

RAF- memorial, Dejbjerg. Western Jutland.

RAF bomber crashed on August the 30th 1944.

During the night on August 30th 1944 about 600 British bombe planes crossed Denmark two times – out and back home to bases in England. The mission targets were bombing the German cities Königsberg and Stettin.

A German night fighter attacked Lancaster LM479 of 101 Sqdn. returning from Stettin, and fire broke out onboard. Shortly after the plane crashed at Dejbjerg in western Jutland. The eight men crew perished in the crash.

Squadron No. 101 of 1 Bomber Group Lancasters was stationed at airbase Ludford Magna.



RAF No. 101 Squadron.

F/O. Thomas Foster, pilot, RCAF.
F/O. Samuel Albert Mackenzie, RCAF.
P/O. Cyril Cousin, RAF.
P/O. Hubert Joseph Linn, RCAF.
WT/O. William Owen, RAF.
F/Sgt. Alfred Reid Chalmers, RCAF.
Sgt. George Frederick Gibson, RAF.
Sgt. Andrew Stewart, RAF.

Following the German Wehrmacht performed a simple funeral of the bodies of the flyers close to the crash site near Dejbjerg Kjaergaard. It was 'burying on the spot' - orders from Berlin.

This hostile act the population did not like very much. Vicar, Hans Pedersen, went to Skjern, where he met with the German commandant and asked for permission to give the dead flyers a decent Christian funeral at the graveyard. The German hauptmann meant in this connection, that the RAF-airmen exactly had had a suitable funeral in this situation.

The vicar got very angry, and he let the German know, that he now on behalf of the Danish church would take this case in own hands and make sure, that the dead flyers had a Christian funeral.

Funeral at Dejbjerg, September 14th 1944.

The vicar vent home to Dejbjerg, where he contacted the juridical official in Dejbjerg parish. This good man agreed, and at once he made a call to the police chief in Ringkoebing. The police chief arranged immediately so, that men from Civil Defence under command by captain Kisby went out to the crash site with necessary tools. They also brought four coffins, which the eight perished flyers were lain into.



RAF memorial stone and headstones at Dejbjerg graveyard.

Late in the day the four coffins were transported on wagons over to Dejbjerg church. People from the resistance movement had at the graveyard in the meantime been digging a big common grave.

At sunset this day in September a funeral was performed for the crew from Lancaster LM479. Vicar, Hans Pedersen, committed the ritual acts, and many people from the parish participated together with the police chief from Ringkøbing. People brought flowers from their gardens. During this peculiar funeral with strong sung psalms highly sounding in western Jutland gloaming sunset, the participators were touched by the atmosphere at this special celebration, when the eight young airmen were buried.

The German Wehrmacht was soon informed about the illegal funeral. Consequences were that the vicar, the juridical official and the chairman of the parish council were arrested and taken to the village of Stauning for closer interrogations. After a few days they were again set free. But it had been some unpleasant days for those three men and their families.



RAF Lancaster bomber.

This is an example of the German 'burying on the spot'. After the liberation about sixty bodies of allied airmen were found buried in such manners. Therefore many re-funerals were held in summer 1945 and later. (At Idom churchyard June 15th 1945 and Hoven November 1945).

Source: Anders Bjørnvad: Faldne allierede flyvere.

The RAF headstones at Dejbjerg.

Two names on each stone.



Headstones - four allied flyers Dejbjerg churchyard.

After liberation in 1945 people from Dejbjerg set up the big memorial stone on the RAF-grave. In 1948 War Graves Commission and Dejbjerg parish found, that it would look well, if a number of headstones were placed in front of the monument. Photos from the memorial prove that it was a good decision. Now headstones and Memorial stone look like a harmonic whole in common.



Headstones - four allied flyers Dejbjerg churchyard.

Attack on Königsberg and Stettin.

RAF Bomber Command considers the nights mission against two cities in North Germany as one of the big operations.

Sources say that there were involved 914 different types of planes. Losses were 41 planes, which was looked at as normally at that time, where German fighters still were able to operate from several home bases and from airfields in Denmark.



101 Squadron's Lancasters carried special electronic equipments to make life difficult for the German air defence system and 'W for Whiskey' has the distinctive 'ABC' aerials above its fuselage, with another just visible below the nose.

The German fighters first attacked the RAF bombe planes over western Denmark, followed them across Jutland and in over Sweden as far as to the southern part of the country.

In this mission RAF lost 11 bombers over Danish territories. The total number of lost crewmembers was 166. 129 were killed, 28 survived, 7 captured by the Germans and 1 made a lucky escape to Sweden.

A night fighter from Fliegerhorst Grove (Karup) had attacked the Lancaster (Dejbjerg) over middle of Jutland at 03.50 p.m. *)

*) Carsten Petersen: Nights in August 1944.

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Royal Air Force Graves Dejbjerg.



RAF No. 101 Squadron - Lancaster LM479.
Crashed at Dejbjerg on August 30th 1944.



Dejbjerg church and surrounding graveyard.

Dedication:

To the boys who have not been so lucky; who have given all they could give to their countries and for Freedom's sake. Let us never forget them.

