flugzeugwerke for the German Luftwaffe during WW2. Designed in the early 1930s as a Schnellbomber ("fast bomber"), intended to be fast enough to outrun opposing aircraft, the lightly built craft had a Twin tail and "shoulder wing". Sometimes referred to as the Fliegender Bleistift ("flying pencil"), it was popular among its crews due to its handling, especially at low altitude, which made the Do 17 harder to hit than other German bombers.

The plane was introduced in 1937, and had a top speed of 258mph, it carried a crew of four, a bomb load of slightly over 2000lbs and had a top range of 745miles. The armament consisted of seven 7.92mm MG15's positioned around the plane. This version of the Do17 was phased out in mid/late 1940 for the newer Do217E1 variant which had better performance.



504 (City of Nottingham) Squadron

© Nigel Staniforth

This picture represents the Hurricane flown on the day by Sqn Ldr John Sample DFC. He flew various Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain while servicing and repairs were carried out.

The Hurricane is coded TM which was assigned to 504 squadron and the letter A was to identify who was flying the aircraft that day. So on the 15th September Sqn Ldr Sample was flying this Hurricane.

The Hurricane was designed by Sydney Camm and was introduced in 1937 by Hawker. The plane was the unsung hero of the Battle of Britain accounting for 60% of victories compared to the Supermarine Spitfire. A Spitfire snobbery trend started during the campaign in which Luftwaffe servicemen insisted that they were shot by a Spitfire and not a Hurricane and would not believe it when told.

During the battle which lasted from 10th July until 31st October 1940, the Hurricane was mainly assigned to attack the bomber formations and the Spitfire the fighter cover assigned to protect the bombers.

The fighter was easy to repair compared to the Spitfire which needed to be sent away whereas the Hurricane could be repaired

in the field if need be. Many pilots became aces while flying the Hurricane.

The aircraft was powered by a Royce Merlin with a top speed of 340mph and a range of 600miles. Armament consisted of eight 0.303 machine guns which later was changed to four 20mm cannons.

The plane fought throughout WW2 in campaigns around the world. The last Hurricane was built in 1944.



Hurricanes can still be seen flying at airshows and the Battle of Britain Memorial flight have several in their collection.



Sqn Ldr Sample (with forge cap on) and the rest of the squadron at rest waiting for the order to scramble

Victims of the explosion

Special Constable Leonard Francis Clarke 532R

Warrant No:101192



Born on the 23rd August 1912 in Tottenham, London to Edward and Mabel who had four sons and three daughters. In July 1938 he married Hilda M Chambers in Rochester. In civilian life he was a chief cashier at a chartered surveyor and estate agent and lived at 156 Parkside Avenue Barnehurst.

When WW2 started he became a Met Police Special Constable and on the day of the incident (15/09/40) witnesses reported that he was trying to prevent people going near the bomber at the crash site and warning them to not get too close as bombs were scattered around the crash site.

When a bomb exploded S/C Clarke was badly hurt. He was taken injured to the Woolwich District War Memorial Hospital at Shooters Hill but died of his wounds on the 16/09/40 aged 28.

Constable Clarke was buried on the 20th September 1940 in St Paulinus church graveyard, Crayford. But records do not say where the exact location is. So he lays at rest in an unmarked grave within the grounds of the church.

Leonard's older brother Thomas Henry Clarke was killed during WW1 on the 26th September 1915 at Flanders, France, and his father Edward Clarke passed away also in 1915.

Sadly there is at present no information on what happened to his wife Hilda who he was only married to for two years, they had no children. Hilda passed away in 1977, she never remarried.

Samuel Ernst Sole ARP Warden



Born in April 1901 in Wandsworth, London. He married Mabel Bishop and had a daughter. Ernst was a shoe repair man in civilian life and also an ARP warden during WW2. He was injured in the explosion of the bomber and was taken to the Woolwich Memorial Hospital at Shooters Hill. On 17/9/40 he succumbed to his wounds at the age of 39.

Ernst Sole is buried in St Paulinus church yard, Crayford and lays in row J2 grave 25 in an unmarked grave.



© Pat Bellini

John Frank O'Connell ARP Warden



Born on 5th July 1907 in Camberwell London, John was married to Nellie nee Sampson in Essex in April 1932 and had two children (One daughter called Anne was born in 1934). From 1937 he lived at 163 Parkside Avenue, not far from Barnehurst golf course

John was a wholesale fruit salesman, and once WW2 started he became a ARP warden. He was aged 33 when wounded in the explosion trying to prevent people from getting near to the bomber.

He was taken to the War Memorial hospital in Woolwich where he died the same day.

John O'Connell was buried in St Paulinus Church Yard, Crayford on 23rd September 1940 and lays in Row J2 Grave 22.



Thomas William Read



Born on the 3rd August 1909 in Camberwell, London to John and Maud Read, he was born a twin to his sister Victoria May.

He was injured on the 15/09/40 when the bomber exploded on the Barnehurst Golf Course and was taken to the Woolwich District War Memorial Hospital at Shooters Hill where he died the same day.

Thomas Read was buried on 21st September 1940 at Erith cemetery in Brook Street in the old part of the cemetery and is resting in plot J grave 846.



William Charles Daniels Civilian



Died on the 15/09/40 when the German bomber exploded on the Barnehurst Golf Course and was aged 38 when the accident happened. He lived locally at 136 Parkside Av and was the son of Mr D Daniels.

In civilian life he was a plumber. His body was identified by his father. In the records it listed the following personal items were carried by William, Id card, smelling salts, whistle (ARP whistle?), key ring, railway ticket, scissors and washers.

He is buried in St Paulinus church grave yard, Crayford and he lays in rest in row J1 grave 18.

William Taylor Civilian



Born on the 14th March 1913, he died at the Barnehurst golf club on the 15/09/40 when the German bomber exploded. He was aged 27.

In civilian life during WW2 he was an ammunition worker assembling explosives and worked with his wife Kathleen who did the same job.

William live at 262 Parkside Avenue, which is not far from the golf course where he died.

He was buried on the 23rd September 1940 in the Erith cemetery in Brook Street.

COMBAT REPORT.

75

Sector Serial No. (A) _____
 Serial No. of Order detailing Flight or Squadron to Patrol (B) _____
 Date (C) 15.9.1940.
 Flight, Squadron (D) Flight: _____ Sqdn.: 504
 Number of Enemy Aircraft (E) 20 D.O.215s, 1 D.O.17
 Type of Enemy Aircraft (F) 1 H.E.111.
 Time Attack was delivered (G) 1435
 Place Attack was delivered (H) near Gravesend.
 Height of Enemy (J) 1st attack 19,000 feet. (20/15)
 2nd attack 7,000 feet. (20/17)
 3rd attack 4,000 feet. (H.E.111)
 Enemy Casualties (K) 1 D.O.17 destroyed.
 Share in H.E.111 destroyed.
 Our Casualties (L) 1 Hurricane missing.
 Searchlights N(1) N/A. Aircraft _____
 A.A. Guns Assistance N(11) Personnel (M) F/O Jebb wounded.
 NIL. (P) see below
 (R) _____

GENERAL REPORT

In company with 249 Squadron sighted about 20 D.O.215s escorted by a large number of H.E.109s flying N.W. approaching London. Carried out $\frac{1}{2}$ attack from starboard on the nearest Vic of E/A. As I broke away the Vic broke up.

Then spotted a single D.O.17 dodging in and out of clouds. Carried out 4 quarter attacks and followed him down and saw him crash on land somewhere in the Farningham-Dartford area. Then I joined in with about 4 Hurricanes and 2 Spitfires who were attacking a single H.E.111. Finished the rest of my ammo. on him in $\frac{1}{2}$ attacks. He crashed landed on an aerodrome, probably Brenchley.

4 attacks on D.O.17:
 in each case:
 Range opened 200 yds
 Length of burst 2 secs
 Range closed 75 yds
 Rounds fired 320

Signature J. Samples
 O.C. { Section Red.
 Flight A.
 Squadron 504. Squadron No.

2 attacks on H.E.111:
 in each case:
 Range opened - 250 yds
 Length of burst - 2 secs
 Range closed - 100 yds
 Rounds fired - 320

R.A.F. Form 1151.
800 PAGES 1/20. 1/20.

Sqn Ldr Samples combat report on the shooting down of the Dornier

REGISTER OF AIR RAIDS AND ALARMS

DATE 15th Sept. 1940 Incident 50.

CLASS		TIME
Air Raid message	Yellow	<u>Explosion from D15. message 14.20 hrs.</u>
Action warning	Red	
Cancel caution	White	
Passed	Green	

No. dropped 1

High Explosive German Bomber Bombing

Incendiary Bomb on plane exploded at 15.00 hrs built

Smoke 1 and injuring 1 visible

Poison Gas: Type: a number of unexploded bombs still there
bleared. 1st Oct 1940 report received from
Group 8 2339 hrs

in Barnet road 449 house

16.40

14.20 hrs

SERVICES CALLED

First Aid 15.00 hrs 1 bomb 12.5.40 from Barnet road Group did not arrive near C.

Fire 15.01. alarm from 16.11. Barnet road 14.20.

A. F. S. on job.

Demolition

Decontamination

L.D.V.s on ground 14.27.40

DAMAGE

a. Services

Gas ok

Electricity o

Water .

Sewers .

Telephones .

b. Roads ok

c. Buildings ok

DEATHS

Deaths Injured

1 F - C - M 7 F - C -

The ARP report on the incident pages 1 and 2 for 15th September 1940

SOUVENIR HUNTERS KILLED BY BOMB.

TRAGIC SEQUEL TO GERMAN PLANE'S CRASH.

FOUR DEAD BY MAN'S FOOLHARDINESS. Souvenir hunters seeking to obtain relics of a crashed German bomber, on Sunday, paid the penalty for their curiosity, when one of the bombs thrown clear of the wreck exploded, killing four people and injuring several more.

One of the dead men was a police constable who was trying to disperse the crowd. He died afterwards from the injuries he received.

"It need never have happened," said the stewards of a Kent Golf Club House, near to which the bomber crashed. "If people had kept away instead of trying to collect souvenirs and meddling with the bombs, no one would have been hurt. Even after the explosion the police and members of the Home Guard had difficulty in preventing hundreds of people coming on to the golf course.

The club house was like a hospital. I was the only woman there and helped to tend the injured. Three people were killed outright. Some of the severely injured were laid on the lawn until they could be moved.

Luckily a well-known doctor and London Medical Officer of Health was in the house, and he was able to attend to the people at once. Afterwards they were taken to hospital.

CRASHED IN ORCHARD.

The bomber was brought down by British fighters. It gradually lost height, and eventually crashed in an orchard adjoining

dential area left standing glaring head Preliminary car belongin responsible.

"A winkin seen on thre off a main r Warden's Guard searc now suggest to a piece o inside a hou

On Mondsa began their by bombs di The survey personal tou ticulars of a owners of ho responsible i property.

When tiles district, the them from houses were this was ref are reminded against for l

In a shelte ist entertain them in cor shop above notice stated

A bus pulli had been sll called out."

Evidently were as tirec raid annour walked on to laughter, "A men, is that in due cours

While a shi area were as

the golf course. There it at once burst into flames. Several of its bombs were scattered over the golf course.

Within a few minutes sight-seers and souvenir hunters were dashing to the scene. Fragments of the wreckage were seized and carried off in triumph as others arrived.

Then some of the more foolhardy ventured on to the first tee where bombs had been discovered. Wardens tried to disperse the crowd and get them out of the danger area, but they were ignored or laughed at.

One man is stated to have picked up a bomb which was partly fused and threw it aside as useless. Another man is believed to have seized another bomb, and then the explosion occurred.

Among the three people who were instantaneously killed was a caddy. A policeman was also struck down. He died later.

A man who was just walking from the tee and was about ten yards away was thrown on to his face. He escaped injury. Several others were similarly fortunate to escape the flying fragments.

Many of the souvenir hunters apparently came from a distance. People in the houses in the immediate vicinity remained under cover.

JUST MISSED HOUSE.

"We saw the bomber gradually coming down in a wide sweep," said one woman. "When it looked as though it was going to hit the house, we all rushed into the hall. Apparently it passed over the house, for we heard it crash in the orchard on the other side of the road. From a window we saw the smoke from the blaze."

Fortunately none of the golf club members was playing on the course at the time of the crash. Those who had been playing were in the house at lunch. The bomb exploded half an hour after the crash.

This is not the first time that the course has suffered as a result of enemy action. A number of craters were caused by bombs dropped in a recent raid. As a result one hole had to be cut out of the round. Many incendiaries have also been scattered round, but incipient fires were quickly extinguished by members and caddies.

by in
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Road
Sept

Kentish Independent 20th September 1940

© Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre

DORNIER CRASHES ON GOLF COURSE.

SIGHTSEERS AND SPECIAL CONSTABLE KILLED.

A Dornier 17, pursued by a Hurricane, crashed on a golf course on Sunday. Anti-aircraft fire is credited with a share in the destruction of the bomber, and as the fighter flew away in a "victory roll," clouds of black smoke rose from the wreckage of the Dornier.

There were several explosions of light ammunition while the fire lasted, and soon after one of the load of bombs exploded. By this time crowds of spectators had arrived at the scene, and some approached near to the bomber, in search of souvenirs.

Four persons were killed, including a Special Constable, who was endeavouring to keep the crowd away, and fourteen others were injured.

In the same area a man and three boys were killed while viewing a crater in which a bomb exploded.

Kentish Times Newspaper

© Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre



An actual picture of the bomber in flight. Picture was taken in January 1940



Thanks to Petra Ehlers nee Michaelis for the pictures
© Petra Ehlers

Im
Namen des Führers
befördere ich

den Oberfähnrich in der Luftwaffe

Herbert Michaelis


mit Wirkung vom 1. April 1940 zum

Leutnant

Ich vollziehe diese Urkunde in der Erwartung,
daß der Genannte getreu seinem Diensteide
seine Berufspflichten gewissenhaft erfüllt und
das Vertrauen rechtfertigt, das ihm durch diese
Beförderung bewiesen wird. Zugleich darf er
des besonderen Schutzes des Führers sicher sein.

Hauptquartier des Ob.d.L., den 10. April 1940.

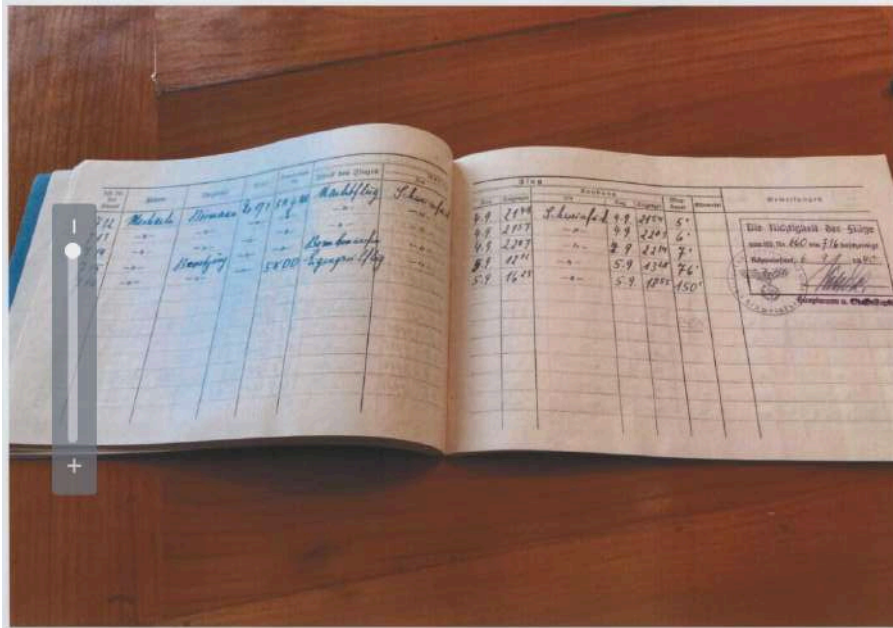
Der Reichsminister der Luftfahrt
und Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe



Jörning

Herbert Michaelis promotion to Leutnant in April 1940
© Petra Ehlers

Herbert Michaelis flying logbook



Its recorded that Michaelis and Boermann flew together three times and once for Hausburg

© Petra Ehlers

G.H.5

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL SOUTHERN HOSPITAL

DIET and TREATMENT CARD

Ward D Case No. _____ Religion _____
 Name Lt Michaelis Date of birth _____
 Occupation _____ If child, whether baptized _____
 Date of admission 15. 9. 40. Date of discharge _____
 Where from _____ Discharged to _____
 Notifications _____

Last private address _____

Name, address and telephone number of nearest relative _____ State relationship _____

DANGER LIST

ON	Date	Time			
How sent					
Initials ...					
OFF	Date	Time			
Initials ...					

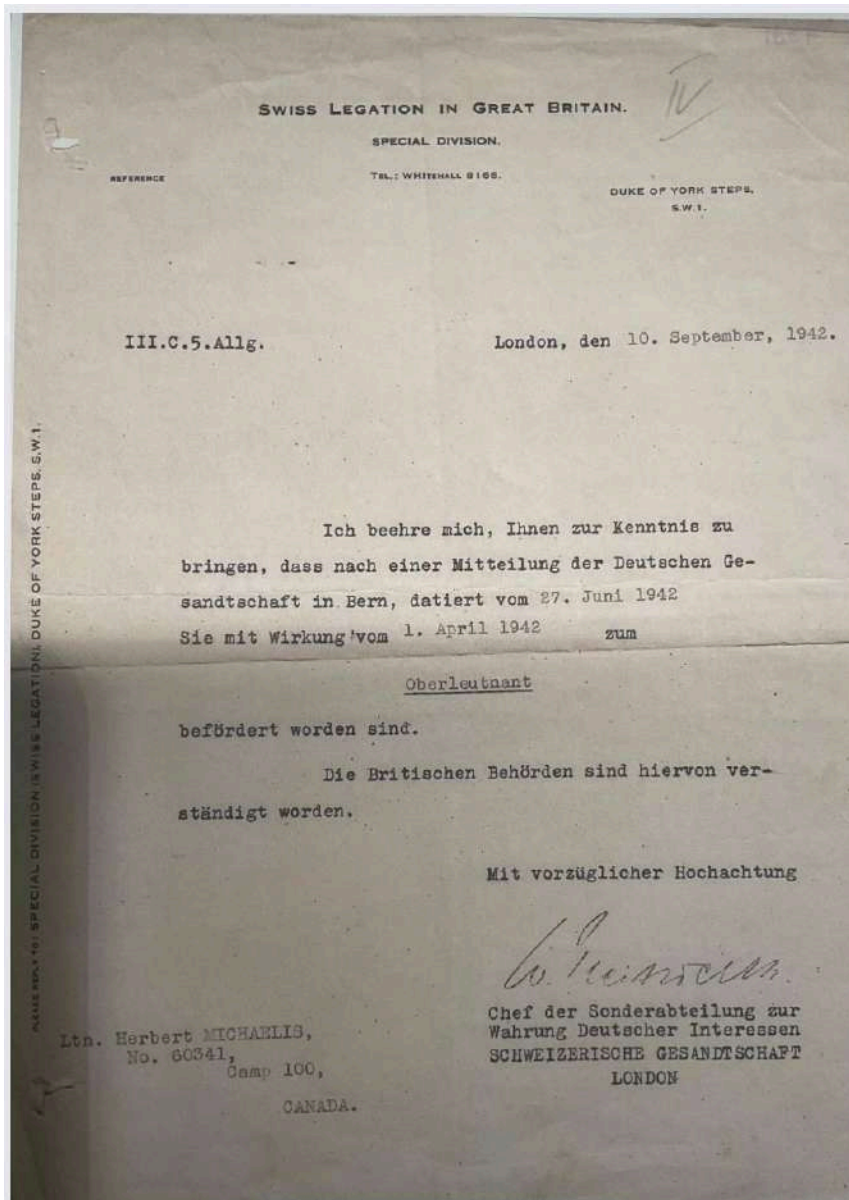
On admission:—Form of Bath _____ Method of transport to ward _____

Date	Prescriptions and Treatment	M.O.'s initials	Date when ordered	Diet No and Extras	Date when discontinued	M.O.'s initials
15.9.40.	<p>to be washed out with ...</p> <p>3,000 units A.S.B. given ...</p> <p>M.O.'s ...</p> <p>eyes to be washed out ...</p> <p>... ..</p> <p>... ..</p> <p>... ..</p>	<p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>		...		

1,000 (P.1000-21) 22.9.39

Treatment record from the Southern Hospital for Lt Michaelis dated 15/09/40. It is listed that he was given drugs for his treatment and that his eyes were to be regularly washed out due to the dye from his Mae West covering him when a bullet struck it

© Petra Ehlers



Letter from Swiss legation that Herbert Michaelis had been promoted to Oberleutnant (First Lieutenant) effective 1st April 1942

© Petra Ehlers

Pictures of Lt Michaelis
© Petra Ehlers





Pictures taken at Camp 30 Bowmenville camp, Canada







CONTROL FORM D.2
Kontrollblatt D.2

CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE
Entlassungsschein

ALL ENTRIES WILL BE MADE IN BLOCK LATIN CAPITALS AND WILL BE MADE IN INK OR TYPE-SCRIPT.

I
PERSONAL PARTICULARS
Personalbeschreibung

Dieses Blatt muss in folgender Weise ausgefüllt werden:
1. In lateinischer Druckschrift und in grossen Buchstaben.
2. Mit Tinte oder mit Schreibmaschine. 99

SURNAME OF HOLDER MICHAELIS
Familiennamen des Inhabers

CHRISTIAN NAMES HERBERT
Vornamen des Inhabers

CIVIL OCCUPATION TECHNIKER
Beruf oder Beschäftigung

HOME ADDRESS Strasse HITLERSTRASSE 34
Heimatanschrift Ort GRANDSTADTWEIG
Kreis - - -
Regierungsbezirk/Land - - -

DATE OF BIRTH 19. 1. 19
Geburtsdatum (DAY/MONTH/YEAR) (Monat/Jahr)

PLACE OF BIRTH DOHNITZ
Geburtsort

FAMILY STATUS—SINGLE Ledig X
MARRIED Verheiratet
WIDOW(ER) Verwitwet
DIVORCED Geschieden

NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ARE MINORS
Zahl der minderjährigen Kinder —

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THE PARTICULARS GIVEN ABOVE ARE TRUE.
AND UNDERSTOOD THE "INSTRUCTIONS TO PERSONNEL ON DISCHARGE" (CONTROL FORM D.1).

Ich erkläre hiermit, nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen, dass die obigen Angaben wahr sind.
Ich bestätige ausserdem dass ich die "Anweisung Organisationen" O.S.W. (Kontrollblatt D.1) gelesen und verstanden habe.

SIGNATURE OF HOLDER Herbert Michaelis
Unterschrift des Inhabers

II
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE
Ärztlicher Befund

DISTINGUISHING MARKS WANGE HINTERM L. OHR
Besondere Kennzeichen

DISABILITY, WITH DESCRIPTION
Dienstunfähigkeit mit Beschreibung

MEDICAL CATEGORY - FIT -
Tauglichkeitsgrad

I CERTIFY THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THE ABOVE PARTICULARS RELATING TO THE HOLDER ARE TRUE AND THAT HE IS NOT VERMINOUS OR SUFFERING FROM ANY INFECTIOUS OR CONTAGIOUS DISEASE.

Ich erkläre hiermit, nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen, dass die obigen Angaben wahr sind, dass der Inhaber ungeziefert ist und dass er keinerlei ansteckende oder übertragbare Krankheit hat.

SIGNATURE OF MEDICAL OFFICER Dr. med. Baudel
Unterschrift des Sanitätsoffiziers

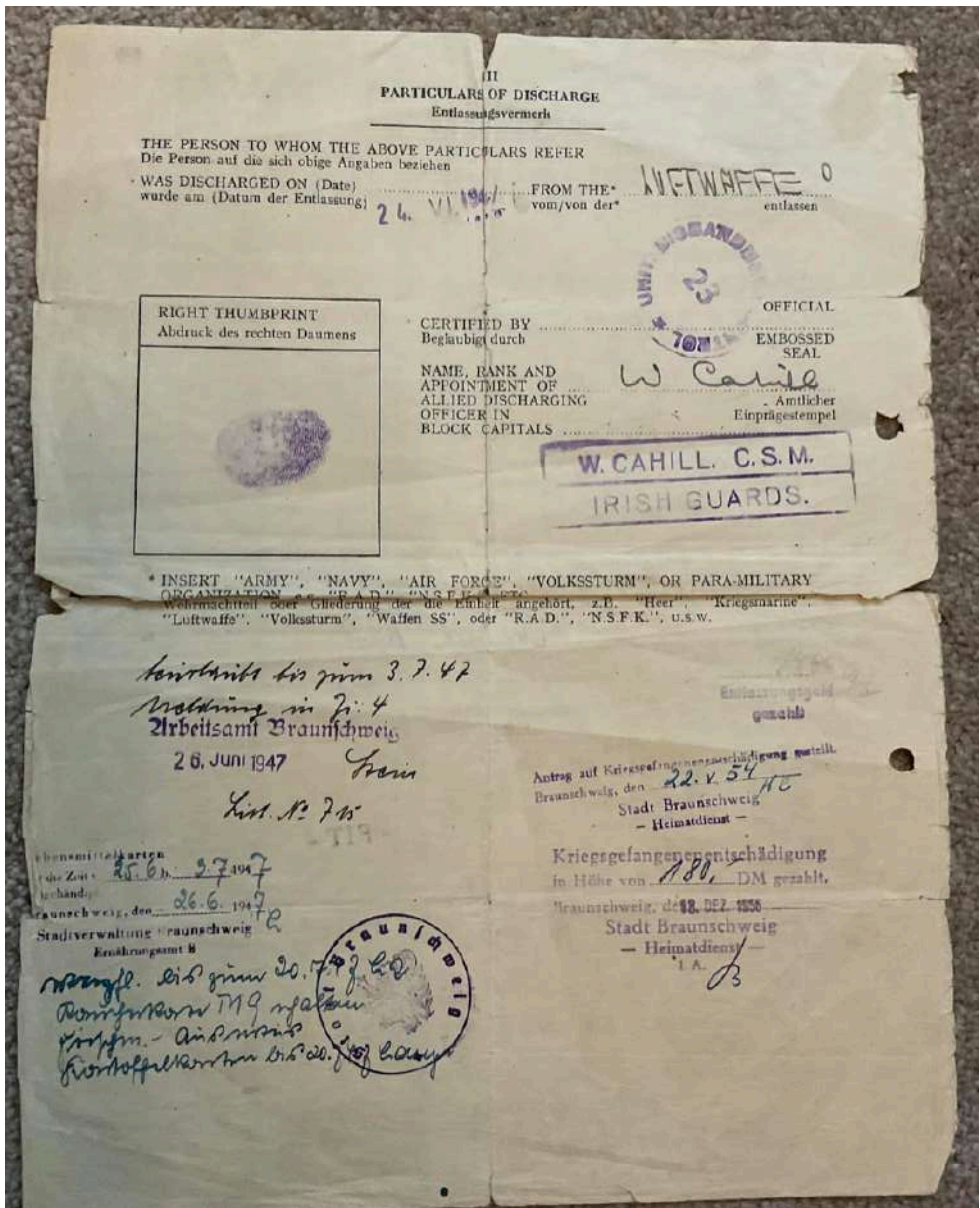
NAME AND RANK OF MEDICAL OFFICER
IN BLOCK LATIN CAPITALS
Zuname/Vorname/Dienstgrad des Sanitätsoffiziers
(In lateinischer Druckschrift und in grossen Buchstaben)

P.T.O.
Bitte wenden

† DELETE THAT WHICH IS INAPPLICABLE
Nichtzutreffendes durchstreichen

FORM 2124 G 44 10706

Herbert Michaelis's discharge papers issued in 1947
© Petra Ehlers



Discharge papers page 2
 © Petra Ehlers

Petra Ehlers

During the research my friend Kathrin Dietze and myself decided to post an appeal in a local newspaper which covered the area where Herbert Michaelis lived before his death in 1995.

By luck an old neighbour of the Michaelis's family saw the appeal and contacted their daughter Petra Ehlers nee Michaelis who contacted Kathrin and a correspondence was started between the three of us. I found out that Herbert's youngest sister who is in her 90's was able to provide an insight into her brother and also with Petra's information on her father, a name I had known for years now became a real person to me.

I would like to thank Petra and her husband Konrad allowing me to ask questions about her father and for their time and kindness to travel to the UK to visit me.

It was an honour to show her the crash site, the hospital he stayed at and to take her to the Battle of Britain museum at Hawkinge, Folkestone to see the display of item from her fathers bomber on display.

Petra & Konrad Ehlers visit to the Battle of Britain Museum Trust, Hawkinge 25/10/23

Pictures reproduced with kind permission of the museum.
©Kent Battle of Britain Trust



I would like to thank Dave Brocklehurst MBE curator of the Battle of Britain museum, Hawkinge, Folkestone for making Petra and Konrad welcome on their visit and for allowing them to take pictures of the items on display from her father's bomber.

If you are in the area of the museum it is worth a visit as it has in it the worlds largest collection of items on display from the Battle of Britain.

For further details on the museum please go to the following link:

<https://www.kbobm.org/>

Epilogue

An act of war 85 years ago in which two nations fought each other has today become a friendship between two families who were involved in an incident which directly/indirectly changed their lives for the better.

It's been a long journey of discovery for myself in this research with many ups and downs over the 30 years of research, trying to find the truth so that the 'boys' were remembered.

Many friendships were made which only can be a good thing due to the result of a war.



Petra and myself, Barnehurst Golf Course Oct 2023

©Petra & Konrad Ehlers

Chapter Two

German Me109 fighter

Welling, Kent 20th October 1940

Background into the story

Before you start reading this story, I thought that I would explain and share some information about this event which happened 85 years ago, which I feel that the reader should be made aware of, before making your mind up on who should be credited with the victory.

Over the years one pilot has been credited with it on a comment he made in his combat report, and that is Pilot Officer Bryan Draper of 74Sqn who was in the area when the said Me109 was shot down. But since I have been researching this incident another name has come into the equation through his combat report, eyewitness account and talking to a colleague from his squadron who was with him on the 20th October 1940. The pilot in question is Pilot Officer Tony Lovell of 41Sqn, who I feel also has a strong claim to the victory and has been over looked. On this day ten Me109's were reported as either shot down or damaged. Of these four made it back to their bases in France, the other six crashing in the South East of England.

Over recent years one more pilot has been mentioned, to be included on the list, and that is Flying Officer Peter Brown of 41Sqn. This claim I can dismiss immediately as I corresponded with him during the 90's and in his letter he stated that he did shoot down an Me109 of 5/JG52 flown by Fw Bielmaier, which crashed at Mereworth Woods near West Malling, Kent so therefore he was not in the area when Friedemann was shot down.

Due to combat, pilot reports may not be correct as at the time they were fighting for their lives, so memories and accounts of incidents may vary between the witnesses involved in the battle that day.

After reading both pilots combat reports I think that many people have assumed that the Draper account is the true version. His account is that he attacked with several hits on the enemy plane, then saw it dive, before his attention was diverted elsewhere when he was attacked by a Me109 and took action to avoid the attack. His claim therefore can not be properly confirmed as this Me109 may have dived to avoid the attack by him and could therefore be one of the seven Me109's which was reported to have crashed later.

In the report written by Pilot Officer Tony Lovell, he states that the enemy fighter burst into flames after he attacked then exploded seconds after. This was also witnessed on the ground by fifteen year old Ennis Mowe. I feel this account is more reliable from the descriptions etc, but once again this can not be confirmed. Sadly both pilots died in combat and a flying accident so could not be quizzed further on the matter.

I have written the story from both their points of view and from information available and will let the reader decide who they think should be credited with the victory.

Nigel Staniforth 2025

20/10/40 Welling Me109 crash

The Battle of Britain had been raging for months with losses on both sides, Hitler had postponed Operation Sealion (Unternehmen Seelowe) indefinitely on 17th September as the RAF had not been destroyed. Reichsmarshal Hermann Goring had promised Adolf Hitler that his Luftwaffe would destroy the RAF. Once eliminated there would be no fighter cover to protect the Royal Navy from attacking the invasion force as it crossed the English Channel and it would force the navy to stay in port.

Throughout the battle, which started on 10th July 1940, there had been phases in the strategy the Luftwaffe had used and by October the final Phase (Phase Five 1st October to 31st October 1940) had started that saw the Luftwaffe change tactics. They abandoned large scale daylight raids. Instead they focused on small-scale low level raids by Ju88's and high-level fighter bomber raids, using bomb carrying Me109's supported by normal fighter cover (Storangriffe raids) to lure the RAF fighters into combat.

The main bomber force raids were now almost exclusively at night and aimed at British towns and cities, which had started on 7th September 1940 and ran until May 1941 (now called the Blitz). These new German tactics posed a very serious challenge to Fighter Command. The fighter bombers on daylight raids were very hard to intercept and losses on both sides fell significantly.



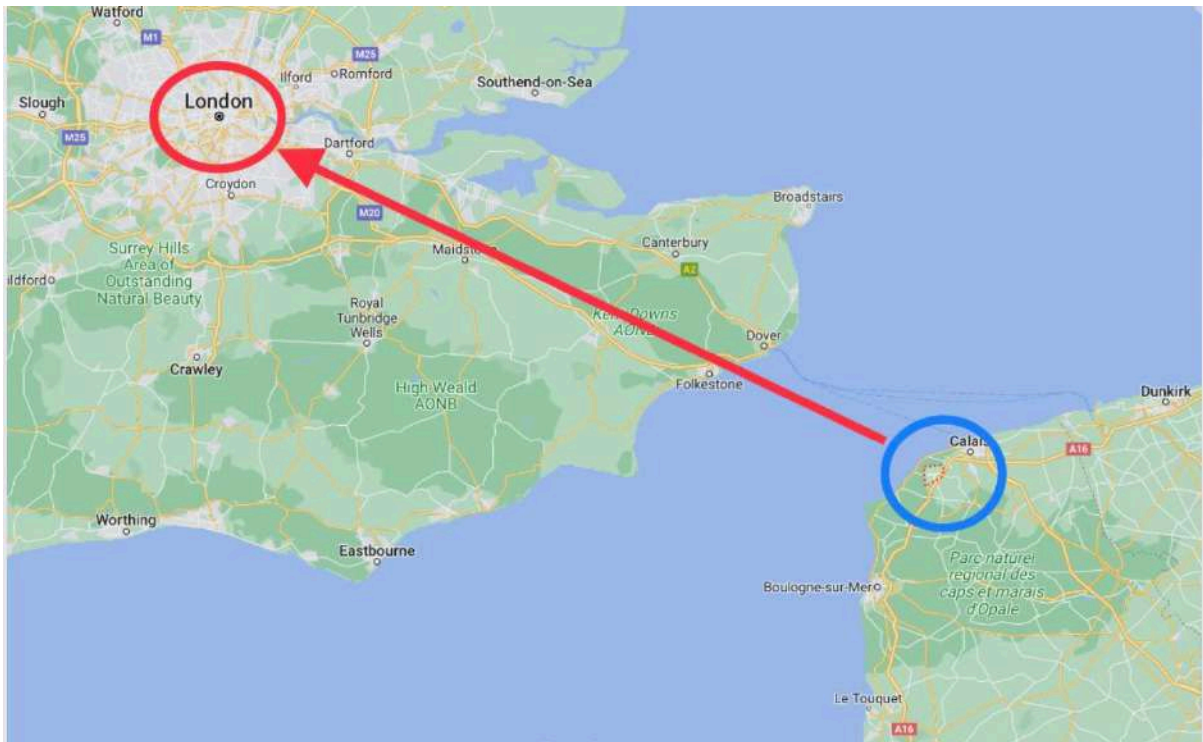
Me109 Jabo fighter/bomber



During the Battle of Britain, Reichsmarshall Hermann Goring had blamed his fighter pilots for these failings and ordered that the fighters, instead of acting as fighters and free ranging ahead of the bomber

formations, were now to stick to the bombers as close escorts due to the losses that the Luftwaffe had experienced. Under Goring's direct orders one third of his Me109 fighter force was swiftly converted to carry a bomb (either four 50kg or one 250kg bomb) slung under the belly of the Me109's flying at high altitude, heavily escorted by regular fighter cover. The plan was to draw the RAF fighters into battle, where they would be annihilated by superior German numbers. It did not matter to the Germans where the bombs fell as the hapless Jabos were simply the bait. The pilot would aim using the standard gun sight therefore accuracy was poor, but it was still ordered that one staffel from each Jagdgeschwader was to have a Jabo section for the Battle of Britain.

So this was the scene on Sunday 20th October 1940, which was also the hottest day of the month. In 6/JG52 Oberfw Albert Erich Friedemann aged 26 from Meusdorf was going to act as an escort for the Me109 Jabo bombers. Oberfw Friedemann S/n 65167/6 with six combat kills to his name was going to be part of one of these raids which was planned. Five waves of formations of Me109's had been sent over from 09:30 that day to attack targets in the South-East of England and London again. 6/JG52 that Oberfw Friedemann was part of, was to provide fighter escort to one of these raids on London. Based at Peuplingues in France the fighters, if careful with their fuel consumption, could stay over England for 10 minutes as the fighters range was 373 miles (600km), but if they encountered RAF fighters and had to fight, the time over England would be reduced and many Me109's would either return to their bases with their red low fuel warning lights blinking on the instrument panel or they would have to ditch in the English Channel and hope that they were picked by the Seenotdienst (German air sea rescue).



Peuplingues to London 91miles (148Km)

Me109 had ten minutes over the target area before it would have to leave to return to base. It would have even less time if it encountered RAF fighters

The raid was scheduled for the afternoon. Oberfw Friedemann was flying a Me109 (work number 2780 code Yellow 2). He fought his way across Kent and by 13:35 had reached London. The Jabo's they were escorting dropped their bombs and then accelerated to combat speed and engaged with the defending RAF fighters on equal terms, but throughout they were keeping a cautious eye on the fuel gauges.

F/Lt Lovell's account

Flight Lieutenant Tony Lovell of 41 Sqn from RAF Hornchurch in Essex flying Spitfire X4609 callsign Red 1 was patrolling the Maidstone area when his squadron were ordered North-West as a raid had been plotted on radar. At 30,000ft a formation of 50 to 60 Me109's were spotted 5000ft below. Flt Lt Lovell gave the order line astern and the squadron attacked the rear formation. The Me109's did not know the Spitfires were there until the leader Flt Lt Lovell opened fire on a Me109 in the middle of the formation at 250 yards. After a few bursts the Me109 rolled over and burst into flames. Bullet strikes had hit the engine which started to emit black smoke as the glycol started to leak out. The engine started to overheat as well as possibly the fuel tank, which was partly under the cockpit floor and partly behind the rear cockpit bulkhead.

F/Lt Lovell's combat report he states the following:

'I chose one Me109 in the rear centre and they obviously did not see me until I started firing. After two short bursts, the enemy aircraft fell into a spin and then burst into flames. I turned left and five Me109's putting their noses down fired at me together. Doing violent evasive action, I got away, but lost the formation. Control then ordered me to pancake'.

When his ammo was checked it was found that he had used only 600 rounds from six of his eight guns, as two had failed to fire because of the cold.

P/O Bryan Draper's account:

'I was flying Yellow 2 in squadron formation when 30plus enemy aircraft were intercepted.

I singled out one Me109 which turned North across the Thames and then tried to return South.

I fired two long bursts at enemy aircraft, one deflection and other astern. Enemy aircraft was going down obviously out of control when I was fired at from behind and my oil radiator shot on my

way down, I again saw enemy aircraft still going down and I estimated that it would crash somewhere in the Kidbrooke-Woolwich area.

I crash landed my own machine in a field as the engine had seized owing to loss of oil'

Ober Friedemann jettisoned the cockpit canopy and raised himself out of the seat. Having no choice in the matter, he bailed out of his doomed plane over the Plumstead/Welling area of South London. Seconds after his exit the Messerschmitt's fuel tank exploded in mid-air at around 13:45pm.

Due to the stresses of combat, pilots do not have much time to observe what they saw and can recall what they saw slightly wrong. I suspect that Oberfw Friedemann had bailed out before the plane went into a spin and exploded seconds later. However the story when pieced together with what was witnessed in the air and on the ground, was the shooting down of Oberfw Albert Friedemann's Me109.

An eyewitness on the ground was fifteen year old Ennis Mowe who was making her way home that Sunday. Half watching the vapour trails high above London, she suddenly heard a loud boom high above her. Stopping quickly she looked in time to see a fireball and fighter breaking apart as another fighter turned rapidly away. The tail section of the stricken Me109 disintegrated, but the front section was coming straight down dropping like a stone.

People on the ground, including young Ennis, also saw something else falling away from the doomed fighter, flailing and tumbling through the air as it came down. Witnesses realised that it was the pilot and that his parachute had failed to open. Eyewitnesses stood horrified watching the pilot coming closer to the ground. The Me109 largely intact front section landed with a very loud thud, upside-down in the front garden of a house in Wickham Street, Welling, the people who lived at the house were in the air raid shelter at the time and heard the plane crash into their front

garden. The plane did not explode on impact as the fuel in the fuel tank had been burnt off in the explosion. As the plane hit the ground one of the undercarriage legs sprung partially up in the wheel bays, while pieces of the Me109 tail section fluttered down over the area.

Oberfw Friedemann with a part parachute opened, died when he landed in the fields on Gibson Farm. Near to the crash site where he was found by the authorities and his body quickly removed, his logbook was found in the cockpit which confirmed he had six combat kills. It was also noted that he was burnt and had gunshot wounds to his body. Meanwhile in Wickham Street a small crowd had arrived to see where the Me109 had landed. There was no fire and all that could be heard was the loud metallic ticking of the hot engine as it started to cool down. A fireman, who was not needed passed his hat around the crowd and collected £22 for the Spitfire fund. Soon an RAF guard was posted around the Me109 to stop souvenir hunters from helping themselves to pieces of the plane. Police quickly started to move people on from the crash site, but the plane remained in Welling for another three weeks as it was put on display outside the local cinema where it was used to collect donations from the cinema goers for the district Spitfire Fund.

RAF intelligence section visited the crash site to check if they could gain any intelligence from viewing the wreckage and the following was found in the A.I.I (G) Crashed Enemy Aircraft report Report serial No12. Date 21/10/1940:

No2 Me109 E.3

Crashed on 20.10.40 at 13:45 hours at Plumstead, Woolwich. Marking not decipherable. Yellow nose, rudder and spinner. Crest: shield with blue eagle looking backwards. Aircraft made by B.F.W works No.2780 date 1940. Following fighter action aircraft apparently broke up in the air, crashed and is completely destroyed. There were several 303 strikes in all

three blades of airscrews.

Armament: 2 20mm, shell guns, 2 mg17's, Camouflage: dark green on top of wings with pale blue cloud effect running diagonally.

Armour: pilot's head protection found without curved piece. Pilot killed.

Oberfw Albert Friedemann was buried in Bexleyheath cemetery Section E, Grave 492, and due to the bad feeling at the time, he was not given a military funeral. In the 1964 at the request of the German Government he was moved to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof cemetery, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire where he is at rest in Block 1, Row 7, Grave 255.



Albert Friedemann's grave at Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof Cemetery Cannock Chase, Staffordshire

Biography

Oberfeldwebel Albert Erich Friedemann

S/n 65167/6



Born on 25/11/13 in Meusdorf/Bundesland Machen to parents William and Marie Friedemann who had two sons. His brother who was older than him was called Ewald. Albert was a Condor Legion veteran in which he had fought in the Spanish civil war, which started in July 1936 until May 1937. He was awarded the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class, the Spanish Cross in Bronze and the Spanish Medal of Merit during his service in the Luftwaffe.

By the time of the Battle of Britain, he was a very experienced pilot in Jagdgeschwader 52 (JG52). On 20th October 1940, the day he was killed, his Staffel (6/JG52) was assigned to fly escort for Jabo Me109's (carrying a bomb under the fuselage).

While over the London area, his formation was attacked by Spitfires from 41Sqn or 74Sqn. The pilots who shot him down could be either Ft Lt Tony Lovell or PO Draper. The plane exploded and he was killed when he fell to earth with a part opened parachute.

He fell onto land of Gibson farm and his Me109 landed in the road opposite in Wickham Street, Welling. His logbook was found in the cockpit of the Me109 and it was found that he had six combat kills.

On 29th October 1940 he was buried in Bexleyheath cemetery in grave E492 and due to the feelings at the time he did not get a military funeral. On the 18th December 1940 his parents were advised of his death by the German Red Cross and he was officially registered as KIA in Germany on the 25th January 1941.

In the 1964 at the request of the German government he was moved to the German National War cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire where he now rests in Block 1, Row 7, Grave 255.

Biography

Flight Lieutenant Anthony Desmond Joseph Lovell



Anthony Desmond Joseph Lovell was born in Ceylon on 9th August 1919 and was educated at Ampleforth College. He joined the RAF on a short service commission and began his initial training course on 25th October 1937. He moved onto 6 FTS Netheravon on 6th January 1938.

In late 1938 he joined 41 squadron at Catterick. He went on a parachute course at Manston in March 1939. He was attached to SHQ Catterick from 41 squadron on 22nd July 1939 for Ops duties and did not rejoin 41 until 20th November 1939.

Lovell shared in the destruction of a He111 East of Dover on the 31st May 1940 and on the 1st June 1940 he shared another over Dunkirk. On 8th July he shared a Ju88 Southeast of Scarborough.

In combat off of Dover on the 28th he was attacked by Major Molders of JG51 and crashed on landing at Manston. He was admitted to Margate Hospital, wounded in the thigh.

His next sortie was made on 4th August. On the 15th Lovell claimed a Me110 destroyed and probably another. He was shot down over the Thames Estuary on 5th September and bailed out, unhurt. His Spitfire, R6885, crashed and burned out in Kimberley Road, South Benfleet.

On the 5th September Lovell was appointed temporary 'B' flight commander, on the 6th he destroyed a Me109, on the 15th destroyed another and probably a second and on the 30th he damaged a Do17.

Lovell was confirmed in his appointment on 29th September and promoted to Acting Flight Lieutenant on 1st October. He damaged a Me109 on 1st October, destroyed another on the 20th, damaged another on the 30th, destroyed another on 17th November and destroyed one and shared another on the 27th.

Lovell was awarded a Bar to the DFC in February 1942.

In February the squadron was posted to the Middle East, arriving at Helwan in April.

Lovell was posted to HQ Middle East, arriving in May 1942, went on to 252 wing as a controller and then to 13 Sector Operations room. On 21st May 1942 he flew to Malta to join 603 squadron. On the 23rd he damaged two Ju88's, on the 26th he damaged a Me109 and Mc202 and on the 28th he shared a Ju88.

On 2nd August 1942 603 squadron was temporary disbanded and Lovell and other pilots joined 1435 flight, which was then renamed 1435 squadron, Lovell being given command of the new unit.

On 13th August 1942 he destroyed a Ju87 and Sm84, on the 14th he shared a Ju87, on 1st October damaged a Ju88 and on the 26th damaged a Me109.



Lovell was awarded the DSC in November 1942.

On 7th December he destroyed a Ju88 and on the 17th a Sm79 on the ground. In early 1943 Lovell was rested and went to controller duties at 8 Sector Operations room in Malta. He was promoted to Acting Wing commander on 31st March 1943 to lead the Malta Spitfire wing.

Lovell came off operations again and did staff jobs until December 1943, when he was made Wing Leader

322 Wing. He took the unit to Corsica in March 1944 to operate over Northwest Italy and Southern France.

On 3rd May he destroyed a Fw190 and damaged another, on 15th May destroyed a Me109 and on 15th June destroyed a Fiat G55.

Lovell was posted away on 14th August to No1 Mobile Operations Room. In November 1944 he was made Wing Leader, 244 wing in Italy but in December was posted to 71 OTU Ismailia as CFI.

He was awarded the DFC (US) in November 1944 and Bar to the DSO in 23rd February 1945.

Lovell returned to the UK in June 1945 but was killed on 17th August when he crashed into a field adjoining Old Sarum aerodrome. He took off in Spitfire XII EN234 and after raising the undercarriage performed a slow roll at 100ft. Entering a second roll the Spitfire lost height, went through power lines and disintegrated after hitting the ground.

He was 26 years old and is now buried near his home in Portrush cemetery, County Antrim.



Portrush cemetery, County Antrim

Biography

Pilot Officer Bryan Vincent Draper



Bryan Vincent Draper from Barry, South Wales was born on 26th March 1916 to parents Robert and Nellie.

He joined the RAFVR in April 1938 as an Airman u/t (Under training) and was called up on the 1st September 1939. He was commissioned in December and was sent to 11 group on the 28th December.

After converting to Spitfires he was posted to No.2 Ferry pilot pool in January 1940. He moved to 74 squadron in February.

On 25th May he shared a Do17, damaged a Do17 and Me109 on 10th July, destroyed a Ju88 on the 14th September and a Me109 and probably another on the 17th October.

On the 20th October his Spitfire P7355 was badly damaged in combat over South London, during which he claimed a probable destroyed Me109. Draper made a crash landing with a seized engine. He claimed three Ju87's (Stuka's) and a Me109 on 14th November and another on the 20th. He was awarded the DFC and was posted away on an instructor's course on the 30th December 1940.

He married his wife Yvonne in 1941 before he went to instruct at RAF college Cranwell before being sent to Canada to instruct. He was promoted to Flight Lieutenant in March 1942, he returned to the UK in December 1943 and under training to fly Mosquitos. Draper joined 45 squadron in India in February 1945 and with the

rest of his squadron were assigned ground attack missions against the Japanese in the Burma campaign.

On 28th February 1945 while on a mission his plane broke up while in a shallow bombing glide. Both Draper and his crewman W/O James were killed and are both buried in Taukkyan.



Taukkyan War Cemetery, Rangoon



Messerschmitt Me109

This picture represents the actual plane that Oberfeldwebel Albert Friedemann flew on the day.

The plane code was Yellow 1 and the eagle on the engine cowling was the emblem for Gruppe 6 within Jagdgeschwader 52.

Designed by Willy Messerschmitt in the early 1930's, the plane became the main fighter of the Luftwaffe before other fighters became available later in the war. Between 1936 to 1945 34,248 Me109 airframes were produced. Many variants were manufactured, with the G series being the most prolific.

Powered by a Daimler-Benz DB605, it had a top speed of 250mph with a range of 373miles. With a full fuel load, it could fly for 90minutes. It was armed with either a single 20 mm MG C/30 engine-mounted cannon firing through the propeller hub as a Motorkanone, or two synchronized, engine cowl-mounted 7.92 mm (.312 in) MG 17 machine guns, or one lightweight engine-mounted 20 mm MG FF cannon with two 7.92 mm MG 17s.

The Me109 could not turn tightly like the RAF fighters could, which was the tactic used by British pilots to outturn an attacking Me109. However the German fighter had direct fuel injection meaning it could out dive an RAF fighter if being attacked. It was also capable of high altitude and could carry more armament than the Spitfire and Hurricane. Many German Pilots became aces while flying the many variants of the fighter during WW2.

The Spanish airforce retired most of their fleet in the 1960's. The German fighters featured in the Battle of Britain film were Spanish built Me109's 'Buchons', powered by Rolls Royce engines.



One of the many Me109's which did not make it back to base during the Battle of Britain



Supermarine Spitfire Mk1

The above pictures represent Spitfires Mk1's of 41 & 74Sqn. The codes assigned to 41Sqn was EB and ZP to 74Sqn.

The Spitfire was designed by R J Mitchell and his team at Supermarine. It first flew on 5th March 1936 and was introduced into RAF service in 1938. 20,351 Spitfires were produced until production ceased in 1948. Various models of the plane were produced from the Mk1 to Mk24 powered by a Rolls Royce Griffon engine.

The Mk1 Spitfire was powered by the Rolls Royce Merlin engine which had a top speed of 369mph with a range of 986miles. Armament was eight wing mounted 0.303 Browning machine guns, but some were adapted to carry cannons later in the Battle of Britain.

Compared to the Me109, the Spitfire was slower at high altitude and could not dive as fast as the Me109, which had fuel injection.

The Spitfire's and Hurricane's, when attacked developed a tactic of going into a tight turn which the Me109 could not match can be seen in much of the gun camera footage taken of the RAF fighters turning sharply to avoid the machine gun and cannon fire of the enemy fighters.

The last country to retire their fleet of Spitfires was the Irish airforce in 1961.

SECRETF/Lt LOVELLFORM "F"COMBAT REPORT

1111 katz

Sector Serial No.	(a)	
Serial No. of order detailing Patrol.	(b)	
Date.	(c)	20. 10. 40
Flight, Squadron.	(d)	41 Squadron
No. & type of enemy aircraft.	(e)	50-60 Me.109's
Time attack was delivered.	(g)	1345 hours
Place attack was delivered.	(h)	Near Biggin Hill
Height of enemy.	(j)	25,000 feet
Enemy Casualties.	(k)	Destroyed 1 Me.109
		Probable ---
		Damaged ---
Our Casualties. Aircraft.	(l)	---

Personnel.	(m)	---
Searchlights.	(n) (i)	---
A.A. Guns Assistance.	(ii)	---
Fire from Fighters.	(p)	Range opened 250 yards
		Length of burst 1/2 sec. and 1/3 sec.
		Range closed 200 yards
		No. of rounds fired 600 Two guns failed to fire owing to cold.

ADP/ALV

Tony Lovell's combat report page 1 for the 20/10/40

F/Lt LOVELL

While leading Mitor Squadron at Angels 31 in the Biggin Hill area, I sighted 50-60 Me.109's turning from N.W. to S.E.

I ordered the Squadron into line astern and attacked the rear formation. I chose one Me.109 in the rear centre and they obviously did not see me until I started firing. After two short bursts, the enemy aircraft fell into a spin and then burst into flames. I turned left and 5 Me.109's, putting their noses down, fired at me together. Doing violent evasive action, I got away, but lost the formation. Control then ordered me to pancake.

Co. Lovell F/Lt

Tony Lovell's combat report page 2 for the 20/10/40

Sector Serial No _____ (A)

Serial No. of Order detailing Flight or Sqdn.
to Patrol _____ (B)

Date _____ (C) 20.10.1940.

Flight, Squadron _____ (D) Flight 'A' Sqdn. 74

Number of enemy aircraft _____ (E) 30 plus.

Type of Enemy Aircraft _____ (F) Me.109.

Time attack was delivered _____ (G) 1445 hrs.

Place attack was delivered _____ (H) Midstone-Gravesend area.

Height of Enemy _____ (J) 26,000 ft.

Enemy Casualties _____ (K) Destroyed. 1
Probable. 1
Damaged. -

Our Casualties Aircraft _____ (L) One.
Personnel _____ (M) Nil.

GENERAL REPORT _____ (R) See overleaf.

Searchlights: Did they illuminate enemy (N.1)
if not, were they in front or
behind _____ No.

A.A.Guns: Did shell bursts assist pilot (N.2)
intercepting enemy? _____ No.

Range at which fire was opened in each (P)
attack delivered, together with estimated length
of bursts. _____ 2 - 6 sec. bursts.

Total No. of rounds fired _____

Name of pilot (Block letters) DRAPER, B.V. P/O.

Bryan Draper's combat report page one for 20/10/40

I was flying Yellow 2 in Squadron formation when 30 plus enemy aircraft were intercepted.

I singled out one Me.109 which turned N. across the Thames and then tried to return South.

I fired two long bursts at enemy aircraft, one a deflection and the other astern. Enemy aircraft was going down obviously out of control when I was fired at from behind and my oil radiator shot.

On my way down I again saw enemy aircraft still going down and I estimated that it would crash somewhere in the Kidbrook-Woolwich area.

I crash landed my own machine in a field as the engine had seized owing to loss of oil.

*Brian V Draper 190
74 Squadron.*

Bryan Draper's combat report page two for 20/10/40

2
24

18.

A.I.L.(S).

CRASHED ENEMY AIRCRAFT.

Report Serial No.12. Date 21.10.1940.

No.1 Me.109.
 Report Crashed on 17.10.40 at Manston Aerodrome at 1545 hours.
 No.3/109. Markings: 1- (1 in yellow). Nose and tail orange, spinner yellow. The manufacturers plates had been removed, but work number appears to be No.1106, date 1939. Engine: D.B.601A, made by Daimler Benz, Genshagen, Teltow, No.62150. Following fighter action, during which radiator was hit and engine overheated, pilot made fair belly landing on aerodrome. Armament: 2 20 mm. shell guns, 2 M.G.17's. One bomb rack suitable for 250 kg. bomb, and normal bomb gear fitted. Armour: Cross bulkhead in fuselage, but no head protection found as cockpit cover had been jettisoned. Pilot prisoner.

No.2 Me.109 E.3.
 Report Crashed on 20.10.40 at 1345 hours at Plumstead, Woolwich.
 No.4/82. Markings not decipherable. Yellow nose, rudder and spinner. Crest: shield with blue eagle looking backwards. Aircraft made by B.F.W., Works No.2780, date 1940. Following fighter action aircraft apparently broke up in air, crashed and is completely destroyed. There were several 303 strikes in all three blades of airscrew. Armament: 2 20 mm. shell guns, 2 M.G.17's. Camouflage: Dark green on top of wings with pale blue cloud effect running diagonally. Armour: pilot's head protection found without curved piece. Pilot killed.

(Sgd.) J.A. Easton,
Wing Commander.

Air Intelligence on the Me109

Seen in the winter of 1939-40 at Speyer, 'yellow 5' wears a stenciled version of 6./JG 52's striking eagle motif on the cowling



This picture of 'Yellow 5' clearly shows the eagle on the engine cowling

Bexley, Kent, England, Cemetery Registers, 1879-1985 for Albert Freedmann

Bexleyheath Cemetery > 1940-1945 (war service) Save v

No. of Entry.	Surname and Full Christian Names of Person Buried.	Age and Sex (M. or F.)	Nationality.	Service Unit Details (R.N.; Ship, &c. Army; Regt., &c. Air Force; Squadron, &c. Nursing Service Unit, &c.)	Service Identification Number.	Rank, Rating or other Description.	Date of Death.	Place of Death.	Cause of Death.
1.	Freedmann Albert	26 M.	German	German Air Force.	B 65167	2 nd Lieut	20.10.40	Gilsons Farm Wickham St.	War operat
2.	Krohn W.	M.	German	German Air Force	530/53576	Pilot	4.11.40	Goldblow Bexley	
3.	Stapleton, Frank	26 M.	British	H.M.F. Royal Scots Regt	N/557917	Pte	11-11-41	Wickham	
4.	Cartwright William E.	31 M.	British	116. Squadron R.A.F.	844596	L.A.C.	24-1-45	Bexleyheath	suicide
5.	Cartwright, Albert John	36 M.	British	R.A.F.	2245973	AC/2	13-3-45	Southern	

6 of 14

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The Burial register for Bexleyheath cemetery showing the burial entry for Albert Friedmann

A b s c h r i f t .

T e s t a m e n t .

Ich erkläre hiermit, daß in Todesfalle meine Eltern alleinige Erben meines gesamten Vermögens sind.

Albert Friedemann,
Unteroffizier

Berlin-Schönwalde, den 12. Juli 1938.

Der Umschlag des Testaments ist mit dem Kompagniestempel der Flieger - Ers. - Abt. 12 Schönwalde versiegelt.

Vorstehende Abschrift hat in Urschrift hier vorgelegen und wird hiermit beglaubigt. Auch der versiegelte Briefumschlag lag vor.

Harsdorf, den 10. April 1938



H. Schönberg, Gefällter

The last will and testament of Albert Friedemann.

Translation:

I hereby declare that in the event of my death, my parents shall be heirs to my entire fortune.

Albert Friedemann
12th July 1938



The Death announcement which the Friedemann family placed in the newspaper

Translation:

After weeks of worrying and hoping, we received the painful news that our only beloved son and brother the aviator and Senior Sergeant Albert Friedemann died a heroic death for the Führer and the Reich in the air battles over England in October.

He was the holder of the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd class as well as the Spanish Cross in Bronze and the Spanish Medal of Merit.

The foreign soil be easy for him

Narsdorf, December 1940

In deep pain

Willy Friedemann family

Please refrain from expressing condolences

1. Sept. 1943.

Herle Fam. Friedemann!

Ihr Schreiben vom 15.8. mit Foto Ihres Sohnes
Albert habe ich erhalten. Sage Ihnen im Namen der
Staffel Danke und erfülle gerne Ihren Wunsch betr.
wieder schreiben. Das Foto ist schon recht scharf es sah
in meinen Kameras so, wie wir ihn alle noch in
Erinnerung haben. Albert war wohl einer unserer Besten
Kamerad durch und durch und jeder von uns
würde gerade sein Bestes zu sein. Wie werden wir
ihn vergessen.

Obst. Gunders Dank der mit uns Offi. war und dann
4 ganze Tage unsere Staffel führte ist wie Major
Rund ja nicht sieht mehr wieder aus.

Wir werden niemanden vergessen denn durch
sie würden wir gewinnen. Die Gruppe kommt den 2000
und das Besten der 7000. Abreise schon vor
längere Zeit melden. Wir durch unsere ge-
fallenen Kameraden konnten solche Erfolge
erzielen werden und immer werden sie
bei uns sein.

Herzlichen Dank für die Bemühung.
Mit freundlichem Gruss
Hr. Albert Kowalsky

Letter written to the Friedemann family by Albert Kowalski who was Albert's friend in the squadron

Translation of letter

September 1, 1941

Sergeant
Albert Kowalski
field post number
L 31561 Lg. P U. Breslau

Dear Friedemann family

I received your letter from August 15th with a photo of your son Albert. Thank you on behalf of the squadron. I am happy to honour your wish to write again.

The photo is alright. Show it to our comrades the way we all remember him. Albert was probably one of our best comrade through and through and each of us thought we also were his best.

We will never forget him.

Lieutenant Denk, who was an officer with us and then led the squadron for a whole 4 days, is no longer with us, like Major Reul.

We won't forget anyone because they made us great. The group was able to report 2000 and the squadron 7000 shooting a long time ago.

Such successes could only be achieved through our fallen comrades. They will always be with us.

Thank you again for your efforts,

With German greetings

Yours,

Albert Kowalsky

Family pictures kindly reproduced with family consent.
© Joerg Stahl



Posing for the camera in flying gear.



Friedemann family home



Family photo with parents and relations.
(Albert is back row, third from right)



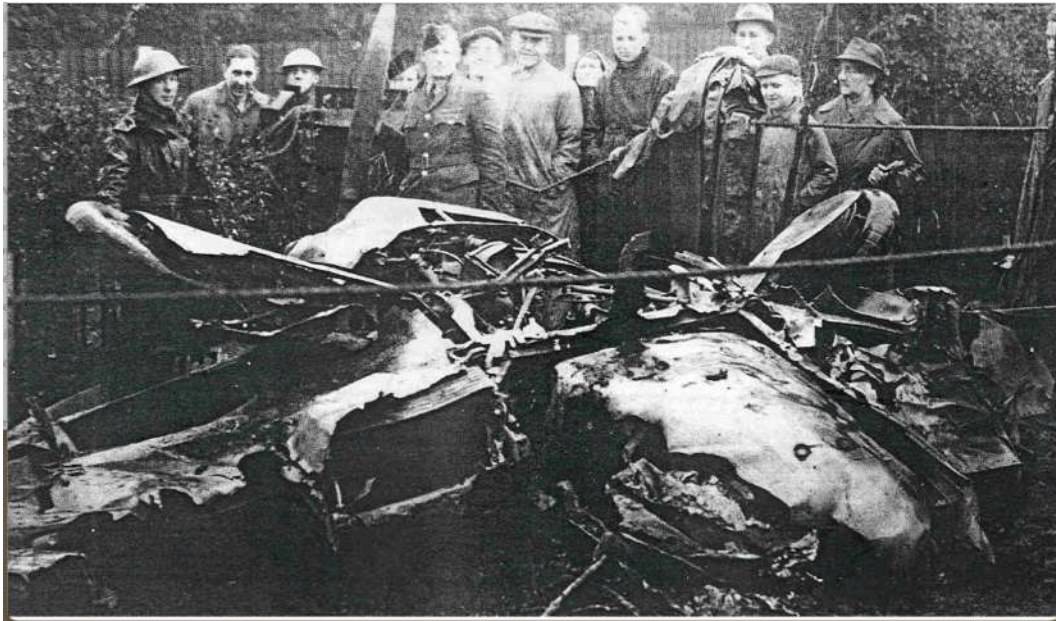
Albert Friedmann



Albert posing with one of the Me109's he flew, this is not the plane he flew on the day of the mission

Pictures of the crash taken on the day





I think pictures above were taken the next day

© Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre

Wickham Street location of the crash today



Gibson Farm where Albert Friedemann's body was found, think it was over to the left of the picture near to the houses which can be seen in the distance

Chapter 3

German Dornier Do17 bomber
Bexley, Kent 3rd November 1940

Bexley Bomber 3rd November 1940



Luftwaffe operations by November 1940 had changed from the tactics used during the Battle of Britain, and now consisted of small scale daytime attacks and large scale night attacks, mainly on London, and smaller scale raids on the other major

cities around the UK. The aim of the night time raids was to grind down the morale of the civilians. These raids became known as the Blitz.

On the 3rd November a single Dornier Do17z-2 bomber code letters 5K+ CS werk num 2573 of 8 Kampfgeswader 3 at its base at St Trond in Belgium was being prepared by its ground crew for a mission. At just after 11:00am the bomber took off on a solo mission to a target in the Woolwich area (I suspect it was the Woolwich Arsenal) as the Luftwaffe considered it a prime target due to its weapons manufacturing.

The crew were the following:

Lt Wolfgang Sonnenberg (pilot) born 06.10.1919 in Brakel

Unteroffizier Ferdinand Zumbrock (radio operator) born 7.5.1919 in Burgsteinfurt

Feldwebel Johannes Kleditzsch (observer/gunner) born 10.8.1914 in Marienberg

Gefreiter Willi Krohn (observer/gunner) born 31.12.1919 in Naugard

The bomber was tracked by radar across the channel and as it reached the Kent coast, the crew started the scan the sky for fighters. As the plot became apparent to ground controllers on the direction the bomber was taking RAF fighters were vectored towards the Gravesend area to intercept. At 8,000 feet over Gravesend the AA guns positioned around the town opened fire and scored a hit on the port engine.



St Trond (Belgium) to London 235miles (378km)

With the engine disabled the crew were weighing up the options that they had when two Hawker Hurricanes from 46Sqn based at North Weald, Essex, spotted the bomber and attacked.

Flying Officer Lefevre Yellow 1 described the attack in his combat report as follows:

'2 A/c were ordered to investigate raid X35 after various vectors we sighted EA at 8000ft over 10/10 cloud steering 228 1 1/2 miles. We closed and I delivered quarter attack from 300yards then 3 attacks from quarter and beam. Several hits observed on engines and fuselage. During one attack bombs were jettisoned (12 approx). Return fire experienced during 1st and 2nd attacks, but I was not hit. I observed black smoke from starboard right engine which stopped. During Yellow 2's attack left EA at 500ft going downwards through thin cloud which hide him from view'.

Pilot Officer Charles Ambrose Yellow 2 reported the following in his combat report:

'Starboard beam and quarters. On my initial attack from above and closed to within 10yards and observed the E/A turned went into a steep dive into cloud. When he emerged from cloud I carried out a frontal attack, also from above. I shadowed E/A for some time and left just maintaining height, with smoke still emitting from starboard motor'.

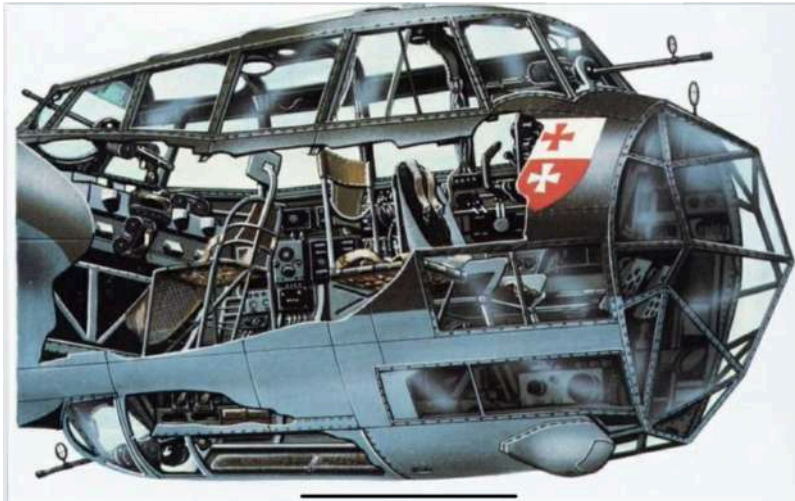
With the crew badly wounded on board, the pilot jettisoned some of the bombs to make the bomber more manoeuvrable to try and avoid the attacks but the fate of the bomber was sealed. The bomber came into view of Bexley with the two fighters still on its tail. With smoke belching out of the starboard engine and the port engine faltering. Lt Sonnenburg had little choice but to crash land as the altitude was too low to bail out, plus his crew were wounded. He decided to land on a clear space, deciding the allotments and back gardens of Wansunt Road were his only option.

An eyewitness on the ground Mr W Ellis told me in a letter what he witnessed from his back-garden on that November day:

I was on leave from the Merchant Navy staying with my stepmother at 28 Wansunt Road, Bexley. I was at the bottom of the garden digging the vegetable patch. It was a dull overcast day with very low dark cloud. I heard several burst of machine gun fire. I didn't take much notice as Vickers of Crayford, as the crow flies, is only a couple of miles away and they were often testing machine guns. My stepmother came out of the back door with a cup of tea for me, she let out a scream and pointed to the sky.

I looked up and coming straight towards me like a huge glider was this plane. I do not think I have moved so fast in my life, and threw myself down flat on the lawn. The plane actually skidded across the patch I had been digging, through a brick wall and ended up on the neighbouring tennis court. There had not been any air raid warning. Thinking it was one of our planes returning, I ran towards, it sliding over the wing. It was all black and the substance it was covered in came off on my trousers. It was then that I saw the German crosses, and that petrol was gushing out all over the place. So I quickly beat a hasty retreat, but could hear men groaning so I went back.

Within 10-15 minutes several people arrived plus an ARP warden to help me get the crew out, who were in a bad way. As far as my memory goes they were taken to West Hill hospital, Dartford. There was one of the crew under the wing dead (Gefreiter Krohn) who had been killed in the crash, it was decided to get him out the next day.



Cockpit positions in a Dornier 17

By then RAF men had arrived and discovered the bombs were still aboard. They evacuated people in Wansunt Road who wanted to, leave my stepmother and I decided to stay after one of the RAF chaps said that the chance of the bombs going off was remote. The next day two RAF men came to defuse the bombs, after they were defused I helped get them out to the RAF truck, from memory they were roughly the size of a 5 gallon drum. They dug a hole under the plane to get out the dead airman, who I presume was the bomb aimer. Exactly a week after nearly all the wreckage had been removed, we had an air raid and a German bomb dropped on the exact spot of the plane crash. We lost windows and roof, but I got extended leave.

Later I heard by local gossip that the crew had died in hospital, one on the way to hospital. I cannot vouch for the truth of that.

Looking back after all these years I realise my stepmothers scream saved my life. That plane was gliding through the air like a black ghost, there was not any noise at all until it hit the ground. I expect because it was coming straight towards me not even a swishing sound.....uncanny'.

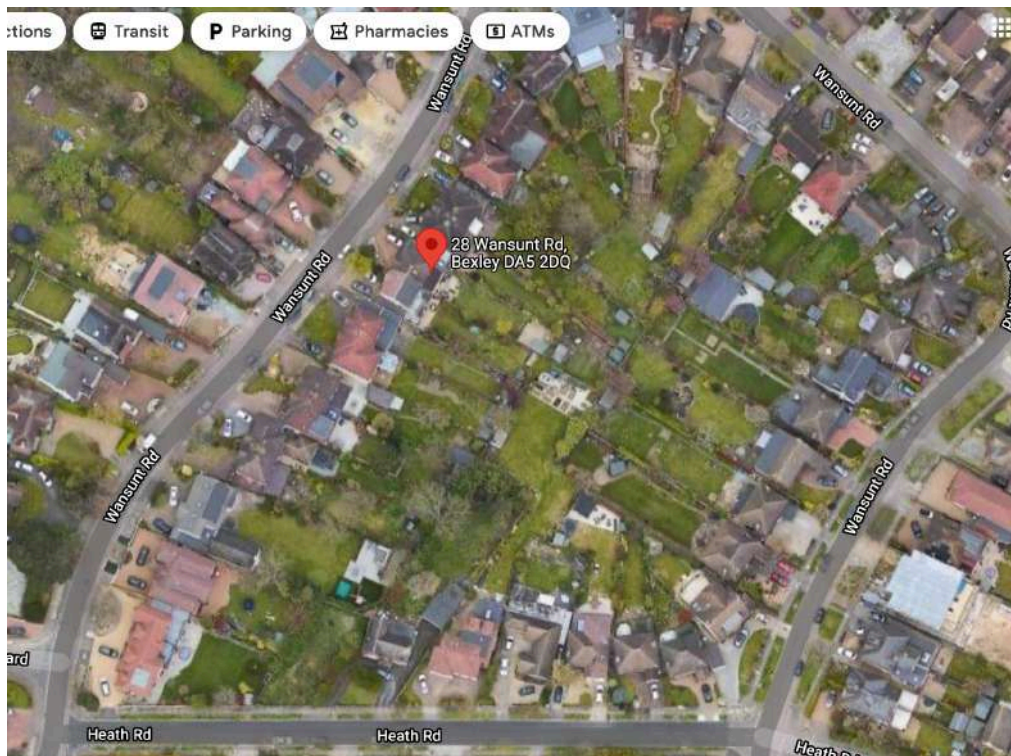
Another witness called Gwenyth in 2005 on the BBC WW2 people's war described what happened to her on the day.

'I was five at the time, my sister was three, my mother forty; Daddy was not at home at the time. Mother had food cooking in the oven (I was told later); suddenly there was a horrendous chilling roaring noise. Mum grabbed us; we huddled together by the dining room and front room wall. Terrified saying our goodbyes, I was so scared; sure we were all going to die. A hush came and we were still alive- nothing happened to us; the wardens told my mum to open all windows and leave the area at once. (I learnt this later) we all went to Grandma's in Victoria Road, Old Bexley village. Mother worried about her cooking, went back home after being told not to by the warden, she insisted and went back at her own risk, and sorted her cooking, and came back to us. So the story goes.

This was told to me much later, that it was a German plane shot down, which had landed at the bottom of our garden, and that the pilot had a rack full of bombs, which he did not let go! He died in the crash'.



Wansunt Road 1930's photograph



Wansunt Road present day

The bomber silently glided and as described by Mr Ellis crashed into the allotments/back-gardens tearing through them until the plane smashed into a brick wall which belonged to the Westminster choir school.



Westminster choir school

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After the plane came to rest it was found that the fuselage had broken off level with the trailing edge of the wing. Both wings had torn off outside of the engine nacelles and the cockpit was completely smashed.

Residents rushed to the scene and to their horror could see and smell the aviation fuel gushing from the ruptured fuel tanks. Fearing an explosion they quickly moved away, but as they moved away, they could hear groans coming from the cockpit. At this, people returned and attempted to get the wounded crew out of the smashed cockpit.

Locals helped get the crew away from the plane and found that they were in a very bad way. Gefrierter Willi Krohn, a car lock smith in civilian life, was found dead under the wing, I suspect he was either in the belly gunners position called the 'gunners tub' or had been laying in the gunners position in front of the pilot. His body, trapped under the wing was not recovered until the next day. He was buried in Bexleyheath cemetery on the 8th November 1940, and due to bad feelings at the time, he was not given a military funeral. In 1962 at the request of the German Government his body was moved to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof cemetery, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire where he rests in Block 1, Row 7, Grave 255.



Willi Krohn's grave at Cannock Chase

As the crew were pulled from the wreckage alive, Unteroffizier Ferdinand Zumbrock, a weaver before the war, died on his way to County hospital, West Hill, Dartford.

Lt Wolfram Sonnenberg died of his wounds at the same hospital on the 4th November 1940.

The last of the crew, Feldwebel Johannes Kleditzsch a carpenter by trade, died of his injuries on the 5th November 1940.

All three crew were buried first in Watling Street cemetery, Dartford and like Willi Krohn, they were moved to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof cemetery, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire in 1964.



Today Wolfram Sonnenburg and Ferdinand Zumbrock are buried together and can be found at Block 5, Row 3, Grave 53. Johannes Kleditzsch can be found at Block 5, Row 3, Grave 51.

When the bomber was checked after the crew had been removed, it was found that twenty SC50 bombs were still aboard. RAF bomb disposal defused them and they were removed on the same day. The bomber laid where it landed for several days as No. 49 Maintenance Unit from Faygate dismantled it, but during the night a night-time raider dropped a stick of bombs which blew up the wreckage.



Photographs of the crash site and removal of bombs
© Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre

Biography

Leutnant Wolfram Albert August Sonnenberg
Pilot S/n 700/53576



Born 06/10/1919 in Trochel to parents August & Anne Sonnenberg, his father was a Prussian state forester and deputy estate manager in Trochel, who passed away in 1932. He had a younger brother named Udo who also served in the Luftwaffe during WW2 and became a teacher in civilian life after the war.

Wolfram graduated from Ulricianum-Gymnasium in Aurich in February 1938 and planned to become an officer in the Luftwaffe.

He did his flight training at Regiment 10 at Neukuhren airfield near Königsberg which today now is called Kaliningard in Russia.

He was awarded the wound badge due to action but at present it is not clear what happened for him to be awarded it. He was also awarded the Bomber Operational clasp.

On the day of the mission, 03/11/1940 he was badly wounded after the attack from the two Hurricanes from 46Sqn over Gravesend.

Once the bomber had crashed on the open land of Wansunt Road, he was found very badly wounded in the smashed cockpit of the Dornier 17. After local residents had got him out of the plane he was taken to County Hospital West Hill, Dartford where he died on the 4th November 1940.

He was buried in Watling Street cemetery, Dartford with two of his crew and in 1964 at the request of the German Government, he was moved with the other crew members to the Deutsche Soldatenfriedhof cemetery, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. where he is buried with his crew member Ferdinand Zumbrock, his Bordfunker (radio operator).



Wolfram Sonnenberg's grave today
Block 5, Row 3, Grave 53

Biography

Feldwebel Johannes Ernst Kleditzsch
Observer/gunner S/n 53578/281



Born 10.8.14 in Gebirge, Marienberg he was the youngest son of eight brothers and sisters to his parents Bruno & Marie Kleditzsch. Within the family he was known as Hans. From 1929 to 1931 he held an apprenticeship with a construction company to become a carpenter. In 1932 he entered the Wehrmacht at Kamenz in the infantry/ cavalry before transferring into the Luftwaffe in spring 1940. He trained at Thorn (now called Torun) in Poland as a radio operator/gunner.

In June 1939 he became engaged to Ilse Jentsch from Neugersdorf.

On the morning of the 3rd November 1940, the Do17 took off just after 11am from its base at St Trond, Belgium for a solo attack on a target in Woolwich. The plane, carrying 20 SC50's bombs, reached Gravesend at 8,000ft when the aircraft was reportedly hit by AA fire which damaged the port engine which the pilot had to feather.

During this time Hurricane fighters from 46Sqn attacked the bomber and further damaged the plane and the starboard engine was hit. Eyewitnesses in Bexley have stated that as the plane came into sight it was losing height and the working engine was smoking badly, the plane crashed into the back gardens of houses in Wansunt Road.

The crew were badly injured and Gefr Willi Krohn was killed. The surviving crew was taken out of the plane and taken the County hospital, West Hill, Dartford, where they died from their wounds over a few days. Johannes Kleditzsch passed away on the 5th November 1940.

He was buried first in Watling Street Cemetery with three of his fellow crew. On 18.2.64 at the request of the German government his body was moved to The National German war Cemetery at Cannock Chase Staffordshire.



Johannes Kleditzsch's grave
Block 5, Row 3 Grave 51

Biography

Unteroffizier Ferdinand Heinrich Zumbrock
Radio operator S/n 53578/21



Born on 7.5.1919 in Burgsteinfurt in Westphalia he was one of 8 children (six brothers and one sister) born to his parents. In civilian life he was a weaver by trade.

He joined the Luftwaffe as it was found he had flat feet and an internal hernia so could not be assigned to the Fallschirmjäger (paratroopers) as he had wanted to.

He did his aircrew training at the Borkenberge airfield near Haltern in Northrhine Westphalia. Once training was complete he was assigned to 8/KG3.

On the day of the flight 3rd November 1940 he was the radio operator on the Do17. After the plane crashed in Wansunt Road, Bexley, he was found badly wounded in the cockpit, he died while on route to County hospital, West Hill, Dartford. Ferdinand was buried in Watling Street cemetery, Dartford. A letter of honour was sent to his parents on 5.12.1940 by the state. In the 1960's at the request of the German government his body was removed and moved to the National German war cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.



Today Ferdinand Zumbrock rests in block 5, row 3 grave 53, and is buried in the same plot as Lt Wolfram Sonnenberg, his pilot on the fateful flight. He was unmarried.

Biography

Gefreiter Willi Erich Paul Krohn
Observer/gunner S/n 53576/530



Born 31.12.1919 in Naugard (which from 1945, is now part of Poland called Nowogard) to Bernand and Hedwig Krohn who both died in 1939 as Willi was called up. Unmarried, he had a girlfriend and may have been engaged to Ms Inge Werner from Berlin, he was in civilian life a motor vehicle locksmith.

He had two brothers and a sister, Werner was the eldest born in 1917, but the other two children Gerturd and Fritz never reached adulthood. Fritz died aged 2 years old and Gerturd at 3 days old.

On the day of the mission on 3rd November 1940, the bomber took off from its base at St Trond, Belgium just past 11:00 to attack a target in Woolwich. He was reported missing when the aircraft failed to return at 14:00. Willi was killed in the plane crash and his body was found to be trapped under the plane, which was recovered the next day and he was buried in the Bexleyheath cemetery on the 8.11.1940.

On the 12.12.1940 his family and fiancée were informed he had been KIA, a letter of honour was sent by the state to his family and fiancée on the 23.01.1941.



On 26.10.1962 he was removed from the Bexleyheath cemetery and taken to the National German war cemetery at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, Block 1, Row 7, Grave 255.

Biography

Pilot Officer Peter Lefever DFC
S/n 40719 46 squadron



Pilot Officer Peter Lefever was born 1918 to Charles and Lilian Lefevre and his mother died when he was less than a year old from the flu outbreak in 1919. He was educated at Tonbridge School.

He joined the RAF on a short service commission in 1938. After training he was posted to 46 squadron in December 1938. He was involved in the shooting down of various German aircraft before the Battle of Britain. He took part in the Norway campaign with the squadron, he was one of the lucky ones who was not on board the aircraft carrier Glorious when it was sunk by the Germans while travelling back from Norway.

He stayed with the squadron when it was reformed, when he fought throughout the Battle of Britain and scored more victories.

He was awarded his DFC in 1941.

After being posted away from the squadron he held various post until he took command of 266 squadron flying Hawker Typhoons.

On January 1944 while attacking AA positions in Brittany, France, his plane was hit by AA fire, and he was seen to bail out at 200ft but he was too low as his parachute only part opened. He was reported 'Missing' and is remembered on Runnymede Memorial Panel 200. He was a confirmed fighter ace with 10 confirmed victories.

Biography

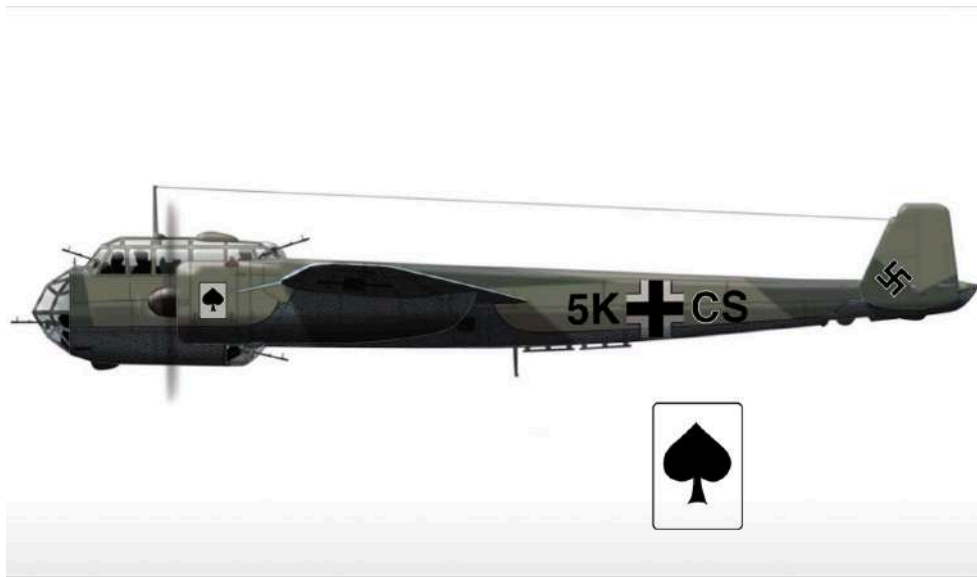
Flying Officer Charles Ambrose DFC AFC CBE
S/n 42583 46 squadron



Flying Officer Charles Ambrose was born 27th January 1917 to Albert and Fanny Ambrose. He joined the RAF and began his flying training as a candidate in June 1939, on completion of his training he joined 46 squadron in March 1940. He shot his first enemy plane (Me109) down in September near Hoath. He was shot down himself two days later and managed to bail out unhurt. He was involved in the shooting down of the Bexley bomber in November and was again shot down on the 30th November and once again bailed out unhurt. He was awarded the DFC on 24.12.40.

He was posted away from the squadron in 1941 and went to the Middle East flying Tomahawks with 112 squadron. He survived the war and stayed in the RAF. He was awarded the CBE in 1968.

He retired as a Group Captain in 1972 and he died in 1986 aged 69.



8/Kampfgeschwader 3 Dornier 17

© Nigel Staniforth

The picture represents what the Do17 looked like on the day it was flown by Lt Wolfram Sonnenburg. The emblem on the nose represents a troll holding a bomb and was the 'Gruppe' (unit) emblem for Kampfgeschwader 8. Within the squadron, each Gruppe would have their own unit emblem.

The Dornier Do17 was a twin-engined light bomber powered by two Bramo 323 engines produced by Dornier Flageugwerke for the German Luftwaffe during WW2.

Designed in the early 1930's as a Schnellbomber ('Fast Bomber'), intended to be fast enough to outrun opposing aircraft, the lightly built craft had a twin tail and 'shoulder wing'. Sometimes referred to as the Fliegender Bleistift ('flying pencil'), it was popular among its crews due to its handling, especially at low altitude, which made the Do17 harder to hit than other German bombers.

The plane was introduced in 1937, and had a top speed of 258mph. It carried a crew of four and a bomb load of slightly over 2000lbs and had a top range of 745miles. The armament consisted of seven 7.92mm MG15's positioned around the plane. This version of the Do17 was phased out later in mid/late 1940 for the newer Do217E1 variant which had better performance.



Do17's during the Battle of Britain

© Bundsachiv



Hawker Hurricane Mk 1 46 squadron

This picture represents a Hawker Hurricane of 46Sqn flown during the Battle of Britain. The Hurricane is coded PO as this was assigned to 46 Squadron.

The Hurricane was designed by Sydney Calm and was introduced in 1937 by Hawker. The plane was the unsung hero of the Battle of Britain accounting for 60% of victories compared to the Supermarine Spitfire. A Spitfire snobbery trend started during the campaign in which Luftwaffe servicemen insisted that they were shot down by a Spitfire and not a Hurricane and would not believe it when they told otherwise.

During the battle which lasted from 10th July until 31st October 1940 the Hurricane was mainly assigned to attack the bomber formations and the Spitfire the fighter cover assigned the protect the bombers.

The fighter was easy to repair compared to the Spitfire which needed to be sent away, whereas the Hurricane could be repaired in the field if need be. Many pilots became aces while flying the Hurricane.

The aircraft was powered by a Royce Merlin with a top speed of 340mph. With a range of 600miles, armament consisted of eight 0.303 machine gun which later was changed to four 20mm cannons.

The plane fought throughout WW2 in campaigns around the world. The last Hurricane was built in 1944.

Hurricanes can still be flying at airshows and the Battle of Britain Memorial flight have several in their collection.

The indications are that the plane was brought down by British fighters. A Spitfire was seen in the neighbourhood and then when the Dornier gradually lost height and eventually crashed, a Hurricane was almost on its tail. Having observed the end of its foe, the British machine flew off.

The German plane crashed through a garden wall and broke up. Fortunately there was no fire, for two unexploded bombs were still in the machine.

Trumped

On the cowl of one engine was painted the Ace of Spades an unlucky card! It had been trumped by British fighters.

Houses in the immediate vicinity were evacuated on account of the unexploded bombs, the road was roped and a military guard placed to keep away possible sight-seers and souvenir hunters. Fortunately the plane had missed the houses in the descent. Prior to this crash, the Dornier had flown low over the district.

Machine gun bullets falling into gardens and houses in the Bexleyheath district gave the impression that the enemy plane was machine-gunning indiscriminately, but whether this was so or whether bullets were strays from the clash between the Dornier and the British is not clear.

A narrow escape was experienced by the Mayoress of Bexley at her home in Bexleyheath. She was in the outhouse attending to her pets, a number of pedigree cats, when bullets began to fall in the garden and on buildings. She lay down until the danger had passed.

Later she and her husband the Mayor (Alderman G.J Buckingham) visited the scene of the crashed bombers.

It was almost exactly a fortnight previous 1pm on October 20th that a Messerschmitt 109 was brought down in Wickham Street, Welling.



A picture taken from the gunners position in the cockpit of Do17's in formation on a mission

© Bundsachiv

Personal pictures of Wolfram Sonnenburg

© Hermann Siefken



House where Wolfram was born on the Trochel Estate



Personal pictures of Johannes Kleditzsch

© Bernd Hesse



The Kleditzsch family home



The Kleditzsch family, Johannes front row (arrowed)



Johannes Kleditzsch in the cavalry before transferring to the Luftwaffe



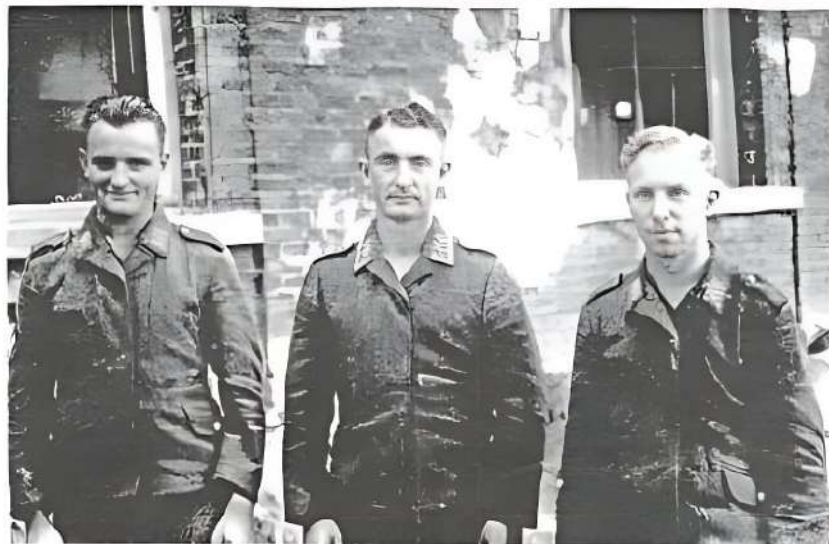
During his Luftwaffe training



Standing guard over three comrades coffins



Photograph taken by Johannes during the Blitzkrieg of France



Johannes centre of picture with comrades



Johanne and his fiancé Ilse Jentsch

Personal pictures of Ferdinand Zumbrock
©Wilhelm Notis





One of the bullet holed propellor tips cut off at the time which was displayed at the Tangmere at one point

©After the battle magazine

Chapter Four

US Douglas A-20 Havoc

Erith, Kent 24th April 1944

US Douglas A-20 Havoc crash, Erith 24th April 1944



The 9th airforce moved to England in 1943 to become a tactical airforce in preparation for the invasion of Europe. The 416th Bombardment Group (Light) was formed on 25th Jan 1943, and activated on 5th Feb 1943 and were given Douglas Havoc A-20's as they prepared to deploy overseas. The group was assigned to AAF-170 Wethersfield RAF station (station 170) in Essex as its base and were assigned to the 9th airforce in Jan-Feb 1944. The group, consisted of the following squadrons; 668th, 669th, 670th & 671st. The group started its missions in March 1944, which were Noball missions. This was the code name for the V1 sites dotted around France that the group started to bomb and would lead up to bombing targets such as airfields and coastal defences in June. They supported the invasion on the 6th June 1944 by bombing marshalling yards, bridges and railway overpasses on the day.



On Monday 24th April 1944 the group were assigned a 'Noball' which was the code name for a V1 launching site (I suspect that the target was to be Bois D Enfer in France, but as the mission was recalled due to bad weather there is no record in the logs for that day).

The group had been very busy throughout the month bombing targets in France which were mainly V1 sites. 2nd Lt Arthur Allen McDonald s/n 0-806285 aged 22 from Wichita was pilot for the day of A-20 Havoc s/n 39941 code letter 2A+U, he had flown it once before this date. 2nd Lt McDonald had been with the squadron 4 Months and had completed 10 missions already as the squadron started to gear up for D-Day. He had joined the airforce and had been commissioned on June 30th 1943, after he received tactical training before leaving

for England to join the squadron. In civilian life he had been tennis champion in the Canadian National Junior league.



Pilot. 2nd Lt Arthur Allen McDonald
© Nigel Staniforth

Another member of the crew that day was S/Sgt. Joseph Shields s/n 13099665 aged 22 from Pennsylvania. He had arrived in England only three months previously and had been on the missions with the squadron from the very start on 3rd March 1944. He had already flown ten times with 2nd Lt McDonald and his other regular crewman S/Sgt Epps. Joseph Shields was the only son of the family and was from Collingdale, Pennsylvania. He entered the Army Airforce on 1st August 1942 and after training around the US, embarked for England on January 1944. He had in civilian life worked for the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company before joining the military.

From letters home to his family you can sense the strain the missions were putting on him, he regularly wrote home and in one of his letters said:

'If you could see the big fires from my turret which are scorching France, you would realise how devastating this war really is'.

In his last letter dated April 23rd he wrote to his family:

'I'm working long, hard days and nights. Often we don't get 'home' until well after 10pm. I am tired now and have to rest as we have a big mission tomorrow. I will write to you again when I get back'.

Sadly that was the last letter he wrote to his family as he was killed the next day (24th April 1944).



Gunner. S/Sgt Joseph Shields
© Nigel Staniforth

The last crew member that day was S/Sgt Leroy Barnard s/n 6391061 aged 25 from Claxton, Georgia, who entered military service on 26th October 1942. He was one of fifteen children born to Jonathan and Laura Barnard. He was married to Ruby Barnard and they had two sons Carroll and Roy, who were very young back in Claxton, Georgia. I wrote years later to 1st Lt Renth who had flown with him. He described Barnard as in his twenties and prematurely grey; had been with the squadron a long time and was a quiet unassuming individual. He had broken his leg when he had run into a stone bridge while going back to base in the blackout. Barnard had decided once his leg had mended that he would fly with other crews on missions as he needed to catch up.



Gunner. S/Sgt Leroy NMI Barnard
© Nigel Staniforth



The mission to bomb the V1 site in France was going to happen in the afternoon. Ground crews at the station were busying themselves preparing the thirty two planes for the mission, with fuel, ammunition and loading the bombs into the bomb bays ready for the scheduled take off. The crews would have been to briefings to get target information and also to get the latest intelligence about anti-aircraft gun sites and German fighters they might expect to encounter on the mission.

The weather was cloudy for the afternoon as the planes set off for their mission at 14:20, thirty two Havoc's formed up at the rallying point and flew in formation across the Essex countryside.

The formation of planes flew through overcast weather and the pilots struggled to maintain formation to avoid colliding with other planes in the formation as they approached Erith at around 3,000ft. 1st Lt Peck was leader of number three flight which 2nd Lt

McDonald was part of and was stationed on the left of the leader. About twenty minutes into the flight the order was given to ascend through the thick outcast; as the pilots did this they realised as the clouds were so thick they were unable to maintain sight of the other planes in their box, so the pilots for safety moved apart to avoid any possible collision.

1st Lt Peck while going through cloud noticed 2nd Lt McDonald above him and called for him to come down and go through the hole in the cloud that he had discovered where he could see the ground. But at 14:47 he saw a big explosion below but did not know what it was until later.

The squadron continued flying through the bad weather whereupon, reaching the coast, the squadrons were recalled to base as the weather was too bad to continue. Once the squadron returned to base they learnt the awful truth; that 2nd Lt McDonald's plane had crashed killing the three man crew.

On the ground eyewitness watched and could hear the bombers approaching through the clouds. Mr Shorter was working on one of the Cory buildings roof close to the crash site and described what he saw:

'My mate and I witnessed it as it came down, we were working on the roof of one of Cory buildings doing repairs. We could hear the planes coming and then this one came crashing down and then the explosion a terrible loss of life'.

Another witness, who was tending his allotment plot at the rear of Turners Asbestos Company South of Manor Road on which the plane crashed, was the closet person to witness what happened. This was PC James Scobell who was a policeman at Erith Police Station. In his witness statement taken a day after the incident he reported the following:

'At about 3pm on 24th April 1944, I was working on my allotment at Manor Road, Erith, when I saw the machine about 150 feet in the air, diving vertically, it seemed to pull out of the dive slightly, and hit the bank about 80 yards from where I was working. It immediately

burst into flames. I ran towards it for the purpose of rendering assistance, but could see no sign of life'.

NB: On a personal note my great grandfather, who lived in Aperfield Road which was right next to the allotments, was sitting on his back step in his garden and witnessed the accident. If the plane had come down a little further over I would not be here today, writing these words!

The authorities recovered the bodies of the three crew men and they were transported to the local mortuary in Erith. Capt Garland Murphy flight surgeon to the squadron travelled to Erith to collect the crew's remains which were taken to the American Cemetery and Memorial in Cambridgeshire, where they were buried.

A group of local school boy's who lived nearby decided to investigate the crash site and found a ring with a stone in it in the wreckage. One of the boys took it home to show his grandmother. Within a short time the authorities knocked at the house to retrieve the ring. I suspect that the ring belonged to 2nd Lt McDonald as it was his class ring from his pilot training course, it is also listed in the personal affects in his file as being returned to his family.



A pilot's class ring similar to what was awarded to 2nd Lt McDonald on completion of his pilot training

Squadron personnel carried out checks on the wreckage and a 1st Lt Renth came to Erith to collect statements from eyewitnesses as

they tried to determine what happen. At the time no reports of collisions had been reported and the general theory was that the plane had hit a barrage balloon cable, but nothing was reported at the time. Checks of the records in 2020 requested by myself to Mr Peter Garwood of Balloon Barrage Reunion Club, who checked the archives he holds, confirmed that there were no collisions reported for that day. I was advised also that aircraft in 1944 had a Swuack



box which would have alerted the pilot of balloons ahead, the formation would have then moved to avoid the balloon formation in the flight path of the bombers.

Barrage Balloons over London

On the 29th April the squadron produced the official aircraft accident report with various statements taken from pilots who flew that day, with 2nd Lt McDonald and engineer statements on the condition of the aircraft and a statement from Pc Scobell.

The official accident report is as follows:

‘The aircraft was last sighted by 1st Lt. Peck, the flight leader, when entering a break in the cloud formation. At this time, 1st Lt Peck had decided that the cloud formation was too thick and turbulent to penetrate in formation and called his wingmen and told them he was descending through the break in clouds. This call was not acknowledged by 2nd Lt. McDonald.

1st Lt Peck later observed an explosion and fire on the ground but was not able to identify the cause of it.

After questioning all available witnesses it was found that their stories varied as to the condition of the airplane and probable cause of the crash. Their stories indicated a mid-air collision and the fact that the aircraft was on fire before crashing. A complete investigation was conducted and neither of these stories were considered plausible. The wreckage did not reveal any indication of fire in flight since the only parts of the airplane showing any evidence of burning were these immediately adjacent to the point of impact and resulting flames.

The fact, that one of the horizontal stabilisers and part of rudder were found one hundred (100) yards to the rear of the crash site and twenty-five (25) yards to the left of the line of flight, indicates that the tail surface failed while the pilot was endeavouring to recover from some unusual condition, probably a spiral or spin. This fact is also confirmed in the statement of Mr. James Scoball who was closest to the scene of the crash and was the first one there.

Responsibility : The true cause of accident cannot be determined for lack of sufficient facts.'

The statements from 1st Lt Peck the formation leader and 2nd Lt Shainberg are as follows:

Statement

To whom it may concern:

'A formation took off on an operational mission about 14:30, 24 April 1944. I was leading number three flight of the second box. 2nd Lt Arthur A McDonald was on my left wing.

At about 14:45 the signal was given to ascend through thick overcast.

My element of three ships started up but as the clouds were so thick it was impossible to keep each other in sight.

My right wingman left me just after we started up. 2nd Lt McDonald left my left wing just before I broke through hole which I could see the ground.

I saw 2nd Lt McDonald right above me and called to him to come down through the hole. At 14:47 I saw a big explosion but didn't know what it was.

The mission was recalled and I returned to the base and reported the explosion I had seen. It turned out to be 2nd Lt McDonald.'

William A. Peck.
1st Lt. Air Corps.

Statement

'A formation took off from Station 170, 24th April 1944, about 14:00. I was flying the right wing of 1st Lt William A Peck and 2nd Lt Arthur A McDonald was flying the left wing. About twenty (20) minutes after take-off we were given the signal to ascend through an overcast.

Our three (3) ships started through the overcast that turned out to be a formation of dark Cumulus clouds. Upon entering we lost sight of each other and when I saw a hole to the ground I peeled off and left for fear of endangering the other planes. I did not hear 1st Lt Peck's radio call probably due to the fact that about this time I was on the inter phone while trying to inform my gunners of the situation.

I then returned home and learned that 2nd Lt McDonald had crashed and that the mission was recalled due to the weather.'

Norman V Shainberg
2nd Lt. Air Corps.

The official cause could not be determined and it was listed as cause unknown.

Sadly after the event, the families in the US were informed by telegram by the US government of the news that their loved one had been killed in action. Unfortunately the telegram for 2nd Lt McDonald was lost/misplaced, so the family did not know that Allen had been killed until two weeks after the event.

A strange occurrence happened sixty years to the day of the death of her husband S/Sgt Barnard. His widow, Ruby Barnard, who never remarried died on the anniversary of her husband's death so is now reunited with him.

After the war, the McDonald and Barnard families requested that their loved ones be returned to the US to be reburied in cemeteries near to where they lived. 2nd Lt McDonald is buried at Old Mission cemetery, Wichita County, Kansas; S/Sgt Barnard is buried at

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church cemetery, Claxton, Evans County, Georgia; S/Sgt Shields is the only remaining crew to be still buried in the UK, today he rests in the American National Military Cemetery, Cambridgeshire, UK. Plot E, Row 3 Grave 63.

From my research into the various possible causes which could have caused the crash, I have come to one conclusion. Due to the overcast the formation was flying through, it is quite possible that 2nd Lt McDonald may not have trusted his instruments, became disorientated and performed corrections in his flight which he thought were needed, which stressed the plane which caused the plane to crash.

As this could not be proved at the time from the wreckage and witness statements, this will remain just a theory.

I leave it up to the reader to decide for themselves what they think happened that day. I have included all the relevant documents for their consideration.

Biography

2nd Lt Arthur Allen McDonald

Pilot

S/n 0-806285

416th Bomb Group, 669th Bomb Squadron, 9th Airforce



Born on 9th November 1921 in Dallas Texas to Silas and Catherine McDonald who had four children, 'Allen' as he was called within the family was the 2nd eldest.

He graduated Wichita High School in 1939, and was a tennis champion in the Canadian Junior National league.

With war raging in Europe and the US, certain to be drawn into the war, Allen enlisted in the Army Airforce to train as a pilot. After training he was commissioned in 1943 in Columbus Georgia.

After a short while Allen was sent overseas to England where he was placed in the 416th BG, 669th BS 9th airforce stationed at AAF-170 RAF Wethersfield, Essex, flying Douglas A-20 Havoc's.

Allen was with the squadron only four months but completed 10 missions to bomb targets in France which were mainly V1 sites.

On the 24th April 1944, whilst flying A20 Havoc s/n 43-9941 the plane crashed South of Manor Road, Erith, Kent killing Allen and the two other crew S/Sgt Joseph Shields and S/Sgt Leroy Barnard.

The crew were buried at the American Cemetery and Memorial in Cambridgeshire. Sadly due to a mishap the telegram to his parents went missing and it was not until two weeks after the accident that his family were informed of his death.

After the war in 1948 the family requested that Allen's remains be returned to the United States to be reburied near to the family.

Today Allen is buried at the Old Mission Cemetery, Wichita County, Kansas.



Staff Sargent Joseph John Shields
Gunner
S/n 13099665
416th Bomb Group, 669th Bomb Squadron, 9th Airforce



Born 6th April 1922 in Philadelphia County Pennsylvania to John and Bertha Shields, the couple had another son who died at an early age so Joseph was now their only child.

After attending Collingdale public school he worked for the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company before enlisting.

He entered the Army Air Force on 1st Aug 1942 and received his training in St. Petersburg, Fla, Salt Lake City, Utah, Denver, Colo and Laurel, Miss, before he embarked for England in January 1944.

He was assigned to the 416th BG, 9th Airforce at AAF-170 RAF Wethersfield, Essex, flying Douglas A-20 Havoc's.

Joseph started the very first mission that the squadron undertook on 3rd March 1944 and had 2nd Lt McDonald as his pilot ten times on the various bombing missions that they did, which were mainly V1 sites in France.

On the 24th April 1944 he was killed in a crash while en route to a target. The plane crashed, South of Manor Road, Erith, Kent. The squadron were to bomb a target in France but due to bad weather the mission was recalled at the English coast. The crew were killed with him were 2nd Lt Arthur McDonald and S/Sgt Leroy Barnard.

All the crew were first buried at the American Cemetery and Memorial in Cambridgeshire, however after the war, families of the other two crew members requested they be returned to the US for burial. He remained at the cemetery as no request was made for his remains to return to the US.

He now rests at the American National Military Cemetery,
Cambridgeshire, UK. Plot E, Row 3 Grave 63

Awards: Air Medal / Oak Leaf Cluster



S/Sgt Leroy NMI Barnard
Gunner
S/n 6391061
416th Bomb Group, 669th Bomb Squadron, 9th Airforce



Born on 18th May 1918 to Jonathan and Laura Barnard, Leroy was one of fifteen children born to the couple.

He married Ruby Griffin in 1938 and they had two sons (Carroll and Roy).

In 1942 he joined the Air Army Airforce where, after training, he was deployed to England as a Staff Sergeant.

Arriving in England he was assigned to the 416th BG, 669th BS, 9th Airforce as a gunner. He flew some missions with 1st Lt Renth until he broke his leg in the blackout and was taken off missions until the leg healed. Once he was declared fit he decided that he needed to catch up on his missions so volunteered to fly with other crews.

On the 24th April 1944, he was selected to fly with 2nd Lt McDonald on Douglas A-20 Havoc s/n 43-9941 and while en route to France to bomb a V1 site the plane crashed South of Manor Road, Erith, Kent and the crew of 2nd Lt McDonald and S/Sgt J Shields were killed with him.

Leroy was initially buried at the American Cemetery and Memorial in Cambridgeshire, but in 1948 the family requested that his remains were returned to the United States to be buried close to the family.

Leroy now rests in the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery, Claxton, Evans County, Georgia.

Further tragedy was to affect the family as his youngest son Roy died aged 13 in 1955. Mrs Ruby Barnard never remarried and she died on the 24th April 2008, on the same day exactly sixty years after her husband was killed.





Douglas A-20G Havoc 669th Bomb Squadron, 416th Bomb Group

The above picture represents the plane flown by 1st Lt A McDonald on the 24th April 1944. The white tail rudder denotes the 669th BS and the letter U was assigned to this aircraft for identification purposes when in formation.

The bomber was a light bomber which came into service from the Douglas aircraft corporation in 1941, it was powered by two Wright R-2600-A5B "Twin Cyclone" radial engines, giving 1,600hp which gave it a top speed of 340mph. It had a crew of three (pilot and two gunners). The operational range was 1087miles. Bomb load was 2000lbs when fully loaded. Armament was nine 12.7 Browning MG's to give the aircraft protection.

The plane was sold to various countries during WW2 including Britain where it was called the Boston. Production of the aircraft continued until 1944; by then 7,478 had been produced.

The 416th BG started phasing out this bomber shortly after the accident, and they were issued Douglas A26 Invader light bombers before D-day.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER T 362	1. NAME (Print) Arthur Allen M^cDonald (First) (Middle) (Last)	ORDER NUMBER T 12006 (State)
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 907 Shadyway Wichita Sedgwick Kansas (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)		
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]		
3. MAILING ADDRESS Same (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)		
4. TELEPHONE 2-8969 (Exchange) (Number)	5. AGE IN YEARS 20 DATE OF BIRTH Mr 9 1921 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Waller Texas (Town or county) (State or country)
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS A. A. M^cDonald 907 Shadyway Wichita, Kansas		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Beach Air Craft, Corp.		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS East Central Ave Wichita Sedgwick, Kansas (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. Arthur M^cDonald (Registrant's signature)		

D. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42) (over) ☆ GPO 16-21630-2

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT

RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION	
White	5'8 1/4"	150	Sallow	
	EYES	HAIR	Light	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Buddy	
	Gray	Red	Dark	
Oriental	Hazel	Brown	Freckled	
	Brown	Black	Light brown	
Indian	Black	Gray	Dark brown	
	Green	Bald	Black	
Filipino				

Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification.....

I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

Mrs. Clarence F. Drake
(Signature of registrar)

Registrar for Local Board **2** **Wichita Kansas**
(Number) (City or county) (State)

Date of registration **Feb. 16, 1942**

Local Board No. 2 73
Sedgwick County 173
102

(STAMP OF LOCAL BOARD)

(The stamp of the Local Board having jurisdiction of the registrant shall be placed in the above space)

16-21630-1

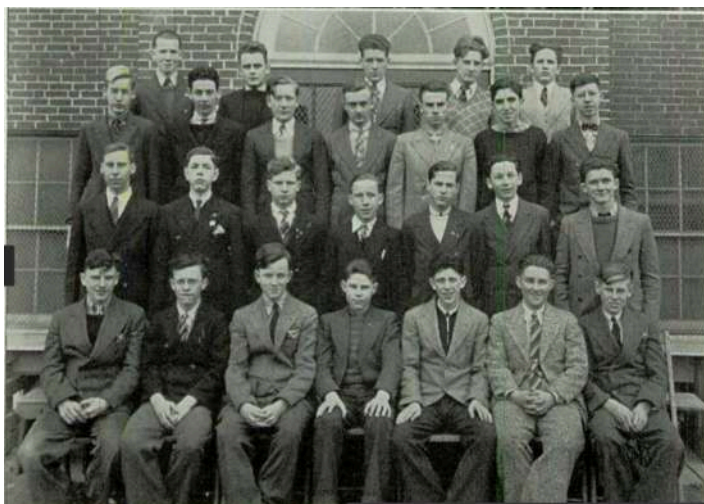
2nd Lt McDonald draft registration card

WIN SILVER WINGS

	
M'DONALD	MORTON
	
RITTER	MERCHANT
	
DYER	NICHOLSON

Six Kansans will be graduated Wednesday from the advanced twin-engine army flying school at Columbus Army Air Field in Columbus, Mississippi, and will receive the silver wings of flying officers and commissions as second lieutenants. They are Arthur Allen McDonald, son of Mr. and Mrs. Silas Samuel McDonald, 904 Shady Way; Robert Warren Morton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Morris Morton, 4347 East Douglas; Raymond Alfred Ritter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence R. Ritter, 121 South Athenian; William A. Merchant, son of Mrs. Mary Merchant, 4913 East Lewis; Dale Hamlin Dyer, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Hamlin Dyer of Clearwater; and Malcolm Nicholson, son of Mrs. John C. Nicholson of Newton.

Local newspaper reporting that 2nd Lt McDonald had completed his pilot his training



10-C HOMEROOM

Fourth Row: J. Peed, J. Reeves, R. Tully, R. Reichenbach, D. Weaver.
Third Row: J. Straub, J. Shields, D. Smyth, J. Wright, J. Schaffer, R. Urson, E. Uhrmann. *Second Row:* Myers, R. Rich, J. Thompson, J. McCuaide, J. Saxton, A. Seibert, T. Young. *First Row:* E. Kane, J. Powers, F. McHale, R. Whitaker, J. Sharr, C. Melven, W. Miller.



S/Sgt Shields High school pictures

group from which the crew came if condolence could be sent to the relatives and he was informed that his letter would be transmitted to the Adjutant-General in Washington.

Miss Winfried Either, Miss Kathleen Shreeve and Miss Joan Sweeper had told the mayor how the airmen manoeuvred the plane to prevent civilian casualties adding: "This presence of mind will long be remembered by those living near the accident". In a further letter to the commanding officer of the group they wrote "The sentiments we feel are from the people of the Borough of Erith and not only from those who reside near the occurrence".

Mrs Wheeler of Slade Green said after the crash "The pilot was a brave man. He must have realised he was about to hit a school or houses and deliberately made for open country".

We received from Mrs Daisy R Precott of 253 Riverdale Road Erith a letter in which she states *'Our hearts have been touched by the heroic action of the three US airmen who gave their lives piloting their plane to clear this town. How proud their relatives must be of these brave men. Would it not be possible to choose three mothers of Erith to write a letter and for them to be sent to Mrs Roosevelt to be forwarded to their wives and mothers. I feel that every mother in Erith would like to express their deep gratitude and appreciation. I myself as a widow of a soldier and mother of three serving sons would like to say to those sad mothers in the USA. Our hearts go out to you in your grief, your gallant sons died that we the people of Erith might live. We thank God and you and the memory of their splendid deed will live forever'*.

Native of Dallas Killed Over Europe

Lt. Arthur Allen McDonald, 22, pilot of an A-20 bomber, Ninth Army Air Corp, was killed in action



McDONALD. grandson of Arthur M. Allen, 3917 Simpson.

Lieutenant McDonald was graduated in 1939 from the Wichita High School with high honors and won a scholarship to Kenyon College, Ohio. After attending Kenyon two years he entered the service in May, 1942, received training in five airfields and was commissioned on June 30, 1943, at Columbus, Miss. After receiving tactical training he left for England, where he was stationed four months before his death.

He was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and held the title of tennis champion in the Canadian National Junior League.

Besides his parents, Lieutenant McDonald is survived by a brother, Capt. Silas S. McDonald Jr. and two sisters, all of Wichita.

2nd Lt McDonald's death reported in the local newspaper at the time

Staff Sgt. Joseph J. Shields, 22, Army Air Force, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Shields, of 604 Beechwood avenue, Collingdale, was killed in action April 24, 1944 over France.



He is buried in England. Shields is the nephew of Joseph M. Hufnal, of 1030 Girard avenue, Swarthmore, a World War I veteran and veterans' service officer.

Pvt. James Dugan, Jr., of Aston Mills, is reported missing in

action since Feb. 12, in Germany, the War Department has informed his wife, Mrs. Elsie Dugan, who now resides with her parents in Upland.

Attached to a Chemical Warfare

Collingdale Boy Wins Awards Posthumously

Staff Sgt. Joseph J. Shields, of 604 Beechwood avenue, Collingdale, has been awarded the Army Air Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Purple Heart posthumously, by the War Department.

The award was made to his mother, Mrs. John Shields, in Philadelphia, by order of Brigadier General Dunlop, with appropriate ceremonies.

Sergeant Shields, a turret gunner on an A-20 Havoc plane, was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. John Shields, and was a graduate of Collingdale High School. Mr. Shields is secretary of the Collingdale Board of Health. Sergeant Shields was employed at the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company before enlisting in the air force.

After attending many air force schools, he was promoted to staff sergeant and was detailed to the Army Air Base in Denver, Colo. He requested training in gunnery school and after graduating as an aerial gunner was assigned to combat duty with a unit in the European theatre, flying out of a base in England.

Sergeant Shields was killed in action with the enemy over France, April 23, 1944. He was 22 years old. His mother received a letter from the base chaplain in England, telling her that Sergeant Shields was dead in his plane when it grounded in England, after the battle action, and that he had received a military burial.

The citation accompanying the awarding of the Air Medal, reads in part, "In recognition of meritorious achievement while participating in aerial combat flight and personally distinguishing himself against the enemy and also having the required number of operational sorties against the enemy."

S/Sgt Joseph Shields death reported in his local newspaper

11 Georgians Killed in Action

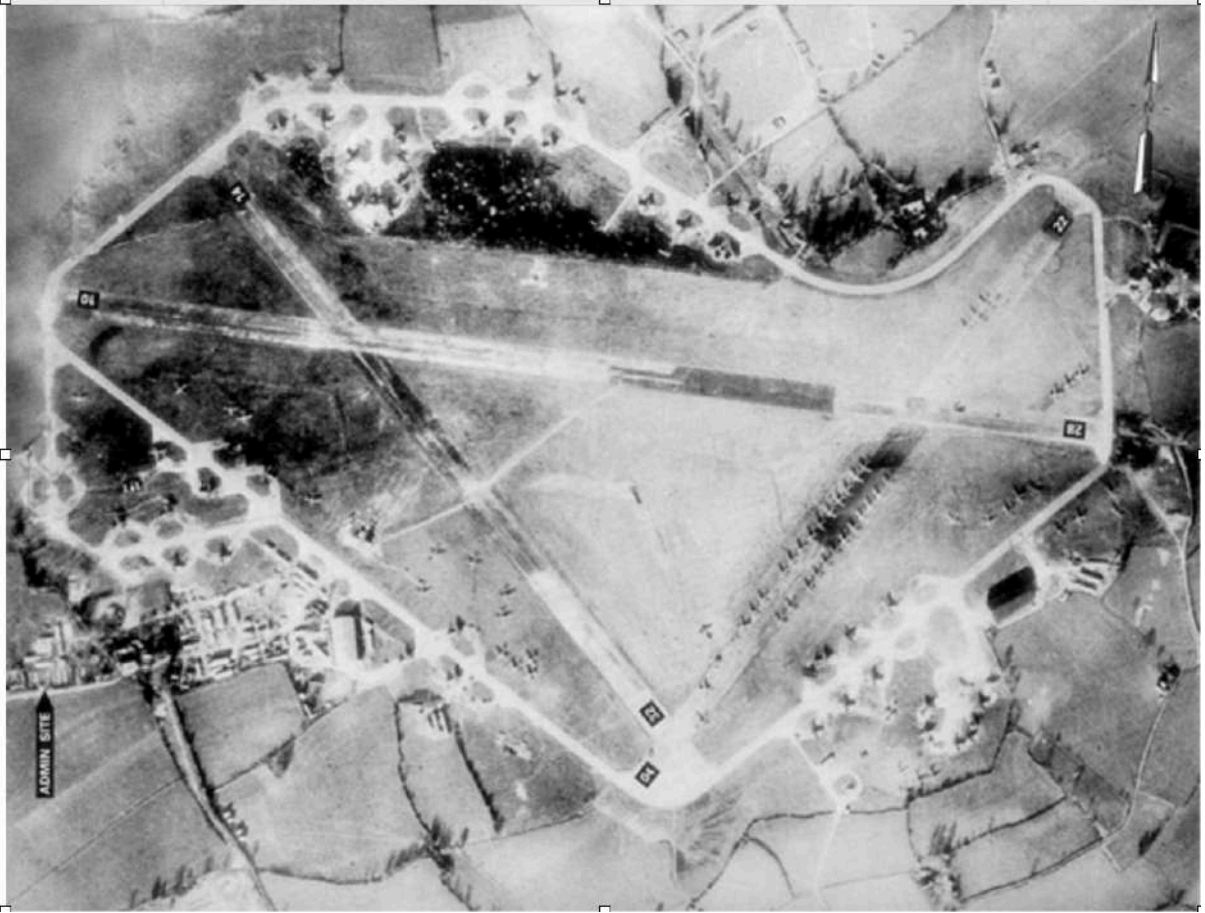
WASHINGTON, June 2. [UP]—
The War Department made public
today the names of 591 United
States soldiers killed in action.

Included were the following
from Georgia:

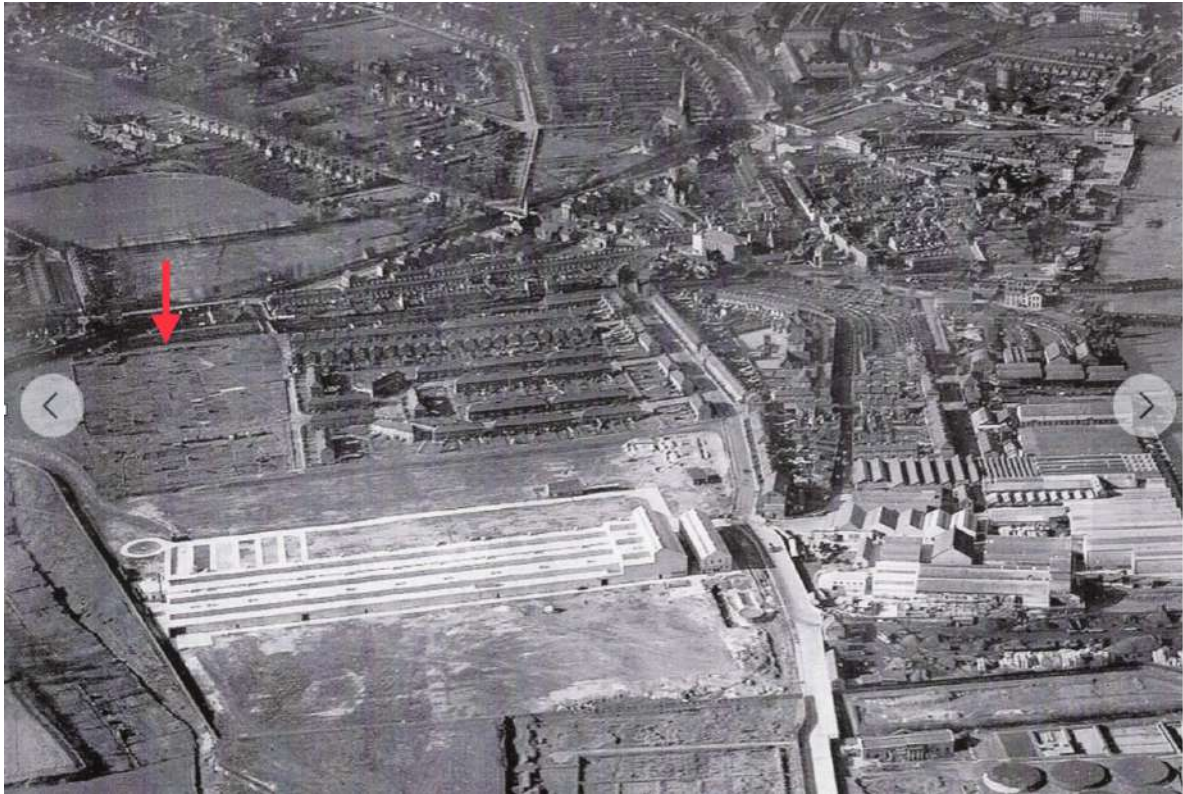
EUROPEAN AREA

Barnard, S-Sgt. Leroy—wife,
Mrs. Ruby L. Barnard, Savannah.
Hammontree, Sgt. James A.
—mother, Mrs. Katheryn Y. Ham-
montree, Chatsworth.

S/Sgt Barnard's death reported in the local newspaper



Station 170 RAF Weathersfield during the war



© Local Studies and Bexley Archive Centre

The plane crashed onto allotments between the housing estate and Turners Asbestos factory (which is arrowed) which was to the far left Manor Road

Epilogue

After 30yrs of researching, which became a labour of love, where I thought at times that I would never finish, it is finally completed. I would have loved to have spent more time on the research, but with the passage of time eyewitnesses and family have sadly passed away so that important information which would have aided me has been lost. With Kathrin's help time has been saved as she knows the German records and could investigate faster than myself.

If any new information comes to light on the 'boys' this will be added to the research as and when appears.

Now that the research is completed I am wondering whether I will be twiddling my thumbs, as this research has taken up a large part of my life.

But fear not dear reader, I have come up with a story of another incident in my area, which very little is known about which I will research and write about on next.

If you have any information on any of the four incidents I have researched I would very much like to hear from you.

You can email me on the following email address:

nstaniforth860@gmail.com

