

# DENIS LLOYD

February 28, 1915 – June 19, 2006

ROYAL AIR FORCE (RAF) No. 947277

PRISONER OF WAR (POW) No. 23610

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The following is intended to be a general chronology of Grandpa's WWII service in the RAF, as deduced from his Wartime Log diary and other research including WWII forums, public records, established overseas contacts, and general internet research. To the best of my ability, I have attempted to keep this in chronological order. Grandpa's diary is a wealth of information, but some things cannot easily be referenced by our family due to its age and because there is only one copy.

## SECTION 1: TRAINING:

### ***A) May 1940: Cardington, England – Initial Training***

RAF Cardington is a former RAF station in Bedfordshire, England. In the late 1930s and 1940s, RAF Cardington was an induction center and holding station for new recruits. There were two main squadrons at Cardington; No. 1 Balloon Training Unit and No. 2 Recruitment Centre. Grandpa would have trained here for one month as a new recruit.

### ***B) June – September 1940: Prestwick, Scotland – Wireless School***

Prestwick is a town in South Ayrshire on the southwest coast of Scotland, about 30 miles southwest of Glasgow. Prior to the war, it was an existing civil airfield. Due to the war, the RAF took over the airfield for training purposes. Grandpa would have trained here for no more than four months.



*Grandpa at Cardington, May 1940*



*Grandpa at Prestwick, August 1940  
(bottom row 2nd from left),*

**C) September – November 1940:  
Cranwell – Wireless School**

RAF Cranwell is a Royal Air Force station in Lincolnshire, England and is presently home to the Royal Air Force College which trains the RAF's new officers. Grandpa would have trained here for no more than two months.

**D) November 1940 – January 1941:  
Dumfries – Air Gunnery School**

RAF Dumfries was a former RAF station located near Tinwald, Scotland. The airfield opened in 1940 and was sold in 1960 to a private firm. Beginning in approximately July 1940, the school trained bombers and gunners before they passed on to operational training units. Grandpa would have trained here for no more than three months.



*Grandpa at Dumfries Gunnery School, December 1940*

*Left to Right: Ernie Halestrap (KIA), Grandpa, Jack Foster (KIA), Joe Cassidy  
(status unknown), Harry Gibbons (status unknown)*

**E) January – February 1941: Leuchars – Coastal Command**

RAF Leuchars is the second most northerly air defense station in the United Kingdom. It is located in Leuchars, Fife, on the east coast of Scotland, near the town of St. Andrews. On the second day of the war, a Hudson aircraft of RAF 224 Squadron attacked a Dornier 18 aircraft over the North Sea which became the first British aircraft to engage the enemy in World War II. Leuchars remained an active station to the end of the War, concentrating on anti-submarine and anti-shipping strikes. Grandpa would have trained here for no more than two months.

### **F) February – April 1941: Lossiemouth – Bomber Command**

RAF Lossiemouth is located to the west of the town of Lossiemouth in Moray, Scotland. RAF Lossiemouth was built in 1938-1939 and although mainly a training unit for bomber crews during the war, some operational raids originated there, the most important being 617 "The Dambusters" Squadron's successful attack on the Tirpitz on November 12, 1944. Grandpa would have trained here for no more than three months.

### **G) May – August 1941: Oakington, 7th Squadron Bomber Command**

Oakington is/was the "spiritual home" of RAF 7th Squadron that Grandpa joined. Construction of Oakington began during the summer of 1939 and was located near Cambridge, and its operational use started in July 1940. The grass surface there was a cause of problems for the heavy Stirling bombers during the winter of 1940-1941 resulting in a number of landing and take-off accidents because of the strain on the undercarriages of the aircrafts. 7th Squadron was the first squadron to be equipped with the new Stirling heavy bomber and the first RAF squadron to operate four engined bombers during WWII. 7th Squadron was scheduled to join air attacks over Japan but the war ended before the squadron was due to move. Grandpa took from Oakington for each of his 11 missions, the details of which are forthcoming. Grandpa would have trained here for no more than four months before his missions began.



*All as left to right: Back Row: Sgt's: Hay, Rogers, Neill, Nicholson, Ainge, Tooms, Speakman, Graham D.F.M. Wheatley, Dale, Clarke, Hardie, Lomas-Smith, Woods, Peters.*

*2nd Row: Sgt's: Wynne, Smith, Merrels, Armstrong, Glenwright, Kenny, Clifton, Aston, Donelen, Fl/Sgt. Yardley, Nicholls, Graham, Bridges, Williams.*

*3rd Row: Sgt's: Kirkland, Davenport, Wallace, Rossiter, Cooke, Wallace, Bailie, Burrows, Chamberd, Austin, Sauge, Cole, Wood, Chapple, Taylor K.I.A.*

*4th Row: Fl/Sgt. Walker K.I.A., Sgt's: Martin, Sgt. Edwards, Sgt. Whitwell, P/O. Balie, P/O. Brander, P/O. Blunden, F/O. Kinkane K.I.A., P/O. Levien, P/O. Worley, F/O. Hogg, P/O. Bolton K.I.A., Fl/Sgt. Watson, Fl/Sgt. Prentice.*

*Seated chairs: Fl/Sgt. Beasley, Fl/Lt. Mitchell, F/O. Harwright D.F.M., F/O. Sach D.F.C., P/O. Deyell D.F.M., F/O. Witt D.F.M., Fl/Lt. Collins, Sq/Ldr. Lynchblosse D.F.C., W/Comdr. Graham, Sq/Ldr. Speare, Fl/Lt. Bristoww, Fl/Lt. Blacklock D.F.M. D.F.C., F/O. Oliver, Fl/Lt. Stock D.F.C., F/O. Austin, Fl/Lt. Saunders, Fl/Lt. Compton D.F.C., Fl/Sgt. Hignett*

*Seated floor: Sgt's: Webb, Price, Clarke, Williams, Ryder, 'Beauty'.*

In regard to the previously referenced training, Grandpa was certified on November 21, 1940 as a Gunner and on January 23, 1941 as a Radio Operator.

## SECTION 2: THE SHORT STIRLING:

The Stirling was the first of the four-engined bombers to join the RAF and unfortunately suffered from several design limitations which affected its performance and load-carrying capability. This resulted in heavy losses and casualties in comparison to the higher flying Halifax and Lancaster bombers. Air Ministry specifications which were provided to 11 different manufacturers at the start of the war, called for a four-engined heavy bomber capable of carrying a bomb-load of 14,000 lbs. with a range of 3,000 miles. This was seen as a remarkably demanding request. It was also requested that the wingspan should not exceed 100 feet to enable the aircraft to fit inside current RAF hangars. As a consequence, certain aspects of the Stirling's performance suffered, including the operating altitude of the aircraft with a full load, as the wings could not generate the lift required to operate a higher altitudes. Within five months of being introduced, 67 out of the 84 aircraft delivered had been lost to enemy action or were written off after crashes. The Stirlings were gradually phased out and moved to less dangerous duties such as minelaying. It is estimated that a total of 582 Stirlings were shot down during WW II air campaigns and that another 119 were written off for other reasons.



## SECTION 3: GRANDPA'S MISSIONS:

Grandpa participated in 11 separate bombing missions before he was shot down on August 25, 1941 on a bombing mission to Karlsruhe, one of the oldest cities in Germany. Grandpa was shot down in the vicinity of Aach, near Trier, near the Moselle River and not far from the French border. As illustrated in detail later, Grandpa and Mom visited there in 1964.

Below are the individual missions, referenced by date, aircraft identifiers, target locations, and times that Grandpa participated in, as well as mission objective information I have obtained from general internet research as well as official records I obtained from the National Archives in Kew, England. Much of the information is still classified.

DATE	AIRCRAFT SERIAL/IDENTIFIER	TARGET	TIME
07/07/1941	N6034/MG-?	Albert	3:05 (daytime)
07/11/1941	N6035/MG-A	Le Trait	3:00 (daytime)
07/14/1941*	W7434/MG-E	Hanover	5:25 (nighttime)
07/15/1941		Honington	
07/20/1941	W7434/MG-E	Cologne	5:23 (nighttime)
07/25/1941	W7434/MG-E	Berlin	7:20 (nighttime)
07/30/1941	W7434/MG-E	Cologne	3:55 (nighttime)

08/02/1941	W7434/MG-E	Berlin	7:00 (nighttime)
08/05/1941	W7434/MG-E	Karlsruhe	6:10 (nighttime)
08/07/1941**	W7434/MG-E	Essen	4:25 (nighttime)
08/19/1941	N6020/MG-B	Kiel	6:55 (nighttime)
08/25/1941	N6020/MG-B	Karlsruhe	4.00 (nighttime)

\* In Grandpa's notes located within his RAF Observer's and Air Gunner's Flying Log Book, he referenced the landing of this flight on 07/15/1941 as a separate operation, as the bomber landed in Honington due to damage.

\*\* Additionally, Grandpa also claimed to have flown in the mission on 08/07/1941 to target Essen. This mission however, is not referenced in the National Archives records I obtained for 7 Squadron missions for August 1941. More research is pending.

### A) 07/07/1941: ALBERT, FRANCE - MISSION #1:

Four aircraft left to attack an AIRCRAFT FACTORY at Meaulte, near Albert, France. These aircraft were piloted by F/O. R.D. Morley (Squadron/Leader), R.D. Speare, P/O. K.O. Blunden (\* Grandpa's plane), and F/Sgt. A. YARDLEY. 2 sticks [...] the target and two more were slightly off but on buildings to the West.

Later aircraft were unable to see the target as it was obscured by smoke and dust but incendiaries were seen burning. Slight flak was experienced from a convoy over which our aircraft passed on their return. A large fighter escort from 11 Group accompanied our aircraft. Air Vice Marshall T. Leigh-Mallory C.B. (Companion of the Order of Bath) D.S.O. (Distinguished Service Order) A.O.C. (Air Officer Commanding) signaled after the events – "My heartiest congratulations on the magnificent results of your bombing at Albert today." To which W/Cdr. H.R. Graham replied : - "Many thanks. Operation only successful because of excellent escort." This complimentary message was particularly appreciated as it is the first the squadron has received. (Air 27-98 Public Record Office, Kew). **Grandpa served as the Wireless Operator on this flight.**

Below is an excerpt from Grandpa's memoirs about Missions #1 and #2. Of particular note is that due to the argument during Mission #2, Engineer Sgt. Fowler asked to removed from the crew all together and survived the war himself as a POW. The replacement, George Nicolson (see later sections) died during Grandpa's crash on August 25, 1941 with the rest of the crew. Amazing luck for Sgt. Fowler obviously.

**SOURCE:** Ian Davenport and the National Archives,  
<http://www.picardie-1939-1945.org/la-somme/l-armee-anglaise/la-royale-air-force/article/le-bombardement-de-l-usine-potez>

### B) July 11, 1941, LE TRAIT, FRANCE – MISSION #2:

Le Trait was of strategic importance because it housed manufacturing facilities for submarines and U-Boats. Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa's specific flight: "5 X 1000 10 X 500. 8 X 500 brought back. Bombs failed to explode." **Grandpa served as the Wireless Operator on this flight.**

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**"Enemy Coast Ahead" (with apologies to Guy Gibson)  
My first operational sorties**

In 1941 one way of striking back at the enemy was by daylight "sweeps" over occupied Europe. In July this was carried out by sending flights of three Stirlings over Belgium and France with fighter escort. With the crew I had just joined, we set out for Albert on the Somme, with Hurricanes alongside us and Spitfires higher up. I should have been scared as obviously we were sitting ducks, but I felt quite thrilled. We saw no enemy fighters and I watched the bombs drop, viewing from the rear hatch. Unfortunately we missed the target, an aircraft factory. It was a great feeling to get safely back and to shoot up the airfield before landing.

A second similar mission two days later was not so straightforward. The aircraft we had used previously had been shot down on a similar mission the day before, and we were given a brand new aircraft, without being given the chance to air test it first. On taking off we found that the guns would not operate when we tried to test-fire them. We informed "Winco" on the R.T. and he told us to carry on and rectify the problem in the air. The engineer, "Tiny" Fowler, offered to go and investigate, but the pilot would not give him permission. Our target this time was a submarine base at Le Trait, Northern France and I could see U boats on the stocks. Again we missed the target. However, we had the distinction of flying over enemy territory unarmed and fortunately again our fighter chaps kept the German fighters away from us. On landing back at base, the ground flight sergeant in charge of maintenance turned the hydraulic stop cock on! The engineer had a blazing row with the skipper and asked to be removed from the crew. He survived as a P.O.W. in Germany on another crew, but his replacement Sgt Nicholson was killed

There but for the Grace of God....

**SOURCE:** National Archives and Grandpa's memoirs.

"Bad weather over the continent interfered with the raids and made observation difficult, a communique said, but large fires were reported started at several points in Western Germany. The British acknowledged that two of their planes failed to return."

**SOURCE:** Denton Record Chronicle, July 11, 1941

### C) JULY 14, 1941, HANOVER, GERMANY – MISSION #3:

Hanover was of strategic importance due to its rubber factories and due to being an "industrial area". Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa's specific flight: "5 X 1000 7 X 500 420 X 4 Incendiaries. Bombs seen to burst just North of aiming point starting more fires.

Visibility good. Landed at Honington on return and damaged tail wheel doors.” **Grandpa served as the Wireless Operator on this flight.**

**SOURCE:** National Archives

“British bombers were reported today to have pounded industrial areas at Bremen and Hanover and docks at Roomerdam last night. An air ministry communique said thousands of incendiaries and many tons of explosives were loosed on the Bremen and Hanover....Five bombers were listed as missing....”

**SOURCE:** The Washington Bee newspaper, July 15, 1941

#### D) JULY 20, 1941, COLOGNE, GERMANY – MISSION #4:

Cologne was of strategic importance due to its railway targets. Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa’s specific flight: “Same. Own bombs seen to undershoot fire aimed at but 10 fires were seen on leaving. Our with green flames which flared up at intervals. F/O. Pulton of 1419 Flight Newmarket acted as Rear Gunner.” **Grandpa served as Wireless Operator on this flight.**

#### E) JULY 25, 1941, BERLIN, GERMANY – MISSION #5:

Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa’s specific flight: “BERLIN 5 X 1000 and 6 X 500 G.P. No cloud over target but very thick base. Heavy Flak accurate. Bursts not seen. W/T went dead on way out, made S again but went U/S on way back. Landed MAHSTON.” **Grandpa served as Wireless Operator on this flight.**

Right is an excerpt from Grandpa’s autobiography, “More Best Years of My Life” about this particular flight. The rear gunner who suffered the concussion would have been Edgar Frederick Drew.

#### Target for tonight: Berlin

I believe that on mass raids later in the war a loss rate of 7% was sustainable, but not 33% which happened to us twice.

Each time three of our aircraft set out for Berlin, one turned back, one was shot down and we reached the target, getting back home in one piece. It was a seven hour trip to the Big City and to be on one’s own over Berlin was not to be recommended. It was an eerie experience when searchlights latched on to you, and the anti-aircraft guns opened up the moment our bombs left the aircraft. We lost what height we had (not much in a Stirling) in a screaming dive which was exceedingly painful to the ears, but needless to say we got back all right.

The second visit was similar in that we were again the lucky one out of three, but this was the mission on which we got hopelessly lost as the radio packed up. We certainly received a rude welcome over several German Cities, and I remember kissing the ground when we force-landed at Manston.

I think the Pope got the idea from me

Footnote: As Manston was a Fighter Command station, their R/T (radio telephone communication) was on a different wavelength so we could not communicate with them, but could only fly helplessly round their airfield. They evidently recognised us as a friendly, (owing to the commotion my identification radar was not switched on) gave us the green to land and switched on the flare path lights. We landed heavily and the rear gunner was concussed – he should always get out of the turret when touching down. We were taken care of overnight and set off at daylight for Oakington. I saw the fields pitted with bomb craters, a legacy of the Battle of Brittain, and Margate pier had a large gap in it, an anti-invasion device. (Shades of Dad’s Army)

#### F) JULY 30, 1941, COLOGNE, GERMANY – MISSION #6:

Cologne was of strategic importance due to its railway targets. Notes from the National Archives for bomber W7436 (not Grandpa's): "Same load. This aircraft and W.7434 saw their bombs burst One caused a huge red explosion and four or more good fires were started which were visible for ten minutes. Notes for bomber W7434 (Grandpa's): Same load. Electrical failure in wing bomb doors which were opened and shut by hand. **Grandpa served as Wireless Operator on this flight.**

#### G) AUGUST 2, 1941, BERLIN, GERMANY – MISSION #7:

Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa's specific flight: "Same load. 15,800 feet. One huge flash seen, thought to have been 4000 lb. bomb. Heavy flak, intense and accurate. Our bombs not observed owing to avoiding action being taken. **Grandpa served as Wireless Operator on this flight.**

#### H) AUGUST 5, 1941, KARLSRUHE, GERMANY – MISSION #8:

Karlsruhe was of strategic importance due to its railway targets. Notes from from the National Archives for Grandpa's specific flight: "do. 5 X 1000. 4 X 500. 8 X 250. S.B.C." **Grandpa served as Wireless Operator on this flight.**

#### I) AUGUST 7, 1941, ESSEN, GERMANY – MISSION #9

Krupps Factory NOTHING IN RECORDS FROM NATIONAL ARCHIVES

#### J) AUGUST 19, 1941, KIEL, GERMANY – MISSION #10:

Kiel was of strategic importance due to its railway targets. Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa's specific flight: "D.N.C.O. do." **Grandpa served as Wireless Operator on this flight.**

#### K) AUGUST 25, 1941, KARLSRUHE, GERMANY – MISSION #11:

Karlsruhe was of strategic importance due to its railway targets. Notes from the National Archives for Grandpa's specific flight: "**Missing – nothing heard from them.**"

#### **AUGUST 25, 1941 – GRANDPA'S LAST MISSION:**

In regard to the last mission in which Grandpa was shot down, I have not yet found much detailed information regarding the strategic/operational importance of Karlsruhe as a target, other than it was considered an "industrial city" and that it has railway targets. A review of Grandpa's diary clearly illustrates that Stirling N6020/MG-8 was an older plane and considered a "dud", and that the writing was on the wall regarding the chances of a successful mission before they even took off due to a variety of perceived issues, including electrical problems. This resulted in a significantly delayed test flight and the crew taking off later than the other bombers during the actual mission. Records I obtained from the National Archives indicate that several planes had to abandon their objectives on that occasion due to the severe electrical storm. Records further seem to illustrate that the other three aircraft Grandpa flew in also crashed later during the war. N6034 appears to have crashed the very next day after Grandpa flew in it with a different crew (source: [www.lostaircraft.com](http://www.lostaircraft.com)). N6035 appears to have crashed approximately two weeks later (source: [www.lostaircraft.com](http://www.lostaircraft.com)). W7434 appears to have crashed on August 15, 1941 when it crashed returning to Oakington during low visibility. The pilot, F/O Witte went on to fly in over 100 missions.





*The top Stirling appears to be Grandpa's plane, MG-B*

*Below is a reprinted version of Grandpa's account of his last flight, as contained within his records:*

**LAST "OP" (11TH):** In 1978 the Editor of the RAF Ex-POW Association magazine asked us for items which might make interesting reading for posterity. After 37 years the memory of that night is still fresh and I was able to send the following account.

On August 25th 1941 we took off at 20.00 hrs from Oakington in our 7 Squadron Stirling (the first of the four engined bombers to be operational). The target was Karlsruhe, regarded as an easy trip south of most of the ack-ack and the night-fighter belt. I was extremely uneasy however as the aircraft was not reliable – it was an old one borrowed from "training flight" as our own had been "pranged" while we were on leave. As first Radio Operator I found that the radio and the other electrics left much to be desired. Many faults caused us to make our usual test flight so late that we took off much later than the other squadron aircraft, so all the defenses were alerted before we crossed the enemy coast. Consequently, we met some heavy flack over Calais.

Soon afterwards we ran into a violent thunderstorm: the severe "static" in my head phones made me decide to wind in the trailing aerial and I received a nasty electric shock for my pains.

The aircraft started to dive, so I switched over to the intercom (I had been listening out previously) to find out what was happening:

I heard the rear gunner say that we were still being fired at and that our navigation lights were on! (No doubt caused by one of the many electrical faults mentioned previously).

We went into a spin and the skipper told us to get ready to bale out. This looked like being an impossibility as the "g" pressed me flat on the floor. We seemed to be getting under control a little and I was able to just crawl the long way to the back of the aircraft. I had to negotiate the spars of the main wing – difficult enough in level flight in the daylight, but fortunately I had practiced it often with my eyes closed.

In the dim light the rear turret appeared to be empty and the floor escape hatch open, with its wooden cover flapping to and fro. I assumed that the 'bale out' signal had been given while I was crawling aft, and as the aircraft was out of control I tried to clip on my parachute which I had managed to hang on to. The "g" made it difficult to get it up to my chest, and having got one clip on nearly gave up trying to fix the other. Eventually I managed it and started to go through the hatch feet first. I then realized that the hatch was not open, but that the ILLEGIBLE had been shattered, and there was I, stuck in the middle of it. The slip-stream, plus some hard wriggling on my part, did the trick and I was out.

My first reaction was one of relief to be free of the strain of the diving plane. Consequently, I was not particularly worried when the rip cord handle came off in my hand when I pulled it (I didn't know it should, I thought it must be a dud chute!) However, the parachute opened with a crack and I immediately spotted the navigation lights of the plane below me: seconds later it exploded and the flames that lit up the parachute. I tried to curl into a ball so that the Germans wouldn't see me! I remember seeing a river (the Moselle) then tree tops, then stars as I hit the ground very hard (I have previously described how I was captured).

The rest of my crew were killed and my wife, daughter, and I returned in 1964 to the little churchyard at Aach, near Trier where the six of them had been buried the day after the crash.

We even met the old sexton who had buried them and he showed us the site of the grave which he had tended for 17 years, until they were moved to the R.A.F Cemetery at Rheinberg. We had the moving experience of visiting Rheinberg in 1966.

*Below is an additional account Grandpa's last flight, as contained within his memoirs, "More Best Years of My Life. Much of this information paved the way for my eventual trip to Germany in April 2019.*

**"One of our Aircraft is Missing"  
(It was our turn)**

Known as "Getting the chop" or "Going for a Burton", my 11<sup>th</sup> and last "op"

Returning from leave in August 1941, some unwelcome sights met me. The glass was blown out of my bedroom window and the dressing table mirror was broken. Worse, our "own" aircraft, W7434, was lying wrecked in the middle of the airfield. My immediate reaction was that we were so short of aircraft that we would be "stood down" until replacement planes arrived, but it was not to be. In his wisdom, our Wing Commander got N6020 out of training flight and presented it to us. It was only in training flight because it was a "lemon" and had a very chequered history. We spent much time on air tests and made one unhappy trip to Kiel, which we were unable to find. (I expect we dropped our bombs in the sea as it was unwise to try to land with them on.) The other unusual thing was that we had an army 'bod' on board whose mission was to observe the enemy anti-aircraft fire ("flak"). But the only people to fire at us were our own navy, not an unusual occurrence.

The target for our next and last mission was Karlsruhe, regarded as "a piece of cake". We spent all day trying to get the "kite" airworthy and when we took off at about 20.00 hrs. we were behind the other two, so we were told not to fly out via Reading, but to head east over Great Yarmouth. Even take off went wrong, all my ammeters shorted out when the electrically operated undercarriage was raised. The only hostility we seemed to meet was flak over Calais.

We had probably been flying for a couple of hours, having dropped a bomb (unfused) over Belgium to try to gain more height, when we ran into a violent thunderstorm. As the static roared in my headphones, I hastily wound in my trailing aerial, getting a nasty electric shock in the process.

I had been "listening out" for sometime and was not aware of anything untoward happening in the aircraft, so switched over to the "intercom". I heard the rear gunner say that our navigation lights were still on and that they were firing at us! (No doubt one of the many electrical problems had caused the navigation lights to come on). The next thing I heard was the skipper saying "Oh B..... it get ready to bale out you people." I picked up the 'chute but was immediately pressed to the floor by the intense "g". I thought that my number was up, feeling rather sad at not seeing my family again. The pilot must have got the aircraft out of a spin but we were still in a screaming dive – we were probably iced up as well. I was able to make my way with great difficulty through the main spar to my escape hatch at the rear – apart from the rear gunner, the rest of the crew used a hatch at the front. The hatch appeared to be swinging open and in the half light the rear gunner turret appeared to be empty.

I managed to clip my parachute to my chest in spite of a ton of "g" and lowered myself through the hatch. Then I realised that it was only the hatch cover that was waving in the wind, the jagged Perspex was the remains of the hatch proper. I eventually wriggled through and my feeling was one of great relief that I was out of that screaming dive. I took a dim view when the rip-cord handle came off in my hand, I thought that the parachute was a dud. (The corny joke was "If it doesn't work, take it back and get another one."). But it opened with a satisfying crack. I saw our aircraft way below me with its navigation lights still on and the next moment it erupted in a ball of flame, lighting up my parachute. The noise of the explosion made me think that the Germans were firing at me and I tried to curl into a ball to make myself less obvious! I could see a river below me (the Moselle) and though really not having a clue what to do, I pulled some cords to avoid falling in the river, but fortunately dropped onto a mossy bank, avoiding the tall trees which might have been an unpleasant business.

My immediate thoughts on landing were:

- (a) I have left my flying rations behind. (chocolate etc.)
- (b) There goes my pilots course (I had applied to remuster after I had completed my first 30 operations)
- (c) It dawned on me that I might survive the war.

It was pouring with rain and I got very wet, I was unable to free my parachute from the bushes and hide it as we were supposed to do. I found a path in the woods that led me to a large farm house. It was well lighted and I could hear voices. Thinking that I was still in occupied territory (actually it was near Trier in Germany) I knocked on the door and called out "Je suis anglais". Immediately the talking stopped and the lights went out. Feeling that I was not wanted I found a hayloft nearby, climbed up into it, hid in the hay and fell asleep.

I was awakened by unmistakable Jerry voices, and as one was prodding the hay with his bayonet, I sat up and said "Hello". I don't know what he replied but it certainly wasn't "Do you come here often?" When he got me down below, he fired a revolver of in my ear (I think to summon the others, not to scare me) and I was taken back to the same farmhouse. Taken inside, it seemed to be full of pregnant women, so I assumed that it was one of Hitler's stud farms. They obviously did not fall for my charms and showed their annoyance every time one of our aircraft flew overhead, spitting and punching. Although not particularly thirsty, to engage in polite conversation, I asked for a drink of water. In reply a very large German policeman pinned me against the wall and with quivering lips spat out some German pleasantries like "Have a nice day". I was then handcuffed, put in the back seat of an open car (having been given farewell punches by the Nazi maidens) and the car drove off into the woods. When it stopped I thought it was to dispose of me, but it was merely to turn the car round. On reaching Trier, I was taken to an underground room where I thought the torture would begin (I didn't really care, I suppose I thought it was all to unrealistic). However, I was greeted by a pleasant civilian who said – you've guessed it – "For you the war is over."

Footnote. In 1995 I received a letter and a document from a Mr Hancock, who had traced me through the Air Ministry. It was an account of Kenneth Blundens brief life. This gives some vivid detail of our stay on 7 Squadron at Oakington, and our last flight.

### “Gairmany Calling”

This was the call sign of the Irish Gentleman who used to broadcast German propaganda on the radio. He became so well known over here in Britain that he was given the name “Lord Haw-Haw” and it stuck.

A German ploy to get people to listen was to nightly broadcast a list of Prisoners of War. I had only been a prisoner for about 3 weeks when the name Denis Lloyd, Nottingham was broadcast. Apparently things got pretty hectic at my brother Les’s house people calling and the ‘phone ringing.

After the war, Lord Haw-Haw, William Joyce, was hanged as a traitor, for he had a British passport.

A pity really as he did our family a good turn!

*Below is what appears to be the crew’s general flight path or intended flight path on August 25th 1941, as derived from information available. 1=Oakington, England (take off location), 2=Calais, France (flack encountered), 3=Trier/Aach, Germany (crash site), 4=Karlsruhe, Germany (intended bombing target)*



POW CAMPS WHERE GRANDPA WAS HELD:

Research Pending

August 1941: Dulag Luft - Germany

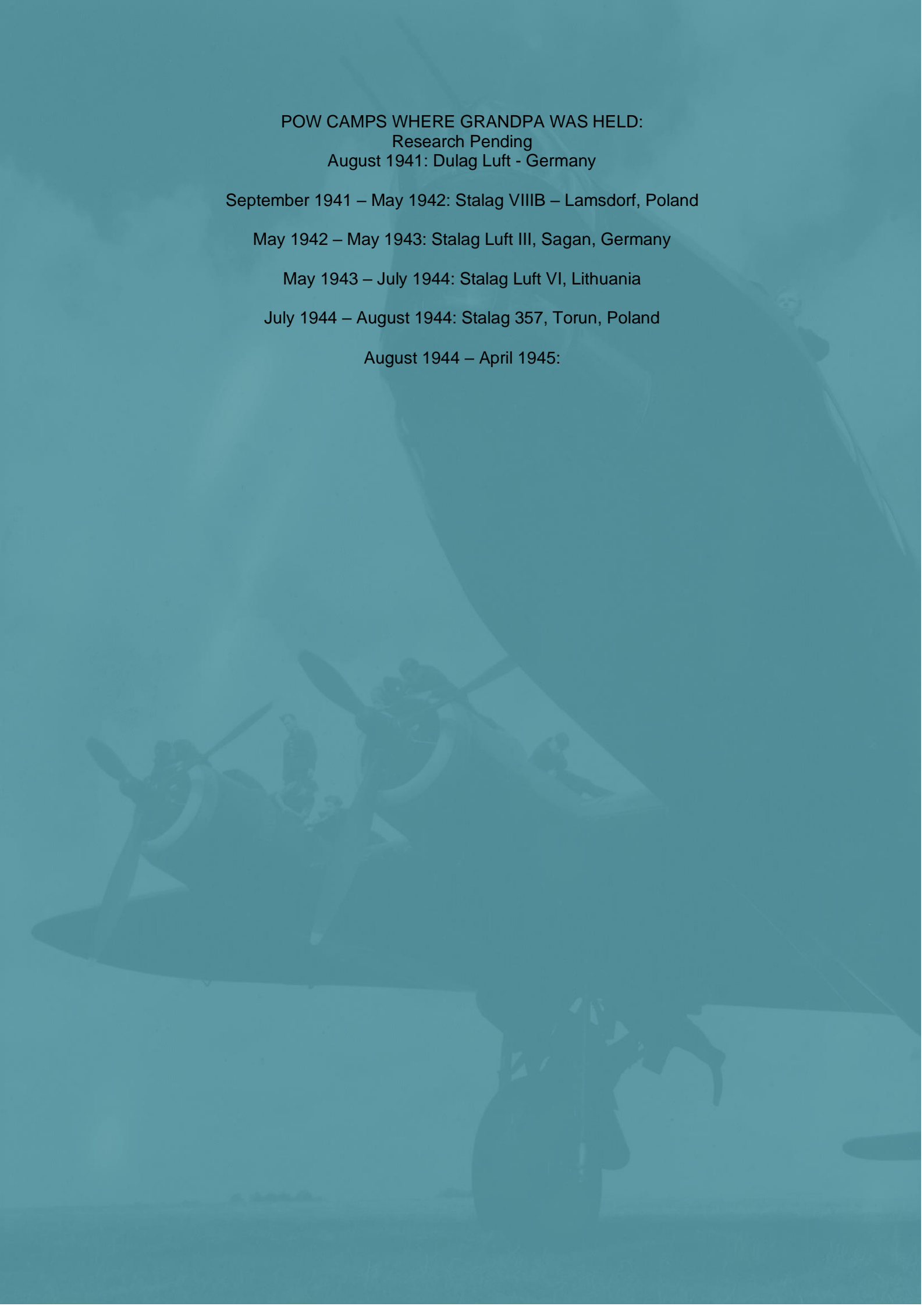
September 1941 – May 1942: Stalag VIII B – Lamsdorf, Poland

May 1942 – May 1943: Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany

May 1943 – July 1944: Stalag Luft VI, Lithuania

July 1944 – August 1944: Stalag 357, Torun, Poland

August 1944 – April 1945:



# CRASH/BURIAL SITE INFORMATION

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The details of Grandpa's crash are detailed in the preceding biography section that I put together as part of my research. It is known he crashed near Trier, Germany at a horse farm known as Sievenicher Hof.

Grandpa and Mom returned to the area in 1964, including the small town of Aach, where they found the church where his crewmembers were buried before they were eventually moved to the RAF Cemetery in Rheinberg. Grandpa and Mom were not only successful in finding the church, but additionally were able to locate the sexton of the church (later identified by name as Wilhelm Lorig when Sue and travelled to Germany), who buried the crew after the crash and who tended to the grave site for quite some time.

Mom does not remember looking for the crash site on that particular trip to Germany, and I don't remember Grandpa ever mentioning it. Uwe Benkel assisted us with locating the crash site and made trips to Aach and Trier in 2018 on our behalf in anticipation of our visit made in April 2019 which is further detailed in the next section. I was referred to Uwe Benkel by Ian Davenport, the grandson of Les Davenport, who was a friend of Grandpa's also shot down (X2) during war and who was a POW with Grandpa. Mom remembers Les Davenport visiting Grandpa after the war. A lot of the information retained by Grandpa was instrumental in Uwe Benkel being able to locate the crash site, the church yard, and the Erlenhof farm where Grandpa hid before being captured. The following information outlines some general background information while our research was ongoing before travelling to the same locations in 2019, with the exception of some information found in February 2020 about Father Lauxen.

## EXCERPT FROM BIOGRAPHY OF PILOT KENNETH OSWALD BLUNDEN

This was followed in March 1947 by a letter from the German Pastor who both witnessed the crash and buried the victims:

"On the night of 25/26 August '41 there was a terrible storm, and many aircraft were heard flying over Trier, mostly very low. Suddenly, I heard a terrible crash, and I saw from my bedroom window a large fire burning in the direction of Trier. An aircraft had tried to land by the 'Sievenicher Hof', a large farm 1½ Km from Aach in the direction of Trier, and had caught the corner of the roof of a barn about 30 feet high, and had exploded. One of the crew bailed out and landed safely. He came through the woods in the rain, and spent the night in a house named 'Erlenhof'. The next morning he surrendered and went safely to a POW camp. The other airmen in the crashing aircraft must have been killed instantaneously, and the next day they were all buried in Aach. Later we received the names of the airmen from Berlin".

Rather touchingly, a young German girl Anna Borne, who lived opposite the churchyard, tended the grave and always kept fresh flowers there until - to her considerable upset - the remains were removed in September 1948 to the Rheinberg British Military Cemetery near Duisburg, where the collective grave is now located.

*Figure 1 - From Blunden Biography – shared with Uwe Benkel which assisted with logistics for our April 2019 trip to Germany*

## PICTURE OF CRASHSITE AT SIEVENICHER HOF



Figure 2 - Crash site picture (August 25/26, 1941) obtained from Uwe Benkel, Stirling Bomber N.6020



Figure 3- Newspaper article 1941 obtained from Uwe Benkel



## PICTURES OF ST. HUBERTUS CHURCH IN AACH, GERMANY



Figure 4 and 5 – Church in Aach, Germany (1964 and 2018) taken by Grandpa/Mom and Uwe Benkel, respectively

## PICTURES OF GRAVE SITE OF CREW AT ST. HUBERTUS



Figure 6 and 7 - Aach, Germany church cemetery (1964 and 2018) taken by Grandpa/Mom and Uwe Benkel, respectively. Rough location of crew burial location.

### **OTHER PICTURES AND INFO RE: AACH GERMANY:**

The top picture was taken by Grandpa and Mom during their 1964 visit. The gentleman on the far-left buried Grandpa's flight crew and remembered Grandpa parachuting out. Grandpa indicated he received a warm welcome when meeting him in 1964. Sue and I later identified this man as Wilhelm Lorig after meeting with some residents of Aach. More details will follow in the section regarding our trip to Germany.



*Figure 8 and 9 - Wilhelm Lorig (1964) and same location provided by Uwe Benkel (2018)*

In February 2020, I came across the document below in Grandpa's diary which was correspondence between the family of crew member William Allan and the Royal Canadian Air Force. As referenced, this document illustrated that a Father Lauxen at the church oversaw the burial of the flight crew at the church in 1941.

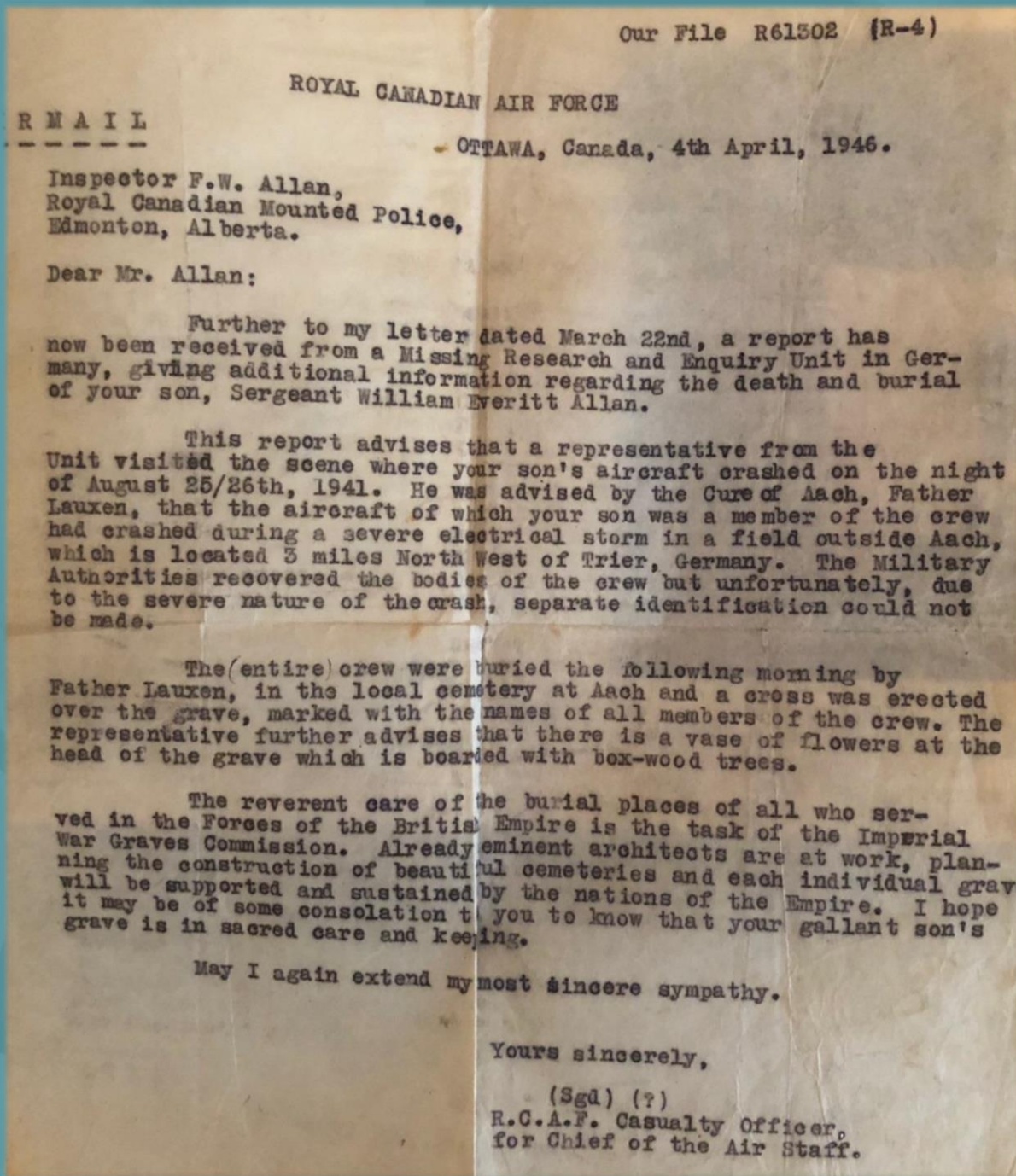


Figure 10 - Allan Family document

As detailed in the section about our trip to Germany in 2019, when there we met Agnes and Christel Krein of Aach. Agnes remembered the crash and provided some amazing detail not previously known to us. In February 2020, I contacted the Krein family to see if they might by chance have a picture of Father Lauxen or any other noteworthy information. Below is a picture I received from his obituary and some additional information Agnes remembered about Father Lauxen.

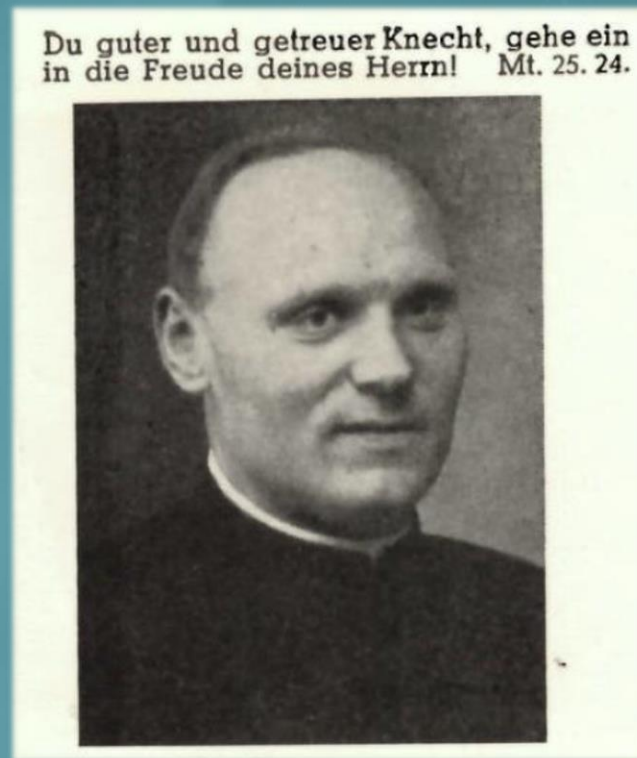


Figure 11 - Father Lauxen

Hi Ian,

When I met my mother for Sunday lunch, I told her about your e-mail and what you are looking for. Spontaneously she said: "I have a foto of Father Lauxen!". She rifled through her box with old pictures and obituary notices... after the twinkling of an eye... there it is!

She remembers Father Lauxen as a very severe person who stood for a strict catholic education. The adults held him in high esteem and the children were rather afraid of him.

He had command of English language and he disposed the children for the arrival of American soldiers at our little village in March 1945. He taught them to raise the hands and say "I surrender!". These are the only English words my mother ever learned in her life - but to date she didn't forget them.

The obituary notice provides you with details from his life. He was born in 1899, consecrated as a priest in 1923 and died in 1959. My told me that he was the youngest of 10 children, as soldier in World War I. he became wounded by a gas attack and suffered from it in his lifetime.

I hope, that the information can help to complete your investigation. If there are further questions, don't hesitate to ask.

My mum, as a contemporary witness, is very pleased to share her memories with anybody who is interested in.

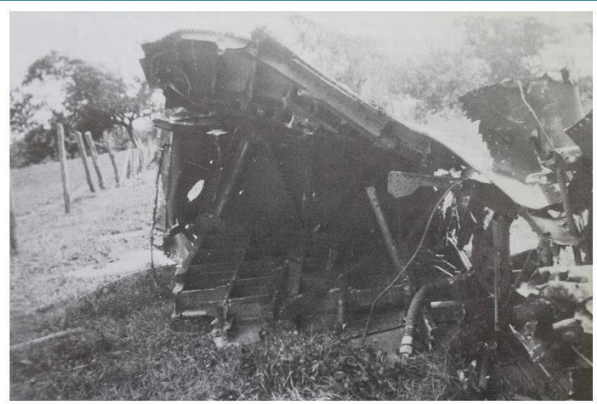
Best regards from Germany!  
By for now - may be in New York :-)  
Christel

### **SIEVENICHER HOF AND ERLENHOF FARMS**

We were able to determine after our trip to Germany that Grandpa's bomber essentially exploded in mid-air over the Sievenicher Hof Farm, with a scattered debris field over a large area including the farm fields and local woods. Some parts even hit the buildings on the farm property. This was derived from witness interviews and research conducted by Uwe Benkel in 2018. When Grandpa parachuted out and after he landed, he stayed the night in a hayloft at another local house known as Erlenhof which is a 7-minute car ride from the crash site. Uwe was able to visit both the farm and residence in June 2018 in advance of our trip to Germany. Grandpa became a POW the next day.



*Figure 12-14 - Sievenicher Hof Farm 2018 – Red tiles after repair from crash*



*Figure 15 – 17 - Sievenicher Hof - Debris Location 1941 and 2018*



*Figure 18 - Aerial Image of Sievenicher Hof Farm 2018*



Figure 19 - Aerial Image of Erlenhof 2018



Figure 20 - Aerial Images of Sievenicher Hof and Erlehhof



Figure 21-22 - Metal from Stirling N.6020 (2018)





*Figure 23 - Metal from Stirling N.6020 (2018)*

The pictures above of metal remains were found by Uwe Benkel during a preliminary trip to the farm in 2018. These were found in the woods, untouched for over 70 years. They were found under a few inches of "leave litter" and given to me when I travelled to Germany in 2019.

# APRIL 2019

## TRIP TO GERMANY

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On April 22, 2019, Sue and I boarded a flight to Frankfurt, Germany to finally make the trip and find the crash site of Grandpa's Stirling Bomber (N.6020). This trip was several years in the making as my research commenced in 2014. As reported in other sections, we were confident we had found the crash site in Trier resulting from the assistance provided by Uwe Benkel of the "Working Group for the Missing".

In the back of my mind I knew that if I didn't make the trip now, I might never do it. A bit selfishly, we left Jack and Olivia with Grandma and Grandpa as the trip had a specific focus that might have been difficult to accomplish at their age. We flew from Newark and connected through Toronto and landed in Frankfurt at around 6 a.m. on the 23rd. Upon our arrival, we picked up our rental car and prior to the trip I was happy to confirm that driving in Germany is the same as it is here regarding what side of the road you drive on and the location of the steering wheel.

Of note, just before we were about to board our connecting flight in Toronto, I received an email from John "Johnnie" Wright, the nephew of crew member John David Wright who died in the crash. We had been corresponding for a while and he was aware of our trip, as we had invited him and other families to come along. In his email, Johnnie explained that his schedule had changed and that he was able to get to Trier on the Thursday and hoped to join us. Unfortunately, Uwe had set everything up for Wednesday and I wasn't in a position, nor did we have time before boarding, to attempt to make those changes. Johnnie was very understanding but I felt conflicted about not being able to accommodate him. Corresponding with him has been a highlight of this project.

We rented an Airbnb apartment (for the first time) in Trier on Olewiger Street which was perfect for us and it was about a 2.5 hour ride from Frankfurt. It was a small apartment with everything we needed. We met the owner who was very nice and spoke perfect English as did just about everyone else we interacted with. The apartment was directly across the street from a Biergarten (Blesius Garten) where we ate several times, and which had great beer.

Trier is the oldest city in Germany with a strong Roman influence and we were on the outskirts in a nice quiet area. Within walking distance were several nice restaurants, many vineyards, and a community garden we walked through one day when we walked into the main part of the city. It was a beautiful place and we took lots of pictures. There was a bus stop directly across the street from the apartment, but we relied on the car we rented most of the time.



*Figure 1 – Our Apartment*



*Figure 1a – Blesius Garten - Evening Dining*

Once we got situated at the apartment and after taking a nap (Sue's was much longer than mine due to jetlag), we met up with Johanna Thomas who is a member of Uwe's group. She lived in Luxembourg which was a short drive away and Uwe put her in touch with us, mainly because I think he wanted to be a good host upon our arrival in Germany.

Upon meeting up with Johanna in the city, we quickly realized she spoke about as much English as we did German, so our initial thoughts were that this was going to be a challenge. However, our use of modern technology to include Google Translate really assisted us, and Sue and I both noticed how after a short time her English really improved. Johanna was a great hostess and seemed proud of her city as she had grown up just a short distance away.

She showed us numerous places including the Moselle River which I wanted to see based on Grandpa's diary references (he noted seeing it when parachuting down), some historic churches, the birth place of Karl Marx, etc. We spent most of the afternoon with her and saw a lot of the city, and parted ways ready for our big day (Wednesday) when we were scheduled to meet Uwe for the first time and find the crash site.



*Figure 2 - Johanna Thomas and the Moselle River*

On Wednesday morning, we met Johanna and her boyfriend Kevin Sousa in the parking lot of Blesius Garten. Uwe arrived a short time later and he was as nice as I expected. Uwe lived about 1.5 hours away and was apologetic for being a few minutes late. Kevin was very nice and told us he was planning to join the Luxembourg Air Force a few months from then.

We found it funny that he mentioned their Air Force only had 3 or 4 planes and that they leased them from Belgium. Quite a difference from our Air Force. Kevin was very friendly and spoke near perfect English.

Sue and I rode with Uwe while Johanna and Kevin followed at which time we went to our first stop, the home of Adolf Welter.

### **VISIT WITH ADOLF WELTER – APRIL 24th**

While driving, Uwe explained to us that Adolf was the town historian who had in depth knowledge of the crash and had witnessed the events when he was a young boy. Upon arriving at his home, Adolf and his wife invited us in and were most hospitable. Adolf took us into his office in the basement where it appeared that he had just about every piece of history from Trier neatly organized into binders. His collection was most impressive which included several books he had published, and he even had artifacts and weapons in a display case dating back to the Romans which he had dug out of the ground himself. Adolf had several documents and photographs prepared for us which I had never seen, including a picture of the crash site in which a member of the Hitler Youth was helping to clean up the area after the crash.

Adolf reported that Grandpa's bomber exploded in mid-air over the farm and that a leg of one of the crew members was found a quarter mile away still wearing a boot. Adolf indicated that the bomber was returning after dropping its bombs when it was shot down over Trier. This particular detail doesn't appear accurate, as my records and Grandpa's diary illustrate that they were on their way to the bombing site and not on the way back, and that they even dropped an unfused bomb over Belgium to gain some altitude before being shot down due to intense flak.

Adolf further referenced the bomber as having a Canadian crew which was only true in part (John Duncan Edworthy and William Allan) as the crew was also from England (Kenneth Blunden, Edgar Frederick Drew, Denis Lloyd), Northern Ireland (John David Wright), and Scotland (George Nicolson). Adolf spent the day with us and visited all locations referenced herein. He and his wife took us to lunch at a nice restaurant within walking distance of their home at which time she ordered a beer and told us how she liked our President (Donald Trump). Adolf pointed various things out to us during the entire walk to the restaurant.



*Figure 3: Left – Uwe Benkel (L) and Adolf Welter (R), Right – Adolf Welter's Records*

After lunch, we made a couple of different stops with Adolf. First, we visited another memorial site in Trier in memory of an American B-17 crew that died there in a crash in 1945. This had no particular relevance to our trip, but it was very nice to see the effort that went into its creation, and Adolf explained that he paid for the memorial himself. Of note is that a few weeks after our trip, the niece of one of the B-17 crewmembers did an almost identical trip to ours with Uwe and Adolf at which time they planted a Yellow Rose of Texas at the memorial which had significance to their family. They appeared to model their trip after ours a bit, as they too brought a state flag for Uwe as a gift (Indiana) and a plaque with almost identical wording to ours. I think we did the same after reading about another of Uwe's projects...

Next, we visited the location of the Luftwaffe facility where Grandpa was processed as a POW after being caught at the Erlenhof farm the morning after the crash. As described in another section, Grandpa referenced this location as the "Luftwaffe barracks on the hillside" of Trier. Adolf explained that those barracks were no longer in existence, but showed us the exact location which was quite a busy commercial area. Our next stop was the crash site itself....



*Figure 4: Left - Adolf at B-17 Memorial, Right - Site of Luftwaffe Barracks in 1941 where Denis was processed as a POW*



*Figure 5: Left - Picture of Crash Site provided by Adolf Welter, Right - Sue and Adolf's wife walking to lunch*

### **VISIT OF SIEVENICHER HOF FARM – APRIL 24TH:**

Next, we all drove to a local horse farm called Sievenicher Hof which was only about a ten-minute drive away from our apartment in Trier. This was really the moment I had been waiting for and it was a difficult feeling to describe as we pulled up the long driveway. It was a beautiful day and really could not have been better for our visit. Upon our arrival, we noticed a farm worker in the courtyard at which time Uwe introduced himself and explained the purpose of our visit. He spoke some English and was very friendly and had a nice dog with him that we met too. This gentleman indicated that we were welcome to do as we pleased while at the farm and he would assist us as needed.

We showed him the plaque we made in memory of the crew and he indicated he would be happy to assist us with hanging it and that he would also make something to hang it on depending on the area selected. While we were speaking with him a car pulled up at which time the daughter of the owners of the farm returned home. She was very nice, and we thereafter met her mother and father who were equally friendly and hospitable. The stone farmhouse seemed quite historical and they offered us something to eat and drink which we politely declined. The male owner of the farm was quite ill with cancer. He spoke good English and seemed to know a little bit about the crash in 1941 but not much.

When Uwe explained to the family that I was the grandson of the lone survivor, this appeared to peak everyone's curiosity and raised some eyebrows and the group seemed very interested in the story which we explained. We next explained that we had brought with us a memorial plaque in memory of the crew and that we had hoped to just place it on a tree somewhere on the property with their permission. The family insisted that we put it directly on the side of their home. I really couldn't believe this, and it was fantastic to be able to do this in memory of the crew. The farmhand previously referenced, helped us by providing a drill bit that would drill into the stone house and we were able to get the plaque up with relative ease. I had Sue put in one of the screws in memory of Grandpa, as he was very fond of her and because she made the trip with me.

It should also be noted that everyone in our family contributed to paying for the plaque for this occasion. After we put up the plaque we took a lot of pictures, some of which were to accompany a newspaper article due to be published there which was coordinated by Adolf.

I left some small gifts with the family including some patches and challenge coins from work, some maple candy, a flag of New York State, and a thank you card. I also provided them with a translated document explaining the full relevance of why we were visiting their property including some of Grandpa's diary excerpts and pictures of him. I wanted to do this because I thought it seemed politer as opposed to just showing up and asking to take pictures and walk their property. They seemed very appreciative.



*Figure 6: Left - Arrival at the Farm, Center – Kevin Sousa, Right - Meeting with farm employee with plaque*



Figure 7: Left - Meeting the owners, Center - Installing the plaque, Right – The farmhouse



Figure 8: Plaque installed at Sievenicher Hof

Next, we metal detected areas of the farm, mainly some of the fields where we had seen pictures of the wreckage from the time of the crash. Uwe seemed like quite the expert and I did the digging. I came well prepared with work clothes and gloves and loved every minute of it. We found several pieces of metal including parts of the fuselage and pieces of jagged iron.

Uwe indicated that based on his experience and a review of the records and testimony pertaining the crash, he felt it likely that the iron pieces were parts of the bombs on the plane that would have exploded outward. We also found pieces of wire, one bullet fragment, and other miscellaneous pieces of metal. Of note is that we also came home with a horseshoe that we plan to hang at the camp in memory of Grandpa.

We searched the fields for at least a couple of hours at which time Uwe said we needed to move on to our next stops due to bad weather moving in, and because he was worried Adolf might be dead in the car (wonderful sense of humor) as he did not accompany us on the metal detecting portion of our journey! Our next stop was Erlenhof...



*Figure 9: Getting ready to metal detect the crash site - picture by Sue*



*Figure 10: Metal Detecting the farm with Uwe, Johanna and Kevin*





Figure 11: Parts of Stirling Bomber N.6020

## **VISIT OF ERLLENHOF FARM – APRIL 24TH:**

When Grandpa successfully parachuted out of the Stirling bomber, he came down in a wooded area, fortunately missing trees and a stream. As he detailed in his memoirs, he was unable to free his parachute and hide it as he was trained, but he did attempt to make a tent out of it due to the heavy rain which didn't work. He found a path to a large farmhouse which was well lit and from within he heard voices. Thinking he might be in France, Grandpa knocked on the door and called out "Je suis anglais" at which time the talking stopped, and the lights went out.

It was at that point that Grandpa found a nearby hayloft, climbed into it and fell asleep. Grandpa awoke to "Jerry voices" and one German was prodding the hay with his bayonet at which time Grandpa identified himself and surrendered. When brought down from the hayloft one of the Germans fired his revolver near Grandpa's ear, likely to summon others. He was then taken back to the same farmhouse where he was interrogated inside.

Grandpa reported in his memoirs, "Taken inside, it seemed to be full of pregnant women, so I assumed it was one of Hitler's stud farms." Every time aircraft flew overhead the women showed their annoyance and would spit at and punch him.

At one point, Grandpa asked for a glass of water at which time a rather large German pinned him up against the wall. He was then handcuffed and put in the back seat of an open car after having been given farewell punches from the "Nazi maidens".

After leaving the area, Grandpa was driven to Trier (the Luftwaffe barracks previously referenced and visited with Adolf Welter), where he was taken to an underground room where he thought he might be tortured. However, he instead was greeted "by a pleasant civilian who said – you've guessed it – "For you the war is over."

Grandpa's 4-year POW journey began but for him the war wasn't over by any means.

We were able to identify this farm as Erlenhof which was about a 7-minute car ride from the Sievenicher Hof farm. This was documented by Adolf Welter and in numerous other records pertaining to the crash, including correspondence between the English government and the families of the crew members shortly after the crash. This property was very nice with two large white farm houses and a barn next to the smaller house closer to the driveway. When we arrived, a female staff member met us in the driveway and said she couldn't authorize the taking of any pictures and that she would have to ask the owner.

The male owner, whose name I didn't get, yelled out of the window of the smaller house adjacent to the barn at which time he was conversing with Uwe. The gentleman basically stated that we could take a couple of pictures and leave. I snapped a few pictures of the property and was content that the farmhouse Grandpa had referenced was the same one we were in front of.

It started to rain lightly at which time an elderly woman approached us from the second, larger house on the back of the property which appeared to be a newer building as opposed to the other. We explained why we were there and she engaged in some minor conversation with us at which time she told us she was born a year after the crash and was aware of the story of the "Englishman" who was caught there. She said it was a popular story and that her mother had told her the details when she was young. Sue picked up on this and wondered if one of the pregnant women Denis referenced might have been her mother?

No one here was particularly pleasant like they were at the Sievenicher Hof farm. The owners appeared quite wealthy and ostentatious, and we didn't really feel that welcome as everything was rushed and a bit chaotic. As such and maybe feeling a bit petty, I didn't give her any of the gifts I brought like I had given to the owners of the Sievenicher Hof farm. However, I did attempt to give her the document I prepared and had translated to German explaining the relevance of why we were there, but she told me to just give it to her staff member and she then ran away from us when it started to rain harder.

Uwe looked at the barn and indicated that he felt it was old enough to be the original barn where Grandpa had slept. Ideally, I had wanted to go into the barn and walk the property and find the stream and footpath that Grandpa had referenced, but unfortunately this wasn't meant to be.

Our next stop was the small village of Aach where Grandpa's crew was buried after the crash...



*Figure 12: House near the barn where Grandpa was interrogated*



*Figure 13: Erlenhof Barn*



*Figure 14: Left - Johanna, Kevin, Sue and I in front of the barn, Right - Standing with Erlenhof owner*



*Figure 15: Larger house toward back of the property*

## VISIT TO AACH – APRIL 24TH

The last part of our trip that day was a visit to the small village of Aach which is only a short drive from Trier and just down the road from Erlenhof and Sievenicher Hof. Here we found the small Catholic churchyard where Grandpa's crew was buried after the crash until they were later moved to the Rheinberg War Cemetery several years later. Aach is a beautiful, small village with narrow cobblestone streets, and a small Biergarten.

As referenced herein, the people we met were very helpful and extremely friendly and accommodating. Upon our arrival we quickly found the locations where Mom and Grandpa had taken pictures in 1964 during their visit which was neat, and we took our own photographs in those same spots. There was some debate about where the crew had actually been buried, as we tried to match up Grandpa's picture from 1964 (where he had been shown the old grave site which was then covered with a piece of sheet metal). Adolf Welter, who was still with us, insisted it was in a different location but not far away. The churchyard is so small, so I don't think it much matters anyway, but I was trying to figure it out since we had come all that way.

Grandpa's picture below from 1964 gives his determination of the site (right foreground). Uwe has quite a sense of humor and at one point when I was standing where I thought the grave must have been, he yelled, "You're standing on the dead bodies!" which caused me to jump and he laughed.

As we spent time at the church, the weather was getting progressively worse and it was getting late in the day, so we concluded our trip for the day with plans to return the following day. I don't think we even attempted to enter the church on that occasion from what I remember but we did the following day...



Figure 16: 1964 and April 2019 Picture with grave location as per 1964 assessment

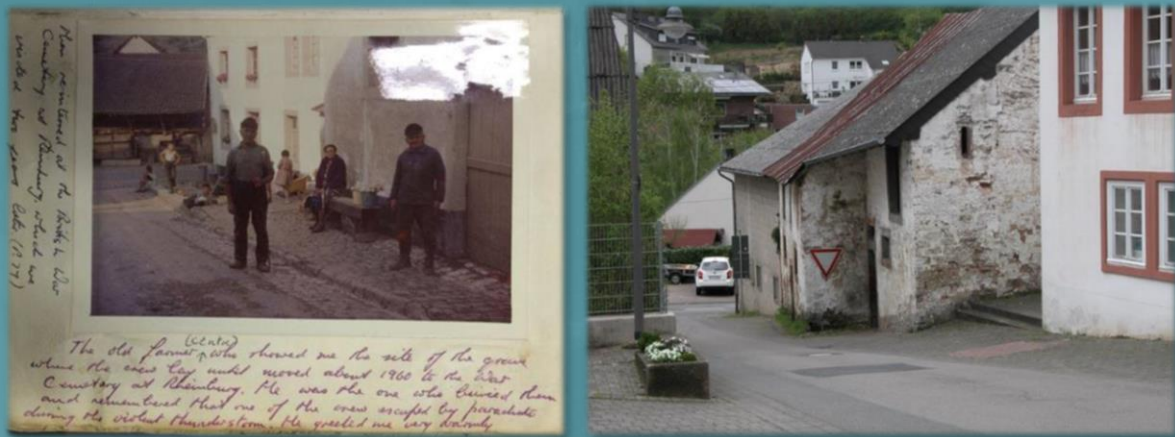


Figure 17: 1964 (Wilhelm Lorig, left, who buried the crew) and April 2019



Figure 18: 1964 picture of gravesite and 2019 picture of possible same location

After leaving the church we made a quick stop, so Adolf could get some pictures developed for his newspaper article. Uwe was not able to meet with us the next day due to his busy schedule, but Johanna said she would take us back to the farm the next day to metal detect some more which Uwe also recommended. I was very pleased because I would have liked to spend a lot more time there.

Upon dropping Adolf at home, we gave him some small gifts including a hat with the American flag on it and some patches and challenge coins from work. It was great to have met him. Sue and I took Uwe to dinner at the Blesius Garten where it was nice to really engage in conversation and learn more about him and his family. It's amazing what he has dedicated his life to and we learned that he has found over 150 missing aircraft and 50 missing airmen since approximately 1989.

Before leaving, Uwe gave us some additional pieces of N.6020 that he had found during a previous visit to Sievenicher Hof in advance of our visit, and he also gave us a nice copy of one of his signed books which was an interesting read.

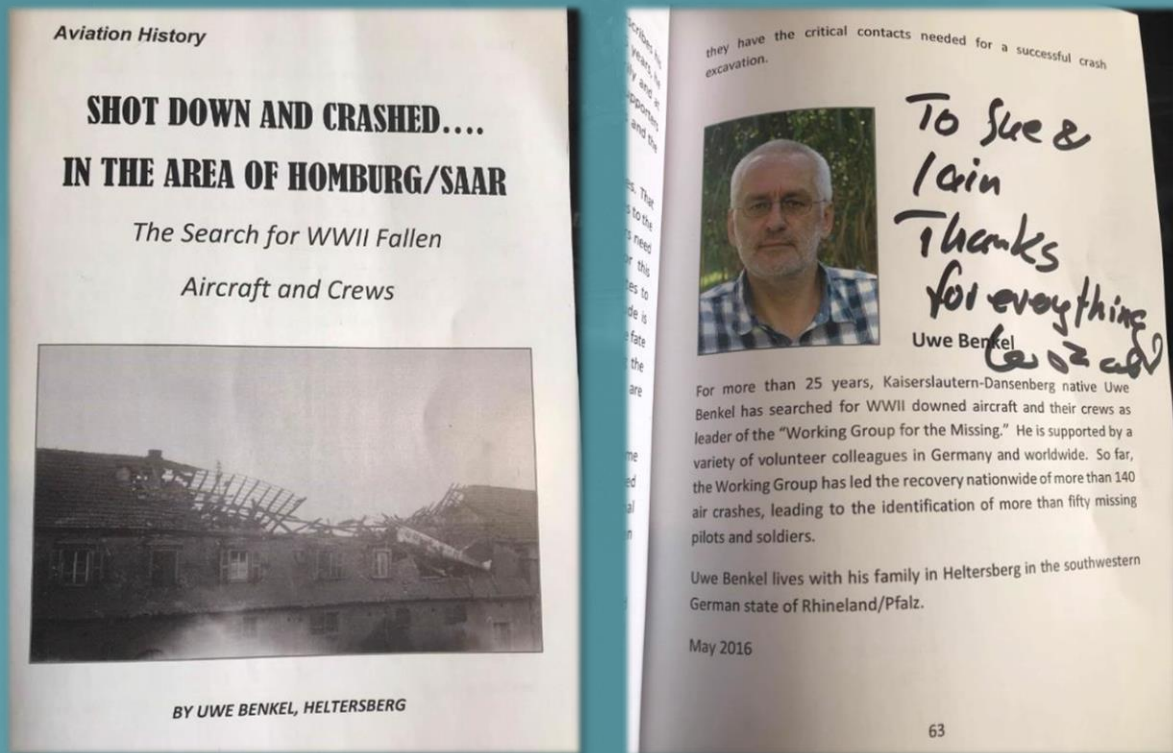


Figure 19: Gift from Uwe Benkel

**RETURN VISIT OF SIEVENICHER HOF FARM – APRIL 25TH:**

Sue and I picked up Johanna the next morning at her parents' home in Konz at which time we returned to the farm for some more metal detecting. This time and as recommended by Uwe, we left the fields and went into the woods which is where Uwe had found some pieces of the fuselage. This was a tougher place to search but we still found several interesting fragments. Most of the area where parts had previously been found by Uwe were covered in thorny bushes, and we weren't really prepared to fully search this area. We probably searched for a good 2-3 hours before moving on at which time we headed back to Aach...



Figure 20: Metal detecting and searching the woods

## RETURN VISIT TO AACH – APRIL 25TH

Upon returning to Aach, Johanna, Sue and I went back to the church where we parked and walked around. We went inside the church which was unlocked and empty and Sue and I both commented how it would have been nice to attend a service there. While there, Sue had the idea of attempting to locate the Borne family in the area. As referenced in the biography of pilot Kenneth Blunden that was passed down from Grandpa and whose author is unknown, it was noted that a young girl named Anna Borne lived next to the church and tended to the graves of the crew for several years until they were moved to the Rheinberg cemetery.

Additionally, after making contact with John “Johnnie” Wright in Ireland, a nephew of 2nd Pilot John David Wright, he too mentioned the Borne family and indicated that his family had corresponded with them during and after the war. He further mentioned that his family sent care packages to the Borne family after the war due to the state of Germany.

Additionally, I made contact with a nephew of Kenneth Blunden on ancestry.com named Hugh Waine (believed to be Vivian Hugh Waine, son of Kenneth’s sister Beryl) who also reported having letters between his family and the Borne family dating back to the war. I have attempted to get copies of these items from both the John Wright and Hugh Waine but have not yet received anything.



*Figure 21: Interior of Aach Catholic Church*

After leaving the church, we walked down the hill and went into a small florist shop called Der Blumenladen where Johanna asked the proprietor if she knew of the Borne family. Johanna told them a little bit about our story and why we were there, and it was evident we had peaked their curiosity. The lady behind the counter indicated that she did not know of the Borne family although the name sounded familiar to her, but that she could take us to a woman in town who might be able to help us.

We all left the store together and after a short walk knocked on the door of an elderly woman in the village. This woman knew of the Borne family but referred us to yet another woman in town named Agnes Krein whose house we walked to next. I couldn't believe the kindness of the florist shop owner stopping everything and being so eager to help us. It was truly amazing.





*Figure 22: Left - Florist shop proprietor with Johanna Thomas, Right - first woman in town in search of the Borne family*

Upon arriving at the Krein residence we were invited in where we spent approximately two hours talking with her. She was extremely friendly, and we explained the nature of our inquiry at which time she told us that she remembered the crash when she was a little girl and that it was a famous story in their community. Agnes shared a family portrait of hers and said she was one of ten children and stated that her two oldest brothers had also died during the war which still made her quite emotional. She stated that she was aware that there was a lone survivor of Grandpa's crash and further indicated that she knew where the crew had been buried at their local church, but she thought that only two members of the crew had been buried there. We showed her a picture of Grandpa and of the plaque we had put up the day before which she looked at for quite some time with interest, and commented that Grandpa was handsome. Agnes stated that she had known the Borne family well, and that although the family home was physically there, the family itself was no longer present although she believed there was perhaps one family member living in the general area. Agnes further referenced how the family of crewmember John David Wright had sent many packages to the Borne family after the war due to the kindness of the Borne family regarding tending to the gravesite for several years, etc. She indicated that she didn't think the "young German girl" referenced in the Blunden biography would have been "Anna Borne" as referenced, because Anna was older and died in 1966 and would not have been a young girl at the time. It was theorized during this discussion that it could have possibly been a daughter of Anna Borne or just the first name was wrong in the biography document. During our visit with Agnes, her daughter Christel came home who joined us for our discussion. She spoke perfect English and she too was very interested in the story and said she would attempt to dialogue with the church to see if there are any records on file that might be of interest to us. Agnes and Christel identified the man who buried the flight crew by name as Wilhelm Lorig, at which time we showed her the picture we had from 1964 which they confirmed was Wilhelm. We have corresponded with Christel a couple of times by e-mail ([Christel.Krein@t-online.de](mailto:Christel.Krein@t-online.de)) since returning home and I am interested to see what she might come up with from the church. After leaving the Krein residence we found Wilhelm's gravesite at the same church and took some pictures. We

said our goodbyes to the Krein family, ate at the local biergarten which was an interesting place (they said I tipped too much and gave me money back) and where I had the much-hyped rump steak, and headed home for the day. I'm glad Sue had the foresight to suggest looking for the Borne family, as we wouldn't have met the Krein family and others, which was a very memorable part of this trip. Before dropping Johanna at home for the evening and saying goodbye, she took us to a small place in the woods near her home of an old SS Officer's grave. This was pretty much in the middle of nowhere and interesting to see.



*Figure 23: Meeting with Agnes Krein and viewing a picture of Grandpa*



*Figure 24: Krein family portrait and gravesite of Wilhelm Lorig*



*Figure 25: SS Officer's Gravesite*

### **TOURING TRIER – OUR LAST FULL DAY, APRIL 26TH**

The following day Sue and I toured the city of Trier by ourselves, which was nice and relaxing as we didn't have a set schedule or any sort of itinerary. We decided to take the bus into the city which was easy, as the bus stop was directly in front of our apartment and the bus schedule was printed at our apartment. We walked around pretty much the entire city and viewed the Porta Nigra amongst other historical locations. The famous Bath's were closed due to renovation, but we were still able to see them from a distance.

Trier is nice and historical with lots of little shops and restaurants. We ate at an Italian restaurant for lunch and drank wine at a little bar in the middle of the square which was right up Sue's alley. We bought some souvenirs for home including a nice picture of Trier from a street artist which is now on our mantle and a small sign in German for the bathroom at home. We had a full day and returned to the apartment to have a nice dinner out.

For our last evening out, we ate at the restaurant Tonkas at Blesius Garten. This was a more upscale restaurant where we had some difficulty ordering as it was one of those places where you have to pick 8 different courses. The waiter knew we were struggling a bit and was very funny and helpful.



*Figure 26: Left - Electoral Place and Right - Porta Nigra*



*Figure 27: View of Trier from the Porta Nigra*

### FLYING HOME, APRIL 27TH

That concluded our trip to Germany and I was sad to leave. Before heading to Frankfurt to fly home, we made one final stop in Aach and went back to the florist shop where we bought some souvenirs for the house. It was the most fitting place I think to conclude the trip.

This was a trip of a lifetime and opened my eyes to many things and which really showed me the true meaning of generosity. We met many great people during this trip and during this project in general, including Uwe Benkel, Ian Davenport, Ian Butterfield, Agnes and Christel Krein, Anne Marie of Olewiger Street, Johanna Thomas, Kevin Sousa, the families of John Duncan Edworthy, George Nicolson, John David Wright, Edgar Frederick Drew, William Allan, and Kenneth Oswald Blunden, numerous newspapers employees and government agencies, as well as the owners of Sievenicher Hof. Sadly, I never even got their names when I was there, but I'll just add this to the list of this never-ending project. In memory of Grandpa Denis and the entire crew of Short Stirling N.6020...



*Figure 28 - Top Row: Denis Lloyd Middle Row: Kenneth Blunden, John David Wright, Edgar Frederick Drew Bottom Row: John Edworthy, William Allan, George Nicholson*